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Government of India
Ministry of Human Resource Development
Department of School Education & Literacy
MDM Division

Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi
Dated November 03, 2014

Subject: Minutes of the meeting of Empowered Committee for Mid Day Meal Scheme held on 15.10.2014 at New Delhi.

A copy of the minutes of the Empowered Committee meeting held on 15.10.2014 at Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi under the Chairpersonship of Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Human Resource & Development to review the implementation of the MDM Scheme and to suggest policy measures for improving its implementation.

2. A copy of the minutes of the Empowered Committee meeting is enclosed herewith.


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Distribution:

- i) Sri Ganta Srinivasa Rao, Minister for School Education, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh
- ii) Shri Brishin Patel, Education Minister, Govt. of Bihar
- iii) Shri Kali Charan Saraf, Hon'ble Minister, Education (Primary, Secondary and Higher Education), Sanskrit Education, Technical Education, Govt. of Rajasthan
- iv) Dr. R. C. Laloo, Deputy Chief Minister & Education Minister, Department of Education, Govt. of Meghalaya
- v) Director, National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad
- vi) Director, Nutrition Foundation of India, New Delhi
- vii) Representative of Swami Sivananda Memorial Institute, New Delhi
- viii) Representative of UNICEF (Ms. Urmila Sarkar, Chief Education)
- ix) Shri N.C. Saxena, Ex-Secretary, Planning Commission, Commissioner Food Security, Office of Supreme Court Commissioner
- x) Prof. Shantha Sinha, Ex-Chairperson, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights
- xi) Ms. Tulasi Munda, Adivasi Vikas Samiti, Serenda, Odisha
- xii) Shri Biraj Patnaik, Principal Advisor to Office of Supreme Court Commissioner on Food Security
- xiii) Shri Haleem Khan, Ex-Chairman, MP Madarsa Board, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

- xiv) Ms. Annie Namala, Centre for Inclusive, New Delhi
- xv) Dr. Sheetal Amte, Baba Amte Foundation, Anand Van, Chandrapur, Maharashtra
- xvi) Representative of Akshay Patra Foundation, Bangalore
- xvii) Representative of NAIK Foundation, Bhiwandi Road, Thane
- xviii) Representative of Naandi Foundation, Hyderabad
- xix) Secretary, Department of School Education & Literacy, MHRD
- xx) Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development
- xxi) Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- xxii) Secretary, Department of Food & Public Distribution, Ministry of Consumer Affairs
- xxiii) Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development
- xxiv) Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
- xxv) Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs
- xxvi) Secretary, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation
- xxvii) Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs
- xxviii) Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj
- xxix) Chief Executive Director, Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)
- xxx) Additional Secretary (SE), Department of School Education & Literacy, MHRD

Copy to:

- i) Private Secretary to Hon'ble Minister of Ministry of Human Resource Development
- ii) PPS to Secretary(SE&L)
- iii) PPS to AS(SE)
- iv) PPS to JS(EE-I)

**Government of India
Ministry of Human Resource Development
Department of School Education and Literacy
Mid Day Meal Division**

**Minutes of the meeting of Empowered Committee for Mid Day Meal Scheme
(MDMS) held on 15th October, 2014 at Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi**

Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani, Hon'ble Minister for Human Resource Development, Government of India chaired the meeting. The list of participants is enclosed as **Annexure-I.**

2. Shri J. Alam, Joint Secretary (EE.I) welcomed the members and made a power point presentation relating to the agenda items.
3. The following issues were discussed: --
 - 3.1 **Confirmation of the minutes of the last meeting:** The Committee confirmed the minutes of the last meeting.
 - 3.2 **Dissemination of video clipping on hand wash:** Members were informed that the MHRD has published a booklet "Swachh Bharat : Swachh Vidyalaya" which highlights hand washing and other aspects of cleanliness and hygiene at school levels. A video spot on hand washing has also been developed and being telecast on Doordarshan and other private TV channels. Hon'ble HRM desired that the video spot on hand wash should be sent to the State Governments / UT Administrations for dissemination amongst school children.
 - 3.3 **Development of Emergency Medical Plan:** Emergency Medical Plan is essential for saving precious lives of the children during any untoward incidents. The State Governments have already been requested vide MHRD letter dated 22nd July, 2013 to develop the Emergency Medical Plan. Govt. of Odisha has already prepared this plan. But many States are yet to prepare the plan. The Committee decided that the development of emergency medical plan by each State Government may be made mandatory and States / UTs should also prepare similar plan by 31st December, 2014.
 - 3.4 **Social Audit:** Social audit is an important tool for monitoring the Scheme through community participation. Govt. of Andhra Pradesh has already undertaken social audit in two districts viz. Khammam and Chittoor through

Society for Social Audit Accountability and Transparency during 2013. The social audit is now to be carried out in 9 States. Out of these 9 States, Maharashtra, Odisha, Bihar and Tamil Nadu have already initiated the process for conducting social audit.

3.5 Increasing the coverage of children under Mid Day Meal Scheme:

Suggestions were solicited from the participants for increasing the coverage of the scheme in the States which had low attendance of children against the national average. Hon'ble Education Minister, Government of Bihar informed that the State Government has decided that children who have 75% attendance in the schools will be eligible for various benefits such as uniforms, cycles, books etc. This intervention has resulted in improvement in the attendance of children in schools in the State. Joint Secretary (EE.I) informed that average student's attendance rate in the country is around 77% and coverage of children under Mid Day Meal Scheme across the country is about 78%. He further added that the State-wise below average coverage ranges from 47% (Chandigarh), 54% (Jharkhand), 55% (Uttar Pradesh), 60% (Tripura), 61% (Delhi), 68% (Bihar), 70% (Gujarat), 75% (A&N Islands) and 77% (Madhya Pradesh and Daman & Diu).

Shri N.C. Saxena, Commissioner, Supreme Court mentioned that children are enrolled in the Government schools for the benefit of textbook, uniform and mid day meals but studying in private schools. The Commissioner office conducted field study in many States, the reports of which are available on the Supreme Court's website. Ms. Tulasi Munda, Adivasi Vikas Samiti, Odisha raised the issue of coverage of children studying in private schools under MDMS. Additional Secretary (SE), MHRD informed that as per the MDM guidelines private schools are not covered under Mid Day Meal Scheme.

Hon'ble HRM advised that reasons for low coverage may be identified and States may be instructed to take necessary corrective measures for increasing the coverage.

3.6 Construction of Kitchen-cum-Stores: States / UTs have been given Central assistance for construction of 10.06 lakh Kitchen-cum-Stores since 2006-07 till 2013-14 against which 6.82 lakh kitchen-cum-stores have been constructed so far. Secretary (SE&L) informed that the State Governments have been

advised at various forums to provide additional funds from their own resources to complete the pending kitchen-cum-stores immediately. He also added that Governments of Bihar, Maharashtra, Jharkhand etc. had contributed from States share for completion of the pending kitchen-cum-stores. HRM advised that a letter should be addressed to the defaulting States / UTs to complete the construction of sanctioned kitchen-cum-stores immediately.

3.7 **Timely payment of honorarium to Cook-cum-helpers**

Director, Mid Day Meal, MHRD informed that there is a delay in making payment of honorarium of Rs.1000/- per month to cook-cum-helpers in many States. He also mentioned that States/UTs and Cook Associations are persistently demanding increase in the honorarium of the cook-cum-helpers. Secretary, School Education & Literacy mentioned that 13 States viz. Chhattisgarh(Rs.1200/-), Haryana(Rs.2500/-), Karnataka (Rs.1600/1700/-), Kerala (Rs.4500/6000/-), Mizoram (Rs.1500/-), Punjab (Rs.1200/-), Tamil Nadu (time scale Rs.5500-7500), Uttarakhand (Rs.1500/-), West Bengal (Rs.1500/-), Chandigarh (Rs.1872/-), Dadra & Nagar Haveli (Rs.2400/-), Lakshadweep (Rs.6000/-) and Puducherry (Rs.5000/6000/9000) are contributing more than the minimum prescribed State Share for the honorarium of cook-cum-helpers. Hon'ble HRM suggested that similarly other States should top up from their State Share towards the payment of honorarium to cook-cum-helpers. She further suggested that the payment to cook-cum-helpers should be made in time in their bank account.

3.8 **Payment to FCI:** Joint Secretary, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution (CA, F&PD) informed that there is huge pendency of Rs. 428 crore on the part of the State Govt., which is more than the revolving funds of Rs. 300 crore kept with FCI by MHRD. He further informed that FCI takes loan from the market for undertaking its commercial operations for the procurement and distribution of foodgrains. It is incurring heavy interest burden due to the delayed payments from the State Governments for the foodgrains lifted under Mid Day Meal Scheme.

Secretary (SE&L) informed that Ministry of CA, F&PD had introduced pre-payment system during 2013-14 because of the delay in payment by the State Governments. The issue was resolved in a Secretaries level meeting. But the

Ministry of CA, F&PD has again decided to introduce the pre-payment system with effect from 1st April, 2015 because of the huge pendency of FCI bills with the State Governments. Hon'ble HRM advised that Secretary (SE&L) should have a meeting with the Secretary, CA, F&PD for maintaining the status quo in the interest of the beneficiaries. In the meantime, the State Governments should also be advised to make immediate payment of the pending FCI bills. The MHRD should also reconcile State reports on payments with FCI statement so that the actual pendency of bills is known clearly. Hon'ble HRM also suggested that States may be advised to make payment to FCI through e-transfer.

Hon'ble Education Minister, Govt. of Bihar mentioned that the payment of cost of foodgrains at district level is resulting in delayed payments to FCI. He further requested to allow payment to FCI at State level to avoid delay. It was clarified that the States have the flexibility to make the payment at district level or at the State level. Many States viz. Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh etc. are already making payment at the State level.

- 3.9 **Testing of food samples:** Shri N.C. Saxena, Commissioner, Supreme Court Commissionerate informed that most of the food samples in NCT of Delhi are not meeting the nutritional standards of Mid Day Meal Scheme. Shri Ashok Rao, General Secretary, SSMI informed that there is no standard protocol for testing of meals in the country. Shri Dave, Advisor, FSSAI informed that FSSAI has prepared guidelines for testing of meals and the same would be shared with Ministry of HRD for the benefit of the Mid Day Meal Scheme.

Joint Secretary (EE.I) raised the issue of registration / licensing of the schools under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. He stated that Ministry of HRD had already requested FSSAI to exempt the schools from registration / licensing. He added that preparation of meals at schools do not come under the purview of the Act because these are not catering activities. Hon'ble HRM mentioned that registration / licensing of schools under FSSA will create another inspector raj and operational problems of many kinds in the smooth implementation of the Scheme. She advised that FSSAI should not insist on registration / licensing of the schools under FSSA, 2006. In order to ensure quality of the meals and appropriate nutrition standards under the Mid Day

Meal Scheme, she advised to introduce a protocol for standards in food safety and testing, which is to be rolled out in the coming New Year.

- 3.10 **Construction of Centralized kitchen at block level to relieve teachers from Mid Day Meal Scheme:** Education Minister, Govt. of Bihar informed the Committee that teachers should not be involved in the Mid Day Meal Scheme. He suggested that instead of school based cooking the State may be allowed to prepare the meal in a Government managed Centralized kitchen to be setup in each block for catering to the cluster of the schools. These Centralized kitchens could be run by self-help groups etc.

Additional Secretary (SE), MHRD informed that the MDM guidelines provide for utilizing the services of self-help groups. As regards Centralized kitchens in each block, it was informed that the objective of the Mid Day Meal Scheme is not only to provide meals to the children but also to encourage involvement and participation of various sections of the society, whose children are studying in the school. She further informed that the role of teacher is to taste the meal and ensure that it is served by the cook-cum-helpers in an orderly manner. Thus, it does not put extra burden on the work of the teacher. Therefore, it was proposed that the existing system of preparation and serving of meals may be followed by the States as per the provisions of the MDM Guidelines.

- 3.11 **Tithi Bhojan:** Government of Gujarat has introduced the practice of *Tithi Bhojan*, where community members willingly contribute to improve quality of the school mid day meals on a happy occasion / event in the family be it a birthday, festival etc. This is one of the best practices of the State Government which should also be followed by other State Governments. Hon'ble HRM advised that the practice of Tithi Bhojan may be widely publicized and States / UTs may be requested to adopt this practice in their States / UTs.
- 3.12 **Food Security Allowance:** The Committee was informed that draft MDM rules under National Food Security Act, 2013 have been prepared for vetting by the Ministry of Law & Justice. The representative from Ministry of WCD informed that they have also drafted rules for ICDS. But the NFSA provides for payment of Food Security Allowance to the children if the State Government is unable to serve the meals to them. This issue being common to MHRD and

Ministry of WCD, he suggested that a joint Committee of both the Ministries along with Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution being the nodal Ministry may be setup to decide upon the uniform modalities for payment of Food Security Allowance.

3.13 **Safety and hygiene of meals:** Representative of Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation mentioned that washing of hands with soap and cleaning of vegetables by the cook-cum-helpers before starting of the preparation of the meals should be mandatory to maintain hygiene and quality of the meals. Additional Secretary (SE), Ministry of HRD mentioned that these are already part of the Mid Day Meal Scheme and also training is being imparted to the cook-cum-helpers on safety and hygiene issues on preparation of the meals. She further mentioned that Gram Pradhans are proposed to be trained in convergence with Ministry of Rural Development.

3.14 **Real time monitoring of the Scheme:** Joint Secretary(EE.I) informed about the latest development on implementation of IVRS for MDMS. He further mentioned that this issue was discussed in the Education Secretaries meeting held on 26th July, 2014 to develop MDM-MIS with IVRS for real time monitoring of the Scheme. A template will also be developed at national level for all the States / UTs to provide information on key indicators.

Mr. Ashok Rao, General Secretary, SSMI shared the findings of the interim report on pilot study being conducted by SSMI in Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh. He mentioned that the implementation of the Mid Day Meal Scheme is comparatively better in the rural areas than the urban areas; food safety problems are also less in rural areas; creating micro-enterprises for women is viable; need for human resource development in local language and training to Master Trainers. He also mentioned that there is a serious structure problem at various levels under the Mid Day Meal Scheme and Interactive Voice Response System was not functional in the village school that was studied in Faizabad district.

Hon'ble HRM mentioned that there is a lot of delay in flow of information right from the school levels to States and Centre. She advised that the Scheme should be monitored with the use of ICT interventions on real time basis to take the timely corrective measures. She added that an e-solution is being

developed by the NUEPA for the schools. This system would be helpful in sending regular alerts on implementation of Scheme to various stakeholders at all levels for timely interventions. The said system will be operational by next academic year.

After detailed deliberations, Committee recommended the following actionable points:

- i) To introduce the practice of *Tithi Bhojan* across the country, based on its success in Gujarat where community members contribute to improve quality of the school mid day meals on a happy occasion / event in the family be it a birthday, festival etc.
- ii) To introduce a protocol for standards in food safety and testing of the meals.
- iii) To strengthen the monitoring system for real time monitoring of the Scheme.

The meeting ended with vote of thanks to the Chair.

List of participants

1. Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani, Hon'ble Education Minister, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of School Education & Literacy, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi.
2. Shri Brishin Patel, Education Minister, Govt. of Bihar.
3. Shri R. Bhattacharya, Secretary (SE&L), Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of School Education & Literacy, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi.
4. Shri N.C. Saxena, Ex-Secretary, Planning Commission, Commissioner Food Security, Office of Supreme Court Commissioner.
5. Ms. Vrinda Sarup, Additional Secretary (SE), Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of School Education & Literacy, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi.
6. Shri J. Alam, Joint Secretary (EE.I), Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of School Education & Literacy, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi.
7. Shri S. Dave, Advisor, Food Safety Standards Authority of India.
8. Shri Ajai Saxena, Joint Secretary, Department of Food & Public Distribution, R.No. 194, Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi.
9. Ms. Sudha P Rao, Chief Economic Advisor, Ministry of Rural Development, Krishi Bhavan.
10. Shri G. Balasubramanian, Deputy Adviser, Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation.
11. Dr Prema Ramchandran Director, Nutrition Foundation of India, New Delhi.
12. Dr. Sheetal Amte, Baba Amte Foundation, Anand Van, Chandrapur, Maharashtra.
13. Ms. Tulasi Munda, Adivasi Vikas Samiti, Serenda, Odisha.
14. Prof. M. Halim Khan, Ex-Chairman, MP Madarsa Board, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.
15. Ms. Annie Namala, Centre for Social Equity & Inclusive Growth, South Patel Nagar, Second Floor, New Delhi – 110008.
16. Dr. Sunita Bhasin, Director, Swami Sivananda Memorial Institute, New Delhi.
17. Dr Ashok Rao, General Secretary, Swami Sivananda Memorial Institute, New Delhi.

18. Shri Gaya Prasad, Director (MDM), Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of School Education & Literacy, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi.
19. Dr. Suparna S. Pachouri, Director (MDM & EFA), Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of School Education & Literacy, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi.
20. Shri Mahabir Pershad, Director, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi.
21. Shri Gulshan Lal, Director, Ministry of Women & Child Development.
22. Shri Ajay Kumar, OSD, MDM, Govt. of Bihar.
23. Dr. N. Arlappa, Assistant Director, National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad.
24. Shri S.L. Meena, Deputy Secretary, Department of Youth Affairs, R.No. 102, Shastri Bhavan.
25. Ms. Damayanti Samal, Adivasi Vikas Samit, Odisha.
26. Shri V.K. Nayyar, Deputy Secretary (MDM), Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of School Education & Literacy, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi.
27. Shri Rajeev Kumar, Under Secretary (MDM), Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of School Education & Literacy, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi.
28. Shri K.L. Ahuja, Section Officer (MDM 2-1), Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of School Education & Literacy, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi.