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

13<sup>th</sup> December, 2012

Dear *Colleagues,*

I write this to you to apprise of the findings of the 41 Social Science Monitoring Institutions on the functioning of MDM Scheme in various States/UTs of the country on the basis of their 3<sup>rd</sup> Half Yearly Report for the period October 2011 to March 2012. The State-wise findings of the Monitoring Institutes have already been shared with you.

A number of States have taken initiatives to strengthen the Scheme; in Karnataka cooking cost is being transferred regularly by e-transfer; School Health Program is running successfully in Andhra Pradesh as micronutrients and De worming medicines are administered regularly; in Assam variety of local vegetables are added in the mid day meal. In Chandigarh inspections are carried out by senior officers. Safety and hygiene condition were 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.

The following issues however cause concern, which need immediate corrective action on your part.

#### 1. REGULARITY IN SERVING MEAL:

It has been reported by most of the MIs that hot cooked meal is generally served daily in most of the visited schools, as reported by students, teachers and parents except:

- i) Golaghat and Lakhimpur districts of Assam, where MDM was interrupted for 7-10 days due to delays in fund flows.
- ii) 7 (17.5%) sampled schools of different blocks of Begusarai district.
- iii) In districts of Samastipur, Siwan and Khagaria there was no regularity in serving mid day meal, due to non-availability of rice and cooking cost.
- iv) In Jammu & Kashmir in most of the schools Mid Day Meal was not served daily and there was an interruption of 15-20 days because of non availability of food grains.
- v) In Kolar district of Karnataka, there was interruption in the midday meal in 11% of the schools for a period of two to ten days due to non-supply of gas.





- vi) In Gondia, Bhandara and Chandrapur districts of Maharashtra, there was an interruption due to irregular supply of food grains.
- vii) In Kendrapara District of Odisha MDMS was disrupted.
- viii) In Jodhpur District of Rajasthan, 10 percent of the visited schools reported to MI that there was an interruption in serving of MDM ranging from 8-12 days, due to irregular supply of food grain, non-receipt of cooking cost on time and non-availability of cook.
- ix) In Mizoram only 15% of the sample schools have served hot cooked meal on daily basis.
- x) In Nagaland 95% schools do not serve hot cooked meal daily.
- xi) In Dadra Nagar Haveli food is not served for 2-3 months during monsoon time.

## 2. REGULARITY IN DELIVERING FOOD GRAINS TO SCHOOL LEVEL:

Food grains (wheat and rice) are to be delivered regularly to the schools at their doorstep. Buffer stock of one month should be maintained at school level to ensure uninterrupted supply of hot cooked meal to the children. Delivery of food grains at the doorsteps of the schools was a problem. Due to non-availability of food grains at school level, MDM was disrupted for several days as reported by MIs. Delay in receiving of food grains has been reported in Jashpur and Raigarh Districts of Chhattisgarh; Ganderbal, Kulgam, Bandipora Districts of Jammu and Kashmir; Godda, Deoghar, Dumka and Pakur district of Jharkhand; Neemuch, Ratlam, Datia, Khargone, Mandla Districts of Madhya Pradesh; Solapur, Raigarh, Sindhudurg, Kolhapur, Ratnagiri, Gondia, Bhandara, Wardha, Nagpur Districts of Maharashtra; Imphal West District of Manipur and West Garo Hills of Meghalaya.

## 3. REGULARITY IN DELIVERING COOKING COST TO SCHOOL LEVEL:

Cooking cost is the most important component of the MDM scheme. As its regular disbursement is key to regular supply of MDM. A number of MIs have reported that cooking cost is reaching late to the schools and this is leading to difficulty in implementing the MDMS at school level. As a result in several places the scheme is being run on credit basis. Some illustrative districts are as under:

State	Districts reporting delay in disbursement of Cooking Cost
Andhra Pradesh	Adilabad, Chttor, Medak,
Bihar	Bagusarai, Saran, Siwan
Chattishgarh	Jashpur, Raigarh, Surguja
Gujarat	Tapi, Vadodara, Mehsana
J&K	Poonch, Udhampur, Ganderbal, Kulgam and Bandipora
Jharkhand	Deoghar, Godda, Dumka and Sahibganj
Karnataka	Gadag



State	Districts reporting delay in disbursement of Cooking Cost
Kerala	Alapuzza and Idukki
Madhya Pradesh	Neemuch, Mandsaur, Ratlam, Bhind, Mandla, Dindori, Alirajpur, and Datia
Maharashtra	Solapur, Raigarh, Sindhudurg, Kolhapur, Ratnagiri, Sangli, Satara, Pune, Gondia, Bhandara, Wardha, Nagpur, Chandrapur
Manipur	Churachandpur
Meghalaya	West Garo Hills
Mizoram	Lawngtalai
Odisha	Dhenkanal, Kendrapara, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Balangir
Punjab	Barnala, Sangrur, Mansa, Muktsar, Bathinda
Rajasthan	Sikar, Nagaur, Jalore, Jodhpur, Udaipur
Uttar Pradesh	Hamirpur, Lalitpur, Farrukhabad, Kanshiramnagar, Sant Kabir Nagar

#### 4. SOCIAL EQUITY:

One of the objectives of the Scheme is to promote social equity, children are encouraged to sit together and take the meals irrespective of economic status, caste, religion and gender. However, in a few cases social discrimination has been reported by the MIs. In Neemuch district of Madhya Pradesh, caste discrimination was observed in 10 percent of the visited schools of the district, in cooking meals, in serving and in one primary and two middle schools the inequity was detected in sitting arrangement. In P.S. Amba of Jawad block the discrimination was noted in cooking, serving as well as sitting arrangements. It was established that MDM was not got cooked by women of SC community by the SMC members. As far as serving is concerned the meals were found to be served by children of OBC community. Similarly the sitting arrangement was also observed to be caste-wise in Mandsaur district of Madhya Pradesh, Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh and in Chickaballapura district of Karnataka. In Jodhpur District of Rajasthan in 45 percent schools children were found to be sitting in-groups according to their caste identity; similarly, Caste discrimination was noticed during MDM serving and eating in 4 schools in Kota District.

#### 5. VARIETY OF MENU:

It is necessary to maintain variety of menu of MDM, which should include rice/wheat preparation, dal and vegetables. Similarly, the schools should display weekly menu in a noticeable position of the school. It has been noticed during this reporting period that normally most of schools were serving varied menu to the children. In some states menu chart has been prepared by State or District which is against the MDM norms; as per the MDM guidelines (Para.4.4 of Chapter 4) the Menu should be decided locally by involving community members. In some cases absence of green and seasonal vegetables was observed by the MIs during their visit. States/UTs may therefore, take appropriate necessary action to ensure that green leafy vegetables are included in the Mid Day Meals of the children. In Paren District of Nagaland 24 schools are providing non variety



items. In some cases the menu chart is found displayed in Head master's room instead of a noticeable location. This has been reported by the MIs of Andhra Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Manipur etc.

#### **6. QUALITY & QUANTITY OF MEAL :**

Regarding quality and quantity of menu, a mixed picture has been captured by the MIs. In some cases the children and parents expressed their happiness over the quality and quantity of menu. But in some other cases an opposite reaction was also observed in this matter. In Begusarai District of Bihar it has been reported by the MI that the children, parents and community were not happy with quantity of food. In Samastipur District of Bihar, the MI has reported about insufficient quantity of food items were served in 18 (45%) schools. In Khagaria district quality of rice was found to be poor. The MI of South West Delhi has reported that 61.5% of children reported quantity and quality of meal as unsatisfactory and insufficient. Negative report about quantity of MDM has also been reported from Deoghar, Godda, Sahibganj, Dumka and Pakur Districts of Jharkhand. In M.S. Akyadeh of Piploda block of Ratlam District of Madhya Pradesh, children were not found to be happy with the quality and quantity of food being served to them. Children complained that they get semi-cooked or over-cooked chapattis and watery dal. In Dindori District of Madhya Pradesh, children and even parents were not found to be satisfied with the quality and quantity of food in 40 and 47.5 percent schools respectively. It was also observed that they do not take MDM due to its poor quality.

#### **7. COVERAGE UNDER SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAMME:**

Micronutrients which are necessary for improving the health and proper growth of the children were not provided in any of the sampled schools of Begusarai district, whereas de-worming medicine was given to the children only one time in all (40) sampled schools of Begusarai district during 2011-12. In Dadra & Nagar Haveli in none of the visited schools micronutrients and de worming medicines were given to the children. In Goa it has been reported that in 15 visited schools (50%) children were not given micronutrients and de-worming medicine in the schools. In Mehsana & Sabarkantha district of Gujarat none of the visited schools children were given micronutrients. The same has also been reported by the MI of Jammu & Kashmir. In Ernakulam, Alapuzza, Idukki and Kannur district of Kerala the children had not received any micronutrients and deworming medicines. The micronutrients were also not supplied to any of the visited schools of Mizoram. In Sambalpur of Odisha Micronutrients and de worming medicines are not given to the children in any schools. The State Governments are, therefore, requested to look into this matter and ensure that all the children are provided with sufficient micronutrients.

#### **8. STATUS OF COOK-CUM-HELPERS:**

MIs have reported that the Cooks/helpers generally cook and serve the meal. In some cases inadequate number of cooks/helpers was observed by the MIs. Sometimes they are engaged by state and sometimes by the SMC. The cooks/helpers are generally nearby habitants of school. In some cases they are not getting the remuneration as per



the GOI norms. In various districts the cooks and helpers are getting Rs.600 and Rs 400 respectively even after the revision of norms. Irregularity of payment has been observed by most of MIs. The extent of delay of this payment ranges from 1 month to 6 months in some cases. In Begusarai District of Bihar schools where MDM was served by an NGO, MDM cooks/helpers were paid honorarium Rs.500/- per month. The social composition of cook/helpers was quite satisfactory. In most of the cases the people from the underprivileged sections have been engaged.

#### **9. INFRASTRUCTURE:**

MIs have reported that most of kitchen-cum-stores constructed were in use in the sampled schools. They have also reported that schools do not yet have pucca kitchen-sum-stores in 35% of the schools of Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir. The MI of Bandipora reported that the schools without kitchen sheds are storing and cooking MDM in the classrooms, offices, and in the homes of the cooks. In some of the visited schools of Jharkhand, it has been reported that kitchen sheds are constructed but not in use. Except in few cases the utensils are also available in the schools. Most of the rural based schools are still using fire wood as fuel whereas the schools of urban areas have shifted to LPG based cooking system. Drinking water facility is available in most of the visited schools.

#### **10. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION:**

It stands to reason that proper community participation could help to overcome the loop holes of MDMS. Unfortunately only limited evidence of community participation has been found by the MIs in this regard. In almost all the cases the roster of community visit was not maintained in the schools. In many cases it has also been reported by MIs that the community people do not have proper idea about the MDMS. It is, therefore, imperative that the States take necessary steps for awareness generation among the community and ensure that mechanisms are in place for active involvement of the community for effective implementation of the scheme.

#### **11. INSPECTION & SUPERVISION:**

Inspections and supervisions are an integral part of the mechanism for successful implementation of the MDM. This is however a weak component in almost all the State/UTs. It is reported by most of the MIs that no regular supervision of MDM was conducted by State or District or Block level Officials. In many cases the inspections by district and block level officials was carried only once or twice in a year but not regularly. Sometimes remarks/ observations were also not found in the inspection register.

#### **12. IMPACT:**

Despite various shortcomings related with MDM, it has been found by all the MIs that MDMS has undoubtedly an incentive for the children to attend schools.



I shall appreciate if you kindly look into the issues as reflected by MIs in their reports which have already been submitted to you and take appropriate action 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 feel free to write if there is anything we can do at this end for effective implementation of MDMS in your State.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,



(Amarjit Singh)

To

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