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भारत सरकार  
मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय  
स्कूल शिक्षा और साक्षरता विभाग  
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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION & LITERACY  
SHASTRI BHAVAN  
NEW DELHI-110 115

Dated: 02.03.2012

**D.O. No. 15727/2012**

Dear Sir,

I write this to apprise you the findings of 3rd Joint Review Mission on the Mid Day Meal Scheme carried out in the State of Jharkhand from 30th January 2012 to 6th February 2012, through a team comprising representatives from Government of India, Supreme Court Commissionerate for MDM, and State Government of Jharkhand. The team covered 54 schools in three districts viz; Lohardaga, Khunti and Ranchi during the visit and presented its report to the State Govt. on 6th February, 2012.

The Mission has appreciated the steps taken by the State Govt. to ensure that the children get hot cooked meal without any interruption as a result of the monitoring being done at the state, district and block level; the role of Saraswati Vahini – a group of mothers of children in ensuring serving of MDM to children; the proactive role of the State Govt. to ensure availability of foodgrains, serving of eggs once in a week and green vegetables to children. Similarly, the Mission also appreciated the efforts of State Govt. and two school teachers in Ranchi district in bringing up the attendance up to over 90% and thereby ensuring maximum coverage against enrolment. These efforts are laudable and need to be replicated in other districts as well. While these initiatives are greatly appreciated, the following issues need your urgent 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. However, the data in respect of 54 schools covered by the Mission has revealed that the coverage of children against the enrolment is only about 60%, which is below the national level of 72%. The low coverage is also confirmed by the fact that in the 3<sup>rd</sup> QPR the coverage of children under MDMS against enrolment is 57% in primary and 55% in upper primary and hence leaves a lot to be desired. This shows that the resources allocated under the scheme have not been fully utilized which is further confirmed by the fact that utilisation of foodgrains in upper primary schools is only 55%.



2. There has been delay in making the funds available at the school level as almost all the schools in Khunti district were having negative balance. The MI (Xavier Institute of Social Science, Ranchi) has also observed that there is delay in sanctioning and releasing of funds due to slow and cumbersome processes for release of funds. Further in most of the schools the cook-cum-helpers have been paid only up to September, 2011. Only 51% expenditure towards payment to cook-cum-helpers in 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter confirms this fact. However, it is appreciable that despite the negative balance, the schools with support from VEC and Saraswati Vahini have ensured interruptions free serving of MDMs.

3. The maintenance of records was poor. This may be due to the reason that there are too many registers for maintaining of records of MDM and sometimes there is lack of coordination between the teacher maintaining the records and Chairman VEC/Convenor, Saraswati Vahini who are operating the accounts and incurring expenditure. Further, too many registers not only make the maintenance of records difficult, but also eat into the precious time of the teachers in this activity. The MI has also observed that the MDM registers are not in place and also not properly maintained. The States like U.P. have only one register, which is easy to maintain. As recommended by the Mission, the State may like to use the UP experience to rationalise their registers for MDMS.

4. The Mission appreciated that sufficient food grains were available in all the visited schools. The lifting of food grains up to the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter has been 69%. However, the MI in its report has observed that food grains are being received by 89% of visited schools whereas other schools have reported delay in receiving food grains.

5. The Mission has observed that food grains are being lifted from FCI by the State Food Corporation up to Block level and from the godowns at Block level the food grains are lifted by the school teacher/Saraswati Vahini which is against the MDM guidelines. Therefore, as recommended by the Mission, the State Govt. may make arrangement for delivery of food grains at the doorsteps of the school so that teachers are relieved of this burden and they utilise this precious time in quality teaching particularly keeping in view the shortage of teachers.

6. It is appreciated that health cards were available in most of the schools, health check-ups are being conducted and spectacles have been provided to children in many schools. However, the Review Mission as well as the MI observed that the deworming tablets and Vitamin A doses have not been provided in most of the schools. IFA tablets have not been provided in almost all the schools in Khunti district during current academic year. The MI has also reported that school health card is maintained in 40% of the visited schools. The distribution of medicines is not done by the government health department frequently. No health check-ups are held. You are requested to take up the matter with the State Health Department to ensure regular checkups under School Health

Programme and administration of IFA tablets, vitamin-A doses and deworming tablets as per requirement.

7. The Mission has observed that smoke from firewood in the kitchen is a serious problem affecting the health of cook-cum helpers and appreciated the use of smokeless chulha in one of the schools in Lohardaga district. The State Govt. may take up the matter with the Ministry of Renewable Non-Conventional Energy Sources for use of alternative methods including smokeless chulha for cooking of MDM in other districts as well.

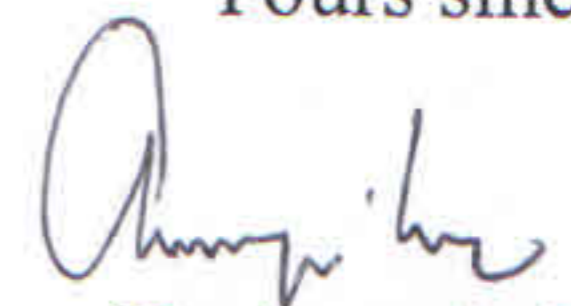
8. The Mission was informed that the payment of cost of foodgrains to FCI has been made up to September, 2011 in Lohardaga district and up to June, 2011 in Khunti district. The MI has also reported that payment to FCI is not made within the stipulated time and always delayed. This may result in stoppage of supply of foodgrains by FCI. As on 31.01.2012, an amount of Rs. 21 crore is outstanding. You are therefore, requested to look into the matter and ensure that the payments to FCI are made regularly.

9. The above issues could be addressed, if meetings of the State level Steering-cum-Monitoring committee (SSMC) are organised regularly and these issues reviewed. The last SSMC meeting was held in 2009, 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, ensure convergence issues are taken care of and corrective steps taken wherever necessary.

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 do let me know if there is anything that I can do at this end for effective implementation of the MDMS in your State.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,



(Dr. Amarjit Singh)

**Sh. B.K. Tripathy,  
Principal Secretary  
Govt. of Jharkhand**