

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

The Implementation of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan And Mid-Day-Meal Scheme

TWO HUNDRED EIGHTY-THIRD REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Education is a vital requirement for nation-building, rendering critical input for human resource development. India's education, comprising elementary education, secondary education, undergraduate level and post-graduate level, respectively is presently in the concurrent list and the objective is to promote meaningful educational partnership between the Central and State Governments. The post-independence era exhibited a system of education which was characterized by large-scale inter and intra-regional imbalances, to cure which a number of steps have been taken since then.

Table: Universal Access to Elementary Education

	1998-99	2014-15
Gross Access Ratio (Primary)	83%	99%
Gross Access Ratio (Upper Primary)	76%	98%
Gross Enrolment Ratio (Primary)	92%	100.08%
Gross Enrolment Ratio (Upper Primary)	58%	91.24%
Dropout Ratio (Primary)	40%	16.83%
Dropout Ratio (Elementary)	57%	32.62%

The following statistics regarding the school education provided to the Committee by the Ministry of HRD during the examination of Demands for Grants 2016-17 of the Ministry, gives a very encouraging sign of the achievements

A brief introduction of the schemes considered by the Committee i.e. Sarva Siksha Abhiyan. and Mid-Day Meal is given below.

SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN: With a view to enhance the reach of elementary education, the Government launched a mission mode programme in the name of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) from 2000-2001.

OBJECTIVES:

- Emphasis on universal access and retention of students in the school
- Bridging the gap of gender and social categories and finally improving the quality of learning.
- Opening of new schools in habitations which do not have schooling facilities and strengthening existing school infrastructure through provision of additional class-rooms, toilets, drinking water, maintenance grant and school improvement grant.

The approach is community-owned and even the village education plans are prepared locally in consultation with the Panchayati raj institutions.

BUDGET ALLOCATION

As regards the budget allocation to SSA, the Central Government has accorded high priority to the Education Sector.

Expenditure on Education in 2011-12, 2012-13 (Revised Estimate) and 2013-14 (Budget Estimate), as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been 3.98%, 4.35%

Year	BE	RE/Final Grant	PAB outlay	GoI share	Central share released
2014-15	28258.00	24380.00	56137.26	33950.46	24122.51

and 4.44% respectively.

Table: Funds as provided by M/o Finance for implementation of SSA programme at BE/RE stage at the beginning of the Financial Year during budget presentation

2015-16	22000.00	22015.42	63412.99	40204.75	21666.52
2016-17	22500.00	Not Available	74248.70	46701.61	17786.26*

encompassing the Budget Estimate (BE), Revised Estimate (RE), PAB outlay & GoI share during 2014-15 to 2016-17 under SSA

It may be seen from the above table that there has been a deficit of funds provided by the Ministry of Finance and the central share required to be released as per the approvals of PAB. The shortage in allocation by the Ministry of Finance at RE/BE stage has been primarily due to increased devolution of funds from 32% to 42% through 14th Finance Commission Award, which came into effect from 2015-16.

This increased devolution has led to an increase in the fiscal autonomy of the states but however, the Committee learnt that the States have not so far aligned allocated additional funds to the priority areas.

The Department of School Education and Literacy has accordingly requested all State Governments for ensuring allocation of adequate amount for the school education sector in their State's Budget in view of the acceptance of the recommendation of the 14th Finance Commission for higher devolution of funds to States of the central divisible pool of taxes for the period from 2015-16 to 2019-20.

RELATION TO RTE ACT, 2009

PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO (PTR)

The RTE Act 2009 in its Schedule lays down the pupil-teacher ratio for both primary and upper primary schools. At the primary level, the Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) should be 1:30 and at the upper primary level it should be 1:35. As per the Act this PTR should be maintained at the school level.

	Percentage of Single Teacher Schools		Percentage of Adverse PTR
	PS	UPS	PS
UDISE 2013-14	12.44	4.98	37.35
UDISE 2014-15	12.16	5.18	35.61

COMPULSORY EDUCATION TO CHILDREN FROM WEAKER SECTIONS

The SSA provides assistance to States/UTs for reimbursement of the expenditure incurred towards at least 25% admissions of the children belonging to weaker section and disadvantaged group as notified by respective State Government in private unaided schools under Section 12(1) (c) of the RTE Act, 2009, based on per child cost norms notified by the State Government, subject to a maximum ceiling of 20% of the size of the SSA Annual Work Plan and Budget with effect from the year 2015-16.

States/UTs have reported that a total of 18.10 lakh children were studying in private schools under Section 12(1)(c) during 2014-15.

SWACCH VIDYALAYA INITIATIVE

The Department of Elementary Education and Literacy launched the Swachh Vidyalaya Initiative under the rubric of the Swachh Bharat Mission.

4,17,796 toilets were constructed in 2,61,400 schools in a period of one year. About 13.58 crore children in 11.08 lakh Government schools in all over the country now have access to toilet facilities.

Schools in the most difficult-to-reach areas in the country such as districts facing Left Wing Extremism (LWE) in forests, remote mountainous terrain and crowded slums.

Partners: State government, CPSUs and Private Corporations.

PHYSICAL PROGRESS UNDER SSA

On a perusal of the physical progress under SSA, the Committee noted satisfactory progress concerning the improvement of infrastructures relating to SSA:-

Activity	Cumulative Sanction upto 2015-16	Cumulative Achievement (completed by 31.03.2016)	%age completed
Primary Schools	199230	183386	92.05
Upper Primary Schools	112392	105943	94.26
Additional Class Rooms	1861336	1740487	93.51
Drinking Water	238973	229742	96.14
Boys toilets	375976	350888	93.33
Separate Girls Toilets	499946	490779	98.17
CWSN	138585	114627	82.71

MID-DAY MEAL SCHEME

The Government of India launched the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Commonly known as Mid-Day Meal Scheme) on August 15, 1995 to provide mid-day meals to the children studying at primary stage. The scheme was extended during 2008-09 to cover children of upper primary classes and the name of the Scheme was changed as 'National Programme of Mid-Day Meal in Schools'.

OBJECTIVES:

- Boost universalization of primary education classes (I-V) by improving enrolment, attendance, retention and learning levels of children, specially, those belonging to disadvantaged sections
- Improve the nutritional status of children of primary stage
- Provide nutritional support to students of primary stage in drought-affected areas during summer vacations also.

Mid-Day Meal Scheme covers all school children studying in I-VIII classes in Government and Government- aided schools, Special Training Centres (STCs) and madrasas & maqtabas supported under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA).

BUDGET ALLOCATION

The MDMS is a centrally sponsored scheme and the budget allocation covering BE/RE Plan as well as Actuals for the Twelfth Plan Period is shown as under:-

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
BE	11937.00	13215.00	13215.00	9236.40	9700
RE	11500.00	12189.16	11050.90	9236.40	
Actuals	10844.13	10903.88	10523.39	9096.80	

Since 2015, the funding pattern has been in the ratio of 60:40 between the Centre and the States; except that it will be 90:10 for 8 NER States and 3 Himalayan States and 100% central funding for the UTs.

FEEDBACK FROM STATE GOVERNMENTS

The Committee undertook visits to different places in the country and held a number of meetings with various stakeholders to consider the problems and suggestions that affect the implementation of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS).

WEST BENGAL

In the discussions held on the 2nd July 2015, it was learnt that for the implementation of SSA, out of the fund received from the GOI and proportionate State share, the following activities with the Plan Approval Board (PAB) approval are going on/completed.

INNOVATIVE DRIVES UNDERTAKEN UNDER SSA

Sankhyalaghu Shiksha Utkarsha Abhiyan

5000 students will be covered under this programme. Besides, each Centre will consist of 25 minority students of class X having low learning level in class IX. The estimated expenditure is Rs.500/- per child.

Dalit Shiksha Utkarsha Abhiyan

The programme will be conducted for 4800 children of class X who will appear M.P. Exam 2016 to arrest drop out among SC/ST children at the end of class IX and to enhance basic learning skill in certain subjects.

Self-defence Training for Girls

Its objective is to equip the girls with defense skills. It spreads a message to the violence-maker that girls are being ready for counter-defense.

Mobile Library Van and science laboratory Van

With a Budget requirement for this programme is for Rs.10, 00,000/- per District, the scheme supports low capacity of school libraries to supply books as per need of all the children. The bus will visit at least once in a fortnight in each school and books are issued to the students and also returned after use. For the laboratory, Polba – Dadpur block (rural) of Hooghly district is selected on pilot basis. The provision is for a specially designed bus with the provision of at least five types of activities/experiments around the inside wall.

E-Learning cum Library

This is an all-in-one computer-cum-projector device which combines functionally multiple devices in a compact unit and helps students learn, engage and also entertain themselves.

SCHEMES TO BE SUBSUMED

- Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage
- GH (Girls' Hostel)
- ICT @ schools
- VE (Vocational Education)

4216 teachers of the Social Science group are being trained in inclusive education & career counselling. The rest of the teachers will be trained in English Communication through SCERT & Institute of English. 15000 teachers are scheduled to be trained in Science subjects by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT).

MAHARASHTRA

Through the discussions, following points were noted. :

- 57,767 out of school children admitted in age appropriate class and provided Special Training.
- Arrested migration of 49,430 children through Seasonal residential Hostel.
- Teachers training on Revised Curriculum provided to 2.5 lakh teachers.
- Meena Raju Manch activity in 24,775 Government Upper Primary Schools.
- 43 KGBVs in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) for out of school girls.
- 3.18 lakh children with special needs identified in 2015-16.
- Transport, Escorts, Aid and Appliances, Braille Books and Large Print provided to CWSN.
- 1.23 crore children received free textbooks.
- 45 lakh children are being benefited with uniforms.
- Development of supplementary material in 10 Tribal Languages.
- Capacity building of 6.3 lakh School Management Committee members.

It was further put forth that features like, Inclusive Education of Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS), Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Vocational Education, Girls Hostel Scheme, etc. are being carried out successfully under SSA/RMSA in Maharashtra.

KARNATAKA

The **School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Council (KSQAAC)** has been established at the State level to assess the learning achievement levels of the students and also schools' performance. The initiatives undertaken for the capacity building of teachers teaching science and mathematics, including:

- ICT: Computer Aided Learning Centres
- Ganitha Andolana programme
- Maths games and matrix melas in school and block levels
- Mobile Labs taking hand-on science education and digital literacy to the village doorstep under Agastya International Foundation's Initiatives
- Arrangement of Science Exhibitions

PROGRESS MADE IN PROVIDING HIGH QUALITY INTERACTIVE MODULES

Under ‘Website for teachers-good teaching practices’, the Karnataka Open Educational Resources wiki acts as a repository of resources to support teachers in terms of their professional development as well as classroom processes. The ‘Innovative classroom practices train the STF-trained teachers in several public software platforms and applications, are better prepared to integrate ICTs into the classroom and are able to realize more constructive teaching-learning processes. Teachers have been trained to create Open Educational Resources (OER) making use of the web portal Karnataka Open Educational Resources(KOER).

The fund constraints to SSA during the last few years resulted in the discontinuation of several programmes, for example, Life Skills Programmes (KISHORI), NPEGEL, Meena Clubs etc. This has also resulted in a reduction of training days and a shortage in the supply of books, drawing books, geography kits. There is an overall shortage of 4777 teachers in the State. The reason for the shortage of teachers is that the post of teachers could not be filled up since all recruitment in Government including recruitment of teachers have been stopped till the rules with respect to the amendment of Art.371(J) of the constitution (providing special status to Hyderabad- Karnataka region) are finalized.

CHANDIGARH**FEATURES UNDER SSA INFORMED TO THE COMMITTEE**

- Free textbooks have been provided to 108332 students studying at Elementary level.
- School Grant provided to 206 schools (106 Primary & 100 Upper Primary) @ Rs.5000/- for primary schools and @ Rs.7000/- for upper primary. Maintenance Grant provided to 206 Government Schools (106 Primary and 100 Upper Primary) @ Rs.7500/- per school.
- Two Days follow up training imparted to 1090 teachers at cluster level. Five Days training imparted to 169 teachers teaching Maths & Science to Upper Primary Classes at SCERT. CRCs & URCs coordinators attended five days capacity building programmes.
- 3687 children with special needs (CWSN) are enrolled in Government Schools & are being provided support services like Transport and Escort Allowance, skill training, therapies, Aids & Appliances etc. 92 teachers teaching at primary level are undergoing 7 days training on curriculum adaptation.

Sample based State Level Achievement Survey conducted in 36 Govt. schools. Under the survey, students studying in classes 3rd and 5th were covered from 36 Government Schools. Awareness generation activities were conducted in all the govt. schools on “Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Abhiyan”.

- Teaching/Training modules procured from NCERT are provided to all 106 govt. primary schools. These modules are helpful for teachers to develop the important skill of reading with comprehension and writing with a purpose among young learners.

INFRASTRUCTURAL AND AMENITIES CHECK UNDER SSA

PTR and Class Size

It was pointed out that the overall PTR at secondary stage has reduced to 1:29 approximately with the joining of newly appointed teachers. The class-size at Primary stage will reduce to 30 students per section at Elementary and 40 students per section at Secondary Level which will improve the quality of education in U.T. Chandigarh.

Student Classroom Ratio (SCR)

To overcome the problem of shortage of classrooms, many schools are functioning in double shifts. To improve it, 3 high schools have been opened this year, 6 new schools and additional classrooms in the existing schools are under construction.

Books, fees and internet

2,30,000 high quality workbooks have been printed and provided free of cost to the students of class I-V. 2 Hindi Medium Govt. Schools are set up as smart schools and the e-content is developed by the teachers. Further, no tuition fee is charged from girls student upto Class 12th.

Sanitation and learning

All Schools have separate toilets for Girls and most schools have CWSN-friendly toilets. There is provision of sharing of school playgrounds for neighbourhood children during post school hours. Initiatives have been taken for 200 Smart Classrooms (in 10 Schools) along with e-content. GPS-cum-CCTV enabled school buses along with female conductors are also operational.

PUNJAB

Under SSA, it was informed that for 2015-16, an amount of Rs.98473.90 lakh has been approved as outlay for 2015-16. So far the Central share released to the State Government is to the tune of Rs.16931.92 lakh as on 12.11.2015 for the financial year 2015-16.

FEATURES UNDER SSA INFORMED TO THE COMMITTEE

- In Punjab despite a comfortable pupil teacher ratio (17), there are as many as 25% primary and 18% upper primary schools with adverse PTR.
- There are only 12% upper primary schools which have the subject teachers as per RTE norm.
- The figure of out of school children (8338) reported by the State for the current year appeared to be depressed, since it was not in line with other flow rate indicators.
- The dropout rate at primary level is more than 2% in 8 districts. The Gross enrolment ratio is less than 100% in 15 districts at upper primary level.

HARYANA

An outlay of Rs.112058.25 lakh was approved for Annual Work Plan & Budget for Haryana for 2015-16. Out of this the State has released Rs.26816.32 lakh as first instalment.

Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR)

In Haryana there are 7% single teacher schools at primary level and 4% at upper primary level. There are as many as 38% primary and 19% upper primary schools with adverse Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR). According to figures of 2014-15, there are more than 9981 surplus teachers at primary and 2154 surplus teachers at upper primary. State needs to rationalize teacher posts.

Enrolment and dropout

The enrolment in government schools at primary level has declined by 7% from previous year. Though the State claims that annual average drop rate is zero, analysis of Class-wise enrolment reveals that there is a decline of almost 30,000 children between grades, and State requires to identify these children.

A Need for Redressal

- State needs to have a systematic programme for early grades reading and math as per the guidelines of Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat.
- At the upper primary level the focus needs to be on improvement in learning of maths and science through a systematic intervention at the classroom level.
- Given that the State is focusing on quality improvement in 3000 schools that meet certain standards, it is a matter of concern that schools do not have adequate teachers.
- Given that the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) scheme is a targeted scheme for achieving the goal of universalisation of girls education there is an urgent need to operationalise all the 11 KGBVs which are yet to be operationalised at the earliest.

RAJASTHAN

SSA was launched in 2001-02 in the State of Rajasthan for creating quality of education for all.

FEATURES UNDER SSA INFORMED TO THE COMMITTEE

- Programme with a clear time frame for universal elementary education.
- A response to the demand for quality basic education for all.
- An opportunity for promoting social justice through basic education.
- A partnership between the Central, State and the local government.
- An opportunity for the State to develop their own vision of elementary education.
- An effort at effective involving the Panchayati Raj Institutions, school management committees, village and urban slum level education committees, and other grassroots level structures in the management of elementary schools.

KERALA

DEEDS AND CREDENTIALS

In 1991, as regards SSA, Kerala became the first State in India to be recognized as a completely literate state, though the effective literacy rate at that time was only 90%. As of 2007, the net enrolment in elementary education was almost 100% and was almost balanced among different sexes, social groups and regions. In January 2016, Kerala became the first Indian state to achieve 100% primary education through its literacy programme ‘Athulyam’.

TOTAL ACCESS TO ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Academic Year	Tribal/Welfare Deptt.	Local Body	All Govt.	Aided	Unaided	Pvt. Unrecognized	Total Schools
2015-16	53	1	4737	7222	3104	1968	17085

FEATURES UNDER SSA INFORMED TO THE COMMITTEE

Free Textbooks

All children from standard II to VIII are eligible for getting free textbooks. Students of standard I are getting the textbooks from the government directly as that of the state policy. 65.72% of the outlay was expended and the remaining to be settled before 31st of March, 2016.

Teacher’s Training

During 2015-16, teachers from all categories were trained as the textbooks were revised in the year. 65.82% of expenditure has been recorded as per the record of 31.12.2015.

Computer Aided Learning (CAL)

During 2015-16 each district was allocated an amount of Rs. 20 lakh for CAL which was expanded accordingly by making the expenditure 100%.

Teacher's Grant

Teaching Learning Material (TLM) grants for the preparation and development of supportive materials for classroom transactions @ Rs.500/- was granted to all teachers teaching in Std. I to V.

School Maintenance Grant

Every Government school in the elementary sector is provided with a maintenance grant for minor repairs in the school. Proper guidelines are usually given to schools for utilizing the fund. 98.42% had been expended as on 31.12.2015.

Inclusive Education

As one of the major focus areas of RTE Act, the children with special needs, is one of the most thrust areas of SSA. After detecting the disabilities through medical camps, the nature and extent of disabilities are identified and assistive aids, external support and home-based services are extended by the Resource teachers. Enrolment and retention of girl children are not at all an issue in Kerala. SSA Kerala has undertaken several activities in this regard. All the districts are now engaged with different types of activities to empower the lifestyle and mental strength of children belonging to the SC/ST category. The expenditure would be completed by 31st of March, 2016. The percentage of achievement is 8.50 per cent as on 31.12.2015.

Community Training

Local Self Government (LSG), SMC members and community leaders are given training on RTE Act. The expenditure in this regard is 46.86%.

Clean School SMART Children (Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat)

Clean School Smart Children is a programme launched by SSA Kerala under Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat Programme of MHRD. **The objective of the programme is to make the children aware of the necessity of cleanliness and to ensure achievement of desired learning outcomes to all children.**

IMPLEMENTATION OF MID DAY MEAL SCHEME

WEST BENGAL

As regards MDMS, there existed an **SMS-based monitoring system called 'ALOSHREE'**. There is also a focus on the reduction in the wastage of MDM food grains by fully utilising the lifted volume of food grains. The FCI sends samples of food grains to the chairman of the municipality for checking before delivery. There is also a parity in terms of quality with meetings being held regularly and necessary feedback being communicated to the authorities. In the survey, it was found that there was a need for a display board in schools, communicating the Do's and Don'ts for the cook- cum- helpers as under the RTE act, 2009, it is mandatory that the minimum norms and standards for infra in schools exist including kitchen cum stores.

MAHARASHTRA

As regards MDMS, It was also pointed out that it works for provision of cooked meals and beneficiary students are from std. 1 to 8. The MDMS is applicable to Govt., local Body, Private Aided, Madarsa/Maktaba (supported under SSA), NCPL. **The scheme is implemented and Monitored by Steering-cum- Monitoring Committee (SMC)**. SMC appointed a cooking Agency. Cooking work is assigned to SHG, Mahila Mandal, Needy women and NGOs. Further, the rice is transported at school level. Other food grain (pulses) and condiments are also supplied at schools in rural areas through suppliers.

KARNATAKA

The Government of Karnataka is providing hot cooked meals to the children of 9th to 10th standards of government and government aided schools and it is providing milk for 1 to 10th standard students in weekly three days out of its own resources. The Committee was further apprised of MDMS that this is a regular programme with no discrimination among children. Over and above good proportion of SC/ST cooks-cum-helpers are employed in MDMS in Karnataka with regular Fund flow adequate allocation adequate. **The Akshara Dasoha programme promotes MDM to the children of drought affected areas during summer vacation. To improve enrolment and attendance of students in school and to improve retention rate, is the aim of this scheme.**

CHANDIGARH

In Chandigarh, presently cooked and wholesome meals under MDMS are being served to about 72000 Children from class Pre-Nursery to 8th standards of 120 Institutions. Nutritional Mid-Day-Meal is provided to the children of Pre-Nursery and Nursery Classes exclusively out of State Budget. The type of Food being served in UT Chandigarh, Mid-Day-Meal menu has been prepared keeping in view the liking of school children, food norms fixed by the GOI and its nutrition value. Mid-Day-Meal is served from the three centralized kitchens to 112 schools on rotation basis as per following weekly menu and 7 schools based kitchens prepare MDM for their own school children as per their liking. Pertaining to the Redressal System for MDMS, feedback from the students is taken on the proforma devised by the department to redress complaints of the students and improve quality of the MDM. **Mechanized transportation has been introduced to ensure timely delivery of hot cooked meals in Schools. Retired/experienced/matured persons have been engaged to monitor/supervise the quality, quantity and hygiene of cooked meals; delivery of hot cooked food in the schools; and to get feedback from students and schools.**

PUNJAB

Referring to the challenges in implementation of MDMS, there was a 3 months delay in the release of central assistance to schools. Further, the monthly data entries in the MIS web portal have not been completed. Attention was also drawn to best practices being followed in the State of Punjab for effective implementation of the scheme which are given as under:-

- State Government is contributing Rs.450 against Rs. 250 towards honorarium per cook-cum-helper per month.
- A SMS based Web system has been started in the District Roopnagar on Pilot basis for daily monitoring of Mid-Day-Meal.
- The mothers of the students are participating in cooking and serving mid day meals in schools.
- Students are motivated to help in producing the vegetables in kitchen gardens in some schools.
- Use of Double Fortified Salt with Iron and Iodine has been made mandatory in the schools.

- Punjab Government has provided Rs.9.60 lakh for eating utensils.
- Training provided to Cook-Cum-Helpers through various Institutes. Workshop on food safety, Quality and personal hygiene for Cook-cum-helpers was held in District Mansa, Faridkot and Muktsar by NGO Akshaya Patra, New Delhi.

HARYANA

In Haryana the approved outlay by the Programme Approval Board – Mid-Day-Meal Scheme (PAB-MDM) for the year 2015-16 is Rs.20952.11 lakh (Central share). Attention was drawn to the best practices being followed in the State for effective implementation of the scheme as:-

- There is provision of State Share of Rs.1750/- per month towards honorarium to Cook-cum-Helpers (CCH).
- All cook-cum-helpers are medically examined twice in a year.
- In the year 2014-15 Rs.70.00 lakh has been released to provide soaps for washing hands for Primary and Upper Primary schools.
- Cooks appointed by SHGs who are mostly the mothers of the children studying in that very school.
- There is a need to develop kitchen gardens in schools by making use of available land in the schools.
- Monitoring cell at State level is available with a dedicated telephone number and e-mail address.
- Advertisement on Radio regarding Mid-Day-Meal Scheme is being done.

RAJASTHAN

Presently in Rajasthan, 73,199 units are operational concerning the provisions of MDMS in schools. The class level data along with number of students involved can be depicted as:-

School Level	No. of Students
Classes: 1-5	41.49 lakh
Classes: 6-8	21.01 lakh
Total	62.50 lakh

In an attempt to usher transparency and remove corruption from the Mid-day-meal distribution, the initiatives are being taken for an SMS-based system through which meal data would be sent everyday by schools to a toll-free number that would be in return monitored at the State level.

KERALA

MDMS was first introduced in the state of Kerala in 1984 in the LP Schools functioning in 222 Villages, having Fishermen as majority community. During 1985 the scheme was extended to all Lower Primary (Std. I to IV) and Upper Primary Schools (Std. V to VII) during 1987-88 and to the students of Std. VIII during 2007-08. The scheme consists of supplying cooked food to the children using rice, pulses, vegetables, egg, milk and coconut oil/palm olein.

Highlights of the Scheme implemented in Kerala are as:-

- State Contribute Rs.2.68/- per child per day against the refined mandatory State share of Rs.1.54/-.
- 6 months cooking cost and remuneration of cook-cum-helpers; e-transfer to schools during last week of May, followed by three-month e-transfer during 1st week of October and next year's March.
- Minimum Wages of Rs.350/- paid to Cook-cum-Helper per day.
- Noon Meal Committee procures condiments, Oils, Salt for use under Mid-Day-Meal-Scheme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Central Government should undertake all initiatives for the States and focus on ensuring that children are learning well and the States should also resort to their own measures in a time bound sustainable manner to understand what is the level of students in terms of learning, and the means to determine improvement in basic learning. The need of the hour is to shift the policy and practice from input-based expenditure to outcome-focused achievement for implementation of SSA.
- One of the prime challenges is to get much more effective utilization of the resources that are spent on elementary education which is the backbone of SSA. Effective spending implies that the expenditure is incurred on progress towards goals, especially in terms of improving learning outcomes of children in elementary schools.
- The educational development in India, is neither homogeneous in regional spread nor neutral to social formations. It has a strong bias in favour of economically developed areas with strong infrastructural support as compared to the backward regions of the country. Decentralization is a major strategy for planning and management of elementary education. The government of India should bring out time bound programmes to minimize the gap wherever States are standing differently in their educational status.
- To bolster the national role at local level concerning the success of implementation of SSA by ensuring proper coordination and synchronization of efforts made by the Ministry of HRD, National Council of Educational Research & Training (NCERT), National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA), National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), and National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE).
- The number of colossal vacancy of teachers remaining unfilled under SSA. huge number of existing vacancies of teachers under SSA is bound to adversely affect the implementation of SSA. Such a daunting task of filling up the arising vacancies of teachers in States has to be carried out in a sustainable time bound planning