
**A Tracer Study on
PETS in MDM Scheme in Chittorgarh, Rajasthan**

Background

CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART), a programme centre of CUTS International, established in 1996 at Jaipur, Rajasthan, India, had implemented a pilot project to test the potential of Social Accountability (SAc) approaches in collaboration with The World Bank. Using two tools of SAc, CUTS CART assessed the implementation of Mid-day Meal Scheme (MDMS) in 2005-06.

This project had the activities which were engaging citizens in the assessment of the scheme through the use of Citizen Report Card (CRC) and Participatory Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) targeting the enhancement in client power and activating the demand side approaches to improve the service delivery.

The final dissemination of the findings emerged out of CRC and PETS raised question mark on various aspects of implementation and ultimately triggered a lot of changes in policy decisions to improve them. This tracer study aims at figuring out the sustainability of the outcomes of the implementation of SAc tools after three years. However, three other impact assessments have already been conducted. The findings of the assessments are attached as an annexure.

Objectives of the Study

The overall aim of the study was to trace the impact of the pilot project on social accountability after three years:

- trace the outcome of the policy implications emerged out of the pilot project; and
- find out the changes in the status of implementation of MDMS.

Methodology

The methodology used in the study includes the secondary information, one-to-one meeting with service providers, focused group discussions (FGDs) among children and teachers and general observation.

Findings of the Tracer Study

Service Providers

- **Findings of MDMS Pilot:** School lacks basic infrastructure to implement the MDMS effectively. Almost all schools lack kitchens and store rooms for food grains. **Impact:** Rs 65,000 is allotted to each school for establishing kitchen, Rs 5000 for buying utensils and money is also provided for storage of food grains at schools. 1383 kitchen-cum-store is built in each school.
- **Recommendation:** The quantity of food grains delivered to each school needs to be weighed to ensure that there are no leakages.
Impact: All schools have been provided weighing machines to weigh food grains on receiving
- **Recommendation:** Even though many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and private trusts have come forward to implement the MDMS in few districts their participation in terms of area and coverage is very poor. They together cover an insignificant number of schools. The possibility of engaging more NGOs and CSOs as alternative MDMS providers need to be explored.

Impact: 1503 schools are being provided mid-day meal through high-tech kitchen and 70 percent children are provided food through five high-tech kitchens run by Naandi foundation. However, it was found that quality of food coming from high-tech kitchen is lower in comparison to the food cooked at schools.

- **Finding:** Delay in payment of conversion cost to cooks.

Impact: The payment to Naandi Foundation is made through web and for cooks at school in three months in advance. The other schools which are still get the cooking done at the school premises are also getting the conversion cost in advance.

- There is increase in the conversion cost, which is now Rs 2.58 per child for the classes 6 to 8 and 2.08 for the classes 1 to 5.
- Separate controlling officer for implementation of MDM is appointed.

SDMC members

- **Finding:** Delay in receiving budget and allocation of food grains in some schools.

Impact: Transfer of funds and food grains is on timely basis.

- **Finding:** Teachers spend considerable time and energy on implementation of MDMS.

Impact: Involvement of teachers and children in receiving and distributing cooked food.

- **Finding:** Even though *Gram Panchayats* have been entrusted with the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of MDMS, in reality they are playing marginal role. The same is true for Parents-Teacher Association.
- **Impact:** No or inadequate involvement of parents and *Panchayati Raj* representatives in MDMS.
- Food grains come in sealed bags of 50 kg so there is no chance of theft.

- Quality of food grains is also good in most of the cases.
- Rare checking of implementation of MDMS by higher authorities.

Children

- Not much difference in quality of food provided at school and home made food.
- No significant improvement in parents and PRIs involvement.
- Children have started washing hands before eating.
- Sufficient utensils in the schools.

Secondary Sources:

- **Performance of Rajasthan in various component of MDMS in the Ministry of Human Resources and Development, Government of India on the basis of a presentation uploaded on the website with link www.education.nic.in/Elementary/mdm/data/NSMC_20.10.09.ppt**
 1. Food grain lifting: Rajasthan is the state where level of lifting of the food grains is more than 100 percent (Rajasthan – 101 percent)
 2. Level of Utilisation of food grains: Rajasthan falls in the category of states, where the level of utilisation of food grains falls between 80-100 percent (Rajasthan – 83 percent)
 3. Cooking Cost Utilisation: Level of utilisation of the cooking cost is just below the 80-100 percent bracket (Rajasthan – 78 percent)
 4. Unspent Balance (USB) of Cooking Cost: Rajasthan had 22 percent USB of cooking cost on March 31, 2009 (Rajasthan – 22 percent)
 5. Management, Monitoring & Evaluation (MME) Utilisation: Rajasthan have utilised 80 percent of the central assistance provided for management, monitoring and evaluation under MDMS implementation (Rajasthan – 80 percent)

6. Utilisation of money allotted for Kitchen Sheds: Rajasthan have performed poorly and utilised only 36 percent of money given for creating kitchen sheds in schools (Rajasthan – 36 percent)
 7. Utilisation of money allotted for procurement of kitchen devices: Rajasthan have utilized 100 percent of money allotted for procurement of kitchen devices
- Preparation of food in the open, engaging children for cooking and use of empty paint containers to serve meals are some of the shocking instances, the country's top audit watchdog Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has found while inspecting schools running the MDMS. The report, which incorporates audit reviews of 19 states in the last five years, has also pointed out several deficiencies in infrastructural facilities of the scheme. These states were Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Orissa, Tripura, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh, according to the report. Rajasthan is exempted from this list by CAG is a positive sign.

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/News/Politics/Nation/CAG-survey-brings-out-shocking-facts-in-mid-day-meal-scheme/articleshow/4926407.cms>

- The MDMS project in Rajasthan has served to arrest the dropout of children from schools, especially in poverty stricken areas of the state, according to the third quarterly evaluation report (Phase III) conducted by the State Institute for Educational Research and Training (SIERT). The classwise retention of standard I-V has increased by almost 13-15 percent from 2003-2007 and MDM is being provided to all students studying in 81436 government and government-aided schools. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Cities/Jaipur/Mid-day-meal-cuts-student-dropout-rate/articleshow/4526965.cms>

Limitations of the Study

- The number of respondents was less (only 23).
- The government officials positioned at the time of implementation at respective positions got transferred in most of the cases.
- High-tech kitchens are used for supplying cooked food, so most of the components of the studies are irrelevant now.

Annexure

Participatory Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) on the Mid Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) – A Project Implemented by the CUTS in partnership with the World Bank

This note about the present status of implementation of MDMS is prepared on the basis of direct interviews conducted with few different stakeholders of MDMS during November 26, 2007 to December 05, 2007, to know the impact of attempts made by the government towards better implementation of the scheme. The attempts of improving the implementation of the scheme were made by the government after dissemination of eye-opening findings of PETS on MDMS by CUTS in partnership with the World Bank.

I. Qualitative and Quantitative Impact:

1.1 High Tech Kitchen System (HTKS) were established at five places in the district and teachers were freed from the additional workload of MDM preparation and distribution after the PETS' result dissemination. A non-profit organisation Naandi Foundation was given the responsibility of the same.

Currently 81,365 out of 1,04,041 children in the schools of the district are being provided the MDM through this HTKS.

However, children are not satisfied with the meals cooked through these HTKS from both aspects of quality and taste. Responding to the questions, the children said, "our parents do not allow us to eat the MDM because sometimes it contains insecticides".

Salim Khan Shekh, the head teacher of Gaadi Lohar School, complained about the meal provided through this HTKS and said "all children do not take meal due to bad quality of it and so, much of it goes in vain".

1.2 In addition to the children of primary schools (Class 1-5), the children of upper primary schools (Class 6-8) are also being provided the MDM in schools from November 21, 2007 by which 81,365 more children are being benefited by the scheme.

1.3 100 gram of food grain per students for the children of class 1-5 and 150 gram of food grain per student for the children of class 6-8 are currently allocated.

1.4 The government has increased the cooking conversion cost (CCC) per child from Rs 1.50 to Rs 2.00 for children of class 1-5 and Rs 2.00 for children of class 6-8 which has led to the improvement in quality of cooked meals.

II. Health and Nutrition Aspect:

2.1 The awareness among children about cleanliness and hygiene has increased and lessons on health and hygiene have become a regular phenomenon in the schools.

The facility of toilet and urinal are more evident in the schools.

The camps related to health check ups are organised in the schools, but the arrangement to measure the effect of MDM provisions and draw Body Mass Index (BMI) of children is still due.

III. Impact on Educational Health:

3.1 Teachers pay much attention and allot time towards imparting education to children. This has become possible due to substantive reduction in their engagement in MDMS especially in the schools where meal is provided through HTKS. However, there is a dire need of adding all the schools through HTKS and also ensure quality of the meal prepared there.

IV. Impact on Community Engagement in School Processes:

4.1 The government has started preparing plans for emphasising the civic engagement. Various non-profit organisations and corporate agencies have started showing interests in preparing and distributing MDMS.

In Chittorgarh district, Hindustan Zinc Ltd and Aditya Birla Group have assisted the government with the help of Rs 4 crore for construction of HTKS.

V. Infrastructure Aspect:

Most of the schools are provided with kitchen shed. The rest of the schools are having kitchen shed in their planning.

Efforts are being made to add all the schools through HTKS and the donators are being searched out for that purpose.

VI. Impact on Timely and Adequate Availability of Food Grains and Funds:

6.1 MDM In-charge Narbada Bhambi informed that there is system of pre-payment to schools for CCC and monitoring has become a regular process.

6.2 The district supply officer has been made responsible for timely and adequate availability of food grains in the schools and the supply system has been strengthened.