

## CHAPTER-2

### ENROLMENT, ATTENDANCE AND RETENTION OF CHILDREN IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

According to the scheme guidelines (August 1995), the MDM authority was to furnish to the GOI the number of children enrolled in class I to V in Government, Local Body and Government aided primary schools and also in EGS and AIE centres for release of food grains, conversion cost and MME cost while furnishing Annual Works Plan (AWP) in February/March every year. For this purpose, the figures of enrolment were first compiled at block level by Assistant BSA after collection from each school/centre. Assistant BSAs were to supply these figures to District BSAs who, after compilation of figures for the entire district were to submit these to the MDM Authority. The Authority after compilation of figures of all the 70 districts was to send these to the GOI.

Base line survey to assess actual enrolment not done

The GOI had also directed (December 2004) that a base line study for 2004-05 in respect of enrolment of children should be completed before the end of the session so that enrolment data pertaining to the MDM scheme for 2004-05 was captured. No such survey was conducted in the State.

#### 2.1 Enrolment in Schools, EGS and AIE centres

The details of enrolment, etc. sent through the AWP by the MDM Authority to the GOI during the period 2002-07 were as under:

**Table 1**

(Figures in lakh)

Year	Enrolment intimated to GOI	Number of beneficiaries as per Quarterly Progress Report (QPR) ending March ( <i>per centage with respect to Column 2</i> )
1	2	3
2002-03	148.56	NA
2003-04	163.75	NA
2004-05	169.97	141.66 (83)
2005-06	186.44	147.91 (79)
2006-07	187.20	143.86 (77)

Note: Figures in column 2 are as of 30 September of previous year plus anticipated enrolment in the next financial year.

Enrolment figures were inflated

It will be seen from the table that 77 to 83 *per cent* of enrolled children were covered under the scheme during the period 2004-07. While the enrolment increased during the period 2004-07, coverage of beneficiaries decreased for which no reasons were furnished. However, records of test checked districts showed that figures supplied by the District BSAs to the MDM authority were not based on the former's record and there was variation between the figures reported to GOI and those collected from the BSAs (*Appendix-I*). The enrolment figures in 14 such districts were inflated by 9.75 lakh and understated by 1.74 lakh in remaining two districts during the period. Further

discrepancies in figures indicated that figures compiled and intimated by District BSAs to MDMA were not reliable as instanced below:

- In Kushinagar district the average number of beneficiaries based on monthly progress report for January to March 2007 worked out to 2.44 lakh against which 3.22 lakh was shown in QPR ending March 2007.
- Enrolment as of 30 September of each year is taken as the basis for annual work plan as well as for release of conversion cost and food grains. In Shahjahanpur district the enrolment varied from 3.57 lakh in October 2006 to 3.69 lakh in January 2007 as furnished by the Assistant BSAs to the BSA which indicated that they did not have proper records of enrolment (*Appendix-IIa*).
- Assistant BSAs of Kyara block (Bareilly district) and Salarpur; Samrer; Dataganj and Kadarchowk blocks (Badaun district) furnished different figures for lifting of food grains and for release of conversion cost for the same month to the BSAs (*Appendix-II b*).
- The Coordinator<sup>1</sup> (of 109 schools), Block Resources Centre, Kasaya Kushinagar stated (July 2007) that figures of enrolment were not collected from schools by him.

**Proper system of reporting of enrolment and attendance did not exist**

A proper system of reporting enrolment and attendance of children by the schools to Assistant BSAs or from Assistant BSAs to District BSAs was not in existence. District BSAs had obtained the figures of enrolment from Assistant BSAs either in monthly meetings without any documentary support or over telephone as and when required. Absence of a proper system for obtaining the enrolment data resulted in communication of unreliable figures to GOI by the MDM Authority.

## **2.2 Attendance and retention**

**Only 64 per cent of enrolled children attended Primary Schools**

Data relating to dropouts from classes was not obtained/ compiled at any level, i.e. neither at the State nor at the district level. Joint inspection by the audit team along with the representatives of BSAs of 320 schools in 16 test checked districts showed that against the enrolment of 63,995 students, 41,024 (64 per cent) were present as per the attendance registers showing a wide gap between the children enrolled and those attending schools. On actual counting, the number of children present in the schools was 38,057.

The Government replied (January 2008) that efforts were made to retain the children in the schools and further efforts were in process at various levels to improve the situation. No reply relating to steps taken for effecting improvement in the system of collection of data on attendance and retention was furnished.

## **2.3 Conclusion**

Base line survey for 2004-05 to determine the enrolment of children as directed by the GOI was not conducted. Reliable data relating to enrolment, attendance and retention of children was not collected/ reported for proper implementation of the scheme.

<sup>1</sup> At block level a teacher is designated as coordinator to collect figures of enrolment in respect of schools in the block.

## **2.4 Recommendations**

- Base line survey as directed by GOI should be conducted to arrive at reliable figures on enrolment of children.
- Reporting mechanism should be improved upon through online connectivity.
- The task force constituted for inspection of cooked MDM should also verify actual attendance with reference to monthly reports and attendance registers in the schools and report discrepancies.