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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. 7-12/2013-EE.6(MDM 3-1)

Dated the 29th October, 2013

Dear

Colleagues,

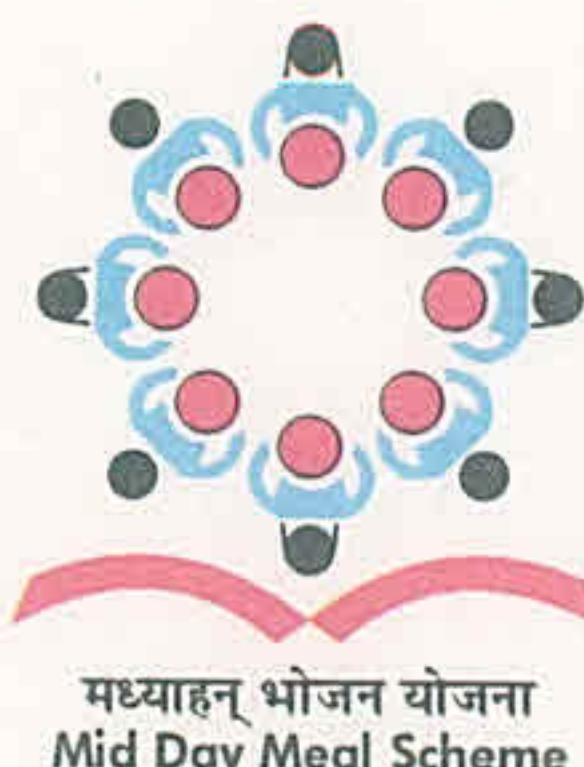
This has been a trying period for the Mid Day Meal Scheme. The reports of poor quality of the Mid-day Meal from different parts of the country need serious introspection.

2. A major issue from the QPR report from the 1st quarter is the steep fall in coverage by about 7 million children between the last and the 1st quarter. While there may be some genuine reasons, there are other issues that can be addressed and the coverage improved during the 1st quarter. This is critical as the JRM reports for 13 States in the country for the current year have highlighted a huge burden of hunger, malnutrition and stunting amongst our school children. This naturally impacts on their learning attainments. Therefore all efforts need to be made to ensure full coverage of all eligible children.

3. Preparation of hygienic and wholesome meal is contingent upon the knowledge and skills of staff and cook-cum-helpers engaged for providing meal in the schools. The Cook cum Helpers (CCH), mainly come from the deprived sections of the society, where they have limited information about nutrition, cooking processes, health and hygiene, preparation of raw grains and vegetables, recipes, serving skills etc. In this connection the capacity building of Cook cum Helpers is being done in convergence with the Ministry of Tourism through their State/UT Institutes of Hotel Managements (IHM). You are requested to get the training of CCH done in convergence with the IHMs or other suitable NGOs like Akshaypatra.

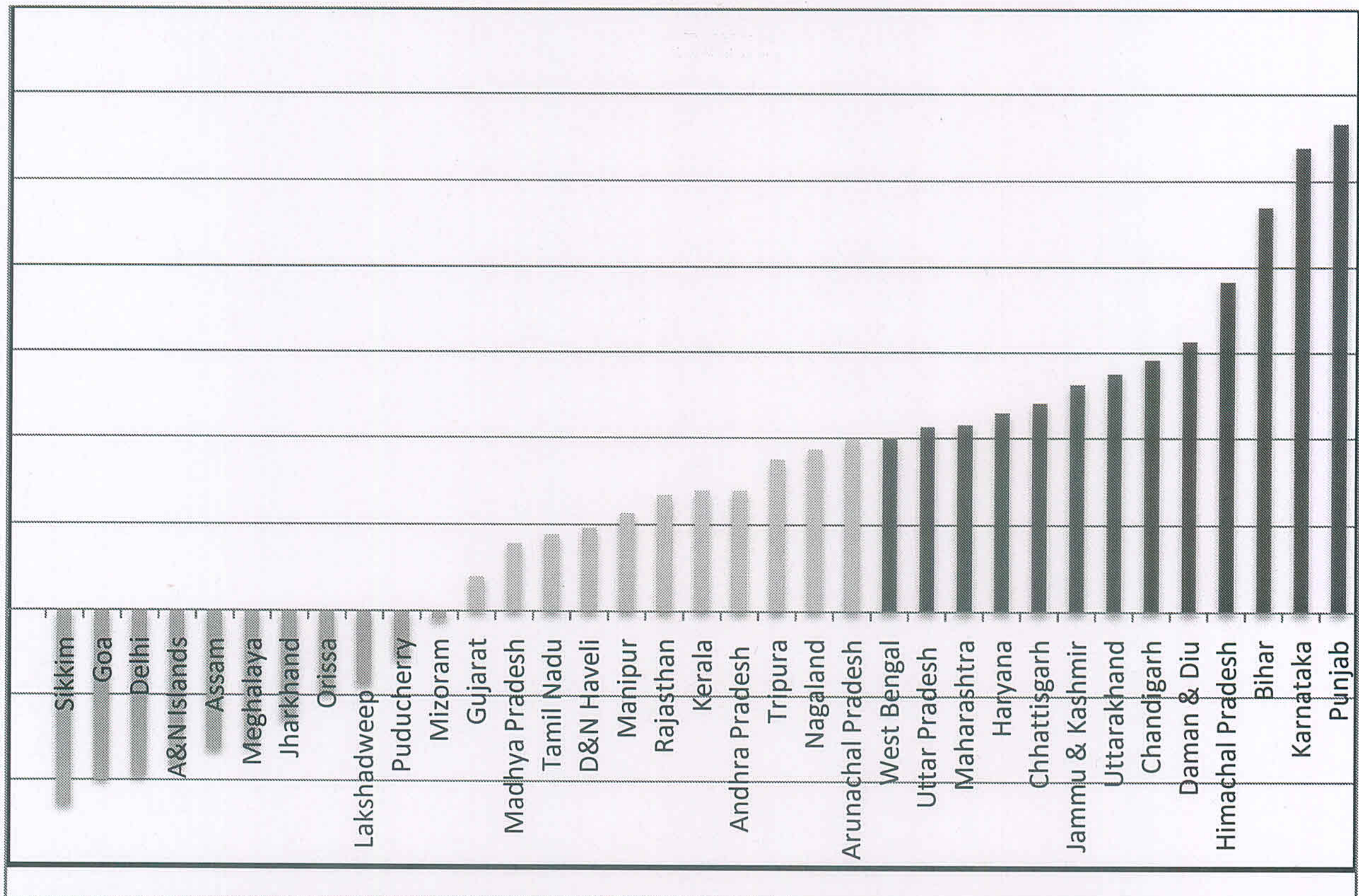
4. Safety and hygiene of meal are very critical for MDMS. The review mission have also observed that Kitchen sheds in many places have roofs made of reed, which are a breeding place for lizards and cobwebs that may fall into the meal being cooked. The States, therefore, need to ensure that the remaining unfinished kitchen-cum-stores are finished early. The cooking area needs to be cordoned off and kept strictly out of bound of the children to avoid the kind of incidents that happened in Odisha and Karnataka.

5. The release of funds to the districts is still a major concern. The schools in many cases have to make arrangements on a credit basis which, affects the effectiveness of the Scheme. It has also be noticed that the revised assistance for the gas based cooking has not been made available to either the districts or the NGOs in a number of cases. Similarly, the payment to FCI is a major concern, as the Annexures show 44% of the payment to FCI is still due. This is a major cause of concern as FCI has threatened to release foodgrains on pre-payment basis only.



6. We also need to ensure that the District level Vigilance and Monitoring Committee meeting under the Chairmanship of Member of Parliament from the district are convened on a regular basis and a comprehensive review of MDMS undertaken. Similarly, the Bihar experience has shown the need for comprehensive Medical Plan to deal with any untoward situation. This needs your urgent focused attention.

7. The State-wise position on the key components of the MDMS can be seen in the Annexures. This data has been analyzed in the **Analysis Report** attached herewith. Based on this report we have ranked the States on their performance in the MDMS. The position is as under:



8. As can be seen the position of States / UTs of Sikkim, Goa, Delhi, A&N Islands, Assam, Meghalaya, Jharkhand, Odisha, Lakshadweep and Puducherry leaves a lot to be desired. The States in the middle from Gujarat to Arunachal Pradesh could certainly do better. While the States in the leaders category from West Bengal to Punjab need to maintain / improve their performance.

9. We shall appreciate if a similar analysis is made for the districts in your States and efforts made to improve the performance in the poorly performing districts. The State Annual Work Plan & Budget should be based on the district level work plan and budget and the districts should be actively involved in the preparing of the same.

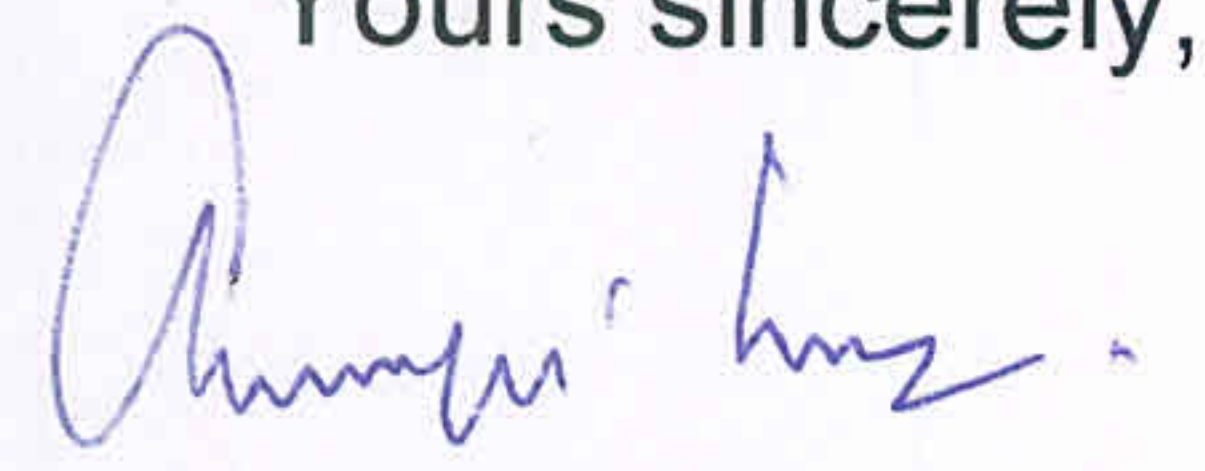
10. These issues could have been addressed in the SSMC meetings which are to be held once in every quarter for each State/UT. However, only 13 meeting of SSMC have been held during April – June, 2013.

11. I shall appreciate if you kindly attend to these issues personally and ensure full coverage of eligible school going children under MDMS. I also request you to evolve mechanisms for greater community participation. The findings of the Monitoring Institutions should also be carefully addressed. A little effort on your part will go a long way to ensure not only, that no child remains hungry in the school but also, that the basic health and hygiene needs of the children are met in a safe and serene atmosphere without hampering the duties of the teachers.

12. I shall appreciate if action is taken on the issues raised above under intimation to this office. We shall also appreciate if the data for the QPRs is sent in a time bound manner and duly validated before it is sent to us. Even today we have not received the first QPR from Nagaland and Puducherry! At the same time please do not hesitate to write if we can facilitate your work in any manner.

With warm personal regards and Happy Diwali.

Yours sincerely,



(Amarjit Singh)

To

Principal Secretaries/Secretaries of all the States/UTs implementing Mid Day Meal Scheme