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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.13-6/2013-Desk-MDM

Dated the 23rd August, 2013

Dear *Mr. Barkin*,

The 5th Joint Review Mission visited Tamil Nadu from 29th July to 8th August, 2013 to review the implementation of Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) in two poorly performing districts viz. Tuticorin and Ramanathapuram as per the prescribed Terms of Reference (ToRs). The JRM headed by Dr. U.K Lakshmi, Prof and Head, Food Science and Nutrition Department, Avinashilingam Institute for Home science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore included representatives from MHRD; Government of Tamil Nadu; Office of the Supreme Court Commissioner for MDMS and Indian Institute Technology - the Monitoring Institute for the scheme in Tamil Nadu. The JRM was also assisted by a Professor and Research Assistants from Avinashilingam institute and Consultants from Ed CIL's Technical Support Group for Mid-Day Meal Scheme. The JRM covered 55 schools in the Tuticorin and Ramanathapuram districts.

The mission appreciated some of the best practices like serving of egg on all school days, introduction of variety in meals on a pilot basis in one block of each district in the State, e-transfer of funds at all levels, well established administrative structure at State, District, Block and school levels, regular employment of Noon Meal Functionaries (Organiser, cook and Assistant Cooks) who are also eligible for promotion, delivery of next month's requirement of pulses, oil and salt at school between 15-25 day of previous month by Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation.

Body Mass Index (BMI) for children of Ramanathapuram District revealed that only 13.8 per cent of children had normal BMI whereas a majority of children (34.5%) were moderately malnourished. It is also noted that 23.4 per cent of children were severely malnourished which is very alarming. A few children (1.5%) were overweight/obese. On the other hand in Tuticorin District it was observed that 22.8 per cent (nearly 1/4th) of children were in the normal category. Mild malnutrition was found among 30.3 per cent followed by moderate malnutrition in 27.3 per cent of the children. Among the children 16.2 per cent were severely malnourished revealing the fact that 73.8 per cent (nearly 3/4th) of children suffer from one or other form of malnutrition in Tuticorin District. ***It is felt that the Department of Social & Nutritious Meal Programme should work in close coordination with the Health and Education Departments and identify the severely underweight children for control of infection/serving additional meals.***



\The mission expressed its concern on serving of less quantity of pulses, vegetables and oil, non-involvement of the teachers in supervision and tasting of MDM, inappropriate storage of food grains etc. The other areas of concern as identified by the Mission are improper maintenance of school health cards, poor community participation in the implementation and monitoring of the scheme, acute shortage of water in Ramanathapuram district, non-provision of kitchen cum stores in the Government aided schools etc. A summary of the recommendations can be seen at **Annexure A. The detailed report is also enclosed herewith.**

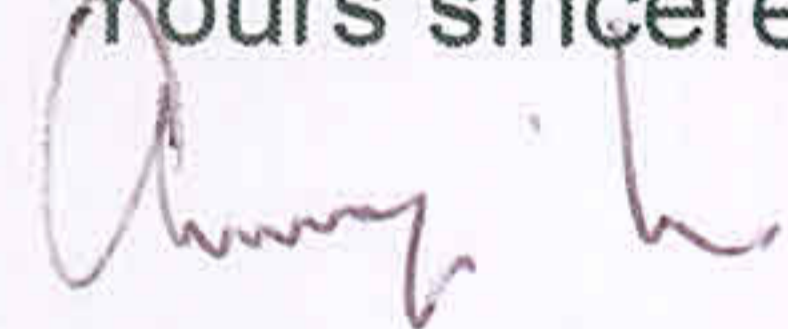
In addition, your attention is drawn to the following issues:

- i. Governance structure at all levels with clear roles and responsibilities
- ii. Tasting of the meal by at least one teacher before it is served to the children.
- iii. Safe storage of food grains in schools.
- iv. Creating greater awareness about the Mid Day Meal Scheme.
- v. Convening of District level Vigilance and Monitoring Committee meeting under the Chairmanship of Member of Parliament from the district.
- vi. Convening of regular review meetings at the District level.
- vii. Social Audit of the Scheme on the pattern of Andhra Pradesh.
- viii. Testing of food samples by reputed NABL approved Food Laboratories.
- ix. Submission of Action Taken Notes on reports of the Monitoring Institutes, Joint Review Mission etc.
- x. Need for an Emergency Medical Plan

I shall appreciate, if you could submit an action taken note on the above within a period of 3 months from the date of submission of JRM report.

A little effort on your part will ensure that no child goes hungry in schools in your State.

With regards

Yours sincerely

(Amarjit Singh)

Shri P.M. Bashir Ahmad,
Principal Secretary
Department of Social & Nutritious Meal Programme
Govt. of Tamilnadu,
Chennai