

**Government of India
Ministry of Human Resource Development
Department of School Education and Literacy
Mid Day Meal Division**

**Minutes of 4th meeting of National Steering-Cum-Monitoring Committee (NSMC)
held on 01.08.2011 in Conference Room, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi**

The 4th meeting of the National Steering-Cum-Monitoring Committee for the Mid Day Meal Scheme was held on 1st August, 2011, in New Delhi, under the Chairpersonship of Smt. Anshu Vaish, Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of HRD. A list of participants is enclosed as ***Annexure-I***.

2. Secretary(SE&L) welcomed all the members of the NSMC and participants and requested Dr. Amarjit Singh, JS (EE-I) to make a presentation highlighting the status of implementation of the MDM scheme and issues for discussion.

3. The Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of NSMC were confirmed by the Committee.

4. Dr. Amarjit Singh, JS (EE-I) detailed the action taken on various issues discussed in the 3rd NSMC Meeting held on 03-12-2010 :

4.1 Status of quarterly progress reports from States/UTs on implementation of MDMS during the year 2010-11:

All QPRs for the last financial year 2010-11 have been received from all the States/UTs and analysed. The analysis has been shared with the States/UTs highlighting their performance and areas that need focus for effective implementation. He added that the QPRs for the first quarter of 2011-12 have been received from 8 States/UTs.

4.2 Linkage of cooking cost to MDM price index:

The department efforts for approval of automatic enhancement of cooking cost on the basis of Mid Day Meal Price Index exclusively based on the items of the MDM basket led to approval of increase in cooking cost @7.5% per year in the last years 2011-12.

Shri K. Ashok Rao said that revision of cooking cost based on MDM price index is critical to ensure quality meal with required calorific value. He further suggested

that detailed costing should be done for different kinds of menus. Secretary (SE&L) advised that this matter may be referred to the sub group on MDMS for the 12th Plan.

Dr. Prema Ramachandran, Director, Nutrition Foundation of India, endorsed the views of Mr. Rao and lamented the total disappearance of vegetables from the mid day meals due to price increase and delay in revision of the cooking cost. She said that increase in price of pulses has led to reduction of protein content in the meal. In order to compensate for the same, legumes can be included in the menu; they have a high protein value and therefore will be a cost effective substitute. She also suggested that “cooking cost” may be renamed as “balanced food cost.”

The views of the committee were solicited for inclusion of coarse cereals in Mid day Meal, Shri K. Ashok Rao was of the view that maize, ragi & millets are good source of protein and calcium and should be included under MDM. Shri Rao said that Rs.1000 per month as honorarium to cook-cum-helpers is very low and is particularly inadequate in cities like Kolkata and Delhi. He suggested that funds be provided for procurement of LPG gas cylinders or piped supply of cooking gas. He also advised that the self help groups involved in the MDM programme should be helped to develop as entrepreneurs through facilitation of loans from Rashtriya Mahila Kosh.

Secretary(SE&L) clarified that it is not feasible to have different rates of honorarium for Cook-cum-helpers engaged in different regions in the country. She also clarified that the job of Cook-cum-helper is a part time job. Hence, daily minimum wages cannot be provided. Secretary (SE&L) also advised that providing funds for procurement of LPG gas cylinders and fire extinguishers either from ‘MME’ or ‘Kitchen Devices’ heads should be considered and action taken to incorporate this in the MDM Scheme.

4.3 Coverage of Pre-Primary Children under MDMS.

JS(EE-1) informed that a committee has been set up for restructuring of the ICDS scheme under the chairpersonship of Member Health, Planning Commission. D/SE&L has conveyed its in-principle approval for including pre-school for children between the ages of 4-6 in Govt. Primary Schools, provided the necessary resources are made available for this purpose.

4.4 Approval of additional requirement of funds for kitchen-cum-stores sanctioned during 2006-07 to 2008-09:

Joint Secretary (EE.I) apprised the NSMC members that during PAB MDM meeting, all the State/UTs were requested to complete the incomplete kitchen-cum-stores and bear the additional financial burden, if any, from their own resources. Many States have initiated action accordingly.

Secretary (SE&L) advised that there is a provision under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan to construct kitchen-cum-stores in new schools. She added that the design of the kitchen-cum-store needs to be improved and the size of the kitchen-cum-store should also be specified. She suggested that Shri Kabir Vajpeyi, an architect who advises on whole schools planning under SSA may be associated in drawing up alternative designs for kitchen-cum-store under MDM.

4.5 Enhancement of norm for children of National Child Labour Project (NCLP) from primary to upper primary.

Joint Secretary(EE.I) informed that approval will shortly be obtained on the proposal for enhancement of norms for NCLP schools from primary to upper primary.

4.6 Transportation assistance in the NER states:

JS (EE-1) clarified that this department has fixed the transportation charges for NER states as well as the three hill States of HP, J&K and Uttaranchal keeping in view their special terrains and needs. Their transportation rates have been fixed at par with their PDS rates. As a result the transportation rates for 11 special category States has now gone up to a maximum of Rs. 395 / quintal for transporting the food grains from FCI depot to school as against the earlier rates of Rs.125 / quintal.

4.7 Training of middle level supervisory officers:

JS (EE-1) informed that training and capacity building are getting adequate focus in the subgroup on Mid Day Meal Scheme constituted for the 12th Five Year Plan. Secretary (SE&L) advised that a module on Mid Day Meal Scheme may also be added in the training material for SMC members under SSA-RTE. She mentioned that during her recent visit to Nagaland, she noticed that despite strong communitisation there were interruptions in serving of Mid Day Meal in schools. It is, therefore, imperative to sensitize the community and provide them

training on MDMS. She advised that a central team may be sent to Nagaland to review the implementation of MDMS in that State.

Dr. Premi, Ministry of Women and Child Development informed that 43 field units of the Food and Nutrition Board are imparting training to the Principals of secondary schools. The training includes sharing of recipes and practical demonstration material. During the week of Children's Day, the BMI of the children is also measured through regular weight and height recording.

4.8 School Health Programme (SHP)

JS(EE.I) informed that the implementation of the School Health Programme is erratic and uneven across States. In some cases weight and height is recorded under this programme. But other important parameters of health such as the test for haemoglobin and correction for refractive errors is not carried out as per guidelines issued under SHP.

Secretary(SE&L) advised that region wise workshops may be organised in collaboration with Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (NRHM) and State Health Departments. She also advised that a joint DO letter signed by Secretary(SE&L) and Secretary(Health & Family Welfare) should be issued to all the States / UTs on issues related to the school Health Programme. She further informed that under Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, school leadership training programmes for Principals are being approved for States/UTs. A module about MDMS may be included in such programmes.

4.9 Status of State Level Steering-cum-Monitoring Committee meetings

Joint Secretary (EE.I) apprised the members that consequent to the Secretary having taken up with the Chief Secretaries through a DO letter, there has been a considerable improvement in the regularity of SSMC meetings; as against 12 States in the year 2009-10, 22 States had held their SSMC meetings in 2010-11 and first quarter of 2011-12. Secretary (SE&L) suggested that the Chief Secretaries of the remaining States/UTs should be addressed once again in this regard.

4.10 Development of web enabled MIS with integration of Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS):

JS (EE.I) informed that Department of School Education & Literacy has decided to develop web enabled MIS integrating with IVRS and this task has been

assigned to NIC. 4 Regional workshops have been conducted in the four zones at Jaipur, Hyderabad, Lucknow and Agartala to consult with the States/UTs.

The web enabled MIS plan of the Bureau has received full support of the States / UTs. The State officers supported the idea of monitoring of MDMS on a real time basis and expressed their full cooperation in the development of MIS with integration of IVRS. Many of the State officials made useful suggestions which have been incorporated in the protocol. The target date for roll out of the MIS is 31 December, 2011.

Shri Ashok Rao suggested that Home Science Departments of Agricultural Universities may be included among the Monitoring Institutes for MDMS.

5. Review of the Scheme:

Director (MDM) made a presentation on achievements of MDM Scheme during 2010-11 and highlighted the performance of the scheme on different parameters. The presentation made by him is at **Annexure-II**.

6. Secretary (SE&L) thereafter invited suggestions / comments from the members of the NSMC on the proposals for consideration:

6.1 Introduction of Social Audit Mechanism for MDM on the lines of MNREGA.

Social Audit refers to the steps that are taken to ensure that the work done by the government is actually benefiting the intended beneficiaries. It is based on the principle that the local governance should, as far as possible, engage the people concerned. It is a process and not an event. Thus, Social Audit is nothing but understanding, measuring, reporting and, most importantly, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of local governance.

JS (EE.I) informed that adequate focus has been given to the introduction of social audit mechanism in the subgroup on Mid Day Meal Scheme constituted for the 12th Five Year Plan.

He stated the salient features of social audit under MNREGA as follows :

- (i). There is an annual calendar to conduct at least one round of social audit in each Gram Panchayat every six months.

- (ii). The social audit unit verifies Cash book, Bank payment and other financial records, Muster rolls, entries and payments made, and also quality of work done.
- (iii). Social audit meeting of the Gram Sabha is convened to discuss the findings of the verification exercise.
- (iv). All elected members of Panchayat & staff involved in implementing the scheme are expected to be present at the Gram Sabha and respond to queries, if any.
- (v). Gram Sabha provides a platform to all villagers to obtain information and responses. The Action Taken Report relating to the previous social audit meeting is read out at the beginning of each meeting
- (vi). The State Govt. is responsible for follow up action on the findings of social audit.
- (vii). The State Employment Guarantee Council monitors the action taken by the State Government and incorporates the action taken report in the annual report to be laid before the State Legislature by the State Govt.
- (viii). The costs of establishing the Social Audit Unit and conducting social audit are borne by the Central Govt. as central assistance.

JS(EE.I) further added that the Ministry of Rural Development has frame rules under Social Audit Act. He mentioned that a comprehensive Social Audit report is placed before the State Assembly.

NSMC recommended that there is an urgent need for MDMS to have a social audit mechanism on the lines of MNREGA. Further, where possible, efforts should be made to synergize with Ministry of Rural Development to ensure cost-effective use of resources.

6.2 Inclusion of private unaided schools of tribal areas under MDM.

JS (EE.I) informed that the National Level Committee set up to examine the issue of coverage of private unaided schools in tribal areas under MDMS has submitted its recommendations to the Govt. The recommendations were considered by the Dept. and the issue has been included in the Terms of Reference of the sub group on Mid Day Meal Scheme constituted for the 12th Five Year Plan.

NSMC recommended that MDMS should be extended to cover the private unaided schools of tribal areas.

6.3 In principle approval for revision of cooking cost for 2012-13.

NSMC reiterated its recommendation that the cooking cost should be linked to mid day meal price index exclusively based on items of MDM basket and that the revision should happen automatically with changes in the MDM price index.

6.4 Need for effective co-ordination with MOHFW for effective implementation of the MDMS

Dr Prema Ramachandran raised the issue of stunted growth in the school children as consequence of long-term under nutrition in early childhood. Stunting is associated with developmental problems; a child who is stunted is likely to experience a lifetime of poor health and underachievement. While stunting is difficult to cure, it is possible to address wasting - a process by which a debilitating disease causes muscle and fat tissue to "waste" away. It could be caused by an extremely low energy intake (e.g., caused by famine), nutrient losses due to infection, or a combination of low intake and high loss. Therefore, it is imperative that the schools have arrangements for measuring height and weight to calculate body mass index (BMI). This will help in detection of wasting early so that such children can be given nutrition education and extra food and stunting prevented.

Similarly, those children who suffer from obesity can be given appropriate nutrition education and encouraged to take up more physical activity during the games period. It was decided that appropriate arrangements be made to determine the BMI of children and address the special needs of children suffering from wasting in consultation with the state departments of Health.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks.

Annexure-I

List of Participants

1. Ms. Anshu Vaish, Secretary(SE&L), Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi
2. Shri Amarjit Singh, Joint Secretary(EE-I), Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi
3. Ms. Rita Chatterjee, Joint Secretary, Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi
4. Shri B. B Sharma, DS, Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi
5. Dr. Kavita Sharma, NCERT.
6. Ms. Sarita Mittal, Director (Finance), Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development
7. Shri Gaya Prasad, Director(MDM), Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development
8. Shri K. Ashok Rao, Member, NSMC, General Secretary, SSMI, Chandigarh
9. Dr. G.N.V. Brahmam, Member, NSMC, Scientist – 'F', National Institute of Nutrition, Taramaka, Hyderabad – 500 007
10. Dr. Prema Ramachandran, Member, NSMC, Director, Nutrition Foundation of India, New Delhi
11. Shri Satya Prakash Sharma, Member, NSMC, G.M. School, Kamkor, District Karket, Chhattisgarh
12. Shri G.S. Patial, Under Secretary, Department of Food & RD, Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi.
13. Shri O.P Dani, GM (AG), Food Corporation of India, Barakhamba Lane, New Delhi
14. Ms. Pushpa Gautam, Section Officer, Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development
15. Shri B.R. Meena, Section Officer, Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development
16. Shri R.K. Mishra, Chief Consultant, National Support Group, Mid Day Meal, Ed.CIL
17. Shri K.K. Sharma, Consultant, National Support Group, Mid Day Meal, Ed.CIL
18. Dr. Anindita Shukla, Consultant, National Support Group, Mid Day Meal, Ed.CIL
19. Dr. Krishnaveni Motha, Consultant, National Support Group, Mid Day Meal, Ed.CIL
20. Dr. Mridula Sircar, Consultant, National Support Group, Mid Day Meal, Ed.CIL
21. Mr.. Dinesh Pradhan, Consultant, National Support Group, Mid Day Meal, Ed.CIL
22. Shri Bhupendra Kumar, Consultant, National Support Group, Mid Day Meal, Ed.CIL
23. Mrs. Seema Bharadwaj, RA National Support Group, Mid Day Meal, Ed.CIL
24. Sh. Devendra Chauhan RA National Support Group, Mid Day Meal, Ed.CIL
25. Sh. Shudipto Chatterjee RA National Support Group, Mid Day Meal, Ed.CIL
26. Ms. Reena RA National Support Group, Mid Day Meal, Ed.CIL