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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 11th November, 2011

Dear Sir,

I write to you in connection with the recent 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 Maharashtra for jointly reviewing the implementation of Mid Day Meal Scheme in four districts namely Sindhudurg, Kolhapur, Mumbai Urban and Thane districts from 10th-19th October, 2011.

2. The mission noted with appreciation the positive contribution by Ms Jyoti Jaywant Pawar and Ms Patil, teachers in Government Primary School, Jamdarwadi, in Vaibhawadi block, Sindhudurg district. They played a key role in ensuring cooking and serving of hot cooked mid day meal in the school even when supply of food grains was irregular or cooking cost was not made available to them. They used their own resources as well as borrowed funds to keep the MDM scheme going. The quality of mid day meals in the said school was excellent. Their commitment and dedication to the scheme can motivate teachers in other schools.

3. The Mission has also appreciated the efforts of the Government of Maharashtra for supplying IFA, and micronutrients to children from their own resources. Such intervention would go a long way in improving the health of the children. Micronutrients and IFA tablets were available in all the visited schools.

4. The Review Mission was also satisfied with the attitude of the teachers in Sindhudurg, for willingly volunteering for mid-day meal during their vacant periods so that the education of the children does not suffer while they carry out their duties in the mid day meal scheme on a rotational basis.

5. The quality of meal prepared by the Mahilla Mandal in Mumbai Urban area was good. Excellent Community participation was observed in all the Government Schools in Kudal district where villagers provide two coconut and onions for the mid day meal on a rotational basis. The villagers in the above block also donated Water filters in two Government schools. Eating utensils were also donated by the villagers in few schools of Sindhudurg district (Photograph enclosed)

6. Review Mission observed that Private Aided School, Asalaj, in Gaganbawda block of Kolhapur district adopted innovative practices for involving the community with the scheme through a draw of lottery in which attractive prizes were offered to winners against purchase of coupons by the villagers. The money so collected was utilized in construction of school building including kitchen cum store to ensure good quality meal to children (Photograph enclosed)

7. I would like to place on record that the Cook-cum-helpers in visited schools are cooking and serving the mid day meal to the children even when their honorarium has not been paid during 2011-12. Their commitment to the scheme deserves commendation! **The state also needs to put in place systems to ensure regular payment of honorarium to the Cook-cum-helpers.**



vi) Food grains management

- a) The supply chain management of food grains needs to be streamlined because non receipt of food grains by some schools resulted in interruption of Mid Day Meal Scheme. The recurrence of such incidents can be avoided by providing one month's buffer stock of food grains in all schools.
- b) The unutilised food grains lying with the schools/centralised kitchens is not being adjusted from next month/quarter's allocation. Apart from creating problems of its storage, it increases the chances of its pilferage also. Therefore, the concerned authorities may be advised to look into this matter and adjust the unutilised food grain reported by the schools.
- c) Maharashtra State Cooperative Federation lifts food grains from FCI as well as procures 17 other items of MDM basket such as pulses, spices, condiments, salt, oils & fats etc. Inability of the Federation to provide any of these vital ingredients, results in the disruption of the mid day meal. You may like to review the above decision and delegate the powers of procurement of these ingredients to schools on a pilot basis.

vii) Provisioning of Kitchen-cum-stores in the Schools

The State has constructed only 17464 Kitchen-cum-stores against the 65783 sanctioned units. Construction is in progress in 283 schools. In other words the construction of kitchen-cum-stores is only 28%. As per the mandate of RTE Act, 2009, provisioning of Kitchen-cum-stores is to be ensured by 2012-13 in all schools. Therefore, you are requested to ensure that the remaining sanctioned 47533 kitchen cum stores are monitored closely, for their completion in a time bound manner.

You may also submit the proposal for construction of kitchen cum stores in the remaining 51072 eligible schools including Government aided schools. While submitting such proposal, it may also be confirmed that adequate budget provision has been made in the State Budget for these kitchen-cum-stores.

viii) Exchange Visit Programme

Inter-State exposure visits for officials of State Governments should be mandated to enable them to learn best practices on MDM followed in other States. The institutional mechanisms in Punjab and the MIS system in UP and Rajasthan are a case in point

ix) State Review Mission on MDM

A State Review Mission may be set up to review the Scheme in a district on bi-monthly basis. The report of the state mission may be sent to GOI also.

x) Publicity

Display of child's entitlements of food, daily menu, and MDM logo

Review Mission observed that none of the visited schools had displayed child's entitlement of food under MDM and logo though daily menu was displayed in a few schools.

You may kindly advise all school authorities to display them at prominent places so that child and community in general become aware of their rights and entitlements of food under MDM.

xi) School Health Programme

The Review Mission observed that the health check up is not carried out regularly in many schools by State Health Department but health card of each child was available in the school visited by the Mission. A few schools were visited by the Health Department only once in a year for carrying out health check up.

Kindly issue necessary instructions for ensuring regular health checkup and distribution of medicines and spectacles to children with refractive errors.

8. The following issues need your immediate personal attention:

i) Revision of Cooking Cost

The cooking cost under Mid Day Meal Scheme has since been revised to Rs. 2.89 per child per day for primary and Rs. 4.33 per child per day for upper primary with effect from 01.04.2011. But Govt. of Maharashtra is still providing cooking cost @ 2.69 and Rs.4.03 per child per day for primary and upper primary children respectively. You may kindly ensure that revised cooking norms are adopted immediately.

ii) Non Payment of Honorarium to Cook-cum-Helpers

The cook-cum-helpers have not been paid honorarium during 2011-12 in any of the schools visited by the Review Mission. Since these cook-cum-helpers belong to socially and economically weaker sections of the society, it is critical that they are paid on time and kept motivated.

iii) Filling up the vacant posts

The Review Mission found that in the sampled districts, many posts of Accounts Officers and Superintendents are lying vacant. All the post of Superintendents in Sindhudurg district and 5 posts of Superintendents in Thane districts are lying vacant. The details of vacant posts are as under.

Stage	Status of MDM Staff in State			
	Post	Sanctioned	Filled	% of filled post
Block	Superintendent	300	110	36
Below Block level	No exclusive staff for MDM	Extension Officer and Cluster Head looks after the MDM work as additional charge.		

The Review Mission felt that the institutional set up for managing a scheme of the magnitude and complexity of MDMS is not adequate because there is no separate cell / authority at Mantralaya and Directorate level to look after the Scheme.

Creation of a dedicated MDM cell in the State by filling up all vacant posts would not only increase efficiency but also help in effective monitoring of the scheme at the State level. Therefore, these vacant posts may be filled up on a priority basis.

iv) Non Payment of FCI bills.

The State Government has made payment of about Rs.21.00 crores to FCI against their bills for Rs. 80.00 crores approximately. Some of the bills are more than three months old. As per MDM guidelines, FCI is to be paid within 20 days from the date of receipt of bill. Director, School education may be advised to adhere to these guidelines and make payment for all pending bills. The Directorate/districts authorities may please be advised to review the pendency of FCI bills in monthly meeting and the State Government may also review it on a quarterly basis.

v) Fund Flow Mechanism

In the present system, funds flow from State Government to Director (Education) who releases them to CEO Zilla Parishad. The Chief Executive Officer, Zilla Parishad releases the funds to Block Education Officer and Municipal Corporations. The Block Education Officer releases the funds to Village Education Committee / School Management Committee and Village Education Committee to self help groups. The Directorate of Education also releases funds to Regional Deputy Director of Mumbai for onward transmission to Greater Mumbai Municipal Corporation. Delay of two to three months has been observed by the Review Mission in the release of funds from State to the school level due to the long and circuitous route of fund flow. This can be avoided if the intermediate levels of fund flow are reduced.

xii) Monitoring

A scheme of the magnitude and coverage as vast as Mid Day Meal needs to be monitored closely for ensuring that its benefits reach the intended beneficiaries. For this purpose, we plan to capture on-line data of Mid day Meal through web based MIS embedded with IVRS.

The Block Education Officers, Education Officers, and Extension Officers etc may be asked to inspect 25% schools under their jurisdiction on quarterly basis. Social audit may also be encouraged.

xiii) Availability of Safe Drinking Water, dining halls in Convergence

Children are prone to water borne diseases like diarrhoea, typhoid, jaundice etc. Therefore, the availability of safe drinking water is essential for their health etc. Although water was available in the schools visited by the Review Mission yet its quality needs improvement. Kindly provide these facilities in convergence with Department of Water Supply.

Similarly, dining halls in schools may be constructed in convergence with MNREGA.

xiv) Promoting Cooking through Safe cooking fuels.

Most of the schools are using forest wood as fuel which destroys the eco system through pollution. A number of less polluting or safe cooking mediums are now available which need to be used. Smokeless chullah, LPG, Solar cooker are some of the examples in this regard. Kindly sensitise the concerned authorities about them and promote their use. 80% of schools in HP use LPG for cooking of MDM.

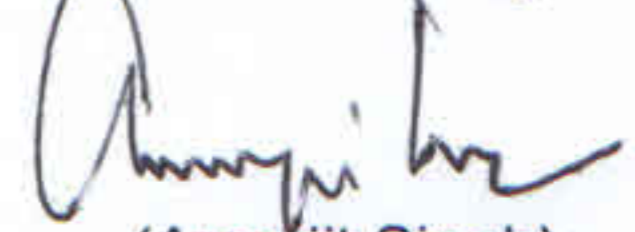
xv) Evaluation Study of the Scheme

The evaluation of the scheme provides an insight into the implementation of the scheme. The last evaluation study of the scheme was undertaken in 2008. Therefore, it is high time that evaluation of the scheme is entrusted to an independent professional agency.

9. I shall appreciate if you could kindly look into the above issues and ensure appropriate action in a time bound manner.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,


(Amarjit Singh)

Shri Ratnakar Gaikward
Chief Secretary,
Government of Maharashtra,
Mumbai