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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. 10-16/2012-EE-6(MDM-3-1)

Dated 14th December, 2012

Dear *Gonish*,

I write this to apprise you of the findings of the Fourth Joint Review Mission on the Mid Day Meal Scheme which visited State of Arunachal Pradesh from 16th November to 22nd November, 2012 comprising of representatives from Government of India and State Government of Arunachal Pradesh. The Team covered 34 schools in two districts viz West Kameng and Papum Pare during the visit and presented its report to the State Government on 22nd November 2012.

2. The Mission appreciated the steps taken by the state Government to ensure that the children get hot cooked meal. It was appreciated by the Mission that buffer stock of food grain is maintained in all the visited schools. The Team also appreciated the initiative taken by a few schools for developing kitchen garden within the school premises. The average attendance in all the visited schools was found to be good; all the children attending the schools during the visit were taking MDM.

3. During the field visits in West Kameng and Papum Pare districts, it was observed that MDM is provided in all schools that were visited during MHRD Review Mission. There are several good practices. The Community involvement was found to be strong by virtue of the School Management Committee (SMC). It was seen from the records that meeting of the SMCs takes place regularly and MDM is also discussed therein. In several schools members of the Panchayat were present and they said that Panchayats play an active role in all education Schemes. In Govt. Middle School, Moni of Block Doimukh in Papum Pare district where the old kitchen shed had to be dismantled, the village panchayat along with the villagers had pooled their resources and constructed a new kitchen shed without any help from the Government.

4. The Review Mission observed that central assistance released during May, 2012 was made available to the District Authorities by the Nodal Department in the month of October, 2012. Although mid-day meal scheme was continued by school authorities, by taking credit facility from local shops, you may like to impress up on State Finance Department to adopt Green Channel System of Andhra Pradesh under which each



मध्याह्न भोजन योजना
Mid Day Meal Scheme

month's requirement of funds is released in advance to the implementing agencies. A copy of these guidelines has already been circulated to all State Governments.

5. The major findings / recommendations of the Review Mission on the basis of field visit in the selected districts are as under:

i) Regularity of Meal:

The field observations have shown that there has been disruption in 8 schools out of 34 visited schools in providing MDM in both the districts. In Middle School of West Kameng District it was reported that MDM is not being served on Saturday as it is a half day. In Govt. Middle School Bomdila Town (I-VIII) it is reported that From 16 & 17 Nov, 2012 MDM was not prepared due to lack of water supply. In Govt. Middle School, Dehung of West Kameng District, the MDM was not served on the day of visit due to absence of all the cooks. Appropriate steps should be taken to maintain the regularity in the supply of hot cooked meal to all the children.

ii) Cooking Cost:

It was observed in West Kameng district instead of providing cooking cost directly to the schools, district authority directly supplies 'nutritional items' such as Dal, Oil, Haldi, Mirchi and Salt to the schools through suppliers. The suppliers are selected by the District authority based on tendering system. For vegetables and fire wood, schools are being provided 15% of the cooking cost. Teachers have to purchase the vegetables and firewood from their own pocket or from school fund or on credit from the local shops. Teachers get payment for this expenditure on yearly basis from the BEO office after submission of the bills and are not provided any advance for cooking meals in schools. This delayed re-imburement process may not only compromise the quality of meal provided in the schools but also takes off the spirit of the scheme and the entire responsibility of managing meals comes over the teachers. It is recommended that the State Govt. should also pay the cooking cost to the schools and teachers in installments rather than paying once in a year. The teachers should not be expected to pay the conversion cost out of their pocket or any other school grant.

iii) Maintenance of record:

The method of maintenance of the records was also found to be very poor. It was also found that same quantity of rice is being issued every working day irrespective of the number of children present. Other vouchers of purchase of items like vegetables and firewood were not found in most of the schools. It is suggested that the State Government should train teachers regarding maintenance of the records of Mid Day Meal in their own interest. Transparency in record keeping needs considerable improvement.

iv) Wastage of food:

During visit to various schools after serving of Mid Day Meal showed that cooked food of at least 10 kilo gram was left over which is a huge wastage of resources. On checking up the matter with the Schools it was found that the cooks cook food according to enrolment early in the morning and not according to those present. This happened in Govt. Middle School, Tenga of West Kameng District, Govt. Middle School, Poma, Govt. Middle School ESS Sector, Govt. Primary School, Khamir of Papum Pare District. This wastage could be also due to the fact that neither the cooks nor the teachers are aware about the entitlement of the children and cooking of mid day meal as per enrolment. Hence there is huge wastage of Mid Day Meal. Awareness should be created about the entitlement of the children so that food is cooked strictly according to the food norms. In order to avoid wastage of Mid Day Meal, cooking should be started after children come to the school. Cooking should not be based on the enrolment figure. Measuring cups should be used for weighing rice and dal as per the entitlement of the children under the Scheme.

v) Honorarium to Cooks:

The field observation in both the districts revealed that cooks are not provided their honorarium on time and there are huge delays. In both the districts the cooks were paid honorarium for 2011-12 financial year only during April 2012. In West Kameng diatrict the cooks informed that they got honorarium of Rs. 3000.00 after six months. For the entire year they got only Rs.6000.00. That means the cooks got Rs. 500.00 as honorarium per month. To avoid high attrition of cooks the teachers especially in Papum Pare District pay cooks out of their own pocket honorarium on monthly basis. No record was found in schools to substantiate the correct position of payment of honorarium. As recommended above that recurring assistance should be provided to the schools in advance, honorarium to the cooks should also be paid regularly. In Arunachal Pradesh, honorarium to cooks is paid once in a year. The cooks are poor and belong to the disadvantaged classes of the society; there is no room for their exploitation.

vi) Menu:

As per MDMS Guidelines the menu should be decided according to local taste and availability of local ingredients. In most of the schools of the West Kameng and Papum Pare district visited by this team, menu was not displayed and Khichri was supplied every day and except potato hardly any other vegetables were added in the Mid Day Meal. The menu prepared in both the districts does not provide a variety of dishes and sufficient quantity of vegetables as prescribed in the scheme for the children. In some schools of Papum Pare Districts soya bins were found to be added in the Mid Day Meal. Nevertheless, the food norms for MDM are grossly violated, which deprives

children of essential vitamins and nutrients. It is important that all schools are instructed to display menu and MDM logo outside walls of kitchen premises as well on any other prominent place in school so that general public is aware of the MDM scheme being implemented in the school. It is recommended that Menu should have minimum vegetables as per the MDM Guidelines.

vii) Kitchen Sheds:

In both visited districts most of the Kitchen Sheds are make shift. In spite of getting Rs. 60000.00 as per earlier norms before December 2009, the kitchen sheds were not found of that value as they were made of GI sheet and with bamboo structure with no provision of ventilation. As a result of which at many places cooking takes place outside the kitchen sheds. The team felt that a kitchen shed can be made up to a height of three feet with mortar and bricks and thereafter another three feet of wire mesh can be added for proper ventilation and the roof can be made of GI sheets. This was found in few schools of both districts and which can be replicated in other schools

viii) School Health programme:

The field visits to West Kameng and Papum Pare revealed that School Health programme does not exist in the State. The visit to the Schools of both the districts showed that though medical teams had come for some specific check up like eye check up but height and weight measurement had not been taken in any of the visited schools. None of the schools and children had been supplied micro nutrients like iron and folic acid, Vitamin A and deworming tablets. It is recommended that a Health calendar should be prepared for each school and each concerned Primary Health Centre be provided a list of schools in its area with Health Calenders to ensure that they cover their schools within stipulated time, and are made accountable for follow-up and/ or other gaps in the target. Health cards should be prepared for all children and a record should be maintained in all schools about the visit of Health Team and information about the children for follow-up and referrals. Medicines, iron tablets, calcium and other tonics be made available to children, if required, during health visits.

ix) Accountability and Transparency Issues:

The most amazing fact is that the funds are transferred by cash mainly due to non availability of banks in rural areas. Even if cash is disbursed for buying vegetables and payment to cooks, proper records were not found in the schools. In the absence of documentary evidence there is an increased possibility that funds may be siphoned off. In both the districts, it was observed that cooks are provided their honorarium in cash, and considering

their literacy levels, they may fall vulnerable to cuts on their honorarium. It becomes worse when some of them have no idea about the amount of honorarium being paid to them. It is recommended that per child per day entitlement be written on school on outside walls to update the information for community members and to facilitate effective monitoring of the Scheme

x) Monitoring mechanism:

At the District level there is acute shortage of staff who can monitor the scheme effectively. For example in West Kameng District there is only one Officer (District Project Coordinator, MDM) without adequate support staff. As a result the implementation of the scheme is not only delayed but also suffers adversely. Therefore, it is recommended to setting up of State Project Management Unit (SPMU). It is recommended that designated staff strictly for the scheme should be engaged to relieve the teacher from the burden of running of scheme. As in case of other States, MBAs, Nutritionists, Accountants, Data entry operators could be hired at the appropriate levels from the MME funds.

xi) Capacity Building:

The field visits to West Kameng and Papum Pare revealed that most of the teachers do not understand properly the vision and Objective of the MDM programme and entitlements under it. Further, some of the teachers were not able to maintain records properly. Therefore, it is important that an orientation/training is organised for all MDM in-charge teachers to make them understand the vision and outlook of MDM programme; standard heights and weights and how to identify malnourished children; and on preparing records. It is therefore suggested that all MDM in-charge teachers be oriented suitably to enable them to understand the vision and outlook of MDM programme and other related aspects as outlined above.

xii) Plates:

The Education Dept has not provided eating plates in any of the schools. Either the children bring plates/ tiffin box from home or MDM is served on leaves as was found three schools of Papum Pare viz. Govt. Middle School, Poma and Govt. Primary School, Nirjuli II, Govt. Primary School, Khamir. The team was informed that people of remote areas are used to take food on leaves. It seems the State Government is not using MME fund properly. These funds could be used for purchase of plates for the children for all the schools.

xiii) Poor Sanitation:

Education Department has no control over sanitation matters of the schools as it is concern of Public Health Engineering Department. As a result water

supply to the some of the visited schools is erratic and condition of toilets are pathetic. There should be better convergence with Public Health Engineering Department for regular water supply and proper maintenance of toilets in schools.

xiv) Other recommendations:

- Need for State level Review Missions for monitoring the implementation of scheme in poor performing districts.
- Display of MDM logo and daily menu in all schools,
- Need for social audit of the Scheme through local stakeholders.
- As Management Information System integrated with IVRS will become operational very soon the districts have to speed up the process of data feeding. To handle huge data and updating the data into the web portal regularly, data entry operators have to be engaged on regular basis in every district.

Kindly take necessary action on these issues as well.

6. The International Food Policy Research Institute has worked out the Global Hunger Index (GHI) as a composite of three equally weighted indices; Under nourished people, Child mortality; Proportion of underweight children. According to them, India ranks 65th out of 79 countries; what is worse there has been no change since 2001.

Country	1990	2001	2012
India	30.3	24.2	22.9
China	11.8	6.6	5.2
B'Desh	37.9	27.8	23.3
Rwanda	28.2	25.6	19.7

6.1. The comparative position of India in comparison with China is a stark contrast. Even Rwanda fairs better. Anything over 10 is very serious. 22.9% Indians suffer from acute hunger and need immediate support. The proportion of underweight children at 43.5% is the worst in 129 countries. Unfortunately the GHI in India has stagnated even when the gross national income per capita has doubled.

In the light of the above you can clearly see the critical role of Mid Day Meal Scheme for our country. It is truly God's work which we all are privileged to

carry out. A little effort on your part will ensure that lakhs of poor school children in your State get nutritious Mid Day Meal along with Education!

An action taken note on the above may please be sent to us after addressing the issues raised by the Review Mission.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,



(Amarjit Singh)

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