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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. 13-19/2013-MDM (2-1)

Dated 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2014

Dear

Raghu,

The 5<sup>th</sup> Joint Review Mission visited Puducherry from 4<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2013 to review the implementation of Mid Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) and assess the nutritional status of the beneficiary children, in two districts – Pondicherry and Karaikal as per the prescribed Terms of Reference (ToRs). The JRM team was headed by Dr. U.K. Lakshmi, Professor and Head, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, other members of the team were - representatives from MHRD and Government of Puducherry, and Officer on Special Duty, Mid-day Meal, Government of Bihar. The Consultants from Ed CIL's Technical Support Group for Mid-Day Meal Scheme assisted the JRM. A total of 33 schools and 771 children (330 boys and 441 girls) were surveyed.

The JRM team was pleased to observe that the UT Administration contribution towards the implementation of MDMS is much higher than the mandatory 25% UT Share, The UT Administration is also implementing a Breakfast scheme from its own funds. In addition, the Mission appreciated other good practices such as Mechanised Centralised Kitchens operated by Department of Education, Government of Puducherry, availability of Buffer stock in the kitchens, Proper storage of items, system of auction of Gunny bags by the Government, Installation of RO system in all the schools for safe drinking water and Multi tap water system for hand washing, Good sanitation facilities, Maintenance of health records of children to know the health status, Uniformity of quality of MDM in all the schools, Inclusion of green leafy vegetables in the Mid Day Meal, Uniform quality of food ingredients supplied through PAPSCO, etc.

The anthropometric survey (by using Body Mass Index – Z Scores) of a sample of 771 school children (330 boys and 441 girls) availing of Mid Day Meal, showed that in Puducherry District 29 % of boys and 27% of girls were mildly malnourished and 21.6 % of boys and 11.7 % of girls were moderately malnourished whereas in Karaikal District 27% boys and 24% girls were mildly malnourished and 30% of boys and 34.6 % of girls were moderately malnourished. Overall the prevalence of stunting was about 25.6%. The prevalence of stunting amongst boys was higher as compared to the girls in both the districts.



मध्याह्न भोजन योजना  
Mid Day Meal Scheme

The Joint Review Mission expressed concern over lack of dedicated management structure of MDM from state up to school level, Non-constitution of District vigilance committee, absence of Grievance redressal mechanism, Nil utilization of MME funds, No emergency plan for MDMS, MDM carried in uncovered vans and food containers loosely closed, and no separate record maintenance for MDMS. Till December, 2013 only one meeting of SSMC has been held.

Based on their observations, the JRM team has made the following recommendations:-

- i) The financial powers should be delegated to the officers responsible for implementation of MDMS. This may expedite the fund availability after release of funds from Gol. The state finance department may be approached for seeking release of entire balance of first Instalment recurring central assistance of Rs 87.448 lakhs which is still pending with the Finance department.
- ii) The dedicated management structure at state, district and school level should be set up for the effective implementation of scheme.
- iii) All the records regarding MDM must be maintained separately for class 1 to 8 at all levels. Record keeping of the beneficiaries served by the school canteen centres and centralized Kitchens will help better utilisation of funds, Food grains etc. and timely data feeding in Gol MIS web portal.
- iv) MDMS guidelines with respect to tasting of the meal by the teachers should be strictly followed. The teacher should keep a record of having tasted food in a register including remarks to be maintained for the purpose.
- v) A needs analysis should be carried out at all levels, to determine the requirement of cook-cum-helpers; this should be used as a basis for engagement of cook-cum-helpers to reduce the additional burden on teacher, so that s/he can concentrate on teaching learning activities.
- vi) The Menu, entitlements and logo should be displayed prominently in schools.
- vii) Agmark or equivalent certification should be enforced for the items supplied through centralised procurement to the kitchens.
- viii) State may engage the services of any reputed institute on the lines of testing done by Sriram Institute for Industrial Research in Govt. of NCT of Delhi to collect the samples from the field on a random basis and test the samples.
- ix) Meeting of State Level Steering-cum-Monitoring Committee should be convened quarterly, to review the issues. Similarly, the meetings of District Vigilance & Monitoring Committee, District Level Steering cum Monitoring Committee may be held regularly.

- x) There is a need to create awareness regarding MDMS including the Contingency/Medical health plans at all level with the dos and don'ts in case of emergency. The Public Health Centres should also be equipped suitably to handle cases of food poisoning or any untoward incident in the school.
- xi) Grievance redressal mechanism for Mid-Day Meal Scheme may be set up for effective implementation of the scheme and the records should be maintained for follow up of the grievance, by a designated cell.
- xii) Dedicated staff at all kitchen levels should be employed to feed information in Gol MIS web Portal regularly.
- xiii) For safety and hygiene purpose, vehicle used for transportation of cooked food to the schools should be properly covered and the containers should be properly closed for safe, hygienic and secure delivery.
- xiv) All Centralised Kitchens should have Fire Hydrants.
- xv) The Health and Nutritional Education should be part of the Mid-Day Meal Programme in which the teachers and cook cum helper can be educated and they in turn can educate the children during the Mid-Day Meal time.
- xvi) Suitable recipes may be introduced using the raw ingredients recommended by Nutrition Team for Mid-Day Meal as given in appendices of the JRM report.
- xvii) Seasonal fruits can be introduced in the Mid-Day Meal to enhance the Micronutrient availability.
- xviii) The Government can provide plates, tumblers and mats to the beneficiaries of mid-day meal.
- xix) The personnel employed in the central kitchen and other people involved in school canteens should also be medically examined periodically to assure their medical fitness.

The detailed Report of the JRM has already been made available to the UT Administration on 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2013 through presentation. The UT may also kindly act on the detailed guidelines issued on 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2013 for effective implementation of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme. We need to ensure that there is an emergency health plan for taking care of any untoward incident. Please also ensure that the cooking area is fully segregated and care is taken that no child goes near the cooking vessels while cooking is taken place in school canteen centres.

The UT should immediately convene a meeting of State Level Steering cum Monitoring Committee and the findings of the JRM should be presented in the meeting.

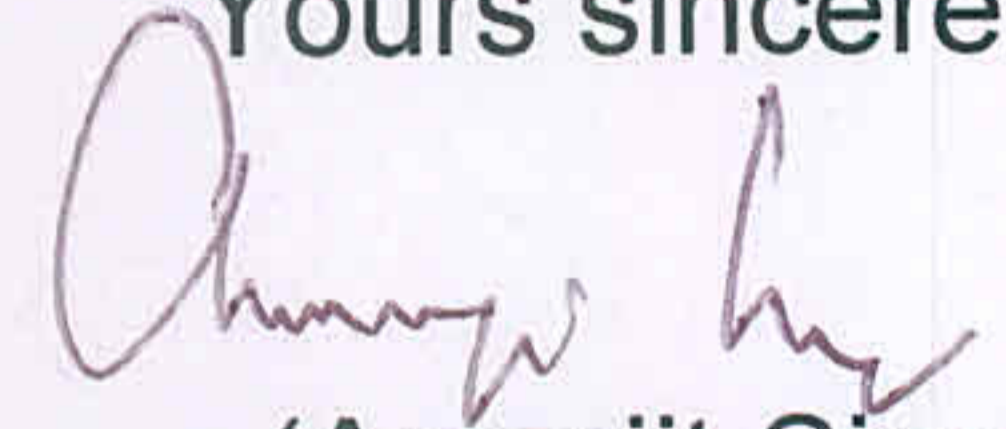
I shall appreciate, if you could submit an action taken note on the recommendations made in the detailed JRM Report within 30 days, which has already been presented to the State Government. ***A little effort on your part will ensure that no child goes hungry in the schools in your State.***

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

With regards,

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Yours sincerely,

  
(Amarjit Singh)