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भारत सरकार
मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय
स्कूल शिक्षा और साक्षरता विभाग
शास्त्री भवन

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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION & LITERACY

SHASTRI BHAVAN

NEW DELHI-110 115

D.O.No. 13-9/2013-Desk(MDM)

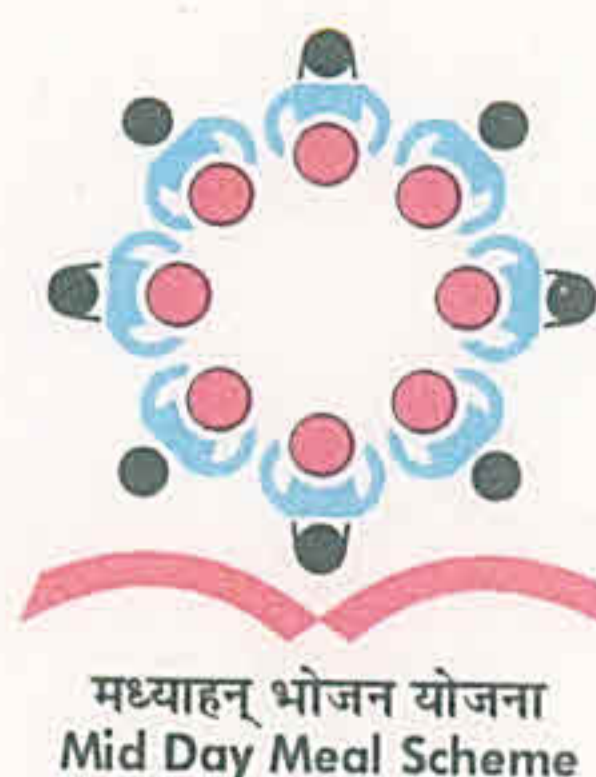
Dated the 22nd October, 2013.

Dear Sir

The 5th Joint Review Mission visited Ahmednagar and Buldana districts in Maharashtra from 30th September to 9th October, 2013 to review the implementation of Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) and to assess the nutritional status of the beneficiary children. The Team headed by Dr. Jagmeet Madan, Principal, Department of Food and Nutrition, SVT College of Home Science, SNDT Women's University, Mumbai Maharashtra consisted of Shri B D Shivani, Deputy Secretary, MHRD; Dr. Mahaveer Mane, Director (Primary Education), Pune; Dr. Meena Godhia and Associate Professors Dr Rekha Battalwar, four Research Assistants from the Department of Food and Nutrition, SVT College of Home Science, SNDT Women's University, Mumbai; Dr. Ashish Satav and Ms. Amruta Paradkar from the Office of Supreme Court Commissioner.

2. The JRM appreciated that 95% of the enrolled children were covered under Mid-Day Meal Scheme. The other best practices of the State include the supply of Micronutrient syrup, protein powder and IFA tablets to all children in the elementary classes; Payment of Honorarium to Cook-cum-helpers either electronically or cheque in their bank accounts; Centralized procurement & supply of pulses & condiments to schools in rural areas; Availability of storage bins for pulses and condiments in all the visited schools; Installation of cost effective and fire proof prefabricated kitchens; availability of fire extinguishers and sealed food samples in schools; as well as the practice of hand wash by the children before and after taking mid-day meal.

3. In the Nutrition Assessment of 532 beneficiary children, the Body Mass Index (BMI), an indicator of the nutritional status, was calculated after taking their anthropometric measurements. Analysis of these children for Z - scores using WHO Global Database on Child Growth and Malnutrition (WHO, 2006) revealed that 54.4% boys and 66.7% girls were underweight in Buldana district. 23.2% boys and 17.5% girls were stunted in the same district. In Ahmednagar, 32.5% boys and 33.3% girls were found to be underweight and 12.4% of boys and 24.2 % of the girls were stunted. As per the BMI index, 20% and 28.8% children in Buldana and Ahmednagar respectively were found to be undernourished. The above issues could be addressed through following interventions:



- i) The Mid Day Meal Menu should have more variety and nutrient density per portion. The JRM has recommended various recipes in its report. These recipes may be introduced in a phased manner within 3 months of the submission of the report. An effort should be made to “identify region specific clusters” keeping in mind the logistics of effective delivery systems for centralized cooking facility. This would help to improve the infrastructure in terms of storage, preparation area, hygiene and sanitation and effective monitoring.
- ii) The JRM Nutrition team recommends to use the Mid-Day Meal as a medium to impart Nutrition Education to children, teachers and parents. Health and Nutrition education should become an integral part of the scheme. The schools should be encouraged to organize health melas, cooking competitions and pro-active parents and community participation. The team has indicated important nutrition messages along with specific recipes recommended for implementation. The team has also developed a FOOD SQUARE TEMPLATE (Annexure-I) to be used as a nutrition education tool for school teachers to sensitize school children with regards to Nutritious Meal. The team recommends that the tool should be customized for different regions, made children friendly and translated in Marathi and circulated to all MDM centres in Maharashtra.
- iii) The Mid Day Meal Program is routed through schools so that correct nutrition messages, good eating habits and hygiene and sanitary practices are imparted and inculcated in children. The team strongly recommends availability of adequate water, adequate hygienic and sanitary toilet facilities and safe drinking water for the school going children. The cook-cum-helper should be sensitized to good hygienic practices including wearing of aprons, gloves and understanding the significance of correct cooking procedures. The height and weight data of school going children should be effectively documented and compiled on a periodic basis to track growth as well as contribute to the National Database to come out with Percentiles of BMI for Indian children. The JRM Nutrition team should involve state specific Nutrition Expert for a continued association in terms of follow-up and intervention. The distribution of Dietary Supplements, Iron-Folic Acid Tablets and De-Worming Tablets should be done with adequate coverage and understanding. The grass root workers should be sensitized about the dosage, indications and contra indications of usage.

4. As regards review of the Implementation of the scheme, the JRM has recommended the following:

- i) **Setting up of Administrative Structure** with dedicated staff exclusively for Mid-Day Meal Scheme so that the scheme is monitored more closely at grass root levels. The State has created posts for Statistical Officer (1), Accounts Officers (33), Superintendents (295) as against the requirement of 352 superintendents @ one for each block. At present 15 posts (45%) of Accounts Officers, 167 posts (57%) of Superintendents are lying vacant. Similarly, 161 posts (45%) of Data Entry Operators to be filled on contract basis, are lying vacant. The monitoring of the scheme would be strengthened if the vacant posts are filled up immediately.
- ii) **Systemic Changes for flow of funds**
JRM observed that out of the recurring central assistance of Rs.442.44 Cr. released under ad-hoc (April, 2013) and balance of first installment (August, 2013), the State Finance Department has released only 303.68 Cr. to the State Department of Education & Sports during the first week of September, 2013.

Thus there is a delay of more than 4.5 months w.r.t to ad-hoc release and 1 month for balance of first installment. This delay has affected the implementation of the scheme at school level which had received funds up to March, 2013. The honorarium of Cook-cum-Helpers had been paid up to March, 2013 in most of the schools.

You may, therefore, take up the matter with State Finance Department for expeditious release of central assistance to your Department. The possibility of adopting 'Andhra Pradesh Green Channel Scheme' may be explored because this scheme would enable the schools to draw 1/12th of their requirement of funds from the Treasury at the beginning of each month. Thus the schools would have availability of funds through out the year irrespective of the time taken by the State Finance Department for completing the procedural formalities for the release of central assistance to State's Nodal Department for implementation of MDMS.

JRM observed that too many intermediary levels in the flow of funds from State Department of Education & Sports to the schools/implementing agencies. The reduction in these levels will definitely reduce the delay in remitting funds up to the schools.

You may also advise the State Finance Department to release the withheld amount of Rs.138.76Cr (Rs. 442.44 Cr – Rs. 303.68 Cr.) from the central assistance of 442.44 Cr. released under ad-hoc and balance of first installment during 2013-14.

iii) Revision of Cooking Cost

The Cooking Cost was revised by MHRD @ Rs.3.34 and Rs.5.00 per child per day for primary and upper primary stage respectively w.e.f 1st July, 2013. But JRM observed that all the schools in the visited districts were receiving cooking cost at old rate @ Rs. 3.11 and Rs. 4.65 per child per day for primary and upper primary classes respectively because the State is yet to revise the cooking cost during 2013-14. You will agree that non-revision of cooking cost by you is depriving the children from getting mid-day meal with the prescribed nutrition and energy. Therefore, the cooking cost must be revised urgently.

iv) Reduction in the quantity of Pulses and Oils in Buldana District

District Education Officer, Buldanahas issued order on 4th September, 2013 advising all schools to reduce the quantity of pulses from 20 grams to 15 grams for primary classes and from 30 grams to 25 grams for upper primary classes. Similarly, the quantity of oils has been reduced from 5 grams to 4 grams for primary and from 7.5. grams to 6 grams in upper primary. The quantity of Mataka has been reduced to 10 grams.

You will appreciate that the Food Norms under MDMS were prescribed after detailed consultation with Nutrition Experts and the Nutrition Institutes. The reduction in the quantity of pulses and oils is likely to affect the protein and energy intake of the children under MDMS. Therefore, you may advise the DEO, Buldana to restore the quantity of pulses and oils as per the prescribed food norms under MDM guidelines.

v) Interruption in Mid-Day Meal Scheme

JRM observed that there was interruption in serving of mid-day meal in schools during June-July, 2013 because of the non-availability of food grain at the schools after summer vacations. The Schools were not maintaining one month's buffer stock of food grains as prescribed under Mid-Day Meal guidelines. The MDM In-charge submitted the indent to the Lifting Agency (State Consumer Federation Limited) when schools opened after summer vacations. The Lifting Agency delivered the food grain within 15 days after receipt of indent. Thus the schools did not serve mid-day meal during June-July, 2013 due to the non-availability of food grains. Some schools had interruption of more than a month as per the details given in Annexure-II. The notable among them is the ZP Primary School in Hivere Bazar, Ahmednagar Urban Block, Ahmednagar whose Sarpanch has got the Best Sarpanch Award and IAS trainees from Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie to see the functioning of this model village.

In order to avoid the recurrence of such incidents of interruption in mid-day meal, you may prescribed Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) along with the necessary checks and balances at various levels for ensuring availability of food grain to school/implementing agency. The reasons for the interruption reported by JRM may be examined for taking necessary corrective action.

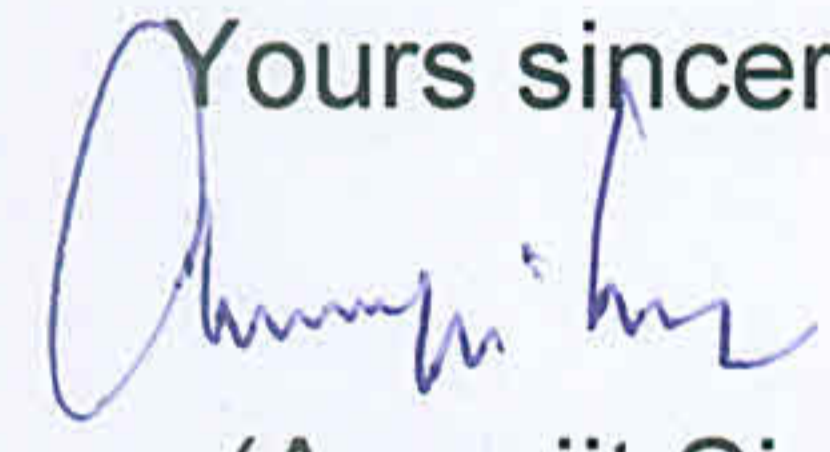
vi) Other Suggestions

- a) Bins may be provided for storing Food grains under moisture free conditions.
- b) Cook-cum-Helpers may be sensitized on FIFO (First in and First Out) system for utilizing oil and other ingredients before their prescribed shelf life or 'best before use' period.
- c) Convergence with State Health Authorities may be strengthened for ensuring effective implementation of School Health Programme.
- d) Action Plan may be drawn up with the time lines for construction of kitchen-cum-stores for which central assistance has already been received by the State Government.
- e) The Annual and Monthly entries in the MIS web portal should be completed in a time bound manner.
- f) Use of LPG and smokeless chullas should be encouraged to prevent health hazards to cook-cum-helpers
- g) Community participation should be encouraged for ensuring transparency and accountability in the scheme.
- h) Toll free numbers may be painted in all the districts for Grievance Redressal. Awareness about the scheme may be generated through advertisement and publicity on the entitlements of the children under food norms. Logo and menu should also be displayed prominently in the school.
- i) Emergency Plan may be finalized along with the "Dos and Don'ts" in case of emergency. The Public Health Centres should also be equipped suitably to handle cases of food poisoning or any untoward incident in the school.
- j) State Level Joint Review Missions may be constituted to visit the poor performing districts in the State.

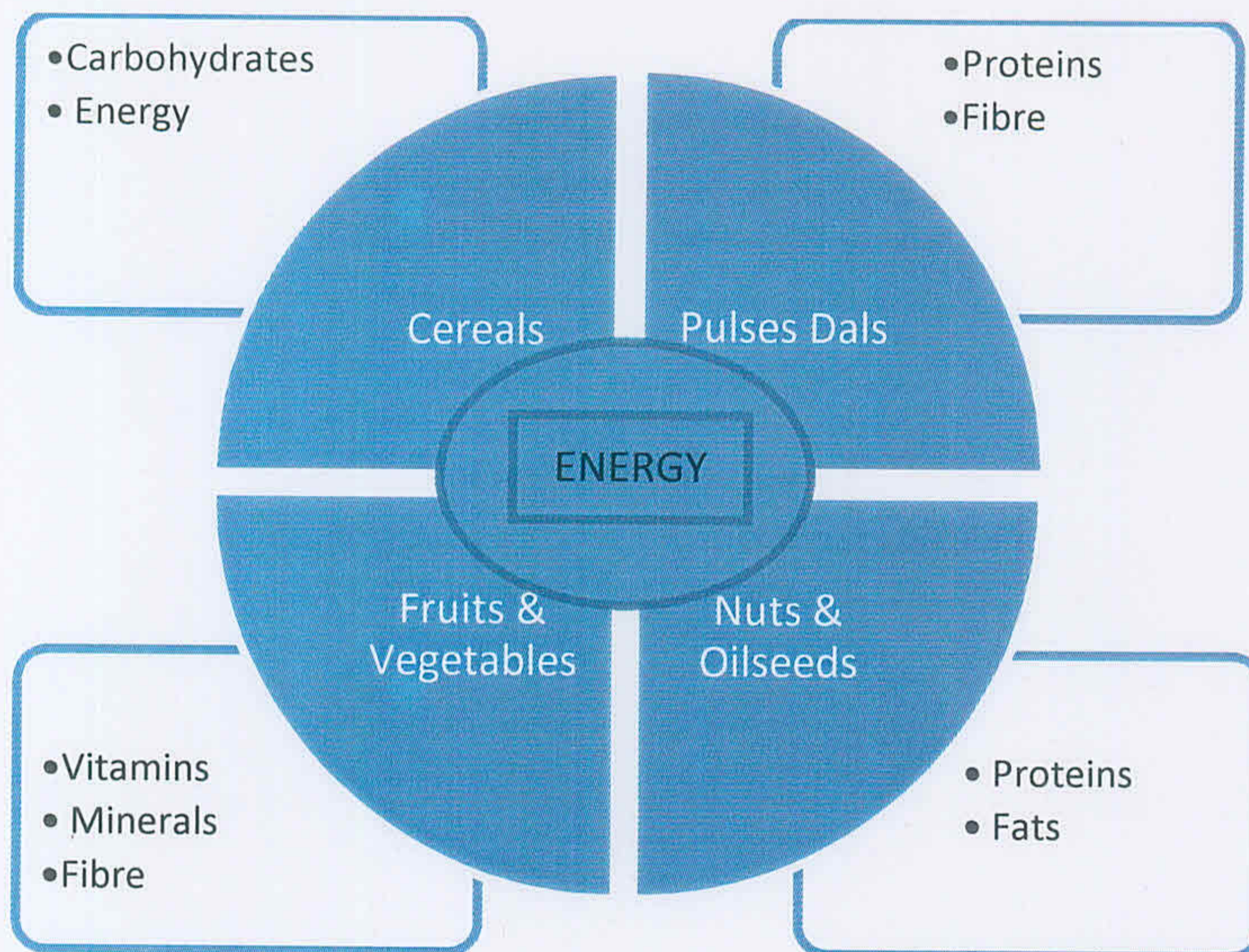
- k) Social Audit may be encouraged through participation of community so as to bring transparency and accountability in the scheme.
- l) MDM ranking of the districts may be undertaken on the basis of the achievement under key indicators such as coverage of children, availability and utilization of funds, food grains, infrastructure, payment of honorarium to cook-cum-helpers, safety & Hygiene.
- m) Empty Gunny bags may be collected from the schools and auctioned collectively.

The report in pdf format containing detailed observations and recommendations of the 5th Joint Review Mission Visit to Maharashtra has also been up-loaded on our website www.mdm.nic.in. The Action Taken Note on the recommendations of 5th JRM may kindly be intimated to us within a period of three months.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

(Amarjit Singh)

Shri J. S. Saharia,
Additional Chief Secretary,
Department of Education & Sports,
Government of Maharashtra,
Mantralaya, Mumbai.



E.g. Paushtik Dal with Rice

