

CHAPTER-1: INTRODUCTION

National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Mid-day Meal)



The Mid-day Meal (MDM) scheme was launched as a Centrally sponsored scheme on 15 August 1995 with the objective of boosting universalisation of primary education by increasing enrolment, attendance and retention, and simultaneous improvement in the nutritional level of students of primary classes (I to V) of the Government, local body and Government aided schools. From October 2002, it was extended to children studying in the Centres under Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE). The scheme initially provided for distribution of fixed quantities of dry food grain to school children. This was replaced by cooked meals with effect from September 2004 after orders of the Supreme Court. The scheme laid (September 2004) special emphasis on disadvantaged groups with the additional objective of providing MDM in drought affected areas during summer vacation also. From September 2006, the caloric value of the meal was increased from 300 calories to 450 calories and protein content from 8-12 grams to 12 grams, while simultaneously providing essential micro-nutrients and de-worming medicines.

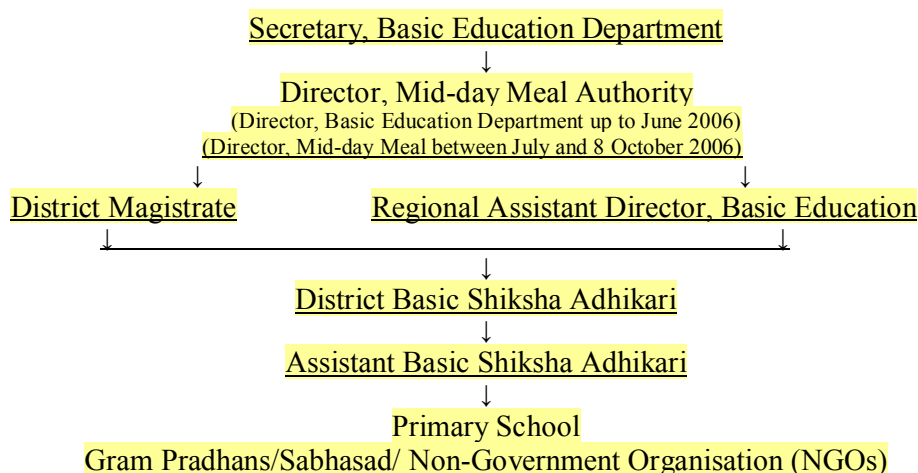
Central assistance for cooked MDM was provided by way of:

- Food grains at the rate of 100 grams of wheat/rice per student per school day.
- Transportation cost of food grains from the nearest FCI depot to schools subject to a maximum of Rs 50 per quintal, revised to Rs 75 from October 2004.
- Conversion cost i.e., cost of cooking.
- Cost of Management, Monitoring and Evaluation (MME).
- Physical infrastructure such as kitchen-cum-store, adequate water supply for drinking and cooking, cooking devices, containers for storage of food grains and other ingredients and utensils for cooking and serving were to be provided by the State Government by utilizing funds available under

various Centrally sponsored schemes. From 2006-07, cost of construction of kitchens and kitchen devices was met from MDM funds.

1.1 Organisational set-up

The overall responsibility for implementation of the programme vests in the Secretary, Basic Education, Government of Uttar Pradesh who up to June 2006, was assisted by the Director, Basic Education and thereafter by the Director, MDM, UP, Lucknow. Principal Secretary, Food and Civil Supply Department is responsible for lifting and distribution of food grains to the implementing agencies. The cost of transportation is verified and reimbursed to the lifting agencies by Basic Shiksha Parishad under administrative control of the Director, Basic Education. The District Magistrate is the nodal officer for the districts and responsible for the implementation of the scheme through District Basic Shiksha Adhikari. The Regional Assistant Director, Basic Education is responsible for furnishing quarterly progress reports to the Director, Mid Day Meal Authority.



1.2 Audit objectives

The objectives of the performance audit were to assess whether:

- the database/ baseline survey on enrolment, attendance and retention of children in primary education conducted/ maintained was reliable;
- implementation of the scheme was carried out through well designed implementation procedures, and conformed to the norms for expenditure met from Centrally sponsored schemes;
- internal controls were adequate and in place; and
- implementation of the scheme did not have any unintended adverse impact on primary education.

1.3 Audit criteria

The audit criteria used were:

- norms and conditions specified in the scheme guidelines;
- financial rules of the Government;
- annual work plans and budget proposals; and
- review, monitoring and evaluation reports as prescribed in scheme guidelines and by the Government.

1.4 Scope and Methodology of Audit

The performance audit of the scheme for the period 2002-07 was conducted during July 2007 to November 2007 by test check of records of the Directorate and 16 out of 70 District BSAs. Besides, 14 Primary Schools (PSs)/ EGS/ AIE in rural areas and six PSs/ EGS/ AIE in urban areas in each district were selected through the Simple Random Sampling without Replacement method. Joint inspections of sample selected schools and centralised kitchens of 20 out of 51 NGOs in the test checked districts were carried out along with authorised representatives of the Education Department. Records of Regional Food Controller (RFC)/ Food and Essential Commodities Corporation (FECC) and District Urban Development Agencies (DUDA) were scrutinised. The audit objectives/ criteria were agreed to by the Principal Secretary, Education in an entry conference held in June 2007. Audit findings and recommendations were communicated to the Government for their comments and also discussed during the exit conference (November 2007). Government accepted the facts and figures and the recommendations made by Audit. The draft report was again discussed with the Secretary, Basic Education, Government of UP in December 2007.

1.5 Acknowledgement

The co-operation from the Principal Secretary, Education, Government of UP, the Secretary, Basic Education, Government of UP and the Director, MDM Authority, Lucknow during the entry, exit conference and during the course of audit is acknowledged with gratitude.