



Dr. Amarjit Singh
Additional Secretary
Tele 011-23381096
Fax. 011-23381302

भारत सरकार
मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय
स्कूल शिक्षा और साक्षरता विभाग
शास्त्री भवन

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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION & LITERACY

SHASTRI BHAVAN

NEW DELHI-110 115

D.O.No.10-7/2013-EE-6 (MDM 3-1)

Dated the 6th June, 2013.

Dear *Sir*

I write this to apprise you of the findings of the Fifth Joint Review Mission (JRM) on the Mid Day Meal Scheme that visited Himachal Pradesh from 21-29 May, 2013. The JRM team led by Dr. Neelam Grewal, Dean, College of Home Science, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana included the representatives from Government of Himachal Pradesh, office of the Supreme Court Commissionerate for MDMS and Monitoring Institute for Himachal Pradesh. The JRM was also assisted by Research Fellows from PAU and Consultants from Ed CIL's Technical Support Group for Mid-Day Meal Scheme.

2. During its visit to the State, the JRM Team covered 45 schools in Shimla and Sirmaur districts. The JRM report was presented to the State Government on 30th May 2013. The Joint Review Mission appreciated the following positive features in the State under the Mid-Day Meal Scheme:-

- i) On an average 90% of the enrolled children were availing of mid-day meal.
- ii) Toll Free Number 1800-180-8007 has been operationalized for the stakeholder to make on line suggestions, seek information or lodge complaints on the implementation of MDMS.
- iii) The State Government has provided Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) connection in 84% schools for cooking mid-day meal. The LPG is being made available in these schools regularly in spite of arduous and difficult terrain in the hill areas. The use of LPG has reduced the environmental pollution and cutting of the trees.
- iv) "No Smoking Zone" logo had been displayed prominently in all the visited schools.
- v) JRM was pleased to see that children in Sarahan block bring lassi (butter milk) and drink it along with Mid-Day Meal. The lassi is sometimes used for making Karhi on the desire of children.
- vi) Good maintenance of records in the primary schools and the commitment of primary school teachers to provide hot cooked meal to children despite constraints such as delay in the receipt of cooking cost, non-delivery of food grains up to school by Fair Price Shop (FPS). All the visited schools were also giving second serving on the request by the students.
- vii) All the children were washing their hands with soap before eating mid-day meal. They also washed their eating plates after mid-day meal.
- viii) Almost all the visited schools had weighing machines. Some schools had received Water purifiers, fans etc. from State Bank of India under Corporate Social Responsibility.



मध्याह्न भोजन योजना
Mid Day Meal Scheme

3. However, the Joint Review Mission observed following areas of concern which require your personal attention:

i) Delay in the release of funds to Schools:

Joint Review Mission observed that central assistance under balance of first instalment and 2nd instalment was released to the State on 25th July, 2012 and 17th December, 2012 respectively. The Cash books of the schools revealed that funds for cooking cost, honorarium to cook-cum-helpers and Transport Assistance were received in the months of December, 2012/ January, 2013 and April/May, 2013 respectively. Thus, there was a delay of more than three months in the release of funds to the Schools.

You will appreciate that timely availability of funds enables advance planning for smooth implementation of the scheme. It is, therefore, essential that funds are released in time to the schools. For this purpose, State Government may adopt Green Channel Scheme on the lines of Andhra Pradesh, where schools are permitted to draw each month's requirement of funds in advance.

ii) Standard Operating Procedure for the Flow of Food grains

As per the extant instructions, while submitting indent for food grains for the next month/quarter, the schools are required to mention the unutilised quantity of food grain lying with them from the previous supply. This unutilised quantity of food grain is to be adjusted from the next month/quarters demand for food grain. But the schools do not submit the indent to the Block Elementary Education Officer (BEEO) who compiles the consolidated demand of food grains for the schools in his block to FCI/FPS on the basis of enrolment for the previous quarter.

JRM observed that Shamsheer Senior Secondary School, Nahan had more than 17 quintals of rice with it and indent for more than 28 quintals of rice had been submitted for the next quarter. The monthly consumption of food grain in the above school is 5 quintals approximately. Since the schools would remain closed for summer holidays, the existing stock of rice would have been sufficient for two months of the next quarter. But BEEO had indented the demand for 28 quintals of rice for the above school on the basis of enrolment for the previous quarter without taking into account the unutilised food grain lying with the school. This is when the school does not have storage bins for storing the huge quantity of food grain. The food grain was lying in the gunny bags in the room and was susceptible to pest and disease infestation. You may, therefore, like to devise 'Standard Operating Procedures' (SOP) for submission of food grains indent by schools/BEEO etc. The food grain should be released as per the storage capacity of the schools otherwise additional storage bins may be provided to the schools for scientific storage of food grains.

iii) Food Norms, Menu etc.

The JRM observed that Deputy Director (Elementary Education), Government of Himachal Pradesh had prescribed the weekly menu, which was displayed in the kitchens of all the visited schools. As per this menu, the schools are required to serve pulses @ 30 grams for three days in a week and vegetable @ 65 grams for two days to all the primary class school children. Meetha Rice is to be served on the sixth day. Similarly, pulses @ 40 grams per student per day for three days in a week and vegetables @ 85 grams per student per day for two days in a week is to be provided to Upper Primary classes. Meetha Rice is to be provided on the sixth day.

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vi) Behavioural Orientation for Senior Secondary School Teachers

JRM observed that Mid-Day Meal scheme is comparatively better managed in the primary schools. The Scheme is however, not implemented with the same zeal in a few Senior Secondary schools where teachers showed indifference towards the implementation of the scheme. The JRM was given to understand that Director (Elementary Education), Government of Himachal Pradesh is the nodal officer for the implementation of Mid-Day Meal Scheme up to primary classes (I-V) only. Class VI-VIII are located in the Senior Secondary/Middle schools, which come under the administrative control of Director (Higher Education). The administrative/disciplinary action against the erring teachers of Senior Secondary schools supervising the implementation of Mid-Day Meal is to be initiated by Director (Higher Education) and not by Director (Elementary Education) who is the nodal officer for implementation of mid-day meal scheme in the State. Thus, there is a duality of control in primary and upper primary levels for the implementation of the mid-day meal scheme. It is felt that there should be a single command both for Primary and Upper Primary classes so that the implementation of the scheme is not affected at upper primary level. You may also, consider orientating the principals/senior teachers responsible for MDMS to enable them to better appreciate the noble mission of MDMS; the nutritional profile of their students and how that affects their cognitive abilities.

vii) Nutritional Profile:

The nutritional profile of 582 school children from 45 schools revealed that in Shimla district, 28.18% of the children were under weight, 17.27 % were stunted, 16.81% were moderately under-nourished while 5% were severely under-nourished. In Sirmaur district, the percentage of under-weight children was 45.09, stunted children 25.21%, moderately under-nourished 25.21% and severely under-nourished children 6.16%.

Below average weight of boys in Sirmaur district is a matter of serious concern. Clinical symptoms of iron deficiency anaemia were more pronounced in Sirmaur district. Decayed, missing, filled teeth (DMF), a clinical sign of fluorine deficiency, was found in 20% and 26.05% of the children from Shimla and Sirmaur districts respectively. The JRM recommends that the undernourished children should be identified through periodical health check-ups and identified children should be given special care during MDM & if need be clinical care.

viii) Convergence with School Health Programme:

Convergence of the School Health Programme with MDMS is essential for monitoring the physical growth and the health status of children and to provide supplements to overcome micronutrient deficiency. It is important to maintain Health Cards in schools for future reference and regular supervision of the needy students. Further, health officials need to give clear instructions regarding the dosage of deworming/supplementation tablets to avoid complications arising out of wrong dosage. Report cards and feedback must be shared with the parents.

ix) Apart from the above mentioned major issues of concern, the State Government may kindly consider the following issues also, for improving the implementation of the scheme:

- a) MHRD released non-recurring Central Assistance of Rs. 377.85 lakhs during March, 2013 for procurement of kitchen devices in 7557 schools. JRM was informed that Department of Elementary Education, Government of Himachal Pradesh has not received the above funds from the Treasury. Since the financial year 2012-13 is already over, the State Government may

seek revalidation of the above funds for utilisation during 2013-14. Apart for procurement of kitchen devices; they could be used for procuring storage bins for schools as well as eating plates for children.

- b) As per MDM guidelines, 50% of the , Management, Monitoring and Evaluation (MME) funds are to be given to the schools for the purchase of soap, stationery, replacement of kitchen devices, purchase of storage bins. None of the visited schools had however, received these funds from the State Government. Since hand wash is being promoted in every school, the children need soap regularly for hand wash. Similarly, the kitchen devices get damaged due to their normal wear and tear. Therefore, State may release 50% of the MME funds to schools as per the MDM guidelines.
- c) All most all the schools had separate **toilets for boys and girls**. But their up-keep was very poor. Most of them were conspicuous because of the stinking smell emanating from them. They had not been properly cleaned, due to the shortage of water in the toilets. The teachers expressed their inability to engage sweepers because they did not have funds for this purpose. The un-clean toilets not only become a source of infection to the school children but they deprive the children from their personal hygiene due to the shortage/non-availability of water in these toilets. The State Government should take necessary measures for ensuring **regular supply of water** in these toilets and their cleanliness.
- d) **Capacity building** of all the stakeholders at every level is required for effective implementation of the MDMS. Cook –cum- Helpers need to be trained in proper weighing and cooking procedures. A six monthly health check up should be made mandatory for all the cook-cum-helpers.
- e) Barring three schools, none of the visited schools had displayed the **MDM logo** in the schools. The schools which had displayed the logo, did not follow the proper colour scheme or the approved pattern of the logo. The photographs of these logos have been given in the JRM Report.

All the visited schools had **weekly menu** but it was either with the teacher or kept in the kitchen. The food norms had also not been displayed prominently in the school. The logo as per the approved colour scheme and pattern, entitlement of children under food norms, weekly menu should be displayed prominently in the school so that various stakeholder are able to access them freely. The **Toll Free number** should be given wide publicity.

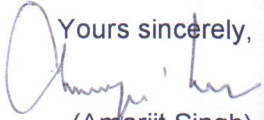
- f) There is negligible **participation of the community** in the scheme. Shamsar Government Boys Senior Secondary Schools had received Rs.5,000/- from the owner of timber trail resort for the student scoring highest marks in class X. Such contributions could be scaled up if the members from PRI, SMC etc. take an active interest in the scheme. You may like to motivate them to play a pro-active role in the scheme.
- g) The State Govt. should constitute a State Review Mission on the lines of Joint Review Mission by GOI for evaluating the performance of the scheme in the poor performing districts.
- h) Officers from the State Government may be deputed to other States to learn their best practices and to adopt them for improving the implementation of the scheme.

- i) The State has not completed all entries for the monthly data in to MIS web portal. The districts have to speed up the process of data feeding immediately through data entry operators.
- j) A Suggestion Box may be provided in all schools for enabling the community to submit their grievances

Action taken on the above recommendations may be submitted to the MHRD within a period of three months from the date of submission of this report. A little effort on your part will ensure that no child goes hungry in school in your state!

Do let us know if we can facilitate this noble mission in any manner.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

(Amarjit Singh)

Shri Sudripta Roy, I.A.S.
Chief Secretary,
Government of Himachal Pradesh,
Shimla – 171002,
Himachal Pradesh.