

6.4 Community Support :

School managements should also be encouraged to draw on the support community. Gram Panchayats and Village Education Committees may be approached for arranging community members to regularly, on a rotation basis, help the management in ensuring efficient cooking, serving and cleaning operations. Involvement of teachers and community members in ensuring that children eat t

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in a spirit of camaraderie and develop sensitivity to their peers with different abilities, by offering them precedence, and instilling values of equality and cooperation would be very valuable support to the implementation of the programme. Support of the community members, including mothers groups, could also be solicited to ensure that children wash their hands with soap before eating use clean plates and glasses, avoid littering and wastage of food, and clean their plates rinse their hands and mouth after eating. Advisories issued by Central Government on mobilization of mothers in connection with the programme may be seen at **Annexure -3**.

MDM Scheme also offers wide opportunity of self-employment to poor women who could constitute self-help groups. Such groups can take the responsibility of cooking and serving mid day meal with the over all assistance of the local level implementing agency. Mid Day Meal Scheme can provide the groups the scope for income generating activities such as growing & supplying vegetables, preparing condiments, etc. Mid Day Meal Scheme could also provide opportunity for involvement of SHGs in the management of the programme, thus ensuring that teaching-learning processes in the classroom are not affected, while SHGs take responsibility for regular procurement, cooking and distribution process. In the selection priority should be given to SHGs with membership of poor women, and whose children are participating in the MDM Programme.

School managements may also be encouraged to seek local support for drawing out varied, but wholesome and nutritious menus.

School Managements should maintain a roster of community members who will be involved in the programme. Community members should be encouraged to voice their observations on the implementation of the scheme and the School Management should make available a register for regular recording of such observations.

Sudeep Banerjee
Secretary

D.O. NO.F. 13-10/2005-EE-5 (MDM) (Pt.)

Dated 27th December, 2005

Subject:- Mobilization of mothers to watch mid-day meal.

Dear

The universalized Mid-Day Meal Scheme now covers nearly 12 Crore children making it the world's largest school feeding programme. A recent research study by Prof. Amartya Sen's Pratichi Trust hails the Mid-Day Meal Programme as "the biggest pro-poor initiative launched since the land reform movement of 1970s".

2. Issues pertaining to regularity and quality of meals, however, continue to evoke concern, necessitating new approaches to monitoring and supervision. One effective intervention could be to empower mothers to watch feeding of the children. The physical presence of atleast one mother (or more than one, wherever possible) could ensure that a good quality meal is served every day without interruption. This would lessen dependence on monitoring through external supervisors/inspectors who are anyway unable to oversee all schools on a daily basis, given the magnitude of the programme.

3. **We do hope that mothers, if encouraged and empowered to take turns to supervise feeding, would be willing volunteers. Presently, they are unable to participate in the programme, their dissatisfaction with its quality notwithstanding. This initiative could give them a voice and a role, resulting in a highly effective mother-watch.**

4. You could also think of additional ways of mobilizing community to add value to this important programme.

5. I would be grateful if the matter receives your personal attention and we are kept apprised of the progress.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-
(SUDEEP BANERJEE)

To

- (i) Chief Secretaries of States
- (ii) Administration of UTs as per list enclosed.

ARJUN SINGH

**D.O. NO.F. 13-10/2005-EE-5 (MOM) (Pt.)
MINISTER OF
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
INDIA
NEW DELHI-110 001
Dated: 29.12.2005**

Dear

I am happy to note the progress that the states are steadily making towards the Universalization of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme. The scheme now covers nearly 12 crore children in the country making it the world's largest school feeding programme. The increase in the scale of coverage is an encouraging development. We, however, need to now focus attention on tackling the challenge of regularity and quality of the meal.

In this context, I solicit your personal leadership to a new initiative involving mothers of the school children to oversee and supervise the feeding of the children. The mothers could be encouraged to take turns to come to the school at the time of the preparation or serving of the meal. By this simple intervention, we could empower crores of mothers to exercise effective vigil reducing dependence on inspectors. Given the large number of children in government and aided schools, a mother would be required to devote just a couple of hours only once or twice a year. This could give mothers a voice and a role, leading to an effective mother watch.

My ministry is separately addressing the Chief Secretaries and all other concerned in this regard.

I hope to see, in the New Year, mass mobilization of mothers in your State under your stewardship.

Wishing you a very Happy New Year,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-
(ARJUN SINGH)

To

All Chief Ministers of States.