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स्कूल शिक्षा और साक्षरता विभाग
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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. 12-9/2011-Desk (MDM)

Dated 16th November, 2011

Dear Vikram Loda,

I write to you in connection with the visit of 3rd Review Mission consisting of the representatives from Government of India, Office of the Supreme Court Commissionerate for MDM, UNICEF and State Government of West Bengal for jointly reviewing the implementation of Mid Day Meal Scheme in two districts viz. Birbhum and Bardhaman from 21st July – 28th July, 2011.

At the outset the mission deeply appreciates the steps taken by the State Government to ensure enhanced coverage of the MDM Scheme especially in urban areas. It is deeply gratifying to note that as a result of your efforts almost 15 lakh more children in the primary schools and 24 lakh additional children in the upper primary schools are currently enjoying the benefits of the mid-day meal scheme. Please convey our appreciation to the entire MDM team. We do hope efforts will be made to cover the remaining children in a time bound manner. Similarly, all efforts need to be made to ensure that the food provided under MDMS is of a high quality.

Time Period	Coverage of Children							
	Pry				U. Pry			
	PAB Approval	Enrolment	Coverage	% covered vs Enrolment	PAB Approval	Enrolment	Coverage	% covered vs Enrolment
2010-11	7300000	9503055	7050814	74%	2600000	5079591	2452590	48%
2011-12								
I st qtr	7250300	9503055	8143657	86%	2890000	5079591	3614209	71%
II nd qtr	7250300	9288824	8543472	92%	2890000	5001623	4847389	97%

The mission also appreciated the excellent record maintenance in all the visited schools where four types of Registers viz Expenditure Register, Daily Rice Issue and utilization Register, Acquaintance Register, MDM Pass Book Registers were available.

The involvement of SHGs in implementation of the Scheme has also been appreciated as a good initiative, which needs to be encouraged.



Recommendations of the Review Mission

Based on the field visit in the selected District/Urban areas the Review Mission has made the following recommendations for corrective measures by the State Govt. and submission of an action taken note to GOI by 31 Dec 2011:

1. **Delay in release of funds (cooking cost) to schools:** Cooking cost is not released in time to the schools in Birbhum district. As a result the cooking agencies have to borrow from local shops and as and when cooking cost is received local shops are repaid. State Govt. should ensure that funds are made available to school/Implementing agency within one month after receiving the funds from the Central Government.
2. **Regularity in serving meals;** Children are not fed on Saturdays, being half days though the approval has been taken for feeding children for 230 days. State Govt. must ensure that MDM is served to children on all working days including working Saturdays.
3. **Community participation;** The State Govt. should conduct awareness campaigns amongst the parents and community to activate SMCs and VECs. The training module available under SSA may be used for this purpose by adding a chapter on MDM. The village panchayats and the community leaders should be encouraged to conduct social audit. This would be facilitated, if wide publicity is given to the scheme particularly with reference to certain key issues such as entitlement of the children; Nutritive value of food; Hand washing; Hygiene and cleanliness
4. **School Health programme:** Most of the schools were not found administering the IFA tablets as they were not equipped with the knowledge about the benefits and usage. In some cases it was reported that girls were given IFA tablets on empty stomach, which caused some problems such as nausea. This resulted in discontinuation of the IFA supplementation. Teachers need information and basic orientation in this regard. All schools should be reporting on a regular basis about the weekly supplementation of IFA tablets and bi-annual de-worming. Health awareness programme should be conducted periodically to ensure proper administration of IFA.

We need to work closely with the state Health Department to ensure Iron Folic Acid supplementation, regular recommended dosage of vitamin A and regular health check up of all school children. 18% of the out of school children are attributed to vision problems which could be easily addressed by correction of refractive errors and provision of spectacles to needy children. The states have been provided ample funds under the National Rural Health Mission for the school health programme. We need to ensure effective use of those funds. Our teachers need information and basic orientation in this regard; better health and hygiene as well as improved nourishment will definitely have a positive effect on the learning outcomes.

5. **Problems of Fuel:** Use of fire wood in visited schools was found to be another area of concern. Alternate fuel arrangements need to be made on a priority (smokeless chullah, gas connections or solar energy). The school authorities find it difficult to obtain LPG cylinders at domestic rates. The LPG cylinders should be at a well ventilated spot or outside the kitchen and stoves should be fed with gas

through gas pipelines. In all those locations where there is a danger of fire; fire extinguishers should be made available.

6. **Evaluation Study on food norms for children of Primary classes:** Teachers and Head masters were reporting that children in Tribal areas and schedule caste dominated areas need rice more than 100 gms per day in primary schools. A study needs to be conducted on this issue, so that a view can be taken in this regard.
7. **Special measures for Kolkata region;** The team visited several kitchens in Kolkata urban area. There are no large mechanical capital intensive kitchens. The kitchens are entirely decentralized. This is appreciable as there are social spinoffs in the form of employment generation for women. It is therefore desirable that the same system of providing Mid Day meals through SHGs in decentralized kitchens should be continued even for coverage of those schools where Mid Day meals are not being provided currently. While the direction and approach is correct there are several shortcomings that have been listed below. These however are not very major and several of them would be overcome if the following recommendations are followed:

The kitchens visited fall into the following categories: Single school kitchens operated by the Headmaster; Kitchens serving several schools in the range of 1000 – 3000 operated by Headmaster; Kitchens serving several schools in the range of 1000 – 3000 operated by SHGs.

The Department may consider setting up model kitchens that can be used for preparation of food in a hygienic and scientific manner and can also be used for training.

- a) Food should be transported in stainless steel vessels (that can carry 20 kg cooked rice) that have firm lids.
 - b) Sand buckets and Fire Extinguishers that are up to date should be placed outside the kitchen and the staff should be trained to use the extinguisher.
 - c) Proper headgear and aprons should be provided mandatorily. It is desirable that cooks are in uniform.
 - d) Encouraging SHGs in which mothers are also members, women employment and community participation will be encouraged.
8. **Grievance Redressal Mechanism:** A grievance redressal Mechanism has been set up at the state level (033-23597699). This should be publicised as per the GOI guidelines. It will communicate complaints to the concerned authority without delay. A mechanism should be put in place for prompt redressal of these complaints.
 9. **Poor quality of Rice;** The Mission observed that quality of rice actually used by the Kolkata schools for MDM is far below standard. The State Govt. should ensure that good quality of rice is made available to the schools for MDMS. We have also taken up with FCI for arranging supply of better quality rice to the State for the MDMS programme.
 10. **Convergence with other departments:** Convergence with DRDA (District Rural Development Agency), Department of Health and Family Welfare needs to be strengthened to ensure the proper implementation of the Scheme. Coordination with West Bengal Civil Supplies Corporation and FCI and PDS dealers needs to

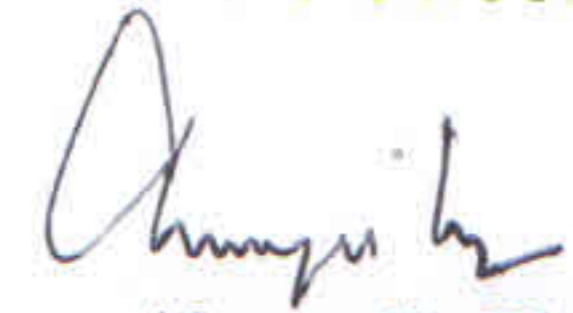
be strengthened to ensure the effective implementation of the scheme. The state level steering cum monitoring committee should be convened once in every quarter to review the scheme and suggest policy measures for effective convergence and implementation of the scheme.

I shall appreciate if you kindly look into the above issues and ensure appropriate action is taken 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 I can do at this end for effective implementation of the MDMS in your State.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,



(Amarjit Singh)

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