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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION & LITERACY
SHASTRI BHAVAN
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D.O No: 13-2/2011 MDM 2-1

Dated: 16th December 2011

Dear *Sh. Subramaniam,*

I write to you in connection with the recent visit of the 3rd Review Mission constituted by the Government of India to review the implementation of the Mid Day Meal Scheme in the State. The Mission presented its report to the State Government on 1st December, 2011 after visiting the two selected districts of Udham Singh Nagar and Tehri.

The Mission was very encouraged by the discussions held during the presentation meeting and appreciated the resolve shown by yourself to address the issues highlighted in the report. The plan to involve the ex-servicemen for monitoring of the programme is innovative and I am sure that once implemented it will go a long way in ensuring effective implementation of the programme in the state. The Mission was also appreciative of the efforts made by the state for the effective implementation of the MDMS despite a difficult terrain, climatic and geographic constraints and other challenges being faced by the state such as floods, and landslides etc. The recent decision of the State government to enhance the honorarium of the Cook-cum-helper from state government funds is also appreciable.

The following issues however, need your personal attention:

1. The no. of children availing MDM against the total enrolment is only 82% at the primary stage and 85% at the upper primary stage. The State has not served MDM in 323 primary schools (284 Govt + 4 Govt aided 2 EGS + 19 AIE centres + 14 Madarasa/Maqtabs) and 112 upper primary schools (95 Govt schools + 12 Govt aided schools + 5 Madarasa/Maqtabs) during the quarter. Kindly ensure the MDM is available to all the children.
2. Inadequacy of the *quality and supply of food grain* - It was observed by the Mission that the quality of rice being issued by the FCI was 'Grade A' however the quality of rice at the school level was found to be of 'Grade B' in a number of the schools visited by the team. I understand that a Inquiry to the effect had immediately been ordered; you are requested to share the Inquiry report and action taken thereupon with the Department early.



3. Quality monitoring mechanism as prescribed in the MDM guidelines must be ensured at all levels of lifting of food grain to ensure that the quality of rice issued by the FCI is maintained till the school level. Additionally, the State also needs to ensure that regular data exchange takes place between the office of ADEO (Basic) and the DSO so as to ensure uninterrupted supply of food grains to the schools; at least one month's buffer stock should be maintained in all the schools to avoid disruption in the programme.

4. *The lack of a computer based Financial Management Information System (FMIS)*: The state needs to formulate an action plan for the same in the next financial year. The FMIS will help the State in monitoring the expenditure thereby ensuring minimum delay in the release of funds at all levels of implementation. Currently the Mission was concerned at the procedural delay in the release of funds from the State Government to the State Project office. The release procedure at the State government level also needs to be streamlined to the extent possible.

5. *Training of cook-cum-helpers*: The Mission lauds the initiative of the state MDM to prepare a recipe booklet titled 'Micronutrients Enriched Nutritious and Delicious Recipes' in collaboration with the college of Home Science, G.B.Pant University of Agriculture & Technology, Pantnagar. It was however, observed that the booklet though present in all the schools the use of the recipes was very limited. Accordingly the State is required to undertake training of Bhojan Matas for which a suitable module may be got designed.

Similarly, while the booklet is a welcome initiative, the State government should ensure that the cook cum helpers are paid in a timely manner as per norms. The State Govt has incurred expenditure of Rs.1591.38 lakhs towards payment to cook-cum-helpers which is less than the expected expenditure (Rs. 1863.47 lakhs)

6. *Implementation of the School Health Programme*: The mission observed that although the school health program was operational in the state, however, the implementation of the programme appeared to be more effective in Udham Singh Nagar than District Tehri. Further the School health check up was being done once in a year and not biannually. The system of school level screening as is being done should be continued, however in order to complete the coverage there is a need for convergence with the AYUSH Department to fill in the gap of Human resources required for the health screening. Teachers are also required to be oriented regarding IFA supplementation protocols. At the same time regular supply of IFA tablets from health department needs to be ensured. Availability of weighing machine and height scale in schools was very good. The School health cards were available in all schools visited although the entry with respect to height and weight was not being done uniformly. It is important to ensure school health program does not work in isolation and opportunity of convergence with ARSH, VHND and other health program should be used optimally. On the day of VHND health worker can visit school for health education and counseling; The referrals under the SHP need to be followed up in a consistent manner in convergence with the Health Department under NRHM.

7. The situation in the NCLP school visit in Dehradun was not very encouraging as the surroundings were unhygienic and the natural lighting and ventilation in the classrooms was totally lacking. The kitchen was being operated in a portion of the classroom itself. The MDM co-ordinators need to visit the NCLP schools and Madrasas so as to ensure that they are not lacking in the basic infrastructure required for implementation of MDM. These most marginalized children need your extra attention

8. *The lack of management personnel at all levels:* The mission took serious note of the large number of vacancies (over 50%) at the SPO level and lack of adequate dedicated staff positions at the district level. The entire programme at the district level is managed by an Additional District Education Officer (Basic) and a co-ordinator who is a contractual appointee. There were no management posts at the block level. The state may initiate immediate action to fill in the vacant contractual positions at the state level in a time bound manner. The state government also needs to consider appointing block level co-ordinators from the MME component. State Govt has incurred an expenditure of Rs. 23.55 lakhs (22%) during the quarter towards the MME, against the availability of funds of Rs. 103.93 lakhs, as such enough funds are available for the purpose.

9. The above issues would have been addressed if regular SSMC meetings were held to review the programme. SSMC meetings were not held during the first and second quarters of the FY 2011-12. The steering cum monitoring committee meetings at the State, district and block level as stipulated in the guidelines would ensure effective implementation of the programme. The issue of waiver of VAT currently being charged @ 4% on the bills being raised by the FCI should also be taken in the SSMC.

I shall appreciate if you kindly look into these 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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