



# Effect of PM-POSHON Scheme in Schools of West Bengal

Sutrishna Bhattacharjyya Ganguly


Ma In Education From University Of Kalyani, Wb, India

Ugc - Net, Wb - Set Qualified



<https://doi.org/10.55041/ijst.v2i4.247>

**Cite this Article:** Ganguly, S. B. (2026). Effect of Pm-Poshon Scheme in Schools of West Bengal. International Journal of Science, Strategic Management and Technology, 02(04). <https://doi.org/10.55041/ijst.v2i4.247>

**License:**  This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), permitting use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author(s) and source are properly credited.

**Abstract** - Among school-going children, hunger hinders their ability to achieve a fulfilling and productive adult life. Such children rarely attend school; they struggle to concentrate on their studies in class, and their dropout rates are significantly high. Providing meals in schools is part of a socio-economic justice initiative aimed at enhancing students' attendance, learning capacity, and self-esteem, as well as reducing dropout rates—ultimately leading to a reduction in hunger and malnutrition. In accordance with patriarchal and gender-based norms within the family, available food is allocated first to male children and subsequently to female children. Anaemic and frail, these young women—who have suffered from such malnutrition since childhood—account for a significant proportion of low-birth-weight pregnancies following marriage; this, in turn, leads to high rates of infant and maternal mortality, thereby perpetuating the vicious cycle of poverty. Discrimination based on caste, class, religion, and gender remains a harsh reality in India. The Mid-Day Meal (MDM) scheme endeavours to alleviate poverty and mitigate socio-economic barriers, as children of all castes, religions, and genders sit together to share their meals. Regrettably, due to factors such as inadequate government support, widespread corruption, and hygiene-related issues, the implementation of the MDM scheme did not yield the expected results. Consequently, the Central Government has decided to relaunch the MDM—under the new name \*Poshan Shakti Nirman\* (POSHAN) scheme—with a renewed focus on alleviating hunger and improving the nutritional standards of students. However, without significant reforms, the POSHAN scheme, too, may fail to deliver the anticipated outcomes and fall short of fulfilling the objective of building a hunger-free India. Given the nationwide variations in child hunger and malnutrition, it is imperative to develop a comprehensive risk map—grounded in human-centric data and involving both communities and families—in order to gain a holistic understanding of the problem and devise effective solutions. The top-heavy model of PM POSHAN should be restructured in a manner that empowers and prepares all stakeholders to engage in the analysis, identification, planning, implementation, and monitoring of the project—measures that will aid in preventing child wasting, stunting, and other related issues. Emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning can be leveraged to detect, forecast, and prevent malnutrition, thereby helping to arrest India's declining trajectory in the Global Hunger Index and the Global Food Security Index.

**Keywords:** School meals, Mid-day meals, PM POSHAN, Malnutrition, Artificial Intelligence, Social Justice.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The PM-POSHON scheme of the Government of India was launched in 2021. Providing nutritious meals to the children studying in Government and Government-aided schools is the main target of this scheme. The PM – POSHON scheme helps the school-going children to protect themselves from hunger, malnutrition and low school participation.

Mainly, this programme was being launched for the students from pre-primary to class VIII to ensure that they could get a hot and healthy cooked meal in a day during school hours, full of necessary nutrition. The nutritional standards set under this scheme include 450 calories for primary students and 700 calories for upper primary students, with a large amount of cereals, pulses, vegetables and oil.

A large number of students belonging to economically poor backgrounds in West Bengal, the scheme used to serve them a meal full of nutrition to improve their nutritional levels and school attendance. It helps reduce classroom hunger, supports educational outcomes, and promotes social integration among children from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Through the scheme, many employment opportunities come to local communities, especially women from self-help groups. They cooked the healthy meal and served it to the students during school time.

The scheme has lots of benefits but faces several challenges, such as a lack of regular supply of food materials, monitoring issues, and declining coverage in some districts of West Bengal. It has come to notice in some recent reports that although more than 1.71 crore students were enrolled in the scheme in 2024-25 across 93,115 schools in West Bengal, only about 75% only received the benefits of this scheme.

### **SIGNIFICANCE**

The program helps school-age children, especially those from low-income households, improve their nutritional health. Children's physical and cognitive development depends on a proper diet. Enrollment, attendance, and retention rates in schools are all improved by the program.

Parents are more willing to send their kids to school on a regular basis when they receive meals there. By bringing children from all castes, communities, and socioeconomic backgrounds together for a shared meal, the program fosters social equality and inclusion.

By creating jobs for chefs and purchasing locally produced food, the program also boosts the local economy.

Therefore, it is important to study the role of this scheme to understand the contribution of PM-Poshan in the educational development and child welfare of the state.

### **BRIEF REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Multiple researchers and policy reports have highlighted the importance of school meal programs in improving educational and nutritional outcomes.

Research on PM-POSHON programs shows that this initiative significantly improves children's nutritional intake and academic participation day by day. Studies have shown that this initiative reduces classroom hunger and increases student attention, leading to better learning outcomes.

The government wants to solve two major problems in India, which are hunger and lack of access to education, by providing nutritious meals and encouraging school attendance.

In this research, it is shown that the low-income group people have received more benefits through this Meal Program and dropout rates have day by day reduced. By ensuring that children receive a balanced diet during school hours, this program contributes to both health and education.

However, various studies have shown many problems in this meal program, such as poor infrastructure, irregular supply of food grains, hygiene issues, and lack of effective monitoring mechanisms. These challenges stand as an obligation to run this meal program smoothly.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Studying the PM POSHAN scheme (formerly Mid-Day Meal) is vital because it acts as a core intersection of child nutrition, education, and social equity in India. It ensures food security for millions, directly boosting school attendance, reducing dropout rates, combating malnutrition, and encouraging social cohesion among diverse students.

Here is why studying this scheme is crucial:

- **Combating Malnutrition & Health:** The scheme addresses malnutrition by providing fortified meals (iron, folic acid, vitamins) to children, tackling issues like stunting and wasting in a significant portion of the population.
- **Improving Educational Outcomes:** By providing hot cooked meals, it encourages attendance and improves concentration, directly linking nutritional support to better cognitive function and learning outcomes.
- **Social and Economic Impact:** It promotes social equity by encouraging children of all backgrounds to eat together, fighting caste prejudice. Furthermore, it offers employment opportunities for local women through Self Help Groups (SHGs).
- **Policy Analysis & Evaluation:** Studies help evaluate the efficacy of current food distribution, identify bottlenecks in infrastructure (kitchen-cum-stores), and suggest improvements like adding breakfast or improving nutritional variety.
- **Addressing Regional Challenges:** Research is necessary to understand how to improve implementation, ensure food safety, and tailor the program to different cultural preferences, such as the inclusion of nutritious local foods.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study is based on a descriptive and analytical research design. Both primary and secondary sources of data have been used.

### **Sources of Data Secondary Data:**

- Government reports and policy documents.
- Educational journals.
- Research papers.
- Reports of the Ministry of Education and state education departments
- Newspaper.
- Online platform.

### **Primary Data:**

- Discuss with school teachers and the school administrator.
- Interaction with students.
- Interview with the cook and helpers.
- Interview with Parents.
- Observe the meal cooking process and distribution among the students.

## **SAMPLE COLLECTION**

The study was conducted by collecting information from Government and government-aided schools in rural and urban areas in West Bengal.

## **METHOD OF ANALYSIS**

Collected data from various sources was analysed using descriptive statistics and qualitative interpretation to understand the impact and challenges of the scheme.

## **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

- The PM-POSHAN scheme is improving the nutritional status of children. Malnutrition is a major concern in India, particularly among economically weaker sections' students. It ensures that through the hot cooked meals served, children receive essential nutrients which are required for growth and development. The nutritional guidelines under the scheme ensure that children receive adequate calories and protein through meals consisting of cereals, pulses, vegetables, and oils. It prevents hunger during school hours and helps students to concentrate on classroom activities. In West Bengal, the programme has played a significant role in addressing nutritional deficiencies among school children. Many students from rural and economically disadvantaged families depend on school meals as an important part of their daily nutrition.
- The PM-POSHAN scheme helps to increase school enrolment and attendance rates in West Bengal. For many low-income families, sending their children to school becomes more attractive when they are assured of a nutritious meal. Parents send their children to school regularly. As a result, government schools have witnessed increased participation, particularly in rural and tribal areas. However, recent data suggest a decline in the number of students availing the meals in some districts of West Bengal, highlighting the need for improved implementation and monitoring mechanisms.
- The school dropout rate has decreased. Parents send their children to school six days a week. The financial burden on families decreases, making it easier for parents to keep their children in school. The PM-POSHAN programmes improve children's health, by which absent in school is reduced caused by illness. As a result, students remain engaged in the educational process for a longer period.
- The PM-POSHAN scheme plays an important role in promoting social equality. By sharing meals together, children from different castes, religions, and socioeconomic backgrounds interact with one another. This helps reduce social discrimination and promotes a sense of unity and equality among students. School meals thus serve not only as a nutritional intervention but also as a tool for social integration.
- This program is a stable source of income and empowers women economically because women from self-help groups are employed as cooks and helpers in schools. The involvement of local communities also strengthens the sustainability and accountability of the programme.

## **KEY CHALLENGES OF THE PM POSHAN SCHEME**

- **Delayed Funding & Low Allocations:** Delays of 3–6 months are common, forcing school staff to spend personal money. Rising food inflation often exceeds the meagre budget allocated per child.
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Many schools lack basic kitchen infrastructure, including running water, clean utensils, and safe food storage spaces.
- **Teacher Burden:** Teachers are frequently overwhelmed by maintaining records, monitoring cooking, and managing logistics, which distracts from teaching time.
- **Caste Discrimination & Safety:** Reports have shown Dalit students being served separately or discriminated against in some regions. Cases of food poisoning and poor hygiene in food preparation remain serious concerns.
- **Nutritional Inadequacy & Quality Control:** Food quality often varies significantly, with complaints about the low quality of pulses, vegetables, and rice provided.
- **Monitoring and Mismanagement:** Corruption, such as the pilferage of food grains and mismanagement, affects the successful implementation of the scheme.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

1. The study is based largely on secondary data sources.
2. Limited field data may affect the depth of analysis.
3. The findings may not represent all districts of West Bengal equally



## **CONCLUSION**

The PM POSHAN scheme (formerly Mid-Day Meal) is a vital, transformative initiative providing hot, nutritious meals to over 11 crore children in India to combat classroom hunger, improve enrollment, and enhance nutritional status. As of late 2025, it serves as a cornerstone for child development by linking nutrition with educational outcomes, requiring ongoing focus on inflation-indexed funding and quality monitoring.

## **References:-**

- 1) Banerjee, A. (2018). *Nutrition and child development in India*. *Indian Journal of Social Research*, 59(3), 255-270.
- 2) Halder, Sanjoy (2026). *Role of Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman Scheme in West Bengal*. Vol 2, Issue 3
- 3) Mukherjee, D. (2019). *Mid-day meal programme in West Bengal: A critical analysis*. *Indian Educational Review*, 56(2), 134-148.