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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION & LITERACY
SHASTRI BHAVAN
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D.O. No. 14-3/2011-Desk(MDM)

Dated 21st December, 2011

Dear Colleagues,

Thanks to you all, 10.69 crore children are provided hot cooked meals in 12.17 lakh schools in the country, under the Mid-Day-Meal Programme. Not only has this helped in preventing classroom hunger; it promotes school participation and retention. It also fosters social equality and gender equity.

I am enclosing herewith an analysis of the MDMS based upon the Quarterly Progress Reports (QPRs) for the 2nd quarter, the reports for which have been received from all the States/UTs except from the State of Arunachal Pradesh. This brings out the critical issues that are required to be addressed with a sense of urgency – a meal lost by a child is lost forever. We also need to constantly refine the MDMS and improve its effectiveness. The following issues need your immediate personal attention:

i) **Coverage of children against enrolment:**

A major goal of MDMS as you are aware, is to provide mid-day meal to each and every child in the eligible schools to enhance enrollment and retention for universal Elementary Education in the Country. At the national level 72% of the enrolled children have been covered under Mid-day-Meal Scheme on an average basis. The States/UTs of Puducherry (99%), Haryana (98%), Lakshadweep (98%), Meghalaya (95%), Goa & Nagaland (94%), Sikkim & Himachal Pradesh (93%), Mizoram (92%), Karnataka (91%) and Punjab (90%) have reported more than 90% coverage. On the other hand the MDMS coverage in the States / UTs of Bihar (45%), Chandigarh (52%), Uttar Pradesh (57%), J&K (58%), Jharkhand (60%), Gujarat (63%), Delhi(68%), Tamil Nadu (69%) and Dadra & Nagar Haveli (71%) is below the National Average and leaves a lot to be desired. This also shows that the resources allocated under the scheme have not been fully utilized in these States **Annexure-I**.

ii) **Utilisation of foodgrains and cooking cost:**

The Scheme aims to provide 450 and 700 calories of energy for primary and upper primary students respectively. To facilitate this, the scheme provides for 100 grams of foodgrains for primary and 150 gram for upper primary students every day. In addition cooking cost has been revised recently to Rs 2.89 and Rs 4.33 for primary and upper primary students respectively to add nutrition value to foodgrains by way of pulses; vegetables as well as oil and fat.

Ideally the consumption of food grains and utilisation of cooking cost should match with each other, which can be seen at the national level at 38%, for both. There is a mismatch between the consumption of food grains and utilisation of cooking cost in various States/UTs (**Annexure II**). While, the utilisation of cooking cost is higher as compared to food grains consumption in the States of Gujarat, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Haryana, Puducherry and Goa, it is vice-versa in the States of UTs Mizoram, Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Manipur.



मध्याह्न भोजन योजना
Mid Day Meal Scheme

In the States/UTs of Assam, Bihar, Chandigarh, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Haryana the consumption of food grains is less than the national average of 38% (**Annexure-III**). Likewise utilization of cooking cost in the States/UTs of A&N Island, Delhi, Assam, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Mizoram, Manipur, Bihar, Kerala, Odisha, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh is less than the national average of 38% (**Annexure-IV**). This is ironical; on the one hand the children in these States suffer from debilitating, malnutrition and anaemia, on the other hand available resources under MDM scheme are being utilised sub-optimally. Moreover, the lack of synchronisation between utilisation of food grains and cooking cost also reflects a lack of focus, effective monitoring or reliability of the figures.

iii) **Lifting of food grains and utilization of transportation assistance**

Further analysis of the data on lifting of food grains and the utilization of transportation assistance shows that at the National level lifting of food grains is 36%. However, there is a wide gap in lifting the quantity of food grains and utilization of transportation assistance. While the States/UTs of Odisha (111%), Daman and Diu (62%) Uttarakhnad (58%), Sikkim (55%) have utilised more transport assistance than the national average of 33%, the States/UTs of Lakshadweep, A & N Islands, Tripura, Tamil Nadu, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Haryana have not shown utilisation of the transportation assistance in the QPR (**Annexure V**). The lifting of food grains is less than the national average of 36% in the States/UTs of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Kerala, Tripura, A&N Islands, Chandigarh and Puducherry (**Annexure VA**).

iv) **Payment to Food Corporation of India (FCI)**

The position relating to payments of bills to FCI is precarious; out of the total bills raised by FCI upto 30th November, 2011 amounting to Rs. 77185.92 lakhs, an amount of Rs. 40874.35 lakhs only has been paid. An amount of Rs. 36311.57 lakhs is still pending for payments to be made to FCI by various States/ UTs. Whereas the large amounts are pending against the States of Rajasthan(99%), Assam(96%), Bihar(89%), Jharkhand(72%), Uttar Pradesh(67%), West Bengal (62%) and Arunachal Pradesh(52%). The pendency against the remaining States ranges from 4% to 42% (**Annexure-V-B**). We have already released 2nd instalment of grant in aid to most of the States/ UTs. I would, therefore, request you to kindly look into the matter personally and arrange to clear the backlog of payments to FCI.

Some States like Rajasthan need to take up with the FCI to reconcile their accounts. Apparently the true position of outstanding payment to FCI is not reflected in the statement provided by FCI. Other States may also like to reconcile the pending payments with the local offices of FCI.

v) **Construction of Kitchen-cum-Store**

Infrastructure facilities such as kitchen-cum-store are an essential component for proper implementation of the MDM scheme for supply of healthy, hygienic and hot cooked meal to the children and also safe storage of food grains at the school level. The Government of India has sanctioned 869233 units of kitchen sheds for schools up to 2011-12. So far the States/UTs have constructed only 509692 units (59%).

The pace of construction of kitchen-cum-store is very slow and needs urgent attention in the States / UTs Andhra Pradesh (6%), Kerala (13%), Tamil Nadu and Mizoram (26%) , Maharashtra (27%), Meghalaya (32%), Haryana (35%), Manipur (38%), Odisha and West Bengal (48%) etc. where less than half of the sanctioned schools have constructed kitchen cum stores (**Annexure-VI**). The States / UTs are requested to speed up the pace of construction of kitchen-cum-stores for safe storage and hygienic cooking of MDM.

States like Maharashtra and J&K need to submit proposals for construction of kitchen-cum-stores on plinth area norms and State Schedule of Rates to facilitate release of funds for the same.

vi) **Engagement of cook-cum-helpers**

Under the component of cook-cum-helper, 2252063 (83%) cook-cum-helpers have been engaged during 2011-12 against the approval of 2699388. In States/UTs of West Bengal (21%), Chattisgarh (69%) the engagement of cook-cum-helpers is less than 70%.

Similarly, the utilisation of funds for honorarium to cook-cum-helpers is low in States/UTs of West Bengal (10%), Dadra Nagar Haveli (24%), Tamil Nadu (26%), Assam (27%), Punjab (28%), Meghalaya and Kerala (29%); Chattisgarh, Bihar and Jharkhand(30%). The State/UTs of Delhi, A&N Island, Lakshadweep and Goa have not reported any information regarding engagement of cook-cum helpers and payment of honorarium to them (**Annexure-VII**).

State/UT governments are requested to engage the cook-cum-helpers as per the requirement of the children in the schools and the MDM norms and avoid wastage of precious teaching and learning time. We also need to ensure, necessary arrangements for timely payment of honorarium to the cook-cum-helpers to keep them incentivised (**Annexure-VII**).

vii) **Utilisation of MME**

Monitoring is an integral part of implementation of the MDM scheme. However, the analysis of the QPR (**Annexure-VIII**) shows that the utilisation of MME fund is nil in many States namely Puducherry, Lakshdweep, Tamilnadu, Manipur, Goa, Delhi and Andhra Pradesh. Utilization of MME fund is very low in some States viz. Dadra Nagar Haveli A N Islands, Kerala Gujarat, J & K and Sikkim have utilized less than 10% of the MME fund.

Low utilisation of MME fund indicates the poor health of implementation of the programme. These State/UTs are requested to make more efforts for strengthening the monitoring mechanism for proper implementation of the scheme.

viii) **State Steering-cum-Monitoring Committee (SSMC) Meeting:**

SSMC, headed by Chief Secretary is an apex body at the State/UT level for guiding, monitoring and implementation of the scheme at State/UT level. The meetings of SSMC at regular intervals are required to review the Scheme and suggest policy measures for effective implementation of the programme. During 2011-12, only 17 SSMC meetings have been held till the end of September, 2011 as against the requisite 70 as per the present guidelines.

While, Lakshadweep, Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam Bihar, Chattisgarh, Haryana, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Odisha, Punjab, Tripura, West Bengal and Chandigarh could convene one meeting each, the remaining States are yet to convene the meeting (**Annexure-IX**).

The States / UTs are advised to convene SSMC meetings once in a quarter with prior intimation to Government of India, allowing us time to send our representative in the meeting. Representative of respective monitoring institution should also be invited to attend these meetings and present their findings before the Chairperson of the SSMC.

ix) **School Health Programme:**

As is well known a healthy mind resides in a healthy body. The Mid Day Meal provides a platform to the children to develop healthy habits like washing hands before and after eating. In convergence with National Rural Health Mission regular health checkups of school children are supposed to be carried out at least twice a year. In addition distribution of Iron Folic Acid, De-worming tablets and Vitamin A has to be undertaken for the school children, as per the schedule of the department of health. The State/UTs are supposed to ensure implementation of this programme in convergence with the health dept. While the status of coverage of children under School Health Programme is satisfactory in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Odisha, it leaves a lot to be desired in Arunachal Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Haryana, Kerala, Manipur, and Rajasthan Dadra and Nagar Haveli where no child has been covered under the School Health Programme during 2010-11 (**Annexure-X**). This is the situation when sufficient funds are available under National Rural Health Mission to meet the health needs of the school children. *On a conservative estimate, India has almost 8 million children out of school; studies have shown that 18% of these children are out of school as they can't see; their refractive errors need to be corrected. Similarly, other illnesses and disabilities keep children out of school They could easily be addressed by an effective implementation of the school health programme.*

x) **Drinking Water:**

It is a known fact that our children particularly from rural India suffer from water borne diseases namely diarrhea, due to supply of contaminated water. It is the responsibility of the schools to make available safe drinking water for maintaining normal health.

The facility of drinking water is available in 100% schools in only 6 States/UTs namely Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chattisgarh and Goa (**Annexure - XI**). In the remaining States/UTs where

The facility of drinking water is available in 100% schools in only 6 States/UTs namely Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chattisgarh and Goa (**Annexure - XI**). In the remaining States/UTs where drinking water is not available to all the children; efforts need to be made by the State Governments to ensure the availability of safe drinking water in all the schools as well as to inculcate hygienic habits like washing hands and eating in clean utensils

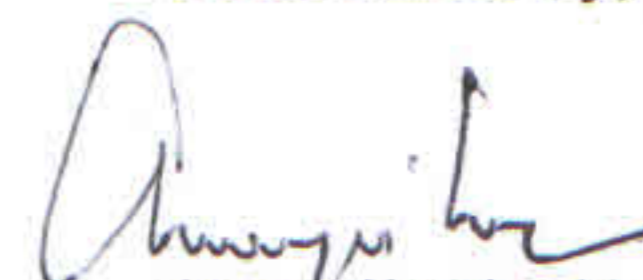
x) **Submission of Information:**

Timely submission of information like QPR, MPR etc. helps in monitoring and taking appropriate action in time for proper implementation of the scheme. The States/UTs are requested to submit the QPRs, MPRs and other information within the prescribed time line, to enable us to review the information and take corrective action wherever required. We received QPRs for the 2nd Quarter in time from 12 States/UTs. The 2nd QPR was delayed by 2 days to 42 days in respect of 22 States and the same is still awaited from the State of Arunachal Pradesh (**Annexure XII**). The delay in submission of the 2nd QPR by the States has resulted in delay in release of funds to the States. This may please be attended to in a time bound manner, and latest expenditure statement submitted to us to enable us to release the remaining funds to you.

I shall appreciate if appropriate action is taken at your level to address these issues. We have initiated the process of plan preparation for MDMS for the year 2012-13. The programme for the same has been intimated to you. We hope that the process of plan preparation for the next year has been initiated and would incorporate the above analysis to ensure that corrective action is taken on a systemic basis for effective implementation of the Mid Day Meal Scheme. We spend Rs.10380 crore of public funds on the programme, not including the contribution of the states. A little effort on your part will ensure no child remains hungry at school! We owe it to the people of India! We are all privileged to be involved in this noble mission – God's very own work!

With regards,

Yours sincerely,


(Amarjit Singh)

To,

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