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**D.O. No. F. No.14-1/2011-MDM-1-(EE-5)**

**Dated 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2012**

Dear Colleague,

Please refer to my D. O. letter No. 14-1/2011-MDM-1-1(EE-5) dated 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2012 by which I had shared the observations of the 40 Monitoring Institutions on the Implementation of the Mid Day Meal Scheme for the period from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011.

2. The second half yearly monitoring reports on MDM for period of April 2011 – September 2011 from 37 Monitoring Institutes in respect of 30 States/UTs have been received by us. The Reports have been analyzed and the findings of the Monitoring Institutes have been shared with you. No response by way of Action Taken Reports has been received. On comparing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Half Yearly Monitoring Reports with the 1<sup>st</sup> Half Yearly, some important improvements have been noticed. In Andhra Pradesh, overall implementation of the Scheme has been found to be satisfactory. In Gujarat, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Half Yearly, coverage of children has increased. In Karnataka, MDM had a positive impact on the general wellbeing and the nutritional status of children. Participation of parents and SMCs has shown an improvement. In Orissa, attendance and enrolment rates, especially in case of girls, SCs, STs and minorities have shown significant increase. MDM has also given food security to the children. It has been observed that Government of Himachal Pradesh has managed the food grain position very well as good quality of food grain was found as buffer stock for one month. 100% of the visited schools in Kullu, Solan, Lahaul Spiti of Himachal Pradesh prepared MDM with the help of LPG gas.

3. The following are the some of critical issues on implementation of MDM as per the 2<sup>nd</sup> Half Yearly Reports, which need urgent attention of the State/UT Governments:

**i) Regularity in serving meal**

Interruptions in regularity in serving of meals have been found at Raichur district of Karnataka, Narshinghpur of Madhya Pradesh, Pali of Rajasthan, Kandhamal of Orissa, Jalna of Maharashtra. In Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh 95% of the schools provide the MDM to children on 3-4 days a week only, while in West Kameng district MDM is being served 2/3 days a week. In a school in Dholpur, Rajasthan, MDM had not been served for six months. The MI has reported that in 21.3% schools the food which is being served is not hot, especially in Hyderabad district where Nandi Foundation run centralized kitchen is operational.

**ii) Regularity in delivering food grains to school level**

There has been delay in supply of food grains in Nuapada and Keonjhar district of Orissa, Jalna, Narshinghpur and Buldana district of Maharashtra, South Tripura, Chamarajanagara and Raichur district of Karnataka, Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh, North West Delhi, Ri Bhoi and West Khasi Hills Districts of Meghalaya. Some time the food grains were supplied in old sacks and also found less in weight. These districts are Jalna, Washim of Maharashtra, Davanagere and Bidar of Karnataka, North West Delhi. The irregularity of delivery of food grains has also been reported in Kadapa, Nizamabad and Mehboobnagar of Andhra Pradesh. The MI has further reported that in all sample schools (100%) the food grain was not delivered at the school, rather they had to make their own arrangements for its transportation to the school.



**iii) Regularity in delivering cooking cost to school level**

Regularity of delivering cooking cost to the school level is vital for maintaining the regularity in MDM to children. Cases of delay ranging from 1 week to 3 months in delivering the cooking cost to the schools have been observed. There was delay in release in cooking cost in Nuapada, Koraput, Nabrangpur Districts in Orissa, Bidar District of Karnataka, District Theni of Tamilnadu, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Districts Bharatpur and Dholpur of Rajasthan, Delhi, Districts Tawang, Upper Siang, Lohit of Arunachal Pradesh and many districts of Jharkhand. The delay in delivery of cooking cost is also prevalent in different districts of Andhra Pradesh as well. In Mizoram, MI has reported that none of the sample schools had ever received cooking cost for MDM in advance. Apart from that, MDM is run on the credit basis also. In some cases the expenditures are incurred by the head masters or by SMC members or even by the SHGs also. Similarly in Sikkim, in West District, cooking cost is not disbursed in advance. At school level it is received late and Head Master manages on credit basis

**iv) Social Equity**

One of the objectives of the scheme is to foster a sense of social equity among students from their childhood. To promote the social equity, children are encouraged to sit together and take the meals irrespective of economic status, caste, religion and gender. While in most cases this objective of MDMS, in some cases MIs have reported discrimination especially in states like Orissa, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh. It is reported that gender discrimination in seating arrangements has been observed in Alami Primary and Upper Primary School of Kandhamal District, Orissa and one school each in Districts Chamarajanagara, Haveri and Uttara Kannada of Karnataka. Caste based discrimination was reported in Primary and Upper Primary School Amthapada of Boud, Orissa, in one school of Bharatpur district of Rajasthan, 17.5% school of Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, 67.5% school of Pratapgarh of Rajasthan. Clear instances of untouchability even within the school premises during cooking, serving and eating mid day meal were observed in Betul, Burhanpur, Chhindwada, Singrauli, Panna, Satna and Chhatarpur districts of Madhya Pradesh. Religion based discrimination was observed in Dungarpur of Rajasthan. In some schools of Rajasthan it was also been noticed that only girls were serving the MDM.

**v) Variety of Menu**

It is necessary to maintain variety of menu in MDM which should include rice/wheat preparation, dal and vegetables. Apart from that the schools should display weekly menu in a noticeable place of the school to ensure transparency and community awareness about MDM. It has been noticed during this reporting period that normally most of schools were serving varied menu to the children. However, in Belgaum district of Karnataka, use of dal and vegetable seemed to be limited quantity as reported by the MI. Variation in menu was not found at North West Delhi and Udham Singh Nagar District of Uttarakhand. In Korba district of Chattishgarh; weekly menu of MDM has not been displayed/shown by the Nandi Foundation. Therefore teachers and students are not sure about the kind of food they get on any given day.

**vi) Quality and quantity of menu**

Regarding quality and quantity of menu, a mixed picture has emerged. In a particular case of Dholpur, Rajasthan, the children reported that they get a maximum of 2 chapattis. No extra chapattis are given to children. Adding to that, the quality of MDM supplied by the NGO/SHG is tasteless and sometimes it smells. In the case of PUMS, Vedanatham (Thoothukudi district) of Tamil Nadu, most children are dropping out of the MDM scheme as quality of food grain is bad. In North West Delhi, an aided School Maninder Shakti (Kesavpuram) has stopped the MDM on account of concerns raised by the parents on quality of meal. In Dungarpur, of Rajasthan, where the food is being supplied by Nandi Foundation, 38% school children expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of MDM supplied. It has also been reported that in case of centralized kitchens the food often gets spoiled due to larger radius of coverage especially in the summers. In Thoubal district of

Manipur, the children are not also happy with the MDM served as reported by the MI. It was found in Korba district of Chattishgarh that the meal is supplied by Nandi Foundation and the quality and quantity of the food served by Nandi Foundation is found to be below the expected standard.

**vii) Coverage under School Health Programme**

Health cards were not found to be maintained in several schools of Orissa, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Manipur. In some cases it has also been found that health cards are available but without any information. In Koraput District of Orissa, West Kameng District of Arunachal Pradesh, MIs have reported that micro nutrients and deworming medicines were not supplied during this period. It was also found during monitoring in Himachal Pradesh that Health Cards of children had been maintained only in 1 (2.5%) school GPS Nairesh in Kullu District of Himachal Pradesh. It was found by MI of Chattishgarh that in Janjgir district, there is no provision of supplying micro-nutrients in 23 schools. The School Health Programme is found to be a grey area where stronger convergence is required with the Health Department.

**viii) Status of cook-cum-helpers**

It has generally been observed by MIs that Cook cum Helper are not paid honorarium on monthly basis but after a gap of three months. Delayed payment of honorarium causes extreme financial hardship. In some cases they are not getting the remuneration as per the GOI norms. In various districts of Orissa the cooks and helpers are getting Rs.600 and Rs 400 respectively even after the revision of norms by GOI. It was also found in North West Delhi that cook cum helper was not engaged as per the GOI norms. In several districts of Arunachal Pradesh, a cook cum helper is paid Rs.33.00 per working day. In Pratapgarh district of Rajasthan, the MI has observed that in 55% schools there was a delay in payment of honorarium and which ranged from 3-6 months. Irregularity in payment of cook cum helpers has also been observed in Andhra Pradesh. On the other hand, the social composition of cook/helpers was quite satisfactory; in most of the cases the people from the underprivileged section have been engaged.

**ix) Infrastructure**

The progress in construction of kitchen sheds continues to be poor in Andhra Pradesh; in all the six visited districts 75% schools are not having proper pucca Kitchen shed and even those who are having the kitchen shed are also not cooking the food in the available shed. The sheds are being used as store house for fire wood. In one visited school (GMS Karukankuddy) the class room was shared by the students and kitchen. In some cases of Thoothukudi, Tamilnadu District officials have not settled some unsettled issues of kitchen cum stores like damaged kitchen cum stores, rat infestation, shortage of water. In a particular case of Theni district of Tamilnadu, GKPS Muthaiyanchetti does not have a store/kitchen of its own and food is being cooked in other school. In Puducherry, the MI found during the functioning of the class hours the cook cum helper was boiling the milk to serve the children for evening hot milk and biscuits scheme to children which is dangerous and objectionable. In Gujarat in Rajkot District the MI has observed that in 8 schools, though the kitchen sheds were constructed but they were not in use. In 1 school, it was cooked at the cook's house and in 6 schools, it was cooked at the MDM In-Charge's house.

In a few cases children are bringing plates from home in Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Orissa and Tamil Nadu etc.

**x) SAFETY AND HYGIENE**

The safety and hygiene condition was found to be satisfactory in most of the schools as reported by the MIs. The students are encouraged to wash their hands before and after taking the meals and they are also taking the meal in an orderly manner. However, in a particular case of North West Delhi, it was found that schools do not encourage children to wash hands before meals. In Pali district of Rajasthan, 37.5% school teachers reported that discipline was poor during distribution of MDM. In Puducherry, the MI has

observed that in one visited schools (GMS Karukankuddy) the class room was shared by the students and kitchen. The MI found during the functioning of the class hours the cook cum helper is boiling the Milk to serve the children for evening hot milk and biscuits scheme to children which is unsafe. Similarly, MI has observed that the drainage facilities and the environment in central Kitchen at T.R. Pattinam which feeds to 21 schools is not clean and hygienic. Puducherry Administration should take immediate action for ensuring safety and hygienic cooking environment as pointed out by the MI in the report.

**xi) Community Participation**

It will not be an over statement to say that community participation would help to overcome the loopholes in the scheme. Unfortunately, this was not seen by the MIs during their visits. In Delhi the community participation has been found to be poor. In most of the cases the roster of community visit was not maintained in the schools. In Jharkhand, the MI has opined that SMC/PTA/MTA participation level is individual. In Thoubal district of Manipur, 100% of schools visited do not have community participation and awareness. In six districts of Andhra Pradesh, it has been reported by MIs that the Community is having 'poor' knowledge about the entitlement and eligibility of food grains in MDM scheme. None of the 40 sample schools of Mizoram had ever prepared any roster for parents and community members for day-to-day supervision of the MDM.

**xii) Inspection And Supervision**

MIs of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, J&K, Jharkhand, U.P., Manipur, Rajasthan, Orissa, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Dadara & Nagar Haveli, and Delhi have reported that no regular inspections of MDM was conducted by State or District or Block level Officials. In many cases the inspections by district and block level officials were carried out only once or twice in a year but not regularly.

**xiii) Impact**

Despite various shortcomings related with MDM in few schools, it has been found by all the MIs that MDMS has undoubtedly improved the enrolment and attendance of the children in schools. It also helped to prevent the class room hunger among the children as a result of which the dropout rate is also decreasing. The nutritional status of the children has also improved.

A little effort on your part will go a long way in improving the effectiveness of the Mid Day Meal Scheme. Let us ensure that no child remains hungry in our school!

With regards,

Yours sincerely



(Amarjit Singh)