

## Basic Education Department

### OVERVIEW

*The National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education\* commonly known as Mid-Day Meal scheme was started in August 1995 with the aim of universalisation of primary education by improving enrolment, attendance and retention and raising the nutritional level of children, inculcation of hygiene and sanitation practices, breaking caste prejudice by sharing common meals and fostering gender equity. The scheme seeks to achieve its objectives by improving the nutritional status of children in class I-V in Government, Local Body, Government Body, Government aided schools, etc. The scheme also aimed at providing nutritional support to children of primary stage in drought-affected areas during the summer vacation.*

*Based on the enrolment reported by the State Government, the GOI allotted district-wise food grains which were to be lifted from the district godowns of Food Corporation of India by the transporting agencies and supplied to implementing agencies through fair price shops. The GOI also provided assistance for physical infrastructure, Management, Monitoring and Evaluation and conversion cost for Mid-Day Meal to be served to the children.*

*Reliable data relating to enrolment, attendance and retention of children was not collected/ reported for proper implementation of the scheme. Records relating to utilization of food grains and conversion charges were not maintained by the implementing agencies nor were UCs for food grains and conversion cost obtained. The quality of food grains for MDM was not ensured and huge quantity of food grains remained with transporting agencies and FPSKs. Mis-match between the quantity of food grains utilised and the conversion cost paid was not investigated. Deficient scrutiny of transportation claims resulted in excess reimbursement of transportation cost to the transporting agencies. Improvement in the nutritional status of the children was not ensured and micro-nutrient supplements and de-worming medicines were not provided. Periodical health check-up was also not introduced. Kitchen sheds were not provided in substantial number of schools and no provision for their repair and maintenance was made. The schools did not have adequate cooking and serving utensils. Potable water was also not ensured in large number of schools. NGOs were engaged without ensuring required infrastructure/ capacity resulting in their unsatisfactory working. Teachers and children were involved in cooking of MDM and proper attention towards safety and hygiene was not paid. The scheme was neither properly monitored nor was its performance got evaluated by any external agency.*

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\* The abbreviations used in the report have been listed in the glossary at page 61-62

- Base line survey during 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.

*(Paragraphs: 2.1 & 2.2)*

- Budget provisions for the conversion cost were in excess leading to unspent balances ranging between 14 and 24 *per cent* at the end of each year during 2004-07.

*(Paragraph: 3.1.1)*

- The quality of food grains for MDM was not ensured as broken in excess of permissible limit, foreign matter and damaged/ discoloured grains were noticed in 224 (76 *per cent*) of the 320 schools and NGOs inspected.

*(Paragraph: 4.1)*

- Food grains valuing Rs 121.98 crore remained with the transporting agencies (2002-07) and fair price shops (2005-07) which indicated poor management of their transportation.

*(Paragraph: 4.2)*

- Loss of food grains (2004-07) valuing Rs 30.82 lakh during storage and transportation in five of the 16 test checked districts was reported though such losses were not permissible.

*(Paragraph: 4.2.1)*

- Quantity of food grains consumed did not conform to its conversion cost and was in excess by one to 37 *per cent* in five to seven districts out of 16 test checked districts and in six districts, excess conversion cost ranging from three to 70 *per cent* was utilised/paid .

*(Paragraph: 4.2.2)*

- Deficient scrutiny of transportation claims of the transporting agencies for the period 2002-07 resulted in excess reimbursement of Rs 81.88 crore up to December 2007 to them.

*(Paragraph: 5.1)*

- Fair price shop keepers retained 3.58 crore empty gunny bags during the period 2002-07 resulting in undue benefit of Rs 43.86 crore to them.

*(Paragraph: 5.3)*

- Revolving fund of Rs eight crore and Central assistance of Rs 1.47 crore for transportation of food grains was lying locked up in personal ledger account since November 2002.

*(Paragraph: 5.5)*

- Non-supply of the required quantity of MDM with the prescribed quantity of nutrients and dishes as per the menu resulted in inadequate nutritional support to children during 2004-07.

*(Paragraph: 6.1)*

- MDM was not provided to 1.63 crore children of drought affected areas during summer vacations of 2005 and 2007 violating the directives (April 2004) of the Supreme Court.

*(Paragraph: 6.2)*

- Improvement in the nutritional status of children was not ensured by providing micro-nutrient supplements and de-worming medicines. The periodical health check-up was also not ensured.

*(Paragraphs: 6.3 & 6.6)*

- Kitchen sheds were not provided in 36,489 schools (out of 96,457) as of March 2007. Out of 253 kitchen sheds of test checked schools, 169 were non-functional due to their dilapidated condition and due to separate centralised kitchens run by the NGOs. Provision of funds for repair and maintenance of kitchens was also not made.

*(Paragraph: 7.1)*

- Sufficient kitchen devices and arrangement for potable water in 61 schools out of 320 test checked schools were not available.

*(Paragraphs: 7.2 & 7.3)*

- NGOs did not submit their accounts and annual reports along with audited statement for the period 2004-07 to the Government.

*(Paragraph: 8.1)*

- NGOs were engaged without ascertaining their capability and infrastructure which resulted in their unsatisfactory performance and unauthorised occupation of space/ classrooms of school buildings.

*(Paragraph: 8.2)*

- Task forces constituted for adequate and effective monitoring of the scheme at the school level visited only 65 to 69 *per cent* of the targeted schools during October 2006 to March 2007.

*(Paragraph: 9.1)*

- Records of food grains and conversion cost were not maintained by the implementing agencies and the BSAs also did not call for these records for verification of consumption of food grains and utilization of conversion cost.

*(Paragraph: 9.2)*

- Quarterly progress reports during the period 2004-07 were sent to GOI very late with delay ranging from three to nine months.

*(Paragraph: 9.3)*

- Monitoring was inadequate and performance of the scheme was not evaluated by any external agency.

*(Paragraphs: 9.6 & 9.8)*