

FTS 9916



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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
17th February, 2012

D.O.No. 13-2/2011- MDM 2-1

Dear Sir,

I write to you in connection with the recent visit of 3rd Review Mission consisting of the representatives from Government of India, office of the Supreme Court Commissioner for MDMS, State Government of Odisha and UNICEF for jointly reviewing the implementation of Mid Day Meal Scheme in three districts viz. i) Bolangir ii) Kalahandi and iii) Puri from 16th -21st January, 2012.

2. The Review Mission was happy to observe the effective Grievance Redressal Mechanism; rigorous monitoring system called 'Samikshya' and kitchen gardens in the schools. The student help line number is also very popular and has a positive impact on Mid Day Meal Scheme. The concept of the Idea box in each school in which students, teachers and other stakeholders make their suggestions for improving the implementation of education Schemes is a very good innovation, provided timely action is taken on the suggestions made.

The quality of rice supplied is FAQ of A-Grade and there was no complaint about quality of rice; and rice was available in all the visited schools. The quality of mid day meals in the schools was generally good. The Review Mission appreciated the feeling of satisfaction and joy on the face of the children while taking the meal.

The Mission has also appreciated the efforts of the Government of Odisha for releasing funds to all schools through e-transfer through an RTGS number. The Review Mission also noted the positive attitude of the teachers in the visited districts for willingly volunteering for mid-day meal during their free time, on a rotational basis, so that the children get proper noon meals, while paying due attention to their education.

The Review Mission also noted that the State Nodal Officer (SNO) receives press clippings on MDM, complaints received directly on mid day meal irregularities, complaints received through Student Helpline and Grievance Redressal Cell. Separate registers are maintained for each category of the above complaints and remedial action is taken. Review Mission also observed that all the visited schools had displayed toll free number 1800 456 722 for registering the grievances. Action is initiated on these complaints within 72 hours. Secretary, School & Mass Education also listens to the grievances of stakeholders on MDM on the last Saturday of each month and takes immediate remedial action.

3. While the above initiatives are greatly appreciated, the following issues need your urgent personal attention:

i) **Financial Management**

The Mission observed that Department of Women and Child Development has not submitted full and final accounts of funds of MDM Scheme to the Department of School and Mass Education even after formally transferring the scheme to the latter Department in November, 2011. Department of Women & Child Development should finalize the accounts of MDM Scheme and transfer the remaining funds to Department of School & Mass Education immediately under intimation to the Ministry of HRD. Further the department should ensure:

- Rationalization of fund flow by reducing the intermediate levels i.e. block level.
- Ensure timely availability of funds to the schools,
- Opening of accounts in CBS branch.



मध्याह्न भोजन योजना
Mid Day Meal Scheme

- d) Payment of honorarium to the Cook-cum-helpers through their bank accounts in CBS branches.
- e) Release of entire honorarium to cook-cum-helpers to schools instead of NGOs.

To cut short the delay in release of money to the implementing agency, the funds should be released through ECS mode or RTGS. Even the Monitoring Institute has reported that there is no school in the districts, which has received cooking cost in advance and there is a time lag of more than 3 months for the funds to reach the school level.

ii) **Engagement of cook cum helpers**

The State has engaged 1 cook and 1 helper in each of the schools irrespective of their enrolment. These cooks cum helpers are treated as separate entity and are paid Rs. 600 and Rs. 400 respectively instead of Rs. 1000 each approved by this Ministry. The Review Mission observed that the norms of the MDM guidelines are not being followed by the State Government, neither for engaging the cook-cum-helpers nor for paying them as per norms. The Cook-cum-Helper is one entity and either of them is to be paid honorarium @ Rs. 1000 per month (Rs.750.00 from the central share and Rs.250.00 from the State share). This distinction needs to be rectified and each one of them make kindly be paid Rs.1000.00 per month.

iii) **Management Structure at State, Districts and Sub-districts levels:**

- a) Under the MME component of MDMS the Government of India provides cent-percent Central assistance @ of 1.8% of total admissible Central assistance for four components of the scheme viz. i) food grain cost, ii) cooking cost, iii) transportation assistance and iv) honorarium to cook cum helpers. The utilization of Central Assistance released under MME component to Government of Odisha during 2010-11 is only 27.98%. Due to lack of proper organizational structure, Mid Day Meal Scheme is not effectively being monitored at Directorate, District, block and school level. It was found by the Mission that the scheme was not monitored as per the guidelines, which state that 25% mandatory inspections are to be carried out by the officials of the State Government. The State Government may consider setting up on an appropriately staffed Project Monitoring Unit at State, District and block level within this financial year.

The above posts may be filled up on deputation/contractual basis and the expenditure may be debited to funds allocated under MME component. The mobility facilities to the officers at various levels and provision of computers, internet facilities, mobiles etc. may also be provided from MME component.

The monitoring could also be strengthened by exchange visit programmes; through Inter-State exposure visits for officials of the State Government to enable them to learn best practices on MDM followed in other States. Similarly, a State Review Mission may be set up to review the Scheme in a district on a bi-annual basis.

- b) Further, as per MDM Guidelines, the States / UTs have the flexibility to utilize 50% funds for school level expenses for forms, stationery, soaps, plates, glasses, mats, training of cook-cum-helpers and replacement / repair / maintenance of cooking devices, utensils storage bins etc. and 50% for other activities viz. hiring charges of manpower on contractual basis at various levels, hiring of transport and contingencies, office expenditure, furniture, computer hardware and consumables, capacity building of officials, preparation of relevant manuals, external monitoring and evaluation, publicity etc. This also needs to be operationalised.

iv) **Implementation**

The PM Institute of Advanced Study in Education, the Monitoring Institute, for your state, has reported that mid day meal provides food security to children. On the days eggs are served the attendance of children is significantly high. The MI has also reported that in 7 schools of Nuapada district were not given mid day meal. The MI has also observed that although the MDM programme is regularly supervised by the SMC / PTA / MTA and they have also a *Jaanch Committee* to supervise the MDM programme, the mechanism needs to be further strengthened. In this context, the Mission recommends:

- a) Involvement of SHG / VEC managed by women especially the women from the weaker and disadvantaged sections of the society should be given priority in the implementation of MDM.

- b) Involve School Management Committees / Noon Feeding Programme Committee in the implementation, monitoring and social audit of the Scheme

v) **Provisioning of Kitchen-cum-stores in the Schools**

- a) The State Government has done a commendable job in constructing all the kitchen-cum-stores sanctioned by the Central Government. The State Government has also constructed 899 kitchen-cum-stores through convergence with other Schemes. However, there are still 801 schools that require kitchen-cum-stores. Monitoring Institute has reported that in Navrangpur district, 10 schools out of 40 visited schools do not have kitchen-cum-stores and MDM is cooked in temporary arrangements. The Review Mission also found that the State Govt. of Odisha is not providing funds to aided schools for construction of kitchen-cum-store. As per the MDM guidelines, Govt. aided schools are also eligible for assistance for construction of kitchen-cum-stores. As per the mandate of RTE Act, 2009, provisioning of kitchen-cum-stores is to be ensured by 2012-13 in all schools.

I would, therefore, urge you to submit the proposal for construction of kitchen cum stores in the remaining eligible schools including Government aided schools. While submitting such proposal, it may also be confirmed that sufficient space is available in the schools for construction of kitchen-cum-stores and adequate budget provision has been made in the State Budget for these kitchen-cum-stores. It may also be ensured that proposal should not include new schools as there is inbuilt provision under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan to construct kitchen-cum-stores in such schools.

vi) **Publicity**

The Review Mission observed that none of the visited schools had displayed child's entitlement of food under MDM and logo though daily menu was displayed in a few schools. You may kindly advise all school authorities to display them at prominent places so that the students and the community in general become aware of their rights and entitlements of food under MDM.

vii) **Evaluation Study:**

A research study to understand the current practices in the area of quality and equity be undertaken for developing State Plans which encompass significant milestones and indicators. A reputed institute may be engaged to evaluate the scheme and submit the report to Govt. of Odisha and Government of India, in a timebound manner.

viii) **Capacity Building and Training**

- a) Community mobilisation efforts need to undergo a qualitative shift, to empower the communities to monitor the implementation of mid-day-meal scheme. In this context, the SMC training should also reflect specific needs and concerns of mid-day-meal scheme. The Mission recommends that Department of Education and SPD SSA, may incorporate the SMC training module for mid-day-meal scheme in the training module of SMC. However, the training guidelines for school based cooking should be different from the centralised kitchens.
- b) The campaign for Shiksha Ka Haq launched by Ministry of HRD on 11th November, 2011 on Education Day, may be utilised as a platform for MDM to generate awareness on entitlements of children and other rights under MDM Scheme.
- c) The State may consider a combination of face to face and distant learning approaches for the Capacity Building under MDMS.
- d) Training module and material for imparting training to functionaries at various levels and cook-cum-helpers can also be organized in consultation with UNICEF. Similarly, other corporate bodies may be involved as part of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

ix) **Convergence**

- a) School Health Programme: The Review Mission observed that School Health Programme was not implemented effectively in the visited districts. The doctors did not visit most of the schools during the last one year. Iron Folic Acid, Vitamin A, De-worming tablets was not provided to the children. The eye check up of the children had also not been done for a long time. The mission noted that a number of children in the schools visited by the mission needed refractive correction.
- b) The State Government should take necessary steps to ensure regular health check-up and distribution of spectacles to children with refractive errors under School Health Programme in convergence with NRHM, ensure supply of IFA and De-worming tablets, and Vitamin-A.

- c) MI has also recommended that all children should be supplied with micro nutrients periodically and their health status should be monitored regularly.
- d) MI has observed that in many schools specially in urban areas there is lack of physical facilities and during rainy season it become very difficult for students to take MDM in an orderly manner due to lack of space, so provision of all weather dining space should be made in such schools.
- e) MI has also reported that in 3 schools viz. i) Krishna project UP school of Komna Block ii) Putupada project UP school in Khariar and iii) Gadramunda project UP schools of Khariar Block of Nuapada district, potable water is not available for cooking and drinking purposes.

x) **Mode of Cooking**

The mode of cooking is firewood in most of the visited schools. I would, therefore, urge you to take following measures to improve cooking environment in the schools:

- a) Promotion of Gas based stoves and use of energy from the Renewable Non-Conventional Energy Resources for cooking MDM.
- b) Discourage wood based cooking to create a pollution free environment.

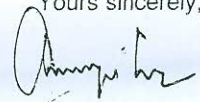
Monitoring Institute has also observed that instead of firewood, LPG gas should be provided to schools.

I shall appreciate if you kindly look into the above issues and ensure appropriate action is taken in a time bound manner and ATN sent to us by **15th March, 2012**. 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)

Shri B K Patnaik
Chief Secretary
Govt. of Odisha
Bhubaneshwar

