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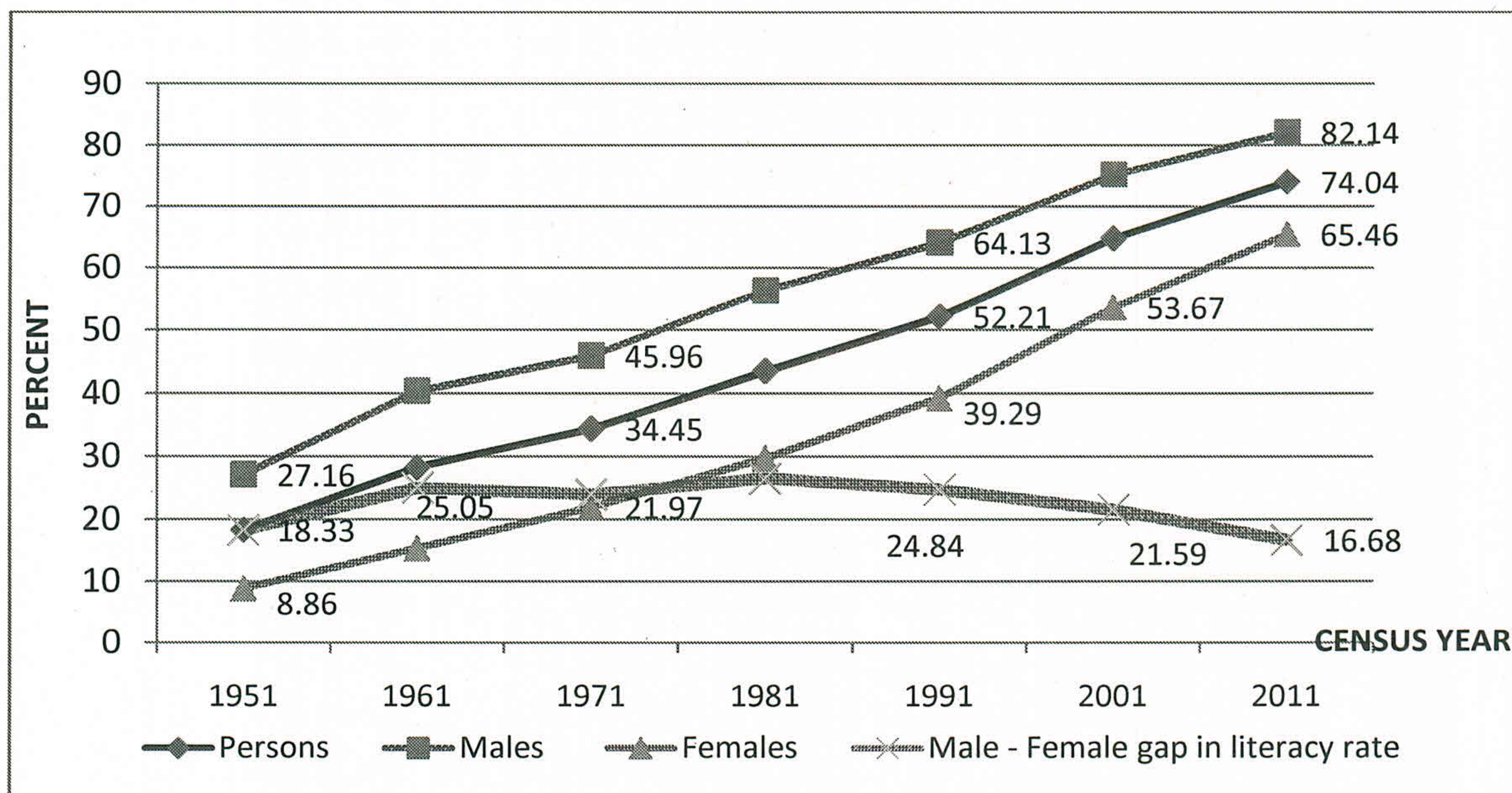
भारत सरकार  
 मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय  
 स्कूल शिक्षा और साक्षरता विभाग  
 शास्त्री भवन  
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 GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
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D.O. No. 7-12/2012-EE-6(MDM 3-1)

14<sup>th</sup> September, 2012.

Dear colleagues,

1. Thanks to your efforts. The Mid-Day Meal Scheme has been able to achieve 72% coverage against enrolment. A major benefit of the scheme has been enhanced access to the children from the marginalised SC/ST and minority groups. The recent census has also shown a sharp fall in the male/female literacy gap from 24.84% (1991) to 16.68% (2011).



This has been possible to a major extent due to the MDMS as the girl child who was expected to cook for her younger brothers and sisters is now able to enjoy a hot cooked meal in the school along with her siblings. The Office of Supreme Court Commissioners on MDMS after a thorough review of the Scheme in Assam, Chhattisgarh and Jammu & Kashmir have observed,

‘The survey confirmed the belief that the midday meal scheme is one of the better run schemes in most parts of the country and is also very popular among parents and children.’





2. We however, still have 25.96% non-literate persons in the country and they constitute the largest proportion of the illiterate population in the world. The National Sample Survey estimates show that 8% children are not attending school on a regular basis. The cohort retention rate at the primary level is only 73%; this means that around 27% of those enrolled in grade 1 have either dropped out or repeating grades and have not reached grade 5. Of the 73% who complete primary, only 85% enter upper primary grades, and only 71% of them will complete the upper primary level. What is more, gender disparities continue to exist, particularly, related to SC, ST, Muslim and CWSN girls. Therefore, bridging the social and gender gaps in enrolment and retention across the elementary years needs to receive special focused attention.

3. The nutrition data further shows that the level of malnutrition increases during the school years. As a result, the children are not able to concentrate on their studies. Therefore, apart from improving the quality of education, an effective MDMS could contribute to greater retention at the school level.

4. The comparison of data on MDMS for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2012-13 and 2011-12 reveals that though the coverage has increased from 69% in 2011-12 to 70% in 2012-13, the absolute number of beneficiaries has come down from 10.36 crore in 2011-12 to 9.96 crore in 2012-13. It appears that the delay in reaching the funds up to the school level is the major reason for poor performance at district level. This fact was confirmed during visit of central teams to some of the poorly performing districts during April, 2012 and visit to some of the schools by the central teams during June-July 2012 for MIS training. Even though the Central Government released 25% ad hoc grant during May, 2012, some of the States like Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland had not released the funds even after a lapse of 2 months resulting in disruption in serving of MDMS. I would therefore, request you to kindly look into this aspect and ensure availability of funds with the schools as per MDMS guidelines.

5. While sharing the performance for the last quarter of 2011-12 with you, I had requested for special efforts in poorly performing States/UTs for full coverage. Special attention needs to be paid to the poorly performing districts, the list of which is enclosed herewith again. As can be seen, of the poor performing districts, 17 are in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas; 11 in the North Eastern States (Tripura - 3, Meghalaya - 4, Assam - 4); 17 in predominantly Tribal areas, and 13 in the hilly areas (Uttarakhand - 4, J&K - 9). We need to make special efforts to improve MDMS coverage in these districts. This will go a long way in improving the overall coverage.

6. The MDM Bureau had recently sent inspection teams to various States to follow-up on the report of MIs. The teams did come across caste based discrimination in one school in district Boudh in Orissa. The matter has been viewed seriously and was brought to the notice of Government of Orissa, who have since suspended the Principal of the school where children were being made to sit on caste considerations. The States need to be alert against any such discrimination.

7. The MDM Bureau has created an online portal for effective review of the MDMS. The latest position on the same (**Annexure XVII**) shows that the annual data entry has been completed for only 32% of schools so far. States/UTs like Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Delhi, Jharkhand, Kerala, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Odisha, Punjab, Sikkim, U.P. and West Bengal need to step up their performance in this regard. This is critical, as once it is operational, it would be of direct benefit to



you for real time monitoring and effective implementation of the MDM scheme. Therefore, I shall appreciate your personal attention to fully operationalize the data entry into the MDMS portal.

8. In addition, the following critical issues need your immediate personal attention:

- Mismatch in cooking cost and utilisation of foodgrains
- Mismatch in lifting of foodgrains and utilisation of transport assistance
- Delay in payment to cook-cum-helpers
- Delays in making payment to FCI
- Delay in submission of proposals for construction of kitchen-cum-stores as well as huge delays in completion of approved kitchen-cum-stores, in some of the States
- Low coverage of children under School Health Programme
- Delay in submission of QPR by States/UTs

These issues could have been addressed by the effective monitoring of the scheme which does not seem to be happening in many States as can be seen from low utilisation of Management Monitoring and Evaluation funds. Similarly, the State Level Steering-cum-Monitoring Committee meetings need to be held regularly to effectively monitor the scheme.

9. I shall appreciate if you kindly attend to these issues personally and ensure full coverage of eligible school going children under the MDMS. You also need to pay personal attention to the quality of the scheme as well as prompt payment to FCI for foodgrains supplied for MDMS. A little effort on your part will go a long way to ensure not only, that no child remains hungry in the school but also, that the basic health and hygienic needs of the children are met in a safe and serene atmosphere without hampering the duties of the teachers. Do remember, ***this is truly God's own work, which we all are privileged to carry out.***

The detailed analysis of the QPRs for the Quarter ending June, 2012 in respect of all the States/UTs is enclosed for your perusal.

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,



(Amarjit Singh)

To,

Principal Secretaries / Secretaries of all the States / UTs implementing Mid Day Meal Scheme