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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: 7-13/2011-EE.6 MDM

Dated: 13/04/2012

Dear Colleagues,

Thanks to your efforts, 10.52 crore children are provided hot cooked meals in 12.18 lakh schools in the country, under the Mid-Day-Meal Programme. It has not only helped in preventing classroom hunger; it promotes school participation and retention. It also fosters social equality and gender equity! *An extremely positive development in the present decade is that the gap of 21.59 percentage points recorded between male and female literacy rates in 2001 Census has been reduced to 16.68 percentage points in 2011. While the overall literacy rate has increased by 9.81 percent, it has improved by 11.84 percent in the case of females.* Similarly, the increase in the number of literates is remarkable in all the EAG States. Bihar (74.83 percent), Jharkhand (59.24 percent) and Uttar Pradesh (56.40 percent) have shown the highest rise. Rajasthan (40.68 percent) and Chhattisgarh (39.61 percent) are in the middle and Madhya Pradesh (38.73 percent), Uttarakhand (37.05 percent) and Orissa (36.68 percent) bring up the rear. *MDMS can take some credit for this.*

I write this to present an analysis of the MDMS based upon the 3rd quarter Progress Reports (QPRs). This brings out the critical issues and shows that the following issues need your immediate personal attention for refining MDMS;

i) Coverage of children against enrolment:

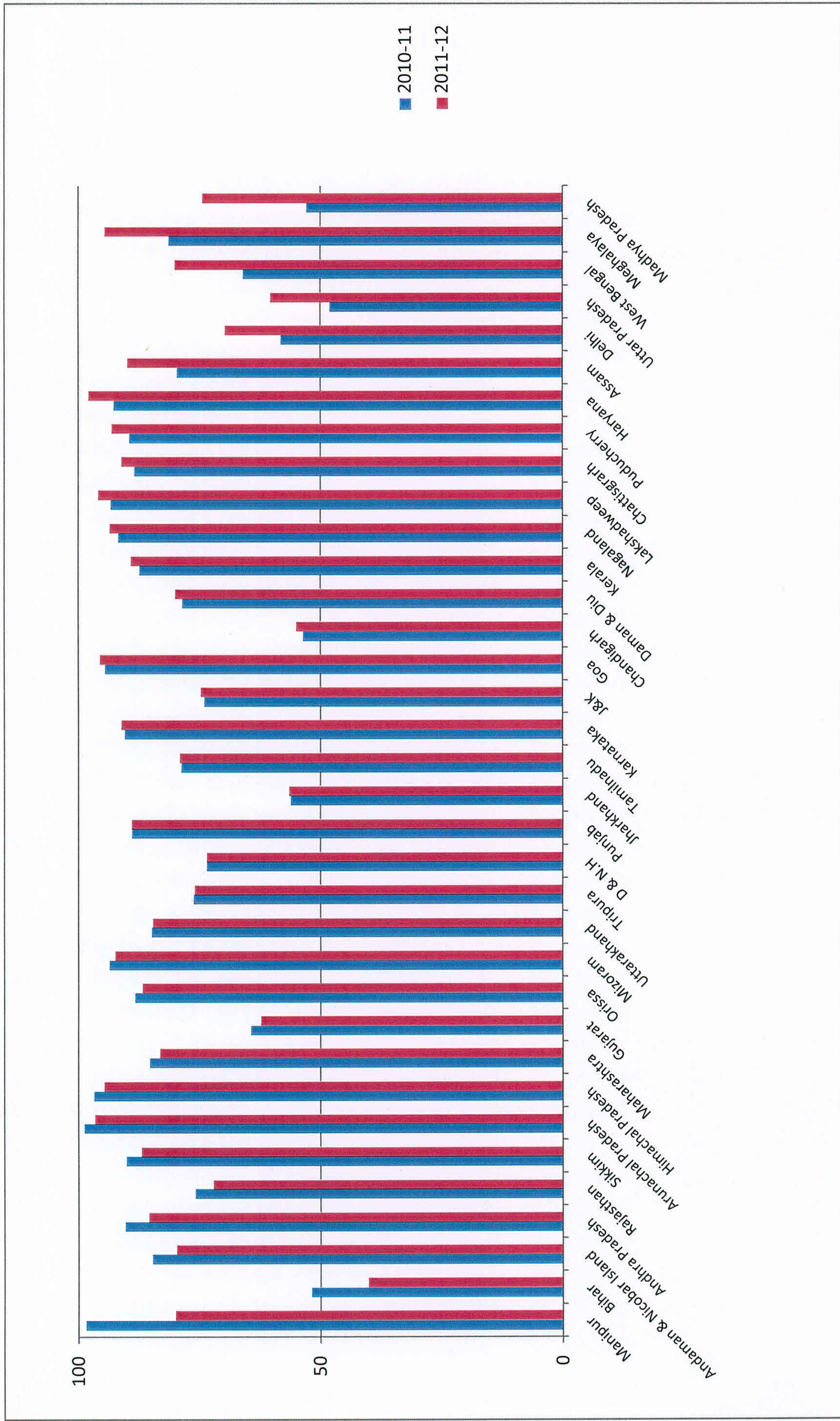
At the national level, currently, 72% of the enrolled children have been covered under Mid-day-Meal Scheme on an average basis. The States/UTs of Haryana (98%), Arunachal Pradesh (97%), Lakshadweep & Goa (96%), Himachal Pradesh & Meghalaya (95%), Nagaland (94%), Puducherry (93%), Mizoram (92%), Karnataka (91%) and Assam (90%) have reported more than 90% coverage. On the other hand the MDMS coverage in the States / UTs of Bihar (40%), Chandigarh (55%), Jharkhand (57%), Uttar Pradesh (60%), Gujarat (62%), and Delhi (70%) is below the National Average and leaves a lot to be desired. **(Annexure-I)**

Comparison of the data reveals that the overall coverage of children in 2010-11 and 2011-12 has marginally increased from 70% to 72%. While some States have made significant improvement in the coverage of children against enrolment, the coverage, some of the States has gone down considerably. A bar chart indicating the trends in number of children availed MDM vis-a-vis enrolment during 2010-11 and 2011-12 can be seen here below.



मध्याह्न भोजन योजना
Mid Day Meal Scheme

PERCENTAGE OF ENROLLED CHILDREN WHO HAVE AVAILED OF MDM IN 2010-11 & 2011-12



The analysis of the data received with your Annual Plan Proposals shows that coverage of children is less than 70% at upper primary level in 61 districts; 42 districts fall in this category at the primary level. A list of these districts is enclosed (**Annexure-1A**). It is felt that these districts require your personal attention as improvement in coverage by these districts will significantly improve the overall coverage and ensure enhanced attendance and retention levels.

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 is provided at the rate of 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 is almost matching as can be seen in **Annexure II** at the national level with 61% utilisation of foodgrain vis-à-vis 63% utilisation of cooking cost. However there is a mismatch between the consumption of food grains and utilisation of cooking cost in various States/UTs. While, the utilisation of cooking cost is higher as compared to food grains consumption in the States/UTs of Gujarat, Puducherry, Goa, Haryana, Chattisgarh, Chandigarh and Lakshadweep, it is vice-versa in the States/ UTs of Mizoram, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Daman and Diu, Kerala, Manipur, Assam, and Nagaland.

In the States/UTs of Bihar, Chandigarh, Assam, West Bengal, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Gujarat, Kerala, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and Maharashtra the consumption of food grains is less than the national average of 61% (**Annexure-III**). Likewise utilization of cooking cost in the States/UTs of A&N Island, Mizoram, Assam, Kerala, Daman & Diu, Manipur, Bihar, Delhi, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Odisha, Jammu & Kashmir, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra is less than the national average of 63% (**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 57%. However, there is a wide gap in lifting the quantity of food grains and utilization of transportation assistance. While the States/UTs of Mizoram (159%), Odisha (140%), Daman and Diu (82%), Tripura (81%), Nagaland (74%), Punjab (72%), Kerala (70%), Puducherry (68%), Delhi (66%), Karnataka (66%), Andhra Pradesh (64%), Uttar Pradesh (62%), Chattisgarh & Madhya Pradesh (61%), Maharashtra & Goa (60%), and Uttarakhand (59%) have utilised more transport assistance than the national average of 59%, the UTs of Lakshadweep and A & N Islands have not shown utilisation of the transportation assistance (**Annexure V**). The lifting of food grain is less than the national average of 57% in the States/UTs of Lakshadweep, Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, West Bengal, Tamilnadu, Assam, Karnataka, and Puducherry (**Annexure VI**).

iv) Payment to Food Corporation of India (FCI) as on 31.1.2012

The position relating to payments of bills to FCI is precarious; out of the total bills raised by FCI upto 31st January, 2012 amounting to Rs. 100794.67 lakh, an amount of Rs. 57913.11 lakh only has been paid. An amount of Rs. 42881.56 lakh is still pending for payments to be made to FCI by various States/ UTs. At the end of third quarter, large amounts are pending against the States of Rajasthan (99%), Assam(92%), Bihar(69%), Sikkim (63%), Uttar Pradesh(60%), Arunachal Pradesh(55%), and Jharkhand(49%). The pendency against the remaining States ranges from 2% to 41% (**Annexure-VII**).

Some States like Rajasthan need to take up with the FCI to reconcile their accounts as against the payment of Rs. 1749.38 lakh by Rajasthan up to December, 2011, FCI has reflected only an amount of Rs. 40.94 lakh up to January, 2012. 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 8,77,358 units of kitchen sheds for schools up to 2011-12. So far the States/UTs have constructed only 5,35,246 units (61%).

The pace of construction of kitchen-cum-store is very slow and needs urgent attention in the States / UTs of Andhra Pradesh (6%), Kerala (13%), Tamil Nadu (22%), Mizoram (26%) , Maharashtra (27%), Meghalaya (32%), Haryana (35%), Manipur (38%), and Odisha(48%) etc. where less than half of the sanctioned schools have constructed kitchen cum stores (**Annexure-VIII**). The States / UTs are requested to speed up the pace of construction of kitchen-cum-stores for safe storage and hygienic cooking of MDM.

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 of West Bengal (21%), Kerala (69%), Punjab (70%) and Meghalaya (72%) the engagement of cook-cum-helpers is less than 75%.

Similarly, the utilisation of funds for honorarium to cook-cum-helpers is below the national average of 59% in States/UTs of West Bengal (30%), Mizoram (36%), Punjab (47%), Kerala & Arunachal Pradesh (50%), Jhrakhand & Tamil Nadu (51%), Meghalaya (53%), Madhya Pradesh (54%), Sikkim (56%), Dadra & Nagar Haveli (57%), and Chattisgarh [(58%). The State/UTs of Delhi, A&N Island, Lakshwadeep and Goa have not reported any information regarding engagement of cook-cum helpers and payment of honorarium to them (**Annexure-IX**).

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.

vii) Utilisation of MME

Monitoring is an integral part of implementation of the MDM scheme. However, the analysis of the QPR (**Annexure-X**) shows that the utilisation of MME fund is nil in many States namely Puducherry, Lakshdweep, Manipur and Goa. Utilization of MME fund is less than 20% in some States/UTs viz. Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Kerala, Tamilnadu, Delhi, Gujarat, A&N Islands, Jammu & Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh.

Low utilisation of MME fund indicates the poor health of implementation of the programme and need for a proper and comprehensive MME plan. These State/UTs are requested to make more efforts for strengthening the monitoring mechanism, training of MDM functionaries, display of MDM logo and publicity 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 33 SSMC meetings have been held till the end of December, 2011 as against the requisite 105 as per the present guidelines.

Manipur has convened three meetings of SSMC, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Odisha, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Chandigarh and Daman & Diu could convene two meetings each, whereas Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Nagaland, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Delhi and Lakshadweep have convened one meeting each. The remaining States/UTs are yet to convene the meeting (**Annexure-XI**).

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, Rajasthan and Odisha, it leaves a lot to be desired in Arunachal Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Haryana, Kerala, and Manipur where no child has been covered under the School Health Programme during the first three quarters of 2011-12 (**Annexure-XII**). 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 and their refractive errors need to be corrected. Similarly, other illnesses and disabilities keep children out of school and are also responsible for dropout/absenteeism. 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 Tamilnadu, Odisha, A&N Islands, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Lakshadweep and Uttar Pradesh (**Annexure - XIII**). 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

xi) Expenditure Position

In the PAB meetings the reasons for mis-match between utilisation of foodgrains and cooking cost, lifting of foodgrains, and utilisation of transportation assistance and low expenditure on payment to cook-cum-helpers have been analysed and it has been observed that delay in release of funds at the State level is the main reason for this mis-match. Some of the States/UTs had not released their own share even though the financial year was coming to close. In view of this it is once again requested that expenditure position may invariably be furnished in the prescribed pro-forma along with the quarterly report starting with 4th QPR.

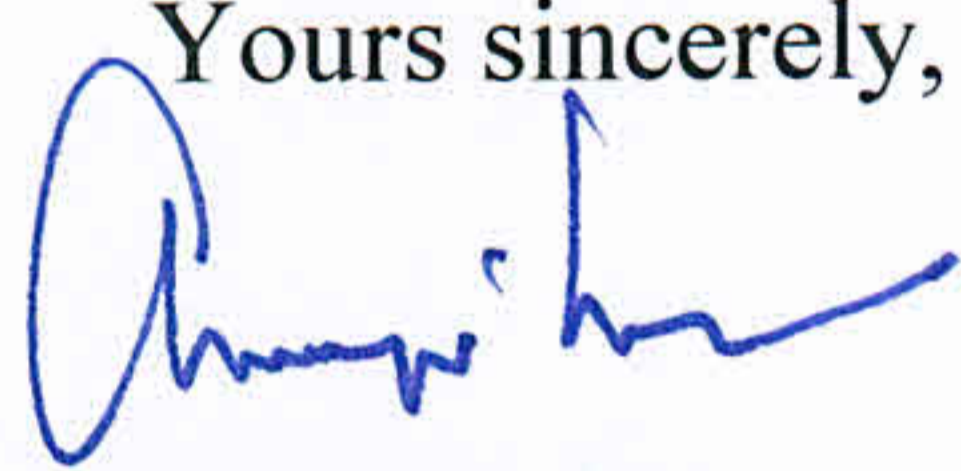
I may mention that the Govt. of Andhra Pradesh have introduced a scheme called “**Green Channel Scheme**” for **making funds available** without any interruptions throughout the year which has ensured timely availability of funds with the implementing units. All the States/UTs may take lead from Andhra Pradesh and streamline release of funds for MDMS. A copy of my D.O. letter dated 4th April, 2012 is enclosed for your ready reference (**Annexure-XIV**).

xii) 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 3rd Quarter in time from 22 States/UTs. The 3rd QPR was delayed by 1 day to 28 days in respect of 13 States (**Annexure XV**).

I shall appreciate if appropriate action is taken at your level to address these issues. During 2011-12 we are spending about ten thousand crore of public funds on the programme, excluding the contribution of the states as well as the subsidy on foodgrains. A little effort on your part will ensure no child remains hungry at school. *We owe it to the people of India! We all are privileged indeed, 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