



सत्यमेव जयते

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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.13-1/2013-MDM-2-1

Dated 28th February, 2013

Dear 

I write this to apprise you of the findings of the Fourth Joint Review Mission on the Mid Day Meal Scheme which visited your State from 28th January to 4th February, 2013, through a Team comprising representatives from Government of India, State Government of Rajasthan, representative of Hon'ble Supreme Court Commissioner Office, representative of UNICEF State Office and Monitoring Institutes for Rajasthan. The Team covered 36 schools in two districts in Kota and Tonk during the visit and presented its report to the State Government on 4th February, 2013.

2. The Mission appreciated the steps taken by the State Government to ensure that the children get hot cooked meal without any interruption. They particularly appreciated the maintenance and proper storage of buffer stock of food grains in all the visited schools, e- transfer of MDM funds, rain water harvesting system in some of the visited schools, as well as satisfactory performance of School Health Programme. Sufficient numbers of kitchen devices and eating plates were also available in the schools. The Review Mission also noted good performance of the State on Annual and Monthly data entry work on the MDM MIS Web Portal.

3. The strong community involvement through the School Management Committee (SMC) was observed. The SMC meetings take place regularly and MDM is also discussed therein. In several schools members of the SMC were present and they said that SMCs play an active role in all education Schemes.

4. The major findings / recommendations of the Review Mission on the basis of field visit in the selected districts are as under:

- i) Despite advance release of funds by Government of India, there is considerable delay in release of funds to the districts and the schools. In the meantime, the



teachers pay the conversion cost, out of their pocket or any other school grant. The State should develop a mechanism in this regard for promptly transferring the funds directly from the district to the schools by E-transfer. The State may also explore the possibility of opening separate bank account for transferring the MDM funds to avoid any confusion between SSA & MDM funds at a later date. Both the funds are received in one Bank Account from two different heads.

- ii) The record registers showed that vouchers are not dated properly. There should be signature of the person who received payment for the purchases; period of vouchers should also be specified. The usual practice is to get one single voucher for the entire month for all the expenses related to conversion cost like recovery; fruits and vegetables; fuel; etc. But there are no supporting papers to verify when and how much and at what rate the various articles have been purchased. The District Authorities should train responsible officials / teachers on maintenance of proper mid day meal records. This aspect needs considerable improvement.
- iii) Despite advance sanction of food grains to the States, there was an irregular supply of food grains due in some cases to lack of coordination in the work of private transporters engaged by the Government. Foodgrains should be supplied regularly by the transporters to the schools as per the requirement of the schools so that the schools do not have to borrow food grains from the nearby schools. The DSO should ensure regular supply of food grains through better control over transporters. The CEOs / BEOs should monitor the supplies through regular inspections; and the Monthly Progress Report should also reflect this.
- iv) The Review Mission gathered related data in terms of enrolment, actual beneficiaries of the MDM, allocation and utilization of grains, purchase of pulses and edible oil, dropout rates etc. There is a considerable variation in the enrolment and the number of MDM beneficiaries, suggesting that the rate of retention is still a challenge.
- v) The payment of Honorarium to cook-cum-helpers was very irregular and delayed by several months in Tonk district. These cooks belong to weaker sections of the society and their motivation levels would certainly improve if they were paid on a regular basis which in turn will surely enhance the quality of MDMS. Government may also consider paying them through E-transfer to avoid delays.
- vi) Cooking agencies like Annapurna Mahila Samiti and centralized kitchen run by Nandi Foundation at Kota district do not appear to be providing satisfactory services. The calculation of food grain at Centralized Kitchen at Kota should be on the basis of number of children actually benefitting from MDMS. The helpers have to facilitate the food distribution in all the schools where food is distributed. As per Government of Rajasthan guidelines, there are no helpers in the schools

served by the Centralized Kitchens for serving meal. This matter has been raised by several State Secretaries in the Education Secretaries' Conference. All the States and UTs have been advised to provide helpers at the school level on the basis of appropriate apportionment of the prescribed honorarium for the cook cum helpers.

The Naandi Foundation and the State Government jointly need to work out the food quality test mechanism with local Home Science Colleges or Food Testing Laboratories in and around Rajasthan to ensure that good quality food is served to the children. The workers who are handling vegetables, utensils, cleaning and cooking require training on food handling and hygiene and water saving. Similarly, they need to make effective arrangements for solid waste management. Currently, even dustbins are not available for vegetable waste. The wastage of food while handling distribution also needs to be minimized.

- vii) The collaboration between the school and the local health units (sub-centre and PHC) needs to be strengthened for joint planning, implementation and monitoring of IFA supplementation and deworming programme by the Departments of Education as well as Health and Family Welfare. The anaemia control programme is operational in the district, however, IFA tablets were not available since last six months to one year in most of the schools. Such issues could be addressed if the supply of IFA tablets and deworming is rigorously monitored by the District Coordination Committee.
- viii) The Government of Rajasthan guidelines on MDM mention about the use of *nirdhumchulha*. Separate kitchens-cum-stores were found in most of the visited schools. In the kitchens in Tonk and Kota districts, where fire wood was used, smoke was polluting school environment. Cook-cum-helpers was working in kitchens in smoky atmosphere which is a health hazard. In many schools the original kitchens are not used, for example food was prepared in verandah in Itawa Block of Kota. Encouragement should be given for installation and proper use of smokeless chullahs. Since the State is blessed with bright sunshine for a major part of the year, a pilot scheme for installation of solar cookers could also be launched.
- ix) One of the important suggestions is that the delivery and monitoring of pulses should be aligned with that of foodgrains. The Government of Rajasthan had undertaken to start supply of pulses and edible oils through the PDS. The Mission, therefore, recommends that delivery of pulses [and edible oil if possible] should be made at door step of the school or through the PDS quota. This would ensure availability of recommended amount of pulses, a potent source of proteins to every child.

- x) Generally the quality of chapati and rice was found to be of good quality, in keeping with local cultural tastes and practices. However, it was found that in the menu where Khichadi was mentioned, pulses in the form of dal were completely missing. The children were calling Khichadi “Charka Chawal” Spicy Rice. The use of pulses was usually found to be very low. Since the main source of protein for vegetarians are pulses, it is necessary that the use of pulses in prescribed quantity is ensured. Some vegetables such as tomato, peas, coriander and potato were found to be used. However, the green leafy vegetables were not found in any school.
- xi) It is important that all schools are instructed to display menu and MDM logo outside walls of kitchen premises as well on any other prominent place in school so that general public is aware of the MDM scheme being implemented in the school. Further, the menu prepared in both the districts does not provide a variety of dishes and sufficient quantity of vegetables as prescribed in the scheme for the children. It is recommended that Menu should have minimum vegetables as per the MDM Guidelines.
- xii) RTE Act has strengthened Community participation through SMCs. However, perusal of minutes of the SMC meetings indicated that apart from taking the approval of the Committee for disbursing funds for MDM, no quality discussion is held to improve the implementation of the scheme. In several schools infrastructure like rain water harvesting, dining slabs has been created through community participation. More encouragement should be given for community participation; experience has shown that the Mid Day Meal Scheme works best where the local community takes charge. We need to ensure that the local community is appropriately apprised of the rights of the children, has access to the relevant information and there are mechanisms to record and redress their grievances.
- xiii) It is recommended that an Inspection Register should be maintained exclusively for MDM so that Inspecting Officers can record their observations on the implementation of the Scheme. Further, provision of Social Audits should be made by the State Government to evaluate the implementation of programme and to identify gaps, with the involvement of PRIs and S.M.C members. The monitoring of the Scheme should be carried out by district & block level officials as per the norms fixed in the MDMS Guidelines. The experiences of Andhra Pradesh in this regard is instructive.
- xiv) As Management Information System integrated with IVRS will become operational very soon the districts have to speed up the process of data feeding. To handle huge data and updating the data into the web portal regularly, data entry operators have to be engaged on regular basis in every district.

(xv) **Other recommendations:**

- Need for State level Review Mission for monitoring the implementation of scheme in poorly performing districts.
- Orientation Training programme for all teachers in-charge of the MDMS.
- The best practice of water harvesting system should be promoted in all the schools.
- Evaluation studies of the scheme should be conducted by the State Government through an external agency.

5. I shall appreciate if you kindly look into the above recommendations of the Review Mission and take appropriate action in a time bound manner. A little effort on your part will go a long way to ensure that no child remains hungry in the schools; *this is truly God's own work which we all are privileged to carry out.*

With regards,

Yours sincerely,



(Amarjit Singh)

Shri C.S. Rajan
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