Mid-day Meal
Programme in India

Chapter - 2
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Mid-Day Meal Programme in India

The Mid-Day Meal Programme is the popular name for school meal programme in India. It involves provision of lunch, free of cost, to school-children on all working days. The key objectives of the programme are: protecting children from class room hunger, increasing school enrolment and attendance, improving socialisation among children belonging to all castes, addressing malnutrition and social empowerment through provision of employment to women.

Mid day meals, as a public welfare concept in India, dates back to 1925 when such a project was launched for the underprivileged children in the then Madras Corporation area. One of the pioneers, Madras Corporation started providing cooked meals to children in Corporation schools in the Madras city. The programme was later introduced on a larger scale in 1960s. Tamil Nadu's mid-day meal programme is among the best known programs in the country.¹

There is an interesting story about how Kamaraj, the then chief minister of Tamil Nadu, got the idea of a noon meal scheme. The spark is said to have occurred in a small village (now a town) called Cheranmahadevi in Tirunelveli District of Tamil Nadu. Kamaraj was a very simple person who used to travel in his car (even without the red lamp at the top) and was not accustomed to convoys. On one such journey, he had to stop at the railways intersection in Cheranmahadevi and got out of the car and waited. He saw a few boys busy with their cows and goats. The chief minister had asked one small boy, “What are you doing with this cows? Why didn’t you go to school?” The boy immediately answered, “If I go to school, will you give me food to eat? I can learn only if I eat.” The boy’s retort sparked the entire process into establishing the mid-day meal programme.²

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mid-day_Meal_Scheme (Last access on dated April 13, 2010)
Besides Madras, several other states/cities of India too have had the mid-day meal programme prior to the Government of India’s initiative. In 1928, Keshav Academy of Calcutta introduced compulsory Mid-day Tiffin for school boys on payment basis at the rate of four annas per child per month. Likewise a school lunch programme was started in parts of Kerala in 1941. It was followed by Bombay, implementing a free mid-day meal scheme in 1942 with United Nation’s Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) assistance. It started distributing a skimmed milk powder to children aged between 6-13 years. Another project was launched in Bangalore city in 1946 where the scheme provided cooked rice with curd to the children. In 1953, Uttar Pradesh Government introduced a scheme, on voluntary basis, to provide meals consisting of boiled or roasted or sprouted grams, ground-nut, puffed rice, boiled potatoes or seasonal fruits. Several others states also introduced such schemes during 1950s, with the aid of international agencies like the UNICEF, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Health Organization (WHO). Similarly, other international voluntary/charity organizations also assisted this programme by providing nutritious food and other assistance such as:

1. Cooperative American Relief Everywhere (CARE) provided Corn Soya Meal (CSM) Balahar, bulgar wheat and vegetable oils.
2. United Nation’s Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) joined hands for the supplementary feeding programme in India to combat malnutrition and provided milk powder/peanut flour (protein rich foods) as well as imparting nutrition education.
3. Church World Services (CWS) assisted in providing milk powder to Delhi and Madras Municipal Corporation.
4. Meals for Million (USA) aimed at combating the menace of malnutrition globally. It supplied Multipurpose Food (MPF) and developed the Indian version of MPF at Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI, Mysore. MPF is a versatile food that can be easily incorporated in snacks and biscuits (Nutro Biscuits), which are nutrient dense, particularly in terms of proteins and vitamins.\(^3\)

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\(^3\) Sushma Sharma and others, Evaluation of Mid Day Meal Programme in MCD School, op., cit., pp.1-2.
An Expanded Nutrition Programme was launched jointly by the Government of India and the FAO, WHO, UNICEF during 1958-59 which subsequently developed into the Applied Nutrition Programme (ANP). Further, on the recommendation of National School Health Committee, the Government of India, initially, introduced the mid-day meals scheme as centrally sponsored programme in 1962-63 in selected areas. It is noteworthy that after the Third Five Year Plan the scheme was included in the State Plans as a centrally aided scheme with central assistance fixed at 40 per cent of the expenditure. During the period of drought in 1966-67, the mid-day meal programme in the primary schools was extended in many areas to cover the pre-school age children and expectant and lactating women, mostly through the Co-operative American Relief Everywhere (CARE) programme. About 20 million such beneficiaries were covered through this programme in 1966-67.

Subsequently, the idea of a National Mid-day Meal programme had been considered again and again for over a decade but without any substantial results. In 1982, the idea of 'Food for Learning' with FAO assistance was mooted wherein Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) were to be covered under this programme. In the very next year (1983), the Department of Education of the Central Government after inter-ministerial consultations, prepared a scheme as per the guidelines of the World Food Programme (WFP). According to this scheme 13.6 million boys and 10.09 million girls belonging to SC and ST categories in classes’ I-V were to be covered in 15 states and 3 union territories. When the proposal was circulated among states and union territories, there was a mixed reaction as many expressed their willingness to implement the programme while others reported some practical difficulties in its implementation particularly when WFP assistance would be withdrawn.

Again a programme with Central Government assistance for mid-day meal for the benefit of children enrolled in primary schools throughout the country was considered during 1984-85. The rationale of the programme were:

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5 D.P. Sethi, The Special Nutrition Programme in Delhi, National Institute of Public Co-operation and Child Development, New Delhi, 1976, pp.11-12.
6 Sushma Sharma and others, Evaluation of Mid Day Meal Programme in MCD School, op., cit., p.2.
1. The Mid Day Meal Programme for primary schools could form the basis of an anti-poverty educational programme.

2. Implementation of this programme for the children aged between 6-11 years may maximize enrolment and reduce school dropout rate which were important from the viewpoint of universalisation of elementary education as well as achievement of higher literacy rate in the country. Besides, this programme would also help in providing nutrition to the under-fed and under-nourished children in rural areas.

The broad features of the programme were:

1. Supplying of food items providing 300 calories per day and 12-15 g protein per child with coverage of primary school children in a phased manner.

2. Expenditure per child per day including expenses on administration to be 60 paisa.

3. No elaborate administrative infrastructure to be built up.

4. Funds required for the programme to come from provisions marked for poverty alleviation scheme.

5. States should evolve suitable logistics and make arrangements for administration, supervision and monitoring.

It was recognized that the scheme had some inherent problems such as possibilities of leakage, inadequacy of buildings, non-attendance of teachers, and participation by non school-going children and misuse by those in-charge of the programme. It was hoped that these problems would get addressed with time. However the programme was not approved as part of the subsequent annual plans, apparently due to resource constraints.

In December 1988, the Department of Education formulated a proposal for covering 994 Integrated Child Development Scheme ICDS blocks with concentration of SC/ST children @ Rs. 1/- per child per day. The important features of this scheme were:

1. The scheme should cover all children in primary classes in government and local body schools.

2. Mid day meals should be provided on all working days.

3. CARE assistance, if any, should be excluded.
From the preceding discussion it becomes clear that the mid-day meal programme is not new in India. It existed in one form or the other even before independence. After independence, several steps have been taken by the government, to give it a comprehensive form. These endeavors ultimately resulted into a National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) in 1995.

2.1) Mid-Day Meals Programme (MDMP):

A National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) commonly known as MID DAY MEAL PROGRAMME (MDMP) was launched on 15th August 1995 by P.V. Narsimha Rao, the then Prime Minister of India\(^7\). Initially it was started in 2408 blocks in the country. However, by the year 1997-98 the NP-NSPE was introduced in all blocks of the country. Universalisation of primary education being the national goal, MDMP was launched with the following objectives:

- to increase enrolment, improve school attendance as well as retention.
- to promote social integration,
- to improve nutritional status of the primary school children and
- to inculcate good food habits among children.

The programme envisaged provision of cooked meal/processed food of calorific value equivalent to 100g of wheat/rice for children studying in classes I-V in all government, local body and government-aided primary schools free of cost. This provision was based on a study done by National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau (NNMB) (1990-92) on dietary consumption patterns of rural children using a one-day i.e. 24 hour recall method. It was observed that the children had a deficit of the magnitude of 628kcal and 6-7g protein in the daily diets. From the nutritional angle, the endeavor should be to bridge the average nutritional gap of 600 kcal through a balanced diet of cereals, pulses, fats and vegetables; the cereal component could be to the order of 60-90 per cent of the calorie deficit or roughly 100g of food grains/child day\(^8\).

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\(^8\) Sushma Sharma and others, Evaluation of Mid Day Meal Programme in MCD School, op. cit., p.4.
However it could not be implemented in a uniform manner in all the country as only four States viz. Gujarat, Kerala, Orissa and Tamil Nadu and the Union Territory of Pondicherry have provided cooked meals. All other states have provided dry rations supplied by Food Corporation of India (FCI) distributed under Public Distribution System (PDS) @ 3 kg of food grain per month per child to a family for ten months which would be equivalent to set norms for 100g/day/child for 200 school days (subject to a minimum attendance of 80 percent). Chandigarh and Delhi continued to serve processed food like fruit-bread, biscuits and fruit due to logistic problems. Lakshwadeep administration, which has been implementing its own MDMP, was exempted from participating in the national programme from 1997-98 as a special case. Some States like Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir reported that they could not implement the programme due to resource constraints. Evidently, the implementation of the programme was not in the true letter and spirit as it could not be implemented throughout the country in a uniform manner.

2.2) Supreme Court Directive for Cooked Food:

In April 2001, People's Union for Civil Liberties (Rajasthan) filed a petition 'right to food', in the Supreme Court of India. This public interest litigation has covered a large range of issues relating to right to food, but the best known intervention by the court is one pertaining to mid day meals. On November 28, 2001 the Supreme Court of India gave directive making it mandatory for the state governments to provide cooked meals instead of 'dry rations'9. The apex Court, in its directive, said:

"We direct the State Governments/Union Territories to implement the Mid-day Meal Scheme by providing every child in every Government and Government assisted Primary Schools with a prepared mid day meal with a minimum content of 300 calories and 8-12 g of protein each day of school for a minimum of 200 days. Those governments providing dry rations instead of cooked meals must within three months (February 28, 2002) start providing cooked meals in all governments and government-aided primary schools in half of the districts of the State (in order of poverty) and must within a further period

of three months (May 28, 2002) extend the provision of cooked meals to the remaining parts of the state."

This landmark direction converted the mid-day meal scheme into a legal entitlement, the violation of which can be taken up in the court of law. Further, it brought out a uniformity in the implementation of this programme throughout the country.

However, in actual practice, the directive could not be implemented by several states from the date stipulated by the Supreme Court. But with sustained pressure from the Court, media and in particular from the Right to Food Campaign more and more states started providing cooked meals. Further step was taken in this direction in May 2004 when a new coalition government was formed at the Centre, which promised universal provision of cooked meals fully funded by the Centre. This 'promise' was included in the Common Minimum Programme of the government and was followed by enhanced financial support to the states for cooking and building sufficient infrastructure. Given this additional support the scheme has expanded its reach to cover most children in primary schools in India. However, the status report in this regard reveals that in October, 2004, 22 out of 28 States and all 7 UTs were fully implementing the MDMP while 6 States in a partial manner.

2.3) Need for Revision of the Scheme:

It is evident from the status report that even nine years after the commencement of the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE), 1995, serving of cooked meal could not be universalized. The main reason attributed for this sorry state of affairs was that in NP-NSPE, 1995 the cost of cooking was to be borne by the State Governments/ UT administrations. Unable to provide adequate funding for meeting the cooking costs, many State Governments/ UT Administrations resorted to distribution of food grains, rather than providing cooked mid day meals. To ameliorate some of the difficulties experienced by the States and UTs, Planning Commission requested State Governments in December 2003 to earmark a minimum of 15% of

Additional Central Assistance under the Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana (PMGY) towards cooking cost under the mid day meal scheme. Nonetheless, the programme continued to suffer on account of budgetary constraints in the States and UT Administrations.

Accordingly in June-July, 2004, certain policy pronouncements were made in regard to the Mid-Day Meal Scheme in President’s Address to Parliament delivered on 7.6.04. Central Government’s commitment to a universal cooked meal programme found reflection in the budget speech of the Union Finance Minister in July 2004, which stated: “The poor want basic education for their children: we shall provide it... We shall also make sure that the child is not hungry while she or he is at school...” The budget speech further promised: “… the whole of the amount collected as cess will be earmarked for education, which will naturally include providing a nutritious cooked mid day meal. If primary education and the nutritious cooked meal scheme can work hand in hand, I believe there will be a new dawn for the poor children of India”. Keeping these aspects in view, changes in the Scheme had become necessary.

2.4) The Revised Scheme, NP-NSPE, 2004:

Pursuant to the above, Central Government has approved a revised scheme, entitled “National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education, 2004 (NP-NSPE, 2004)” The main features of the revised scheme were as follows:

(i) to boost universalisation of primary education (classes I-V) by improving enrolment, attendance, retention, and learning levels of children, especially those belonging to disadvantaged sections,
(ii) to improve nutritional status of students of primary stage, and
(iii) to provide nutritional support to students of primary stage in drought-affected areas during summer vacations also.

To achieve the above objectives, the revised scheme provided for a cooked mid-day meal with minimum 300 Calories and 8-12 grams of protein for minimum 200 days.

content, to all children studying in Classes I-V (i) Government, Local Body and Government-aided schools, and (ii) Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) & Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) centers.

As the scheme was centrally sponsored, the funds for implementing it were to be provided by the Central government. Average monetary value of Central assistance in terms of per child per day, is shown below:

Table 2.1
Average monetary value of Central Assistance (in Rs.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Central Assistance in terms of per child / school day.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Average (economic) cost of foodgrains [weighted average of wheat &amp; rice being supplied]</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Average transport subsidy</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Assistance for Cooking cost</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Assistance for Management, Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2.21</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Guidelines of National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education, (Mid-Day Meal Scheme), Ministry of Human Resources Development, (Department of Elementary Education & Literacy) Government of India, December, 2004

From the above Table, it is clear that Rs. 2.21 per child school day were to be provided by the Centre to States under the revised NP-NSPE. In addition to the above, it was also laid down that the Central assistance will continue to be available for infrastructural items under various Centrally-sponsored schemes.

As regard the management of the programme is concerned, it was provided in the revised NP-NSPE Scheme that every State Government /UT Administration will designate one of its Departments as the Nodal Department for the programme. Nodal
Department need not necessarily be the School Education Department but should be so chosen that it can most efficiently carry out nodal responsibility for effective implementation of the programme all over the State. If required, State may set up a small Implementation Cell attached to the State Nodal Department to oversee the implementation of the programme by using a part of the funds meant for Management Monitoring and Evaluation (MME). Further every State Government/UT Administration will also be expected to designate one nodal officer or agency at the district level (e.g. the District Collector, District Panchayat, etc.) which shall be assigned over-all responsibility of effective implementation of the programme at the district level. At the local level, State Governments will be expected to assign responsibility for implementation and supervision of the programme to an appropriate body e.g. Gram Panchayat, Municipality, Village Education Committee (VEC), Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or School Management-cum-Development Committee (SMDC).

Responsibility for cooking would as far as possible be assigned to local women’s Self-Help Groups (SHGs). Where women’s SHG is not available, Village Education Committee (VEC)/ School Management-cum-Development Committee (SMDC), Parents Teachers Association (PTA), Youth Club or an NGO has to implement the programme by appointing part-time staff as cook, helper, etc. Such staff should as far as possible be women, with due preference being given to women belonging to SCs and STs in accordance with guidelines to be laid down by the state governments. Such organizations would be provided foodgrains as per parameters of the Scheme, and other costs as per State norms, so that they can implement the programme in the assigned school/area.

In urban areas where a centralized kitchen setup is possible for a cluster of schools, cooking may, wherever appropriate, be undertaken in a centralized kitchen and cooked hot meal may then be transported under hygienic conditions through a reliable transport system to various schools. There may be one or more such nodal kitchen(s) in an urban area, depending on the number of clusters which they serve. Examples of this pattern are Naandi Foundation in Hyderabad – Secunderabad, and ISKCON in Bangalore, each of which operates a kitchen for a large cluster of schools. However, clusters could be of smaller sizes, as convenient.
To oversee the management and monitoring of the programme, Steering-cum-Monitoring Committees (SMCs) will be set up at four levels viz. National, State, District and Block. In their respective jurisdictions, SMCs will generally perform the following functions:

(i) Guiding various implementation agencies,
(ii) Monitoring programme implementation, assessing its impact, and taking corrective steps,
(iii) Taking action on reports of independent monitoring/evaluation agencies,
(iv) Effecting coordination and convergence among concerned departments, agencies (e.g. FCI), and schemes, and
(v) Mobilising community support and promoting public-private partnership for the programme.

In brief, the focus of NP-NSPE, 2004 was on the children of disadvantages sections. The benefit of the scheme was also extended to the drought affected areas during summer vacations. Provision of financial assistance of Rs. 2.21 per child per school day by Central Government has been made. For the effective implementation of the scheme provision of designating nodal department at state level and nodal officer at district level was mandated. Various bodies responsible for cooking food such as Women Self Help Groups, Parent Teacher Association, Youth Clubs, etc. were identified. Moreover for management, supervision and monitoring of the programme Steering-Cum-Monitoring Committees were to be set up at state, district and local levels. Certainly, the revised NP-NPSE was an improvement upon the original one.

However certain modifications were felt necessary even in the revised programme in the wake of (2.4.1) launching of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in the country and (2.4.2) bottlenecks faced in the implementation of the programme.

2.4.1) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA):

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan launched during the terminal year of the Ninth Plan, is a flagship Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for Universalization of Elementary Education being implemented on a sharing arrangement basis between the Centre and
State in the ratio of 75:25. It is an effort to universalise elementary education by community-ownership of the school system. It is a response to the demand for quality basic education all over the country. The SSA programme is also an attempt to provide an opportunity for improving human capabilities to all children, through provision of community-owned quality education in a mission mode. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is to provide useful and relevant elementary education for all children in the 6 to 14 age group by 2010. There is also another goal to bridge social, regional and gender gaps, with the active participation of the community in the management of schools.

The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07) had further laid adequate emphasis on Universalization of Primary Education (UEE) with a view to ensuring - completion of five years of primary schooling for all children by 2007 with five parameters- universal access, universal enrolment, universal achievement, universal retention and equity. It necessitated certain modifications in the MDMP in order to achieve the goals set in the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme.

24.2) Bottlenecks in the implementation of NP-NSPE, 2004:

Following main difficulties were experienced in the implementation of NP-NSPE, 2004:

(a) The existing rate of Rs.1 towards cooking cost was found to be inadequate for meeting the cost of nutritious meal as per prescribed norms, particularly after discontinuation of Pardhan Mantri Gramodya Yojana (PMGY) w.e.f 01.4.05.

(b) Absence of kitchen sheds in schools had emerged as a critical factor impacting the quality of the programme. Though convergence with other centrally assisted programmes was envisaged for construction of kitchen sheds, progress in construction has been poor. Consequently, classrooms tend to be used for storage and cooking purposes, which is not only undesirable, but also fraught with risk. In the alternative, cooking is done in the open, which is unhygienic and hazardous.

(c) The existing nutritional norm of 300 calories and 8-12 grams of protein was felt to be inadequate to meet the growing needs of young children, necessitating therefore, the need to review and enhance the norm, and also provide for essential micronutrients and de-worming medicines.
2.5) The Revised Scheme, NP-NSPE, 2006:

Against the above background a Sub Committee of the National Steering cum Monitoring Committee (NSMC) was constituted in August 2005 in order to make recommendations, inter alia, on the adequacy of the present norm of Central Assistance to meet the cooking cost, as well as the manner in which the infrastructure gap should be met. Recommendations of the Sub-Committee were considered by the NSMC in its meeting held on 29th September 2005 and were approved with some modifications. Based on the recommendations of the NSMC, Central Government approved the revised scheme with effect from June 2006.

NP-NSPE, 2006 seeks to address two of the most pressing problems for the majority of children in India, namely, hunger and education by its previous objectives. For this, the present scheme provides that a cooked mid day meal with nutritional content as shown in the Table below will be provided to all children studying in classes I – V:

Table 2.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutritional content</th>
<th>Norm as per NP-NSPE, 2004</th>
<th>Revised Norm as per NP-NSPE, 2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calories</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein</td>
<td>8-12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micronutrients</td>
<td>Not prescribed</td>
<td>Adequate quantities of micronutrients like iron, folic acid vitamin-A etc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Guidelines of National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education, (Mid-Day Meal Scheme), Ministry of Human Resources Development, (Department of Elementary Education & Literacy) Government of India, December, 2006.

The above Table shows that as per NP_NSPE 2004 norms, the prescribed quantity of calories in cooked meals to be provided was 300 which was increased in the revised scheme, 2006 to 450. Likewise, the quantity of protein in 2004 was 8 to 12 grams which was revised and fixed at 12 grams in 2006. Further under the NP-NSPE, 2004, there was
no provision of micronutrients whereas in the revised scheme of 2006, micronutrients were provided which includes iron, folic acid vitamin A.

It was also provided under NP-NSPE that the Central Government will provide assistance for implementing a mid day meal programme with the above nutritional content for children in classes’ 1-V in:-

(i) Government, Local Body and Government – aided schools, and
(ii) Education Gurantee Scheeme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) Centres.

2.6) Programme Management:

A programme of the scale and magnitude of the Mid Day Meal Scheme requires a management structure which is robust and dynamic. It is imperative that the Management system at various levels is clearly articulated and the roles of the different agencies involved clearly delineated. The programme requires close co-operation and coordination of the various agencies involved in the implementation of Scheme. NP-NSPE, 2006 envisages putting in place the following Management structures at the National, State, District/ Block and Local levels.

2.6.1) National level:

I. National level Steering-cum-Monitoring Committee: The revised NP-NSPE, 2006 has provided that the Department of School Education and Literacy would set up a National Level Steering cum Monitoring Committee (NSMC) to oversee the implementation of the programme.

II. Programme Approval Board: The Department of School Education and Literacy would also set up a Programme Approval Board under the chairpersonship of Secretary, School Education and Literacy with membership of nutrition experts and representatives, inter alia, of the Departments of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Panchayat Raj, Planning Commission, Food Corporation of India, etc.
III. National Mission for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA):

The General Council and Executive Council of the National Mission for Sarva Shaksha Abhiyan (SSA) will, also review, from time to time, Mid Day Meal Scheme.

2.6.2) State/ UT level:

i. States and UT administrations are also required to set up Steering cum Monitoring Committees at the State, District and Block levels to oversee the implementation of the programme which functions, mutatis mutandis, for the NSMC. Besides, city level SMCs should also be constituted for all cities having a Municipal Corporation. A representative of the Department of School Education and Literacy, Government of India, should be invariably invited to meetings of the State/ UT level Steering cum Monitoring Committee.

ii. Every State Government/ UT Administration will designate one of its Departments as the Nodal Department, which will take responsibility for the implementation of the programme. State Governments/UT Administrations may set up Implementation Cell attached to the State Nodal Department to oversee the implementation of the programme by using a part of funds under Management Monitoring and Evaluation (MME).

2.6.3) Nodal Responsibility at the District and Block Level:

i. Every State Government/ UT Administration will designate one nodal officer or agency at the district and block level (e.g. the District Collector, District/ Intermediate Panchayat, etc.) who shall be assign and overall responsibility of effective implementation of the programme at the district/ block level.

ii. In States which have devolved the function of primary education either by legislation or executive order on Panchayats, the Chief Executive Officer of District Panchayats or the Executive Officer of Block Panchayats will be the Nodal Officer with overall responsibility for effective
implementation of the programme at the district level. In such States, the responsibility for implementing the programme within their jurisdiction shall be that of the Panchayats and the Urban Local Bodies concerned which have been assigned the responsibility by the State.

iii. The District Nodal Agency will ensure that each school is informed of its monthly allocation of food grains and financial sanctions for construction of kitchen-cum-store, cooking costs, kitchen-cum cooking devices, etc. It shall also identify the Transportation Agency to transport foodgrains from the nearest FCI godown to school. The transportation could be done once in a month.

iv. The district/ taluk nodal agency will also take responsibility for developing indicative menus using locally available and culturally acceptable food items.

2.6.4) Management at the Local Level:

In States which have devolved the function of primary education through legislation and/or executive order on Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies, the responsibility of implementation and day to day supervision of the programme shall be assigned to the Gram Panchayat/Municipality. Standing Committees may be constituted by the Gram Panchayats and Municipalities to oversee the implementation of the programmes. Alternatively, already existing Standing Committees, which have been assigned the task of supervising education related issues may be entrusted the task of monitoring, review and taking other necessary steps for the smooth implementation of the scheme. The Gram Panchayat/ Municipality may, in turn, assign responsibility of the day-to-day management of the programme at school level to the Village Education Committee/ School Management & Development Committee or Parent-Teacher Association as the case may be. The VEC/SMDC/ PTA shall be responsible for the programme to the Gram Panchayat/ Municipality.

In short, under NP_NSPE, 2006 the quantity of calories in cooked meals to be provided was increased from 300 to 450. Likewise, the quantity of protein was fixed at 12 grams. Besides, under the NP-NSPE, 2006, micronutrients were to be provided which includes iron, folic acid and vitamin A. Further, robust and dynamic management
structure at various levels involving different agencies for implementing the Scheme was clearly delineated.

A significant amendment in NP_NSPE, 2006 was effected in the very next year i.e. 2007. As per this amendment, the name of the Scheme was changed from NP_NSPE to National Programme of Mid Day Meals in Schools. Further, it was decided to extend this programme to the upper Primary Stages of Education (classes 6 to 8) in Government (including local body) and Government-aided schools, and EGS/AIE Centre, covering children in 3439 Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) in 2007-08. Besides, it was proposed to extend it to all areas across the country from the session 2008-09. Further, the caloric value of the mid day meal for upper primary was fixed at 700 calorie and 20 grams of protein. Besides, it was proposed to extend it to all areas across the country from the session 2008-09.

Another important development in this regard took place in the year 2009 when the Central Government has decided to enhance the food norms, cooking cost and honorarium to cook-cum-helper and directed to state governments for implementing the same from 1st December, 2009. As per the revised norms, the children studying in the primary classes would be given foodgrain, pulses, vegetables (leafy also), oil and fat in the ratio of 100 grams, 20 grams, 50 grams and 5 grams respectively per day. Similarly, the children of upper primary classes would be given 150 grams of foodgrains, 30 grams of pulses, 75 grams of vegetables and 7.5 gram of oil and fat. The quantity of salt and condiments would be as per the need. It was also decided to adopt the revised cost of cooking i.e. Rs 2.50 for primary classes and Rs 3.75 for upper primary classes.

At present Mid-day Meal scheme is serving primary and upper primary school children in the entire country. It is estimated that as many as 8.41 cr. Primary students and 3.36 cr. Upper Primary Students i.e. a total of 11.77 cr. students are to be benefited from MDM Scheme during 2009-10. As such it has become the world’s largest school feeding programme in India.

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14 www.education.nic.in