

PRESS BRIEF

on

**Stand Alone Report (Civil) of the Comptroller
and Auditor General of India for the
year ended 31 March 2007**

**on Nutritional Support to Primary Education
(Mid-Day-Meal)**

Government of Uttar Pradesh

Press Brief

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 among children in class I-V. The scheme also aimed at providing nutritional support to children of primary stage in drought-affected areas during the summer vacation.

The GOI based on the enrolment of children reported by the State Government, 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. The scheme is implemented by the Director, Mid-Day-Meal Authority under overall control of the Secretary, Basic Education Department, Government of Uttar Pradesh.

The Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year ended 31 March 2007 (Civil) containing audit observations on the implementation of the Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Mid-Day-Meal) by the Government of Uttar Pradesh was presented to the State Legislature on 12 February 2009. Important audit findings contained in the Report are presented below.

- 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.
- The quality of food grains for MDM was not ensured at any stage. Inspection of food grains revealed broken grains in excess of permissible limit, foreign matter and damaged/ discoloured grains in 224 (76 per cent) of the 320 schools and NGOs inspected.
- Food grains valuing Rs 121.98 crore remained with the transporting agencies (2002-07) and fair price shops (2005-07) which indicated poor transportation of food grains.
- Loss of food grains (2004-07) valued Rs 30.82 lakh during storage and transportation was reported in five of the sixteen test checked districts though no such losses were permissible.
- Quantity of food grains consumed did not conform to its conversion cost. The conversion cost was in excess by one to 37 per cent in 5 to 7 districts.

out of 16 test checked districts and in six other districts, excess conversion cost paid ranged from three to 70 *per cent*.

- Deficient scrutiny of transportation claims of the transporting agencies for the period 2002-07 by the Finance Controller, Basic Shiksha Parishad resulted in excess reimbursement of Rs 81.88 crore (December 2007) to them.
- 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.
- Non-distribution 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Kitchen sheds were not provided in 36,489 schools (out of 96,457) as of March 2007. Out of 253 kitchen sheds in 320 test checked schools, 169 were non-functional due to their dilapidated condition and due to separate centralized kitchens run by the NGOs. Provision of funds for repair and maintenance of kitchens was also not made.
- Sufficient kitchen devices and arrangement for potable water in 61 schools out of 320 test checked schools were not available.
- NGOs did not submit their accounts and annual reports along with audited statement for the period 2004-07 to the Government.
- NGOs were engaged without ascertaining their capability and infrastructure which resulted in their unsatisfactory performance and unauthorised occupation of space/ classrooms of school buildings.
- 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.
- Records of food grains and conversion cost were not maintained by the implementing agencies. Basic Shiksha Adhikaris also did not call for these records from the implementing agencies for verification of consumption of food grains and utilization of conversion cost.
- Monitoring of the scheme was inadequate and performance of the scheme was not got evaluated by any external agency.

Principal Accountant General