

CHAPTER-8

ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS (NGOs)

The guidelines (December 2004) envisaged that in urban areas where a centralized kitchen set up was possible for a cluster of schools, cooking may, where appropriate, be undertaken in a centralized kitchen and cooked hot meal may be transported under hygienic conditions through a reliable transport system to various schools. Further, it was also mentioned that NGOs had to fulfill, *inter alia*, the following conditions:

- The NGO had to furnish to the Government an Annual Report along with audited statement of accounts on the transportation charges and such other grants received from the Government duly certified by an approved Chartered Accountant.
- The NGO had to furnish a monthly report on lifting, utilization of food grains, number of schools and children covered to the BSAs for onward transmission to the Government/GOI.
- The accounts were open to check by an officer deputed by the GOI or the Government, besides test-check by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India at his discretion.
- NGOs having credentials and capacity to deliver the Programme were to be selected.
- The NGOs were to ensure serving of cooked meals equivalent to 100 grams of dry wheat/rice per child per day.

688 NGOs were deployed for supply of cooked MDM in urban areas. In nine out of the 16 test checked districts, 51 NGOs were engaged (*Appendix-VII*).

8.1 Submission of accounts and reports

The scrutiny of records of BSAs and joint inspection of NGOs showed:

- NGOs of test checked districts did not furnish annual reports and audited statement of accounts to the Government.
- 34 NGOs of seven districts had not submitted monthly accounts to BSAs as a result thereof food grains consumption and conversion cost could not be verified in audit.
- The records of NSA and District Manager, FECC, Lucknow revealed that 12 NGOs were issued 3,354.16 quintals of excess food grains (*Appendix-VIII*) valuing Rs. 18.95 lakh during April 2005 to May 2007. The records of remaining four²⁷ NGOs were not furnished and excess release of food grains, if any, could not be ascertained.
- The NGO at Kanpur Nagar also did not submit the accounts to the BSA except for November 2004 which showed that 23 *per cent* of funds was utilised on ingredients, 22 *per cent* on fuel and 55 *per cent* on administrative expenditure against prescribed percentage of 70, 10 and 20 respectively. Deficient use of ingredients was bound to affect the quality of MDM adversely. Despite non-submission of monthly accounts by the

NGOs at Lucknow were provided excess food grains amounting to Rs 18.95 lakh

NGOs at Kanpur Nagar were provided excess food grains amounting to Rs 7.79 lakh and conversion cost of Rs 59 lakh

²⁷ Chhangaram Bahuddeshiya Jan Kalyan Samiti, Chhatishgarh Samajik Janchetna Manch, Uttam Kalyan Trust and Janta Sewa Sansthan.

NGO Kanpur Nagar regular release of food grains and conversion cost by the BSA led to excess release of 1379.30 quintal of food grains valuing Rs 7.79 lakh and conversion cost of Rs. 59 lakh during 2004-07.

- NGOs supplying MDM at Agra, Ballia, Bareilly, Etah, J P Nagar, Kannauj, Kanpur-Nagar, Lucknow and Shahjahanpur did not submit the records of food grains, other ingredients and cooking cost to audit. Consequently, utilization of food grains and conversion cost amounting to Rs 12.54 crore²⁸ given to these NGOs could not be verified. The Ayukta, Nagar Nigam, Lucknow also did not furnish the records/ replies of audit memos and letter issued by audit and the District BSA Lucknow (December 2007) as of January 2008 despite reminders.

Non-submission of reports and audited accounts to the Government led to inadequate monitoring of the performance of the NGOs.

8.2 Infrastructure and capacity of NGOs

It was observed during the joint inspection that:

- The BSA, Kanpur Nagar awarded (October 2004) the work to an NGO-Society for Education & Welfare Awareness (SEWA) without ascertaining the infrastructure and the capability of NGO to supply nutritious and hot cooked MDM to schools located at a distance up to 75 kms away from centralized kitchen (Bilhor) as commented in para 8.3 of the report. Neither the period for which the agreement was effective nor any penalty clause in the event of failure by NGO in supplying MDM was incorporated in the agreement. Similar deficiencies were noticed in the agreement entered into with the NGOs in other test checked districts also.
- In Lucknow, fifteen NGOs were deployed in April 2005 for supply of MDM but four²⁹ of them left the work in May 2005 and six³⁰ were black-listed between December 2006 and August 2007 due to selling of food grains, preparation of unhygienic meal and for not observing the prescribed menu. No action was taken against NGO (SEWA) at Kanpur Nagar for supplying inferior quality and lesser quantity of meals.
- The NGO at Kanpur Nagar had occupied a major portion of the Community Resource Centre (CRC), Prem Nagar, (Kanpur Nagar district) in which three PSs and one Junior High School were housed and the officials of the CRC and school children were sitting in the verandah due to shortage of space. The NGO did not pay any rent for the place occupied by it. Moreover, the environment of schools was disturbed due to the big kitchen in its campus. Similarly, the NGO at Lucknow had set up its kitchen in a classroom and verandah of the PS, Naubasta, Lucknow.

NGOs did not have sufficient infrastructure/capacity for serving MDM

NGOs at Kanpur Nagar and Lucknow unauthorisedly occupied school premises and classrooms for cooking meal

²⁸ Does not include cost of food grains given to NGOs at Kannauj and food grains & conversion cost to NGOs at J P Nagar as these were not available.

²⁹ Mahila Utthan Evam Gramin Sansthan, Sewa Sahayata Samiti, Priya Darshini Gyamodya Prashikshan Samiti, Nirbal Varga Mahila Shakti Utthan

³⁰ Gramin Evam Nirbal Vikas Sansthan, Ram Mahila Kalyan Samiti, Savitri Gramodyog Sewa Sansthan, Janata Sewa Sansthan, Pahal, Lalita Bhartiya Gramodyog Sansthan,



Verandah is being used as classroom in CRC at Kanpur Nagar



Cooking of MDM by NGO in classroom at Lucknow

Insufficient infrastructure/ capacity with the NGOs led to their unsatisfactory working and unauthorized occupation of the space in school campus.

8.3 Supply of mid-day meal

In Kanpur Nagar one NGO (SEWA) was awarded (October 2004) the work of serving MDM from a centralized kitchen to the children of 392 schools. Scrutiny of records of the BSA, Kanpur Nagar revealed that:

- School children located at distant places from the kitchen never got hot meals.
- Seasonal vegetables were not used as per requirement of the menu.
- Nagar Shiksha Adhikari (NSA), Kanpur Nagar reported (December 2006) that the NGO had supplied watery Palak dal. Joint inspection of PS, Manpur at Kanpur Nagar revealed that half baked roti and watery dal was served.
- According to Inspection Report (December 2006) of NSA furnished to DM, Kanpur Nagar, the NGO had supplied two light weight *rotis* which could not be of 100 gram and the meal was not supplied timely. The fact was confirmed during joint inspection also as the weight of two chapattis supplied to more than 35,000 children in Kanpur Nagar, was found to be 82-84 gram only.
- The NGO at Kanpur Nagar did not supply *chapattis* or *puri* from October 2004 to December 2006 as it had no machine for making *chapattis*. It supplied rice based meal or *halwa* against the prescribed menu during the said period. This was reported by NSA also to DM, Kanpur Nagar.

Meal served were not of prescribed quantity and as per approved menu

During joint inspection of schools of urban areas of Agra, Etah, Kanpur Nagar and the NGOs concerned, it was found that:

- Head mistress of Model Basic Kanya PS, Prem Nagar, (Kanpur Nagar district) stated (August 2007) that children would not take MDM if it did not look good. *Tahari* supplied by the NGO was shown by the Head mistress to the joint inspection team, the very look of which was unappetising (ref: photograph below). A similar complaint was lodged by the children of Basic PS, Anwarganj, Kanpur Nagar. This was reported by NSA also to DM, Kanpur Nagar.



Tahari supplied by NGO at Kanpur Nagar

Iodised salt was not used by all the NGOs at Agra and Lucknow

- Against the prescribed quantity of 25 gram dal (pulses) to be given to each child to provide 5 gram protein, the average quantity of dal used by two NGOs (Acharya Gyani Ram International Shiksha Niketan and Maya Devi Adarsh Shiksha Samiti) for 79 schools at Agra was found to be five to six grams per child only.
- In PS Balak Universal-II, Etah Adarsh Gramodyog Sewa Sansthan, the NGO did not supply hot MDM timely. The quantity of meal supplied was also not sufficient for the children present. This was confirmed by the Head Mistress of Shri Digamber Jain Kanya J H School, Etah and reported (November 2006) to DM, Etah.
- The guidelines envisaged that iodized salt should be used. In joint inspection, it was found that two³¹ NGOs of Agra and two³² NGO of Lucknow districts were using un-iodised salt packaged in imitated wrappers of reputed firms.



Salt in duplicate wrapper being used by NGOs in Lucknow

Inadequate monitoring of the NGOs by district level authorities resulted in serving of inadequate quantity of meal.

8.4 Conclusion

Non-submission of annual reports/ audited accounts by the NGOs to the Government resulted in inadequate monitoring of the performance of the NGOs. NGOs were engaged without ascertaining their infrastructure and capacity which resulted in their unsatisfactory working and unauthorised occupation of space/ classrooms of school buildings. Poor monitoring by DMs/ BSAs resulted in serving of inadequate quantity of meal to children.

8.5 Recommendations

- The NGOs should be asked to furnish monthly accounts of food grains, conversion cost and other ingredients and further releases should be made after adjusting the balances lying with them.
- The NGOs should be asked to furnish annual report along with audited statement of account.
- Vouchers of vegetables and other ingredients purchased/ used should also be checked by task forces to verify the expenditure incurred.
- Supply of MDM should be assigned to NGOs after ensuring their capacity to provide nutritious and hot MDM to children.
- The school campus should not be allowed for cooking of mid-day meal to avoid any hindrance in the teaching-learning process.

³¹ Suprabhat Educational Society and Bhartiya Gramothan Sewa Samiti Agra.

³² Vishweswar Dayal Madhyamik Vidyalaya Samiti and Help Hands Samajik Sewa Sansthan Lucknow.