



भारत सरकार
मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय
स्कूल शिक्षा और साक्षरता विभाग
शास्त्री भवन

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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION & LITERACY

SHASTRI BHAVAN

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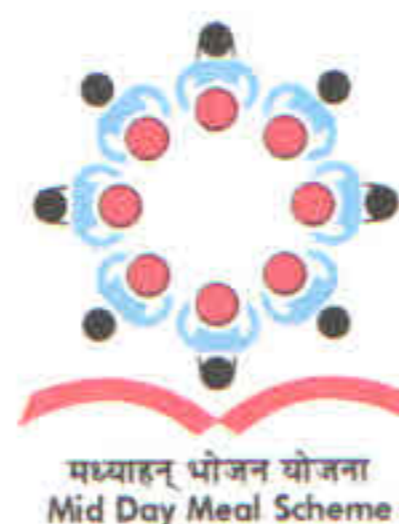
Dear *Dr. Gopal*,

As you are aware, the 3rd Joint Review Mission comprising representatives from Government of India, Supreme Court Commissionerate for MDM, and State Government of Tamil Nadu, visited the State of Tamil Nadu from 22nd to 29th November 2011. The team covered 26 schools in 3 districts namely Vellore, Krishnagiri and Namakkal during the visit and presented its report to the State Government on the 29th of November.

The Mission has expressed its appreciation of the steps taken by the State Government to ensure effective implementation of the scheme. The state government initiatives such as advance release of funds to the schools to ensure uninterrupted supply of MDMS; the proactive role of the State Government to ensure "A" grade rice supplies for mid day meal scheme by FCI; serving eggs on five days a week from state funds; ensuring that the full quantity of food grains is delivered to the districts, were deeply appreciated. Similarly, the systematic and accurate record keeping by organizers as well as close monitoring by inspecting officers as per a time schedule were also appreciated. All this has been possible because of the active involvement of the State Government in the scheme and the role played by the state government in incentivizing the MDM staff!

The following issues however need your personal attention:

1. 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 enrolment and retention. The TN data in this regard is revealing; more than one fourth of children in primary and one third of the children at upper primary level are



मध्याह्न पोषण योजना
Mid Day Meal Scheme

not availing MDM in the state. **The coverage of children against the enrolment is 69 % which is below the national level of 72%.**

2. One of the reasons for low off-take of the MDMS was that the weekly menu was centrally decided at the State level which includes white rice, vegetable sambar, Boiled Black/Green Gram and boiled egg for 5 days. As per the MDM guidelines (Para.4.4 of Chapter 4) the Menu should be locally decided by involving community members. School managements/VEC/PTA may also be encouraged to seek local support for drawing out varied, but wholesome and nutritious menus. The Monitoring Institution (IIT Madras) who is responsible for monitoring and evaluation of MDMS in Tamil Nadu has also observed that same type of Menu is served daily. It is important to have a varied menu in keeping with local tastes and nutritional products to ensure more children find it attractive and palatable. The revised locally prepared menu should be displayed in a noticeable place inside or outside the kitchen-cum-stores, to ensure transparency and create awareness among people.
3. While in all the Government, Government Aided and Local Body schools, eggs are provided to children for 5 days in a week in the NCLP schools, only in 5 districts, eggs are provided. The State Government is requested to provide eggs to all children (16381) in (451) NCLP schools in all the districts as these children are most malnourished and needy ones. This information should also be widely publicized to create awareness amongst the Administrators of NCLP schools.
4. A total of 14340 units of Kitchen-cum-store have been sanctioned to the state by GOI during 2006-07 to 2011-12; the state has completed only 3781 units of Kitchen-cum-store which is 26% of the sanctioned units till the end of the 2nd Quarter of 2011-12. This situation seems to have arisen due to the lack of coordination; while the programme is implemented by the Social Welfare Department the construction of kitchen-cum-store is with the Rural Development Department. There is a need to speed up the construction of kitchen-cum-stores; the State Government may consider entrusting the construction of Kitchen cum stores to the SMCs, as in the case of SSA.
5. In accordance with MDMS guidelines regular health checkups are supposed to be carried out for the school children at least twice a year. Similarly,

distribution of IFA, De-worming and Vit-A has to be undertaken regularly. The coverage in the state of Tamilnadu however, leaves a lot to be desired; only 5561 children have been covered out of 5756905 enrolment under school health programme during the 2nd Quarter, of 2011-2012.

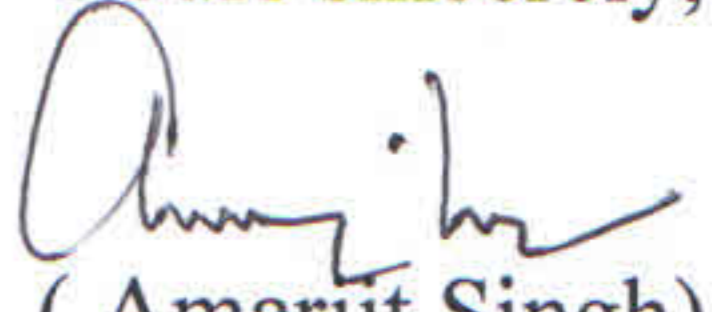
6. The mission observed that there is shortage of manpower; there are large vacancies of Noon Meal Organizers, Cooks and Helpers, which need to be filled up urgently. This has been reported by the MI (IIT Madras) also. The state may initiate immediate action to fill up the vacant positions. As an evidence, the state has incurred NIL expenditure during the quarter towards MME against the availability of funds of Rs.199.65 lakhs. It is ironic the positions are lying vacant and smooth implementation of the MDMS is affected while enough funds are available for the purpose under the MDMS.
7. PAB has approved 127305 cook-cum-helpers and against this only 86% have been engaged. Although all staff namely organizers, cooks and helpers in the Noon Meal Centres /Schools are being paid honorarium regularly and timely; nevertheless the second quarterly progress report shows that only 26% of funds available for the payment of Honorarium to cook-cum-helpers have been utilized.
8. The Community involvement was also found to be poor; even the MI has also observed the same. Only in few schools the parents were visiting at time of meal preparation and serving meal especially in the rural areas. VEC members visit the schools only when there are VEC meetings. The State Government should create greater awareness about the MDM scheme and encourage active involvement of the parents in the scheme.
9. Complaint/suggestion boxes were found in some schools. In the district Namakkal, toll free number exists for redressing public Grievances on the MDMS. The grievance redressal mechanism needs to be publicized using MME funds to facilitate its effective usage and prompt redressal of the complaints. Similarly, we need to have a mechanism to ensure that the complaints are redressed in a time bound manner.
10. While Local fund audit is carried out in the State for all the schools serving MDM, the State government could consider taking up the social audits as in MNREGA by involving the community members for greater transparency in the implementation of the scheme and effective use of public funds.

11. The above issues could have been addressed, if regular meetings of the State level Steering-cum-Monitoring committee (SSMC) were organised and these issues reviewed. The last SSMC meeting was held on 30-07-2010, after that no meeting was organised in the State. As per norms meeting of SSMC should be organised once in each quarter of the year to monitor programme implementation, assess its impact and take corrective steps and review the SMC meetings held at district level.

I shall appreciate if you kindly look into these issues and ensure appropriate action is taken in a time bound manner. A little effort on your part will go a long way to ensure that no child remains hungry in the school. Do remember, ***this is truly God's own work, which we all are privileged to carry out.***

Please feel free to write if there is anything I can do at this end for effective implementation of the MDMS in your State.

With regards

Yours sincerely,

(Amarjit Singh)

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