

CHAPTER-9

REPORTING, MONITORING AND IMPACT EVALUATION

The State Government had issued instructions (June 2004 to January 2006) for formation of village level to State level committees for supervising and serving of Mid-day Meal. Due to non-compliance of these instructions by the committees the Government ordered (March 2006) formation of District level and Block level task forces with twelve³³ and eight³⁴ members under the chairmanship of the DM and the Sub District Magistrate respectively and prescribed a check-list for adequate and effective monitoring of the scheme. Each member of the task force was required to inspect five schools every month so that all the schools were covered every three months.

9.1 Inspection by task force

Task force visited 65 to 69 per cent of schools only

The task forces visited 77,765 (65 per cent) as against 1,19,426 targeted school/centres during the quarter ending December 2006 and 83,932 (69 per cent) as against 1,21,583 targeted schools/centres during quarter ending March 2007. The reports for the period April 2006 to September 2006 were not produced.

Number of visits by the task forces was inflated

In 15 out of 16 test checked districts, task forces were constituted between April 2006 and August 2006. The task force in Jhansi district had not been constituted as of September 2007. While the task forces inspected 1,822 schools in eight test checked districts³⁵ during 2006-07, the reports of task forces in respect of remaining eight districts³⁶ were not available with the district BSAs concerned. The Director, MDM authority in its reports had, however, shown 39,636 schools were inspected in these districts during October 2006 to March 2007. While BSA, Jhansi stated (September 2007) that formation of task force was under process, the Director had shown 2,329 schools were inspected by task forces during October 2006 to March 2007. In Lucknow, the task force was constituted in August 2006 and only one member³⁷ had visited (September 2006) six schools till March 2007 against which the Director reported 2,486 visits by the task force during October 2006 to March 2007. In respect of the test checked 320 schools, the task forces had not visited 239 (75 per cent) schools.

The reports of the task forces for the period October 2006 to March 2007 showed that out of 1.62 lakh schools, meal was not distributed in 2,086 schools, quantity of meal served was less than the prescribed quantity in 1,151 schools, prescribed menu was not followed in 3,589 schools and the quality of meal was unsatisfactory in 1,723 schools. No action was taken by the DM / State Government on the deficiencies pointed out in these reports.

³³ DM, Chief Development Officer, District Inspector of schools, District Programme Officer, District BSA, District Supply Officer, CMO, Dy CMO, District Development Officer, Project Director DRDA, District Social Welfare Officer and District Panchayat Raj Adhikari.

³⁴ SDM, ABSA/SDI, Block Development Officer, Medical Officer Incharge Primary Health Centre, Asstt. Development Officer Panchayat., Nayab Tehasildar, Supply Inspector and one member nominated by SDM.

³⁵ Ballia, Bareilly Budaun, Gonda, JP Nagar, Kannauj, Kanpur Nagar and Lucknow.

³⁶ Agra, Etah, Ghazipur, Jhansi, Kushinagar, Rae Bareli, Shahjahanpur and Shravasti.

³⁷ District Programme Officer, Lucknow.

The numbers of schools shown as covered by the task forces during October 2006 to March 2007 was, thus doubtful. Also no follow up action was taken on the findings of task forces. Thus, the objective of formation of task forces to inspect all the schools every three months to monitor the implementation of the scheme remained unfulfilled.

The Government replied (January 2008) that the audit observations had been taken into consideration to make the monitoring effective.

9.2 Non-maintenance of records

The scheme guidelines provide maintenance of records of food grains and cooking cost by the implementing agencies and NGOs. The guidelines also envisaged displaying of information regarding quantity of food grains received, utilized, other ingredients purchased and utilized, and number of children benefited under MDM scheme at school level.

During the joint inspection of schools, it was noticed that:

- Teachers of 112 (35 *per cent*) of the 320 schools were helping in maintenance of records relating to food grains to be maintained by Gram Pradhans.
- Records of receipts and utilization of food grains were stated to have been maintained in respect of 114 (36 *per cent*) of the 320 schools but no records were submitted to the joint inspection team for verification. In the remaining 206 (64 *per cent*) schools, records were not maintained.
- Non-submission/maintenance of records by NGOs of test checked districts for utilization of food grains and conversion cost amounting to Rs 12.54 crore³⁸ could not be verified in audit.

Due to non-maintenance of records by NGOs, expenditure of Rs 12.54 crore could not be verified

The Government stated (January 2008) that record of children availing of MDM, were kept at school level and instructions were issued to the concerned DMs to call for the explanation of NGOs which have not submitted the records.

The reply was not satisfactory as the records of food grains and conversion cost were to be maintained by the concerned implementing agencies. Thus, due to non-maintenance/non-furnishing of records, actual utilisation of food grains and conversion cost was not ascertainable.

9.3 Periodical returns

9.3.1 Quarterly Progress Report

Scheme guidelines envisaged that Quarterly Progress Report (QPR) in the prescribed seven forms³⁹ seeking information on important parameters of the scheme such as number of children availing of MDM, food grains, infrastructure, utilization of funds and monitoring meetings held during the quarter etc. were to be sent to the GOI within one month after the end of every quarter. This was the main tool for monitoring the scheme. However, QPRs were sent to GOI with delays ranging from three months to nine months.

QPRs were furnished late; delay ranging from three to nine months

³⁸ 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.

³⁹ 1. Coverage of schools/children 2. Progress of provision of infrastructure 3. Arrangements for cooking 4. Progress of offtake of Food grains 5. Utilization of cooking cost and MME 6. Implementation of Programme in drought affected areas and 7. Monitoring & Evaluation. .

The Director stated (October 2007) that there were delays in receipt of QPRs from field offices and consequent delay in compilation of figures at Directorate level. This indicated lack of effective monitoring to obtain the timely data from the field.

9.3.2 Utilization Certificates

UCs in respect of food grains were not obtained

As per the guidelines, Utilisation Certificates (UCs) in respect of Central assistance provided by way of (a) food grains, (b) cooking cost and (c) MME expenses were to be sent to GOI on 30 June and 30 September respectively of the following year. The Director had not called for the details of utilization of food grains and conversion cost from the implementing agencies at the school level. UCs for conversion cost and MME for the year 2004-05 and 2006-07 based on releases made were sent in February 2006 and June 2007 respectively. No UC was sent for 2005-06.

The BSA, Lucknow stated that UCs of food grains and conversion costs were not received from Gram Panchayat and Nagar Ayukta, Nagar Nigam, Lucknow and utilization of food grains and conversion cost mentioned in the QPRs computed on the basis of number of days and beneficiaries. A similar procedure was adopted in other test checked districts also.

9.4 Mid-Day Meal scheme affected teaching/learning

The scheme provided for payment of wages to cooks and helpers from Central assistance and to restrict assigning responsibility relating to MDM scheme to teachers in any circumstances, except that the Head master/ mistress was responsible for ensuring that good quality wholesome food was served to children and actual serving and eating was undertaken in a spirit of togetherness, under hygienic conditions, and in an orderly manner. However, during joint inspection, it was noticed that:

- Of the 320 schools, the teachers in 63 schools were involved in purchase of vegetables and they helped in serving MDM in 267 schools. In 198 schools, teachers stated that due to MDM, they had less time for teaching.
- Children of six⁴⁰ PSs were involved in cooking MDM affecting adversely their learning process.
- Lifting food grains from fair price shops and supply of MDM was made by an assistant teacher of Poorva Madhyamik Vidyalaya, Mustafabad, Rae Bareli since December 2005.



Children engaged in cooking MDM at Shahjahanpur and Ghazipur

⁴⁰ Dharmapur, Ballia, Gauspur Bujurg-I and Martinganj, Ghazipur, Sharda Sadan, Jhansi, Mahanandpur, Rae Bareli and Rujwan Kala, Khutar, Shahjahanpur

- Classrooms were being utilized as store room for food grains and for cooking MDM which resulted in less availability of space to children.

Involvement of children and teachers for helping preparation of MDM and utilization of classrooms for stores/ cooking meals affected the teaching and learning process of children.

9.5 Safety and Hygiene

The MDM scheme was expected to be implemented with the utmost regard to safety and hygiene. It was observed during joint inspection that:

- MDM was cooked in the classrooms in 14 schools of six districts.⁴¹



Cooking of MDM in Classroom at Lucknow



Cooking of MDM in Classroom at Ghazipur

69 per cent of test checked schools were using fire-wood for cooking MDM

- As use of fire-wood was to be discouraged and smokeless chulhas preferably gas chulhas were to be used, 34,005 schools were provided with gas based cooking facilities up to March 2007. However, out of 254 test checked schools⁴² where MDM was cooked, only 79 schools (31 per cent) were using gas chulhas and the remaining 69 per cent schools were using fire wood.



Using fire-wood in PS Jagdeeshpur and PS Rujahankala, Rae Bareli

- Persons engaged in cooking and serving the MDM were to be trained in hygienic habits and had to wash their hands and feet with soap before commencement of cooking/ serving. However, thirty three (10 per cent) cooks out of 320 engaged in preparing MDM did not have neat and clean

⁴¹ Ballia, Kannauj, KushiNagar, Lucknow-2, Raebareli-4 and Shahjahanpur-5.

⁴² In running 66 schools (320-254), MDM were being supplied through centralized kitchen.

In all test checked districts children did not wash their hands before taking meals

dress and MDM was served without cleaning hands and in an unhygienic way in two schools at Kanpur Nagar and Ghazipur.

- MDM was to be used as a vehicle to inculcate hygienic habits among the children. They were to be encouraged to develop habits like washing their hands with soap before taking meal, using clean utensils, avoiding littering and wastage of food. An interview of response of a group of five girls and five boys each in 320 test checked primary schools showed that they were not cleaning their hands before taking their meals.

Only in five⁴³ (two per cent) out of 320 test checked schools the scheme was implemented very well. Teachers had taken care of supply of required quantity and quality of meals being served to the children. They were also very particular about the cleanliness and hygiene. Thus, proper attention towards safety and hygiene was not paid in most of the schools.

9.5.1 Use of unhygienic ingredients

During joint inspection of schools it was found that:

Ingredients used for MDM were not properly cleaned

- In 18 of the 320 schools, rice and vegetables were not cleaned properly before being cooked.
- Insect affected vegetables were found being served in PS, Mahamood Nagar-I, Malihabad, Lucknow. The Gram Pradhan assured the joint inspection team that in future due care would be taken.
- In PS Mahipat, Mau at Kakori, Lucknow and Kanya PS Khair Nagar, Kannauj, rotten vegetables were found.



Rotten vegetables for MDM at Lucknow



Rotten vegetables for MDM at Kannauj

The Government stated (January 2008) that an honest attempt had been made to keep teachers free from any piece of work pertaining to MDM. It was further stated that the children being in their charge, they ought to supervise any feeding programme being implemented in schools and instructions have been issued to keep kitchen neat and tidy and keep strict vigil on hygiene.

9.6 Monitoring

The scheme guidelines envisaged management and monitoring of the programme through Steering-cum-Monitoring Committees (SMCs) at four levels viz. National, State, District and Block levels. In their respective jurisdiction, SMCs were generally to guide the various implementation

⁴³ PS Dabkaia Agra, PS Gur Sarai and PS Sharda Sadan Nagar Chhetra .Jhansi. PS Ravindra Nagar Kushinagar and PS Atsalia Shahjahanpur.

agencies, assess the impact of the scheme and take remedial measures where necessary and mobilize community support. According to the GOI guidelines, the State-level SMCs were expected to meet at least once every six months, and the District and the Block level SMCs at least once in a quarter. The Government, however, fixed (July 2006) the periodicity of meetings quarterly for State and monthly for district and block levels to ascertain the implementation and take corrective measures where necessary. Scrutiny of records, however, revealed:

Monitoring at each level was inadequate

- State level SMC was created in August 2007. This indicated that no proper monitoring mechanism was available during 2004-07.
- Records of the BSAs of the test checked districts revealed that DMs of eight districts had one to 10 meetings during September 2004 to March 2007 while the remaining eight had no meeting during this period which indicated that monitoring at district level was poor.
- No reports of block level meetings were available in the districts which indicated that monitoring was not done at blocks.

Thus, there was lack of proper monitoring at all the three levels which led to poor performance of the scheme.

The Government stated (November 2007) that all BSAs/ Asst. BSAs were being trained for monitoring the scheme. It further stated (January 2008) that the frequency of monitoring had been raised at block levels and DMs had been instructed to ensure regular meeting of district level task force/ monitoring committee. At State level, every possible effort was made to make monitoring effective as was reflected in the decisions of the Government taken from time to time for improvement in the scheme's functioning during 2002-07 and the position reported to the GOI through QPRs.

The reply was not tenable as position shown in QPRs was not analysed at any level in the State and the scheme was not properly monitored as a result of which the intended objectives of the scheme were not attained.

9.7 Error Signals

Regular complaints (8) and newspaper clippings (39) from December 2005 to January 2008 relating to 57 institutions in 27 districts indicated that cases of food poisoning, poor quality of meal and presence of insects in MDM were persisting (*Appendix-IX a & b*). Action taken on the complaints was not intimated (December 2007). In respect of the complaint against NGO at Kanpur Nagar the Government, however, stated (January 2008) that instructions had been issued to the DM to call for an explanation of the NGO. As of January 2008 no action was, however, initiated against the NGO.

Despite deficiencies having been pointed out in CAGs report ending March 1999, these shortcomings persisted

Paragraph 3.1 of the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General's Audit Report (Civil), Government of Uttar Pradesh for the year ended March 1999 brought out variation in enrolment data, unauthorized accumulation/issue of food grains, loss of food grains, irregular payment of transportation cost, undue benefit to FPSKs, non-conducting of evaluation through an independent agency, etc. in implementation of the Scheme. The Public Accounts

Committee (PAC) had also made 19 recommendations during October 2000 to May 2001. The Education Department furnished action taken note on the recommendations of the PAC after a lapse of five years only in June 2006 stating that vigilance enquiry was in process in 14 cases (**Appendix-X**) and the scheme has been formulated keeping in view the recommendation of the PAC. The current performance audit, however, revealed that deficiencies as brought out in the afore-mentioned Report of the CAG, persisted indicating appropriate lessons had not been learnt at different levels of governance.

Annual
evaluation to
assess the
impact of the
scheme was
not done

9.8 Evaluation

The guidelines provide that at least one evaluation study be conducted each year through an external agency utilizing 15 *per cent* funds released under MME.

Though funds under MME for this purpose were available, evaluation of the scheme was not conducted as of December 2007.

The Government stated (September 2007) that evaluation to assess the impact of the scheme through an external agency was not conducted in the absence of nomination of agencies. The reply was not tenable as the GOI had issued instruction (September 2004) to conduct the evaluation of the scheme through the agency nominated for SSA. Subsequently, it nominated (September 2006) four agencies⁴⁴ for evaluation of the MDM scheme. The Government further stated (January 2008) that evaluation was to be carried out by Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow for which terms of reference were under finalization.

9.9 Conclusion

Task forces had not inspected prescribed number of schools. The available stock of food grains and conversion cost was neither displayed in the schools nor were their records maintained by the implementing agencies. QPRs were sent to GOI very late and UCs from implementing agencies were not obtained. Teachers and children were involved in cooking of MDM and proper attention towards safety and hygiene was not paid. The performance of the scheme was neither adequately monitored nor got evaluated by any external agency.

9.10 Recommendations

- Regular visit by task forces should be ensured and necessary action taken on their reports. Timely submission of quarterly progress reports to GOI should also be ensured.
- Maintenance of accounts of food grains and conversion cost by the implementing agencies and their submission to BSAs should be ensured. The available quantity of food grains and the amount of conversion cost should also be displayed daily in the schools.
- Utilisation certificates from implementing agencies should be obtained by the BSAs regularly to monitor implementation of the scheme and the expenditure thereon.

⁴⁴ Giri Institute of Social Science, Lucknow; G B Pant Social Science Institute, Allahabad; Centre of Advance Development Research, Lucknow and Lucknow University, Lucknow.

- Teachers and children should not be involved in cooking MDM and proper attention on safety and hygiene aspect of the scheme should be paid.
- The performance of the scheme should be got evaluated by any external agency.

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