



Study of Impact of Mid-Day Meal (MDM) Programme on School Enrolment & Retention

Final Report

August 2014

State Council for Educational Research &
Training (SCERT), Chhattisgarh

CONFIDENTIAL

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Abbreviation

AIE	Alternative & Innovative Education
BEO	Block Education Officer
BEP	Bihar Education Project
BRGF	Backward Regions Grant Fund
CMDM	Cooked Mid-Day Meal
DCP	De-centralized Procurement of Food Grains
DEO	District Education Officer
DIET	District Institute of Education & Training
DPI	Directorate of Public Instructions
EBB	Educationally Backward Blocks
EGS	Education Guarantee Scheme
FCI	Food Corporation of India
Gol	Government of India
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
IVRS	Interactive Voice Response System
MDM	Mid-Day Meal
MRO	Mandal Revenue Officers
NAN	Nagrik Aapurti Nigam
NCLP	National Child Labour Project
NCLP	National Child Labour Project
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHDR	National human Development Report
NIC	National Informatics Centre
NP-NSPE	National Programme on Nutrition Support to Primary Education
PDS	Public Distribution System
PHC	Primary Health Centre
PHED	Public Health Engineering Department
PPP	Public-Private-Partnership
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institutions
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
RTE	Right to Education
SCERT	State Council for Educational Research and Training
SDP	School Development Plan
SGRY	Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana
SHG	Self-help Group
SLP	Special Leave Petition
SMC	School Management Committee
SMDC	School Management &Development Committee
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
(T)	Tribal
ToR	Terms of References
TWD	Tribal Welfare Department
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WSHG	Women Self Help Group

Executive Summary

Study Area - Chhattisgarh

Chhattisgarh is one of the youngest states of the Republic of India. It came into existence in the year 2000 by bifurcating 16 Chhattisgarhi-speaking south-eastern districts of Madhya Pradesh. Raipur was made the capital city of the State. It is the 10th largest state in India, with an area of 135,191 km² with a population of 25.5 million spread across five divisions - Bastar, Durg, Raipur, Bilaspur and Surguja. Chhattisgarh is the 16th most-populated state of India. As per Census 2011 provisional data, Chhattisgarh had 18 districts which have increased to 27 districts in 2012-13.

According to India Human Development Report (NHDR), 2011, Chhattisgarh state has an Education Index of 0.526 which is higher than that of states like Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan. The Education index is, however, lower than the national average of 0.563. So far as literacy is concerned, the state fared just below the national average. The recent estimates of Census 2011 also indicate a similar picture of literacy rate of 71 per cent (81.4% Males & 60.5% Females), which is close to the all India literacy rate of 74 per cent. The School Education in Chhattisgarh is mainly under the control of Department of School Education, it conducts educational activities from Pre-primary to Higher Secondary Education within the state. Some Missionary Organizations, Local Bodies & Private Institutions are also engaged in providing education in the state. As per data available from Govt. of India's Department of School Education and Literacy (Ministry of Human Resource Development), Chhattisgarh has a total of 146 blocks of which 74 blocks are Educationally Backward Blocks (EBB)¹

Concept of Mid-Day Meal Program

Government of India launched National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Commonly known as Mid-Day Meal Scheme) on August 15, 1995 to provide mid-day meal to the children studying at primary stage. In 2002, the Supreme Court directed the Government to provide cooked Mid-Day Meals (as opposed to providing dry rations) in all Government and Government aided primary schools³. It was revised in September 2004 and in September 2006. MDMS is the world's largest school meal programme and reaches an estimated 11 crore children across 12 lakh schools in India. The scheme is implemented through the State/UT Governments. The central and state governments share the cost of the Midday Meal Scheme, with the centre providing 75 percent and the states 25 percent.

Objectives of Mid-Day Meal Scheme

The objectives of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme are to address two of the pressing problems for majority of children in India, viz. hunger and education by:

(i) Improving the nutritional status of children in classes I – VIII in Government, Local Body and Government aided schools, and Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) centers, National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Schools and Madarasa and Maqtab supported under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA).

(ii) Encouraging poor children, belonging to disadvantaged sections, to attend school more regularly and help them concentrate on classroom activities.

¹<http://ssamis.nic.in/dashBoard.do>

(iii) Providing nutritional support to children of elementary stage in drought-affected areas during summer vacation.

Education plays a vital role in the development of human potential. State Governments are spending considerable portion of their limited resources to provide educational facilities in their respective states. In spite of these efforts, the goal of 100 per cent universalization of elementary education appears to be far and elusive due to inherent socio-economic factors present in the society. Free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 years is the constitutional commitment and it is estimated that Primary school children (6-14 years) form about 20% of the total population in India. Most of the children from low socio-economic section of society suffer from under nutrition, more often they drop out from schools at an early age, which directly affects their overall development. Also a hungry child would not attend schools regularly. Chronic hunger can cause or lead to malnutrition and even lead the children to pay less importance to studies as well as divert their attention from the studies and with a view to enhance the enrolment, retention, attendance and simultaneously improving nutritional level among children.

Background of Mid-Day Meal Program in Chhattisgarh

In the State of Chhattisgarh, which was a part of Madhya Pradesh, under “Mid-Day Meal Programme” hot cooked Meal was being provided to children in tribal districts only in 85 blocks out of 146 blocks. By 1990-91, Madhya Pradesh (including the Chhattisgarh region) was implementing the “Mid-Day Meal Programme” with its own resources on large scale. Mid-Day Meal Program of giving cooked hot meals was started on 2nd October 1995 in the undivided State of Madhya Pradesh. At first the programme was launched in only tribal blocks, under which hot cooked meal was provided to children of Primary school. The reason for providing Mid-Day Meal in only Tribal blocks was because they had residential schools with hostel facilities and it was easy to engage a permanent cook for cooking food for the children during noon in these schools. Tribal areas i.e. in community blocks where such facilities were lacking, the students were getting 3 kilogram rice per month under Mid-Day Meal programme and because of this all school going children were partially benefitted under this program as all the family members of benefitted children were consuming the rice rather than the child itself. Mid-Day Meal programme became universalized in all the States in 2001 onwards after the Honourable Supreme Court ruling in SLP Writ Petition No. 196 passing an interim order dated 28.11.2001. From 2001 onwards it became compulsory for the state to follow the guidelines of Supreme Court and to provide hot cooked Mid-Day Meal to the children of 6 to 11 years age group. Thereafter it became a universal truth that “Mid-Day Meal Programme” had a positive influence on enrolment and attendance in schools.

Mid-Day Meal programme became an essential part of elementary education and due to the successful outcome of the programme enrolment, retention and attendance has increased phenomenally in Primary and Upper Primary schools. Mid-Day Meal programme revised the guidelines as NP-NSPE 2006. Earlier it was known as National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education but now it is known as National Programme for Mid-Day Meal. This new version has increased the conversion cost per child per day from Rs.1.00 to Rs.1.50, to increase nutritional level of the students, and Chhattisgarh is the only state in India where state’s share is Rs.1.00 and the conversion cost of the State in 60:40 ratio, thereby the rate of cooking cost is Rs.2.50/per child/per day in the State.

Table E.1: Mid-Day Meal Program in Chhattisgarh

Brief history		
1995 (Inception) – till March 2002	National programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) - only free food grain of 3 kilograms per child was provided	
April 2002 – March 2003	State started serving cooked hot meal in all the Primary Schools	
2006	Mid-Day Meal programme revised the guidelines as NP-NSPE 2006	
Wef October 2007	Mid-Day Meal programme started in all government and government aided Upper Primary schools of 16 districts of the State	
	Primary (INR/child/working day)	Upper Primary (INR/child/working day)
Wef July 2008	2.58	2.60
Wef December 2009	3.00	3.75
Wef April 2010	3.30	4.00
2011-12	3.40	4.40
Wef July 2012	3.65	4.70

Source: NP-NSPE Guideline 2006.

Study Objective

The study has been undertaken by the Mott MacDonald, the consultants at the State level to assess the following objectives:

- Contribution of MDM in enrolment
- Contribution of MDM in retention
- Status of daily attendance due to the implementation of the program.
- Status of attendance before and after MDM.
- Status of continuity of education due to the implementation of the program.
- Perception of teachers and students towards MDM as learning enhancement programme.
- Perception of Parents and community towards MDM as learning enhancement programme.
- Role of MDM in elimination of discrimination.
- Participation of SMDC / PRI and parents in MDM.
- Best Practices / Constraints

Geographical Coverage

The Terms of Reference (ToR) indicated coverage of 96 upper primary and primary schools in six districts of the State, namely Kondagaon, Koriya, Durg, Rajnandgaon, JanjgirChampa and Baloda Bazaar (as suggested by SCERT, Chhattisgarh). The Clusters/Blocks were selected in consultation with SCERT officials. The detailed sampling frame as indicated in the ToR is indicated in table below:

Table E.2: Study Sampling Framework

Parameters for coverage	Sample covered	Description of coverage
District	6	Selection of districts across the State with geographical representation
Blocks	12	Two blocks per district was selected
Clusters	24	Two clusters per block was selected, such that one was a rural cluster and another urban
Total Schools	96	On the whole four schools per cluster was selected
Total Upper primary schools	48	Among the schools chosen, two upper primary schools per cluster having wide representation of cluster was selected
Total Primary schools	48	Among the schools chosen, two primary schools per cluster having wide representation of cluster was selected

Source: MM Study

As per the requirement of the ToR, the study was conducted by addressing the objectives given. For this purpose, data was collected using different types of schedules at different levels of sample units. As mentioned above, the study has been conducted in six districts of the State, namely Koriya in the North zone, Kondagaon in the South zone, Durg, Balodabazar, Rajnandgaon and JanjgirChampa in Central zone; based on geographical representation of the state (the districts were selected by SCERT).

In each of these districts, two blocks were selected on random basis – these were Sonhat and Khandgawan in Koriya; Farasgaon and Keshkal in Kondagaon; Durg and Dhamdha in Durg; Bilaigarh and Bahatapara in Balodabazar; Chhuikhadan and Mohla in Rajnandgaon; and Akaltara and Pamgarh in JanjgirChampa. Further, in each block, two clusters were selected randomly by the study team – one urban and one rural – in consultation with BEOs of each selected block. In each cluster, 4 schools were sampled randomly by the study team – two primary and upper primary schools each. The list of schools was collected from BEOs of the sampled blocks.

Findings

Implementation of the program

During interaction with DEO and BEO, it was reported that under MDM programme, the Government is providing Rs. 3.92/student/meal to Primary School students while for Middle School students Rs. 5.05/student/meal is provided. Apart from the money, rice is provided through Public Distribution System and honorarium to cook-cum-helper @ Rs. 1000/- per month is also paid. The per student allocation and honorarium was confirmed by the school level authority (teachers, principals and SDMC members) as well as by the Women Self Help Groups engaged in cooking and serving the food. The Women Self Help Groups also confirmed that they are responsible for procuring of food items and provide cooked food to school students on regular basis as per the decided menu. The menu of MDM is decided in consultation with Government authority by members of School Management Committee. The rice demand is generally assessed by the WSHGs and then indicated to the school Principal. The Principal then submits the demand to the BEO. The BEO places the online demand to DEO for approval. Once the demand is approved, the concerned WSHG collects the rice from PDS shop.

- During visit it was reported that the program is being monitored at District, Block, School and community levels. District Education Officer is responsible for monitoring the MDM scheme, quality and quantity of food served to students. It was reported by the stakeholders (SDMC members, School teachers) that DEO visits their school without prior information and physically verifies the quality and quantity of food served and also other aspects of MDM. The DEO ensures the release of funds to the WSHG and speaks to them in case of delay or any other problem in the respective district is found. Similarly Block Development Officer also visits the school as part of monitoring.
- Teachers play crucial role for monitoring the MDM scheme. The School Management Committee comprises members of Gram Panchayat, Parents and Senior Teachers of the school. They visit the school and participate in the monthly meetings of the school.

Role of PRIs/SMDC/PTA in implementation of MDM

- **Participation of PRIs/SMDC** - School Management & Development Committee (SMDC) plays an important role for better implementation of MDM programme. It includes members of Gram Panchayat, Parents and Senior Teachers of the school as well as students. SMDC members regularly organize meetings and discuss about the concerned issues of school including MDM. One PRI member is a member of school management committee and they play important role after raising public concern about any issue of school. In Kondagaon district, some funds are provided to SMDC for purchasing kitchen articles.
- **Parent Teacher Association (PTA)/ School Management Committee Members (SMC):** School Management Committee (SMC) plays an important role for better implementation of MDM programme and has been formed at school level, however in Chhattisgarh they are at nascent stage and require capacity building. SMC includes members of Gram Panchayat/ Ward member or Councillor, Parents and Senior Teachers of the school as well as the students. SMC members regularly hold meetings and discussions about the concerned issues of school including MDM. As observed during the field visits the SMCs have been formed in each of the sampled schools and they do conduct regular meetings (SMC meeting registers were verified). However while interacting with members the team felt that they are not fully aware about their function, duties and responsibilities as an SMC member. In such a case some influential representatives discuss the issues in SMC meetings and take the decisions while other members merely sign in the register. Thus active participation of these members is absent in such meetings. In this connection, for ensuring active participation of all members in SMC, capacity building of members may be required.
 - SMCs are effective mechanism wherein MDM can be monitored at micro level thereby ensuring quality of food as well as appropriate utilization of funds. All PTA/SMC members are aware of MDM programme as they have their children studying in the respective schools who are availing the benefit of this program. The SMC members meet once a month and discuss the following issues:
 - Plan & support for the development of the school through expansion and augmentation of school facilities
 - Ensuring enrolment and retention of students by conducting community mobilization activities such as enrolment drive
 - Ensure distribution of incentives such as mid-day meals, text books and other reading materials, uniform etc. and attend to other needs of the school
 - Specifically monitor the implementation of Mid-Day Meal in the school
 - Prepare an annual account of receipts and expenditure of the school in a separate register as well as prepare the School Development Plan.

Profile of Students

- **Caste classification of students** - Around 42% of the respondents in Kondagaon & Rajnandgaon districts belong to Scheduled Tribes, followed by 30-35% students from Other Backward Castes; General category students were quite less in all the sampled districts ranging from 5-12%
- **Income classification of parents** - In all districts except Durg, majority (more than 50%) of the parents have annual income of less than Rs.1 Lakh. In Durg, 49% of the annual income of the parents was in the range of Rs. 1-2 Lakhs, followed by 39% in JanjagirChampa and Koriya districts.

Level of Awareness on MDM programme

- Level of awareness amongst the community members with respect to MDM programme was found good, more than 95% respondents were aware of the programme and its implementation in schools.
- However, awareness on untoward incidences was found nil, which seems a serious concern

Availability of Infrastructure

- **Availability of Kitchen sheds** –Our study observed that in urban locations, the kitchen sheds were separate while in the rural locations these were within school premises. For example in Durg district, most of the kitchen sheds were separate and in tribal locations of Koriya and Rajnandgaon, kitchen sheds were within school premises.
- **Availability of Store room** - More than 40% of the Headmasters and Teachers of all the six districts, stated that the food grains are stored in a separate room within the school premises; 33% responded that food grains are kept at PRI members' house in Durg district and in Kitchen Shed in Kondagaon district.
 - The study team also observed the place where food grains were stored .It was found that in majority of the cases food grains were being stored in containers made of plastic or aluminium, while in the tribal areas food grains were stored in plastic or jute sacks. Our study team did not find eatables kept in open.
- **Availability & adequacy of utensils in Primary & Upper primary schools** – Though all the Headmasters and Teachers stated that steel plates are used for food distribution but only 79% headmasters in Durg and 38% in Baloda Bazaar assured that they have sufficient number of utensils. Thus, it can be assumed that in general there is an issue of non-availability and adequacy of utensils. Moreover, About 37% and 47.9 % of the students respectively in JanjagirChampa and Kondagaon districts bring utensils such as plates from their homes; the reason is that after eating in school they can take the left-over food to home if remaining in the plate
- **Quality of Food Served- Students' Perception on Quality of Food Served**
 - The quality of food was found more or less good since;
 - around 70% students in Rajnandgaon stated that the quality of food was good - it tastes good with proper ingredients and is served hot while about 50% of the students in all other districts found the quality to be average.
 - Students also opined that the menu also to be monotonous with dal, rice and seasonal vegetables which most of the time is either potatoes or bottle gourd along with pickle.
 - more than 90% students in all sampled districts opined that they do not have any major issue with the quality of food but suggested that salad, roti and sweet in their meal could be included
- **Quality of Food Served- Community members, PTA/SMC members' perception on quality of food served**

:

- PTA/ SMC members stated that there were no major issues with respect to quantity, quality and timely supply of cooked meal, though there have been occurrences of overcooked or undercooked meals, watery dal etc. thus an internal effective grievance redressal mechanism should be implemented, wherein respective headmaster can lodge complaint.
- Around 68% of community members in Koriya and 64% in Rajnandgaon stated that the quality of food was good as it tastes good with proper ingredients and is served hot while in Kondagaon students opined it to be of average quality.
- **Quantity & adequacy of food served** — the quality of food was found more or less good since:
 - More than 80% students in all sampled districts did not have any issue with the quantity of food served; those who were not satisfied stated that second serving is not given to them because of which they remain hungry. However, teachers mentioned that young students waste a lot of food either by not eating or by spilling it. Thus, the first serving given to young students is of small amount and the students are free to get the second or more servings if they feel hungry.
- **Time consumed during Mid-Day Meal in Schools** -On discussing about the timings of serving MDM, in Baloda Bazaar (70%) and Rajnandgaon (59%) community members stated that the meal is served between 13:31-14:30 PM; in all other districts it was informed that the meal is served between 12:31-13:31 PM.
- **Improvement children desire in food**- In terms of the quality of the meal, around 70% students in Rajnandgaon stated that the quality of food was good as it tastes good with proper ingredients and is served hot. While in Kondagaon, the students opined it to be of average quality. About 50% of the students in all other districts found the quality to be average. Students opined that the menu was monotonous with dal, rice and seasonal vegetables which most of the time is either potatoes or bottle gourd along with pickle. Children suggested that it is necessary to maintain variety of menu in MDM. Further they suggested that salad, roti and sweet in their meal should be included on daily basis.
- **Practice of hygiene by children** -All students wash their hands before eating and teachers also ensure that every student has washed his/her hands; though students wash hands only with water and no soap is used. It was noted by the study team that not even a single child was found practicing hand wash with soap, all the students in the surveyed schools wash their hands before and after the meal only with water.
- **Role of PRI Members / SMC's**- School Management & Development Committee (SMDC) plays an important role for better implementation of MDM programme. SMDC includes members of Gram Panchayat, Parents and Senior Teachers of the school as well as students. SMDC members have regular meetings and they discuss about the concerned issues of school including MDM. One PRI member is a member of school management committee and they play important role after raising public concern about any issue of school. In few districts, some funds are provided by them for purchasing kitchen articles.
- **Fund flow in Tribal and non-tribal areas**- Schools prepare estimations of the total annual requirement based on the number of students consuming MDM throughout the year and the number of working days on which MDM is expected to be served. This data is aggregated at the block, district and state levels and then funds are accordingly disbursed to district bank accounts, and the district administration is tasked with transferring funds onward to schools. In general timely release of fund is a concern, it is slightly more difficult in tribal districts may be due to inter Departmental transfer of funds from Nodal Department (School Education Department) to Department of Tribal Development. The funds are released to the Women SHGs with a delay of 3 to 4 months.

Impact of MDM Programme

- **Impact on student's enrolment, retention, attendance & learning enhancement- PTA/SMCs perceptions** -PTA/ SMC members opined that there has been a positive change on all the three parameters and an improvement has taken place on enrolment, retention and attendance of students. More importantly students' learning ability particularly in the rural locations has been enhanced due to improvement in the nutritional status which helps them to concentrate and perform better in the classroom. This is due to the fact that these students either come from economically weak background and both the parents go out for work early in the morning, thus leaving the children hungry at home. These children then go to school without eating anything or their elder siblings prepare only rotis and give them. Eventually these children are either empty stomach or hungry, which hinders their process of concentration & learning.
- **Improvement in attendance, enrolment and retention rate among the students -Headmasters and Teachers' Perceived Impact of MDM Programme:-** – attendance of students in Koriya is good according to 80% of Headmasters & teachers as compared to 56% in Rajnandagaon; status of enrolment also seems to have improved as opined by 60% in JangirChampa and 77% in Koriya. Similarly, retention rate was less in Baloda Bazaar (48%), this could be due to the fact that it is a semi-urban area having many private schools in the vicinity, hence after attending Government schools for few years students go for private schools, retention rate is somewhat good in Rajnandagaon (79%).
- **Number of times attendance taken** - more than 60% schools opined that attendance is taken once in a day in the morning; however in Koriya district 41.7% said that attendance is taken twice in a day.

Best Practices

- **NagrikAputri Nigam:-** Chhattisgarh is first state to implement decentralization of food grains allocation and transportation to district level in Chhattisgarh food grains are supplied by NAN (NagrikAputri Nigam) which is also the lifting agency in the state. The functioning of NAN are based on online system, every activity of this agency can be reviewed by their online report. For implementing this online system, NAN has been awarded by the Government of India. As a result of this system, payments are made at the state level without any need of acknowledgement of receipts of food grains. In the state PDS is functioning through this online system which has ensured it the responsibility of the concerned District Education Officer to release the food grain allocation according to the demand made by the blocks online. The FCI releases food grains to state and within the state; Civil Supplies Department allocates food grains through NAN to their agencies of concerned districts i.e. to District Manager under Civil Supplies Department after getting required figure of food grains from block level officials with list of schools to different fair shops. The cooking agencies lift food grains from the fair price shops ascertained to them. In all the 146 blocks of 27 districts, coupons are issued to the cooking agencies according to enrolment of students. Hence, due to good PDS system and a Nodal Agency "NAN" working under the direction of Government of Chhattisgarh, the storage, lifting and transportation of food grains to all fair price shops of the state is not an issue nor the state is facing any problem on this count.

The State lifts and transports rice by NAN through online system. The rice lifted by cooking agency from PDS is entered in the online system. After verification by District Collector and DEO, the figure of lifted quantity is sent to state office of NAN and Directorate of School Education. After getting the figures of all districts of the lifted rice, the quarterly bill is raised by NAN. The payment of cost of food grain and transportation is done at state level.

- Cooking and serving of food through Women Self Help Groups**:-It was observed that a group of 8-10 women comprising of mothers of the students in the school are responsible for running the program at school level. SMCs are also in place and they help to organise the required food items. The cooking cost of food-grains and honorarium of cook-cum-helper is taken care by the WSHGs and thus, teachers are relieved from day-to-day intricacies of running the Programme.

Best Practices of other states which could be adopted

The ambitious scheme of providing Mid-Day Meal (MDM) has two major objectives of improving health and education of the poor children. The scheme has the mandate to ensure one-third of the nutritional requirements of child for which the administrative and logistical responsibilities are enormous. The scheme is doing well in Chhattisgarh however, providing nutrition is a complex issue, many a times MDM has low nutritional value in comparison to the daily requirements and much lower in nutrients such as protein, fat, iron and iodine in relation to the meal quantity in particular. Moreover, nutrition is also linked with health and hygiene, students require Vitamin, Folic Acid, Iron, even de-worming medicines and micro-nutrients. This cannot be delivered alone by the Department of Education hence, convergence with other programmes and Departments is suggested. The option for delivering other services alongwith the nutritious meal to the students could be adopted, as already in practice in some of Indian states, details are tabulated below:

Table E.1: Best Practices of MDM in Indian States

Sr. No	States	Health	Infrastructure Development	Capacity Building	Others
1.	Andhra Pradesh	Routine health check up done once in two months/free necessary medicines / D.T.P/ TT injections in some districts			
2.	Bihar		B.E.P provides for hut construction	UNICEF provides training of officials and resource persons	
3.	Haryana			Food & nutrition board, GOI for training	
4.	Himachal Pradesh		SSA provides for construction of kitchen sheds	Training through DIET	
5.	Jharkhand	Apna Swasthya Apne Haath – School health in Sanitation Education programme			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective management of MDM through Bal Sansad (Child Cabinet) in Jharkhand Kitchen Garden and Bio Intensive Garden (BIG) ensuring quality food in MDM in Jharkhand
6.	Karnataka	Supply of Vitamin A, Iron tablets & deworming tablets			
7.	Maharashtra	Routine check-up done once in a year by the nearest PHC doctor			

Sr. No	States	Health	Infrastructure Development	Capacity Building	Others
8.	Madhya Pradesh		PHED provides for water Supply	SSA provides for training to PTA	
9.	Tamil Nadu		SGRY, Slum Development provides for Urban areas, SSA		
10.	West Bengal		SGRY, BRGF & SDP for the construction of kitchen sheds		

Several State Governments have evolved practices to improve the implementation of the MDMS in their states. These include involving mothers of students in implementation of the scheme in Uttarakhand and Jharkhand; creation of kitchen gardens, i.e., food is grown in the premises of the school, in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Punjab and West Bengal; construction of dining halls in Tamil Nadu; and increased community participation in the implementation of the scheme in Gujarat. Following are some of the detailed best practices:

Innovative Practice adopted in Jharkhand - SHGs are involved for supplying fresh vegetables

An innovative convergence programme was conceptualised in Jharkhand for supplying fresh vegetables to schools and Anganwadi centers. For which District and Block level Education Officials are coordinating with the School Management Committee for formation of Self Help Groups of farmers who grow vegetables and supply it to the nearby schools and Anganwadis in reasonable rates. This enables the farmers to get a ready market in their locality and saves transportation cost; it has also supported local employment. At the same time it has added value to the quality and nutrition level of MDM.

Effective management of MDM through Bal Sansad (Child Cabinet) in Jharkhand

In Jharkhand, every school has a Bal Sansad (Child Cabinet) consisting of active senior students of the school. It consists of some Ministers and their Deputies other than their leader as Prime Minister and the Deputy PM. Major activities performed by Bal Sansad are:

- Count the exact number of children who are present in school every day and inform the Saraswati Vahini.
- Monitors the cleanliness by ensuring that every child washes his/her hands properly before taking MDM and wash the plates and keeps at proper place afterwards.
- Ensures that all the children sit in rows and help Saraswati Vahini members to distribute MDM.
- Bal Sansad checks the material of MDM. It ensures that the waste material is thrown in the Garbage pit.

Apna Swasthya Apne Haath – School Sanitation and Hygiene Education programme In Jharkahnd

This programme is directly related to children of schools who ensure their good health and sanitation keeping them clean. The Bal Sansad does health check-ups by using tazos (small cards carrying health logos) indicating cleanliness of Ear, Eye, Nose, Teeth, Nail, Dress, Hair and Bath. The Bal Sansad ensures the cleanliness of school premises, classroom, kitchen, hand pump. The Bal Sansad ensures that the soap is kept near the hand pump so that children use it after using toilet and before taking MDM. The Bal Sansad also ensures the use of dustbin in every class.

Kitchen Garden and Bio Intensive Garden (BIG) ensuring quality food in MDM in Jharkhand

Kitchen Garden is good concept to provide quality food in MDM. In such type of gardens minimum quantity of water is required. Here bio compost is used instead of chemical manure. The vegetables grown in Kitchen Garden are of good quality and enhance mental development of children. Generally this garden is made through bio-fencing by bamboo around the garden. Crops are grown on rotation basis during the year so that different vegetables may be provided for MDM.

Public Private Partnerships in Andhra Pradesh

Pubic Private Partnership (PPP) can be the way in which the Cooked Midday Meal can be provided in schools. PPP involves a contract between the Government agencies and a private institution where the onus of providing a public service is on the private institution. Under the PPP mode, the quality of service being provided is expected to improve which can result in an improved performance of the cooked mid-day meal scheme. In Andhra Pradesh, the involvement of a number of private bodies in the implementation of CMDM in the state has resulted in visibly better performance. In rural areas, Self Help Groups/SEC/Temples/NGOs and charitable Trusts/Group of Parents are identified by the Mandal Revenue Officers (MRO) as the implementing agencies. In Urban areas Community Development Societies/NGOs/SHGs/DWCRA/School Education Committees and other Agencies like Temples /NGOs of proven track record/charitable trusts/Groups of parents are identified as implementing agencies by a committee headed by the MRO. Naandi Foundation has taken up the programme in the districts of Vishakhapatnam and Hyderabad. The Naandi Foundation has established a central kitchen at Hyderabad from which midday meal is supplied to 1,01,394 children in 891 schools in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. Similarly the centralized kitchen established in Vishakhapatnam city by the same NGO which covers 35,734 children in 111 schools. In Tirupati district, ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) is meeting the Midday Meal requirement of about 8500 children in 65 schools.

Gaps

Monitoring & Evaluation of Scheme

The scheme (MDM) is monitored closely at four levels monitoring; State, District, Block and School. To ensure smooth functioning of the scheme the Department of School Education has also developed an online monitoring system for Mid-Day Meal and distribution of rice with the help of National Informatics

Centre (NIC), the system also calculates cooking cost. MDM cell has been established at DEO offices. District officials usually monitor the programme along with other programmes. At block level, BEOs and BRCs are involved in the monitoring of MDM. At school level, Village Education Committee normally do the job of monitoring. In this way effective monitoring system has been evolved at each level.

However, it was observed that no indicator based monitoring of the schemes was introduced to measure impact of scheme in nutrition and health status of students. Periodic health check-ups were also not being organised by the district authorities.

Delay in release of Funds

During interactions it was reported by most of the WSHG that there is a significant delay of 3 to 4 months in releasing cooking cost to them. They are based in the villages wherein only rice is made available through PDS but they are putting their own resources for purchasing several items like vegetables and oil. Sometimes, they also buy in credit from nearby shops at higher rates. On account of this improper flow of funds and the quality of meals suffers in many schools.

Delay in Flow of Information to Nodal Office at Block Level

Out of total 146 blocks, 85 blocks come under Block Education Officer of Department of Tribal Welfare and rest 61 blocks come under Department of School Education. Thus, as two different departments are involved, at times the information from state and district level gets delayed in reaching to the Nodal Department managing that block. This issue is primarily faced in rural remote locations.

Delay in serving of Mid-Day Meal in schools

It is observed that meal is not served prescribed time (i.e 1.00 pm.) in the schools while often children come without taking breakfast to schools.

Absence of Internal Grievance Redressal Systems

In the present delivery structure, there are no formal systems by which school Headmasters can lodge complaints in the event of delays in receipt of funds, grains, issues with SHGs and seek redressal. Based on study findings, absence of such systems has disempowered Headmasters and has created unnecessary delays in attending to the issues. In the absence of such systems, Headmasters also feel no sense of responsibility to try and address the problem and take necessary actions in resolving such issues. Building a formal system for Headmasters to lodge complaints in the event of any issue and making these systems public will go a long way in addressing these problems.

Absence of Health Check-up

No health check-up is undertaken for the students taking the benefit of MDM. For example, in Anganwadi centres, every month the child undergoes a health check-up to assess the impact of ICDS. As the children grow there are other health related issues also, such as anaemia, calcium deficiency and hygiene related problems which further trigger lack of concentration and weakness etc. in the children. The students in

school do take one meal in the form of MDM, thus this makes all the more necessary that their health status is checked from time to time.

Lack of adequate staff for MDM at the state, district and block level

While interacting with the state officials it was reported that there is shortage of officials and employees at state, district and block levels. There is no dedicated MDM staff at the block level (these responsibilities have been given to elementary education staff who manage education specific programs and for whom MDM is not always a priority). High staff vacancies exist with no recruitment taking place. In many cases, transfers of staff and resultant vacancies in key positions have resulted in delays in signing off on key financial documents.

Inadequate Infrastructure at School Level

Though the food grains are stored at school level either in the kitchen shed or store room, however study team observed that proper storage facility or storing space is not available at school level. The food grains are stored in one of the class rooms or in any other room where other furniture and other items are kept. Proper utensils are also not available sometimes, especially in the tribal areas it was seen that food grains are kept in the sacks made of plastic or jute, therefore there is always a danger that rats/ rodents might eat it. In addition, plates in which the meal is served are also inadequate; therefore some students have to wait for their turn. After the first lot of students finish eating their meal then the plates are washed and given to the remaining students for serving MDM. Thus old cooking and serving utensils need to be replaced from time to time.

Weak School Management Committees (SMCs)

During field work we found that in most schools the SMCs role does not extend beyond the requisite signing of cheques or cursory monitoring of MDM preparation. Moreover, several Headmasters and teachers interviewed did not consider SMC members to be monitors, nor did they consider their visits to the school to be 'monitoring' visits. In one school in Kondagaon, when the SMC President complained to the Headmaster and the *Pradhan* about the poor quality of meals, the Headmaster told him that he had no right to ask questions. SMC member's interviews cited the lack of adequate training which is seen as a reason for the reduced involvement of SMCs as monitors.

Recommendations for Its Scalability

The recommendation based on the study findings are as follows:

Introduction of Indicator Based Monitoring & Evaluation of MDM Scheme

The scheme (MDM) is monitored closely at four levels monitoring; State, District, Block and School. However, it was observed that no indicator based monitoring of the schemes was introduced to measure impact of scheme in nutrition and health status of students. Periodical health check-ups were also not being organised by the district authorities. Hence, it is suggested that the scheme should integrate with the Health programs.

While our survey showed that the MDM programme has been functioning in all the schools surveyed, there needs to be concerted efforts to ensure food safety, quality as well as optimum utilization of resources. There is an urgent need to ensure that all necessary information is shared with all those involved in this programme. Primarily, it needs to be stressed that MDM is a right of every student; hence PRI members or the SHGs should strictly follow the guidelines for implementing it.

For implementation of indicator based monitoring, it is essential that schools maintains data for each student and this data is validated and physically verified by officers at the District and Block levels who should visit fifteen schools in each month to see that children are getting nutritious and hygienic food and it is improving their health. Every month respective officials need to submit the report to the state department on self-attested form through Fax that they have inspected the schools.

Timely release of Funds

It is observed that Government of India is paying recurring assistance to the States in three instalments and the Finance Department of the State Government is releasing funds in advance. Timely release of fund is somewhere stuck at district level. Hence, it is suggested that the State Government pays more attention and close monitoring is done so that the cooking cost to the schools and cooks are getting paid in time.

Timely serving of Mid-Day Meal in schools

It is observed that meal is not served prescribed time in the schools while often children come without taking breakfast to schools. In such situation, it seems appropriate that meal is served by 12:00 PM or some tiffin could be served at 11.00 am so that children do not suffer from hunger and can concentrate on teaching/learning processes in class-rooms.

Guidelines for Women SHG workers

It is observed that women SHG workers/cook/helpers involved in cooking and serving of food do not keep adequate level of hygiene at both personal level and with the food while cooking. It is recommended that apart from capacity building of these SHG workers, a clear set of guidelines should be prepared and strictly implemented. The components of the guidelines may including the following-

- Personal hygiene i.e. washed cloths, head/hair tied with cap, hand wash with soap before cooking, clean nails.
- Hygiene in cooking food i.e. to ensure that vegetable are washed in prescribed manner, rice and dal are cleaned properly
- Hygiene of the space where food is cooked
- Hygiene of the utensils in which food is cooked and served

Menu of the Mid-Day Meal to be followed

In most of the cases, children have put their concern regarding meal to be monotonous. The vegetables are repeated often. But in principle it was found that the Menu of the MDM is pre-decided with approval of competent Government Authority with verity on each day. But in practice the menu is often not followed by the cooking agencies/SHGs. Hence, it is recommended that the Menu should be decided with possible

variations in the items cooked each day and once decided it should be followed by schools/cooking agencies/SHGs concerned.

Timely Flow of Information to Nodal Office at Block Level

Proper mechanism and clear demarcation of such blocks having issues in fund flow should be made through notification and should be circulated to all nodal offices at block level as well as at state and district offices.

Mandatory Health Check-up at School Level

Replicating the model of Anganwadi Centre, Health Check-up in schools should be made mandatory on 6 monthly basis. This would ensure that proper nutrition is being provided to the students in school and in case of any health issue further diagnoses and treatment can also be given.

MDM needs to be linked with other health programs as well by provision of essential medications. Parents need nutrition and health education so they can be aware of the effects of under-nourishment among children in this age group (6 to 14 years), its impact and what could be done about it. MDM is an entitlement of every child attending school to ensure his/her growth and development, at the same time if school links it with health check-ups and supply of doses of required micronutrients then it will serve the nutrition need of the child.

Strengthen staff availability for MDM at the state, district and block levels

Increasing MDM staff capacity and building systems to deal with vacancies is critical to streamlining the transfer system. As there is a separate cell which deals with planning and implementation of MDM, thus it is recommended that dedicated staff at all the three levels should be placed and would regularly monitor this flagship programme.

Strengthening Infrastructure at School Level

A separate study should be conducted at school level to assess the adequacy of infrastructure available and based on this funds should be allocated at school level for purchasing utensils/ containers for storing food grains and serving items for MDM. Even SMC members should raise this issue in their monthly meetings and should get these resolved with the support of Block Education Officer. In Kondagaon and Rajnandgaon district, in some schools SMC members with the help of community had purchased the plates and provided these to the schools. Such successful models can be replicated in other schools and districts as well.

Strengthening and Training of SMC members

The RTE, through its mandate to create SMCs, provides an important platform to mobilise community participation in monitoring MDM. To leverage this platform, a comprehensive capacity building module

must be developed in partnership with SSA2. The capacity building module must be provided to all executive committee members of the SMC on a bi-annual basis.

It might be useful to organise separate MDM training sessions outside of the regular SMC sessions. Training session must be undertaken at the cluster level and each training session must not comprise more than 20 SMC members being trained at any point of time. Key areas covered during the capacity building sessions must include:

- Implementation and management procedures for MDM (roles and responsibilities, fund flow system, procurement process)
- Awareness about citizen charters and key information provided in them
- Key entitlements under MDM programme
- Developing a monitoring strategy for MDM. This should include:
 - How to read and understand key MDM registers (financial & physical verification registers, bank account pass book and cash book)
 - How to read attendance registers and match attendance registers with MDM registers
 - How to read and understand transparency boards
 - How to develop a monitoring strategy (For instance, SMC members could be encouraged to identify MDM monitors in the SMC, create monitoring sheets that these sheets can be filled up after monitoring visits, consolidate monitoring sheets and read them out during the SMC meeting)
 - Grievance redressal: This should include a module on how to register a complaint and how to use mechanisms like filing RTI to monitor progress on the complaint.

All these can be done by setting up a centralised call centre or helpline with a toll free number in which SMC members can call with specific queries. To provide local support to the SMC, the community mobiliser/resource person can initiate a campaign to identify and train volunteers (educated youth in the village) in every school to provide support to the SMC. In addition to training SMC members, MDM Departments should develop links with Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Departments (RDPR) at the state level and introduce an MDM training module in the Panchayat trainings that are undertaken by RDPR Departments.

Building & Strengthening Internal Grievance Redressal System

Building a formal system for Headmasters to lodge complaints in the event of any issue and making these systems public will go a long way in addressing these problems. For instance, a special helpline number could be created for Headmasters to record issues emerging in their schools. The specific grievance could then be recorded into the IVRS database along with details on the specific officials responsible for resolving this grievance. A tracking system can also be introduced to enable Headmasters to track progress on their grievance.

Some Innovations for Better Implementation and its Scalability

MDM to be directly linked to education: The existing curriculum may be linked with MDM like names of vegetables may be taught to the students by providing the same in their food. Also, practical lessons could

² SSA is responsible for organising SMC trainings and developing training manuals

be drawn on hygiene and sanitation, importance of nutrition, kinds of food and their nutritive value, cooking methods that prevent the loss of nutritive value of food, weights and measurements, basic sums of mathematics-related to addition, subtraction, multiplication, division. The methodology of such practical training could also involve children in some involvement in the programme.

1 Introduction

The Chapter provides information regarding the project area and also status of education in Chhattisgarh.

1.1 Study Area - Chhattisgarh

Chhattisgarh is one of the youngest states of the Republic of India. It came into separate political being in the year 2000 by bifurcating 16 Chhattisgarhi-speaking south-eastern districts of Madhya Pradesh. Raipur was made the capital city of the State. As per Census 2011 provisional data, Chhattisgarh had 18 districts which have increased to 27 districts in 2012-13. Chhattisgarh borders the states of Madhya Pradesh in the northwest, Maharashtra in the southwest, Andhra Pradesh in the south, Odisha in the east, Jharkhand in the northeast and Uttar Pradesh in the north.

It is the 10th largest state in India, with an area of 135,191 km² with a population of 25.5 million spread across five divisions - Bastar, Durg, Raipur, Bilaspur and Surguja. Chhattisgarh is the 16th most-populated state of India. It is a source of electricity and steel for India. Chhattisgarh accounts for 15% of the total steel produced in the country.

As of 2011, Chhattisgarh had an HDI value of 0.358, the lowest for any Indian state³. The national average is 0.467 according to 2011 Indian NHDR report.

Chhattisgarh has an Education Index of 0.526 according to 2011 NHDR which is higher than that of states like Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan which are below the 0.5 mark. This is, however, lower than the national average of 0.563. With respect to literacy, the state fared just below the national average. The recent estimates of Census 2011 also indicate a similar picture of literacy rate of 71 per cent (81.4% Males & 60.5% Females), which is close to the all India literacy rate of 74 per cent.

Chhattisgarh is primarily a rural state with only 23% of population (around 5.9 million people as per Census 2011) residing in urban areas. 31% are Scheduled Tribes and 13% belong to Scheduled Castes

Chhattisgarh is generally perceived as a tribal dominated state not only due to high proportion of tribal population in the state but also, more importantly, due to retaining their culture and traditional way of life despite all pervasive influence of forces of modernity in the name of development. Thus, Chhattisgarh remained 'underdeveloped' in critical indicators of development namely, education and health. Since its creation as a separate political entity, the state Government has been putting focused efforts to make Chhattisgarh a developed state. In the process, Chhattisgarh has not been leaving any stone unturned particularly in the field of school education. For this, Chhattisgarh made use of all the opportunities provided under Mid-Day Meal programme for the achievement of Universalization of Elementary Education.

³India Human Development Report 2011: Towards Social Inclusion

Table 1.1: State Profile (Figure in Numbers)

Chhattisgarh		Total
Population	Total	2,55,40,196
	Rural	1,96,03,658
	Urban	59,36,538
	Male	1,28,27,915
	Female	1,27,12,281
	Total Scheduled Castes (SC)	32,74,269
	Scheduled Castes Rural	25,11,949
	Scheduled Castes Urban	7,62,320
	Total Scheduled Tribe (ST)	78,22,902
	Scheduled Tribe Rural	72,31,082
	Scheduled Tribe Urban	5,91,820
Literacy	Total Literacy rate	71.04
	Male Literacy Rate	81.45
	Female Literacy Rate	60.59
Poverty Status	Urban Below Poverty Line (BPL) Population (*Planning Commission July 2013)	15,22,000

Source: Census 2011 Provisional, Economic Survey of Chhattisgarh 2012-13, *Planning Commission July 2013

1.2 Education Profile of Chhattisgarh

Education forms the backbone of any social and economic development initiative; Chhattisgarh has healthy improvement in its literacy rate over the last decade which increased from 64.66% in 2001 to 71.04% in 2011 (81.4% Males & 60.5% Females), which is close to the all India literacy rate of 74 per cent. Chhattisgarh is committed to its agenda of imparting education to all and allocated a significant share of its plan outlay for this sector. The state has to traverse a long path to achieve the targets it has set for itself, wherein Chhattisgarh would universalize Primary Education and carve a niche for itself by creating regional best-in-class education infrastructure.

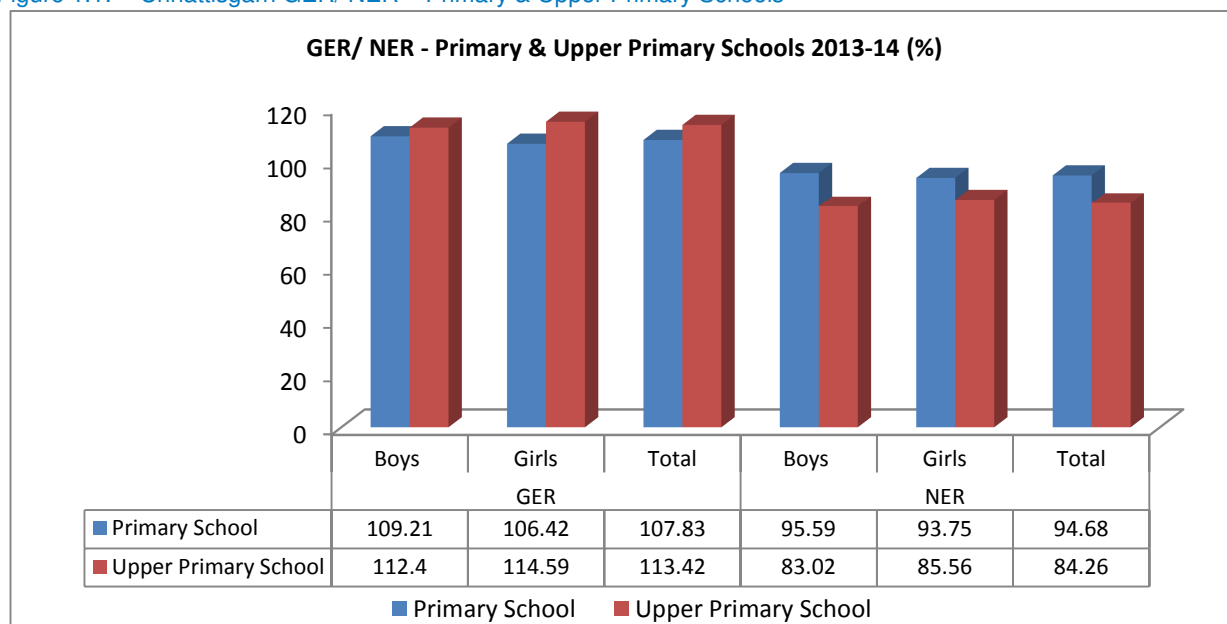
The School Education in Chhattisgarh is mainly under the control of School Education Department. It conducts educational activities from Pre-primary to Higher Secondary Education within the state. Some Missionary Organizations, Local Bodies & Private Institutions are also engaged in providing education in the state.

As per data available from Govt. of India's Department of School Education and Literacy (Ministry of Human Resource Development), Chhattisgarh has a total of 146 blocks of which 74 blocks are Educationally Backward Blocks (EBB)⁴

As per the District Information System for Education (DISE) for 2012-13, Chhattisgarh has a total of 53,766 schools, of which 14,210 are Upper Primary Schools and 35,672 are Primary Schools. The enrolment ratio for the primary and upper primary is presented in the following graph & table.

⁴<http://ssamis.nic.in/dashBoard.do>

Figure 1.1: Chhattisgarh GER/ NER – Primary & Upper Primary Schools



Source: PAB Minutes – Annexure II 2013-14; UDISE 2011-12 & Population

As discussed earlier, total number of Primary Schools in the state is 35,672 of which 33,534 are Government Schools and 2028 are Private Schools. Around 94.6% (31,751) of Government Schools and 75.6% (1,534) of Private Schools are located in rural areas. As per Census 2011, total population of children within the age group of 6-11 years is 29.38 lakhs and that of 11-14 years is 15.10 lakhs (table below)

Table 1.2: Child Population

Age Group	Boys	Girls	Total
6-11 years	14,97,990	14,40,108	29,38,098
11-14 years	7,67,791	7,42,989	15,10,780

Source: PAB Minutes- Annexure II 2013-14

Similarly the enrolment status of children in Chhattisgarh is as follows:

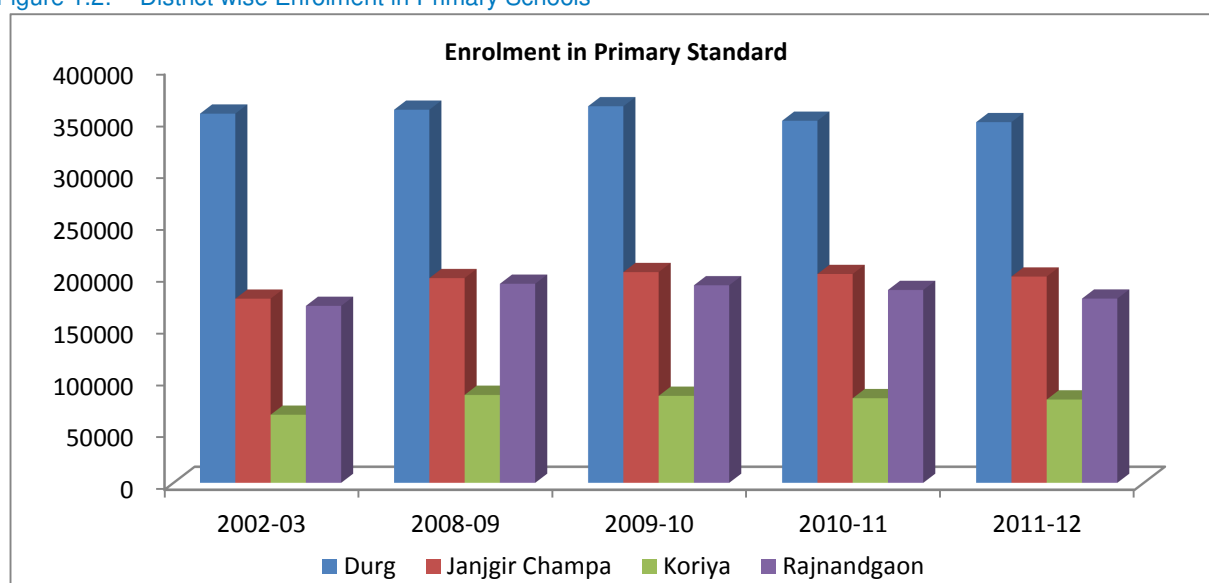
Table 1.3: Enrolment Status in Schools 2012-13

Enrolment status	Boys	Girls	Total
Primary School (class 1 to 5)	15,89,244	15,27,113	31,22,131
Upper Primary School (Class 6 to 8)	8,23,269	7,99,725	16,22,994

Source: PAB Minutes- Annexure II 2013-14

District wise enrolment is provided below for the study districts.

Figure 1.2: District wise Enrolment in Primary Schools



Source: <http://dise.in/drc.htm>

Comparing the enrolment number from 2002-03 with that of 2011-12, only marginal Increase in the districts of JanjgirChampa (11.95%), Koriya (23.68%) and Rajnandgaon (4.08%) can be seen (Table 1.4)

Table 1.4: District wise Enrolment in Primary Schools

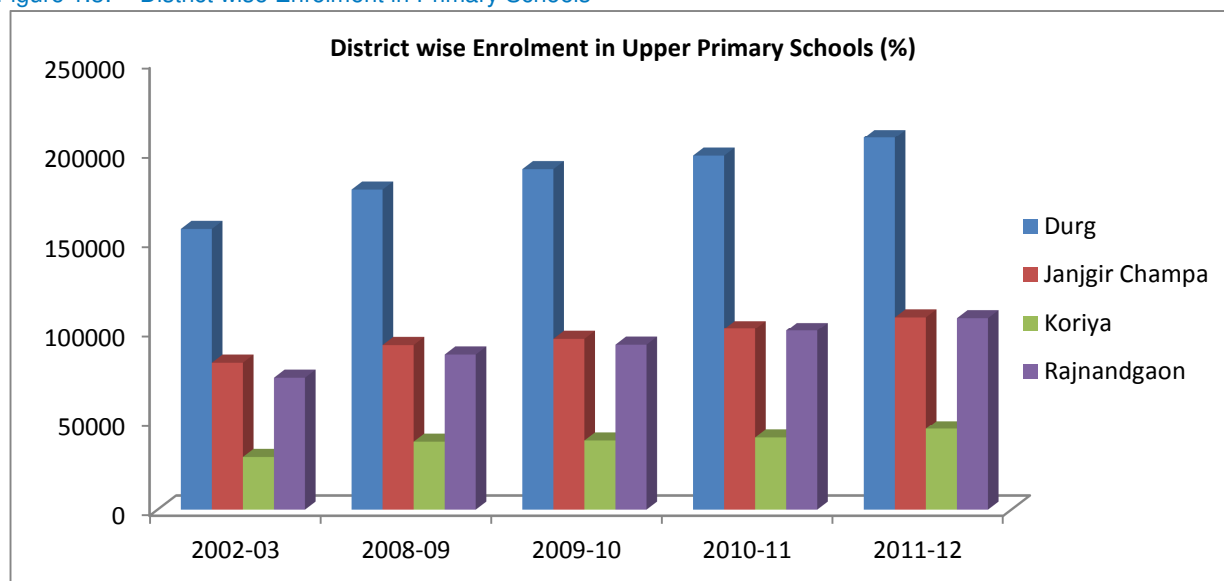
S.No	Districts	Enrolment (Primary Schools)				
		2002-03	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
1.	Baloda Bazar*	-	-	-	-	-
2.	Durg	3,56,017	359,798	3,63,082	3,49,208	347,871
3.	JanjgirChampa	1,77,096	1,96,797	2,02,524	2,00,714	1,98,276
4.	Kondagaon*	-	-	-	-	-
5.	Koriya	65,115	84,929	84,016	81,787	80,536
6.	Rajnandgaon	1,70,217	1,91,346	1,89,932	1,85,438	1,77,174

*These districts were carved out from Raipur & Bastar districts in 2012, hence segregated data for this is not available

Source: <http://dise.in/drc.htm>

However, in case of Upper Primary Schools, there has been increase in enrolment (Table 1.5) as compared from 2002-03; Durg (32.41%), JanjgirChampa (31.18%), Koriya (53.98%) and Rajnandgaon (45.35%)

Figure 1.3: District wise Enrolment in Primary Schools



Source: <http://dise.in/drc.htm>

Table 1.5: District wise Enrolment in Upper Primary Schools

S.No	Districts	Enrolment (Upper Primary Schools)				
		2002-03	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
1.	Baloda Bazar*	-	-	-	-	-
2.	Durg	1,57,080	178,948	1,90,213	1,97,838	207,982
3.	JanjgirChampa	81,828	91,555	94,953	1,00,758	1,07,346
4.	Kondagaon*	-	-	-	-	-
5.	Koriya	29,287	37,782	38,434	40,146	45,097
6.	Rajnandgaon	73,564	86,322	91,757	99,695	1,06,923

*These districts were carved out from Raipur & Bastar districts in 2012, hence segregated data for this is not available

Source: <http://dise.in/drc.htm>

1.3 Concept of Mid-Day Meal Program

Education plays a vital role in the development of human potential. State Governments are spending considerable portion of their limited resources to provide educational facilities all over the country. In spite of these efforts, the goal of cent percent universalization of elementary education appears to be far and elusive due to inherent socio-economic factors present in the society. Free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 years is the constitutional commitment and it is estimated that Primary school children (6-14 years) form about 20% of the total population. Most of the children from low socio-economic society suffer from under nutrition, more often they drop out from schools at an early age, which directly affects

their overall development. Poor school enrolment and high school dropout rate are attributed to the poor nutritional status of the children compounded by poor socio-economic conditions, child labour and lack of motivation. Nutrition support to primary education is considered as a means to achieve the objective of providing free and compulsory universal primary education of satisfactory quality to all children below the age of 14 years by giving a boost to universalisation of primary education through increased enrolment, improved school attendance and retention and promoting nutritional status of primary school children simultaneously.

Introduction of Mid-Day Meal program (MDM) in India occurred almost a century ago. It was the then Madras Corporation which first developed a school lunch programme way back in 1925. However, it was about 50 years later that such a program was given any serious attention at the national level by the Government. In the year 1974, the National Policy on Children declared that country's children are its supreme human resource. This policy encouraged the state to ensure full physical and mental development of children. Later, the National Programme of Nutritional support to Primary Education (Mid-Day Meal Program) was launched in 1995. The objective of this program was to give boost to universalization of primary education and impacting on nutrition of students in primary classes⁵. At about that time the union territory of Delhi implemented a Mid-Day Meal program. The program was revised in 2004⁶ and government at the centre emphasized its implementation in its Common Minimum Programme. It envisaged provision of cooked, nutritious Mid-Day Meal to primary and secondary school children. Importantly, it also mentioned of setting-up of an appropriate mechanism for quality checks.

Despite these developments over the decades, the problem of malnutrition, anaemia, deficiency in Vitamin A and Iodine are very common among children in India.

Mid-day meal program is the biggest program implemented by any Government covering 10.44 crore children in 12.12 lakh elementary schools across the country⁷. This grand program initiated by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India has been showing tremendous impact on the universalisation of Elementary Education

1.3.1 Background of Mid-Day Meal Program in Chhattisgarh

"Mid-Day Meal Programme" in Chhattisgarh and its concept regarding nutritional support to Primary Education is as old as freedom Struggle for Independence because way back in 1943 i.e. before the Independence, Mid-Day Meal Programme was first initiated in Chhattisgarh region in 1943 when erstwhile Korea Princely State provided *Gud-Chana* at lunch time in all the 18 schools existing at that time. In the State of Chhattisgarh, which was a part of Madhya Pradesh, under "Mid-Day Meal Programme" hot cooked Meal was being provided to children in tribal districts only in 85 blocks out of 146 blocks. By 1990-91, Madhya Pradesh(including the Chhattisgarh region) was implementing the "Mid-Day Meal Programme"

⁵Government of India. "Guidelines of National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education [Mid Day Meal Scheme]"

⁶Government of India. "Guidelines of Revised National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education [Mid Day Meal Scheme]"

⁷Annual Report, MHRD 2012-13

with its own resources on large scale. Mid-Day Meal Program of giving cooked hot meals was started on 2nd October 1995 in the undivided State of Madhya Pradesh. At first the programme was launched in only tribal blocks, under which hot cooked meal was provided to children of Primary school. The reason for providing Mid-Day Meal in only Tribal blocks was because they had residential schools with hostel facilities and it was easy to engage a permanent cook for cooking food for the children during noon in these schools. Tribal areas i.e. in community blocks where such facilities were lacking, the students were getting 3 kilogram rice per month under Mid-Day Meal programme and because of this all school going children were partially benefitted under this programmes all the family members of benefitted children were consuming the rice rather than the child itself. Mid-Day Meal programme became universalized in all the States in 2001 onwards after the Honourable Supreme Court ruling in SLP Writ Petition No. 196 passing an interim order dated 28.11.2001. From 2001 onwards it became compulsory for the state to follow the guidelines of Supreme Court and to provide hot cooked Mid-Day Meal to the children of 6 to 11 years age group.

Thereafter it became a universal truth that “Mid-Day Meal Programme” had a positive influence on enrolment and attendance in schools. A hungry child would not attend schools regularly. Chronic hunger can cause or lead to malnutrition and even lead the children to pay less importance to studies as well as divert their attention from the studies and with a view to enhance the enrolment, retention, attendance and simultaneously improving nutritional level among children.

Mid-Day Meal programme became an essential part of elementary education and due to the successful outcome of the programme enrolment, retention and attendance has increased phenomenally in Primary and Upper Primary schools. Mid-Day Meal programme revised the guidelines as NP-NSPE 2006. Earlier it was known as National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education but now it is known as National Programme for Mid-Day Meal. This new version has increased the conversion cost per child per day from Rs.1.00 to Rs.1.50, to increase nutritional level of the students, and Chhattisgarh is the only state in India where state’s share is Rs.1.00 and the conversion cost of the State in 60:40 ratio, thereby the rate of cooking cost is Rs.2.50/per child/per day in the State.

Table 1.6: Mid-Day Meal Program in Chhattisgarh

Brief history		
1995 (Inception) – till March 2002	National programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) - only free food grain of 3 kilograms per child was provided	
April 2002 – March 2003	State started serving cooked hot meal in all the Primary Schools	
2006	Mid-Day Meal programme revised the guidelines as NP-NSPE 2006	
w.e.f.October 2007	Mid-Day Meal programme started in all government and government aided Upper Primary schools of 16 districts of the State	
	Primary (INR/child/working day)	Upper Primary (INR/child/working day)
w.e.f.July 2008	2.58	2.60

Brief history		
w.e.f. December 2009	3.00	3.75
w.e.f. April 2010	3.30	4.00
2011-12	3.40	4.40
w.e.f. July 2012	3.65	4.70

Source: NP-NSPE Guideline 2006.

1.3.2 Supplementary Nutritional Support

Better nutritional inputs improve learning as well as health status. There is a critical link between people's health status and nutritional outcome; interventions to reduce hunger improve nutrition levels and promote good health. Thus, better nutritional status leads to improved knowledge and learning. On the other hand, malnutrition, caused by both micro and macro-nutrient deficiencies, often begins even before a child is born. The effect of this early damage on health and brain development is irreversible in later life, and hence reduces adaptability to education and productivity in later life. Thus, child malnutrition is not a problem just confined to childhood; a malnourished under three-year old will grow up to be a malnourished adult, and fail to realize his/her potential as a human being. Malnutrition is indicator of chronic hunger. Given the current situation, the Government has universalized the Integrated Child Development Program (ICDS) programme in India to provide adequate nutrition to children below the age of five years and in some states it has introduced snacks in the morning and hot cooked meals at lunch time for children below five years of age.

To ensure its sustainability and also with a view to enhancing enrolment, retention, attendance and simultaneously improving nutritional levels among children, the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) was launched as a Centrally Sponsored Program in August 1995, initially in 2408 blocks in the country. By the year 1997-98 the NP-NSPE was introduced in all blocks of the country. It was further extended in 2002 to cover not only children in Classes I -V of Government, Government aided and local body schools, but also children studying in Education Guarantee Program(EGS) and Alternative Innovative Education Centre (AIE) centres.

1.3.2.1 Nutritional Content of Cooked mid-day meals

To achieve the objectives of the Program, the guidelines prescribe the following nutritional content in the mid-day meal⁸:

Table 1.7: Mid-Day Meal Program-Provision of Nutrition

Components	Primary	Upper Primary
Calories	450 Cal	700 Cal
Protein	12 gms.	20 gms.
Micro-nutrients	Adequate quantities of micro-nutrients like Iron, Folic Acid , Vitamin-A etc.	

Source: http://mdm.nic.in/Files/School%20Health%20Programme/Nutrition_Support/Nutrition_support_Introduction.pdf

⁸http://mdm.nic.in/Files/School%20Health%20Programme/Nutrition_Support/Nutrition_support_Introduction.pdf

The component-wise break up of above nutrition value of food items constituting Mid Day Meal (MDM), both for primary and upper primary, are as in following table.

Table 1.8: Mid-Day Meal Program-Provision of Nutrition

S. No.	Items	Primary			Upper Primary		
		Requirement under MDM (in gms)	Energy content (in calories)	Protein Content (in gms)	Requirement under MDM (in gms)	Energy content (in calories)	Protein Content (in gms)
1	Food-grains (Rice / Wheat)	100	340	8	150	510	14
2	Pulses	20	70	5	30	105	6.6
3	Vegetables	50	25	--	75	37	--
4	Oil & Fat	5	45	--	7.5	68	--
5	Salt & Condiments	As per need	--	--	As per need	--	--
Total			480	13		720	20.6

Source: http://mdm.nic.in/Files/School%20Health%20Programme/Nutrition_Support/Nutrition_support_Introduction.pdf

1.3.3 Ensure Right to Education by 100% enrolment

National Programme of Mid-Day Meal in Schools (MDMS) is a flagship programme of the Government of India aimed at enhancing enrolment, retention, attendance and simultaneously improving nutritional levels among children studying in Government, Local Body and Government-aided primary and upper primary schools and the Centres run under Education Guarantee Program (EGS)/Alternative & Innovative Education (AIE) and National Child Labour Project (NCLP) schools of all areas across the country. MDM is also served in drought-affected areas during summer vacations.

2 The Assignment

Mid-day meal program is the largest program implemented by Government all over the country. This grand program initiated by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India is showing tremendous impact on the universalization of Elementary Education. MDM implementation has resulted in the enhancement of enrolments, stabilized retention and curtailed dropout rates manifold.

Since the programmes being executed from 1995, the SCERT, Chhattisgarh intends to evaluate the impact of this program on the enrolment and retention of the students so that future plans could be devised on the basis of the grass root realities and experiences.

1.4 Objective of the study

As per the terms of reference, the study has been undertaken by Mott MacDonald, the consultants at the State level to assess the following objectives:

- Contribution of MDM in enrolment
- Contribution of MDM in retention
- Status of daily attendance due to the implementation of the program.
- Status of attendance before and after MDM.
- Status of continuity of education due to the implementation of the program.
- Perception of teachers and students towards MDM as learning enhancement programme.
- Perception of Parents and community towards MDM as learning enhancement programme.
- Role of MDM in elimination of discrimination.
- Participation of SMDC / PRI and parents in MDM.
- Best Practices / Constraints

1.5 Scope of Work

The scope of work provided in the terms of reference of the proposed assignment includes the following:

- Develop data collection tools
- Select districts, blocks, clusters and schools based on the sampling strategy of SCERT
- Submit Inception report
- Pilot test developed data collection tools
- Train Field teams with final tools revised after pilot testing
- Complete primary survey based on agreed methodology
- Data Compilation
- Analyse the collected data and submit draft report
- Incorporate SCERT feedback, submit final report and make presentation

1.5.1 Geographical Coverage

The terms of reference indicated coverage of 96 upper primary and primary schools in six districts of the State, namely Kondagaon, Koriya, Dhamtari, Rajnandgaon, JanjgirChampa, Bemetra (as suggested by SCERT, Chhattisgarh). The Clusters/Blocks were selected in consultation with SCERT officials. The detailed sampling frame as indicated in the terms of reference is indicated in table below:

Table 2.1: Study Sampling Framework

Parameters for coverage	Numbers to be covered	Description of coverage
District	6	Selection of districts across the State with geographical representation
Blocks	12	Two blocks per district was selected
Clusters	24	Two clusters per block was selected, such that one was a rural cluster and another urban
Total Schools	96	On the whole four schools per cluster was selected
Total Upper primary schools	48	Among the schools chosen, two upper primary schools per cluster having wide representation of cluster was selected
Total Primary schools	48	Among the schools chosen, two primary schools per cluster having wide representation of cluster was selected

Source: MM Study

Districts and blocks finalized in consultation and agreement with SCERT and covered under the assignment are presented below:

Table 2.2: Study Coverage

S. No	Districts	Blocks
1.	Baloda Bazar	Bilaigarh
		Bhatapara
2.	Durg	Durg
		Dhamdha
3.	JanjgirChampa	Akaltara,
		Pamgarh
4.	Kondagaon	Pharasgaon(T)
		Keshkal (T)
5.	Koriya	Sonhat (T)
		Khadgawan (T)
6.	Rajnandgaon	Chhuikhadan
		Mohla (T)

T= Tribal Blocks; List of clusters and schools covered is given as Appendix A

Source: MM Study

The detailed methodology adopted for each component addressed is outlined in the subsequent sections.

As per the requirement of the ToR, the study was conducted by addressing the objectives of the study. For this, data was collected using different types of schedules at different levels of sample units. The study had following stages as mentioned below.

1.6 Stage I: Preparatory Phase

Our core team was mobilised after signing of the contract. The description of activities that was carried out at this stage are provided below

1.6.1 Inception of the Study

During inception phase, we had undertaken consultative meeting with the key representatives of the client and other relevant stakeholders associated on the assignment to gain a complete understanding of the Project and the objectives behind the current assessment. In this meeting, the Mott MacDonald team:

- Presented their understanding and requirements for the proposed assignment
- Collected the relevant documents such as physical and financial performance of the program for last 5 years; cluster wise/ district-wise list of schools where MDM program is being implemented; implementation structure of the program and its stakeholders.

In line with the TOR, the SCERT Chhattisgarh had selected districts & blocks ensuring that the sample is representative of the state. Mott MacDonald had further selected the clusters and schools in consultation with the Block Education Officer.

It was found that the details of the program were not available at the SCERT level and hence we had requested the SCERT to issue letters to the State Government relevant departments which would facilitate us to collect the various data during primary survey.

As an output of this phase we had submitted the inception report which included the following;

- Draft study questionnaire for:
 - Officials of SCERT
 - Officials of State Education Department
 - Officials of Tribal Welfare Department
 - Officials of Directorate of Public Instructions
 - District Education Officer
 - Block Education Officer
 - School Principals & Teachers
 - SMDC members
 - PRI members
 - SHG member/Cook
 - Parents/Community members
 - Students

1.7 Stage II: Pre testing of study tools

After submission of Inception report and its approval by SCERT, we had undertaken pre-testing of all tools in Durg district, wherein the team had contacted the District Education Officer, followed by the block level contacts at Durg block itself, wherein we had contacted the Block Education Officer as well as the Assistant Block Officer. The study team had also collected the cluster wise list of schools in the block.

Following this, the study team had visited two schools – one urban and another rural, wherein team had contacted the school principals and teachers, as well as a few students. In addition, the study team was

also able to observe the mid-day meal being served and eaten by the students in these schools during the visit.

At the state level, we interacted with Director-SCERT, Assistant Director-SCERT, Deputy Director-SCERT, Deputy Director- DPI, Assistant Director-DPI, Additional Director-SSA, and Deputy Commissioner – Tribal Welfare Department.

The study instruments were revised after pre testing based on the findings and shared with the client.

1.8 Stage III: Training of Study team

During pre-testing of study tools, the field supervisors were provided with class-room as well as on-site training.

On receipt of approval of Revised Inception Report (after the pre-testing phase) from SCERT, our study team proceeded further, for training of field investigators and initiated field work. Actual fieldwork commenced only once the interviewers were trained to the satisfaction of researchers.

1.9 Stage IV: Primary Research

As per study requirement, both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used for Primary data collection.

1.9.1 Research Framework

The overall research framework for the study is presented below:

Table 2.3: Overall Research Framework

Stakeholders' coverage	Research techniques	Research Tools	Aspects for coverage
Officials of SCERT, State Education Department (including DPI, SSA and TWD)	Qualitative	In-depth Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary data on enrolment (gross and net enrolment), retention and attendance rates in State, districts, clusters and schools since 2000 • Study expectations and context • Benefits of mid-day meal program with reference to enrolment and retention rates • Problems faced in program implementation • Best practices
District Education officer involved in elementary education and Mid-day Meal program implementation	Qualitative	In-depth Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention and enrolment rates (gross and net enrolment) at district, block, cluster and school levels • Benefits of the mid-day meal program with specific reference to enrolment and retention rates • Problems faced in program implementation

Stakeholders' coverage	Research techniques	Research Tools	Aspects for coverage
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practices
Block/ Cluster Education Officer involved in Mid-day meal implementation	Qualitative	In-depth Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention and enrolment rates (gross and net enrolment) at block, cluster and school levels • Benefits of the mid-day meal program with specific reference to enrolment and retention rates • Problems faced in program implementation • Best practices
School headmaster and teachers	Qualitative	Semi-Structured Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention and enrolment rates (gross and net enrolment) at school level • Benefits of the mid-day meal program with specific reference to enrolment and retention rates • Problems faced in program implementation • Best practices
Students	Quantitative	Structured questionnaires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic status of their families in terms of income, occupation, household assets • Perceived benefits of mid-day meal program • Quality, regularity and quantity in the food received through mid-day meal program • Up to what extent mid-day meal program is acting as a catalyst for their enrolment, retention and punctuality • Expectations from mid-day meal program • Issues related to mid-day meal received
Parent Teacher Association members/ SMDC members/ SHG member/Cook	Quantitative	Semi-Structured Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to what extent mid-day meal program is acting as a catalyst for enrolment, retention and punctuality of students to school • Expectations from mid-day meal program • Issues related to mid-day meal received • Suggested solutions
Panchayati Raj Institution (Gram Panchayat Head)	Quantitative	Semi-Structured Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to what extent mid-day meal program is acting as a catalyst for enrolment, retention and punctuality of students to school • Expectations from mid-day meal program • Issues related to mid-day meal received • Suggested solutions
Community members/ parents	Qualitative	Focus group discussions guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to what extent mid-day meal program is acting as a catalyst for enrolment, retention and punctuality of students to school • Expectations from mid-day meal program • Issues related to mid-day meal received • Suggested solutions

Source: MM Study

In a nutshell, the research issues addressed are as follows:

Table 2.4: Research Issues

Parameters of research	Data collection techniques	Stakeholders	Research Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution of MDM in enrolment • Contribution of MDM in retention • Status of daily attendance due to the implementation of the program. • Status of attendance before and after MDM. • Status of continuity of education due to the implementation of the program. • Perception of teachers and students towards MDM as learning enhancement programme. • Perception of Parents and community towards MDM as learning enhancement programme. • Role of MDM in elimination of discrimination. • Participation of SMDC / PRI and parents in MDM. • Best Practises / Constraints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative • Quantitative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officials of SCERT • Officials of State Education Department • Officials of Tribal Welfare Department • Officials of Directorate of Public Instructions • District Education Officer • Block Education Officer • School Principals & teachers • SMDC members • PRI members • SHG member/Cook • Parents & Community members • Students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanism adopted for implementation of the program including Implementation arrangement of the nodal agency • Impact of MDM on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Classroom Hunger – Fresh Enrolments – Social Equity – Attendance – Retention – Participation of SMDC, PRI & Parents – Documentation of best practices and its scalability – Documentation of case studies

Source: MM Study

The details on various techniques used and coverage are provided in the following sub-sections.

1.9.1.1 Qualitative Research Technique

As part of qualitative research technique in-depth interviews and observations were conducted by the study team:

In-depth Interviews –The team consulted the respective Departments at the state level. The departments were contacted to find out the progress of the program (physical and financial) and status of the program implemented at schools, their targets, existing organisational structure for the process of planning, implementation and monitoring, major issues and best practices. This activity enabled us to understand the local perspective, processes involved, role of different key players, their relationship, dependence etc. The departments, officials and other stakeholders contacted were:

- Officials of SCERT
- Officials of State Education Department
- Officials of Tribal Welfare Department
- Officials of Directorate of Public Instructions
- District Education Officer
- Block Education Officer
- Cluster Resource Coordinator

1.9.1.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

We conducted one FGD in every cluster; thus 24 in all. The participants for the FGD were parents and community members.

1.9.1.3 Quantitative Research Technique

As part of quantitative research technique we used semi-structured and structured interviews. This part of research covered the following:

- School Headmasters & Teachers
- School Management & Development Committee (SMDC) members
- PRI members
- Students
- Community members
- SHG member/Cook

1.9.2 Study Sample

The details of the sample coverage are summarized in table below:

Table 2.5: Sample coverage for the Assignment

Stakeholder	Number per school	Number per cluster	Number per district	Total
Officials of SCERT, State Education Department (including DPI, SSA and TWD)				4
District Education Officer involved in elementary education and Mid-day Meal program implementation			1	6
Block Education Officer involved in elementary education Mid-day meal program implementation			2	12
Cluster Resource Coordinator involved in Mid-Day Meal program implementation (if available)		1	4	24
School headmaster (@ 1 /school)	1	4	16	96

Stakeholder	Number per school	Number per cluster	Number per district	Total
Parent Teacher Association/School Management & Development Committee/SHG-Cook	3	12	48	288
Panchayati Raj Institution (Gram Panchayat Head)	1	4	16	96
School teachers (@ 2 /school)	2	8	32	192
School Students (@ 20 /school)	20	80	480	1920
Student dropouts(@ 5 /school)	5	20	120	480
Community members(@ 25 /school)	25	100	400	2400
Total	57	229	1119	5518

Source: MM Study

As mentioned above, the study has been conducted in six districts of the State, namely Koriya in the North zone, Kondagaon in the South zone, and Durg, Balodabazar, Rajnandgaon, JanjgirChampa in Central zone; based on geographical representation of the state (the districts have been selected by SCERT).

In each of these districts, two blocks were selected on random basis – these were Sonhat and Khandgawan in Koriya; Farasgaon and Keshkal in Kondagaon; Durg and Dhamdha in Durg; Bilaigarh and Bahatapara in Balodabazar; Chhuikhadan and Mohla in Rajnandgaon; and Akaltara and Pamgarh in JanjgirChampa.

Further in each block, two clusters were selected randomly by the study team – one urban and one rural – in consultation with BEOs of each selected block. In each cluster, 4 schools were sampled randomly by the study team – two primary and upper primary schools each. The list of schools was collected from BEOs of the sampled blocks.

1.9.3 Quality control

In order to maintain the quality of data collected, it was important to monitor and supervise the fieldwork regularly. The data collection was co-ordinated by the Project Manager along with field supervisor. Our core team supervised the field investigators on regular basis.

1.10 Stage V: Data Processing, Collation and Draft Report submission

Our in-house team handled the data collection and processing. The data from the FGDs and in-depth Interviews (IDIs) was content analysed by the in-house team of analysts. Apart from above, we have also tried to highlight case studies and best practices at district, block and cluster and school levels. As per requirement, the entered data was checked for its consistency. Data has been interpreted in a systematic manner along with various socio-economic parameters and was presented in a draft report. Based on the comments received on the draft report from the client, the report has been finalised. This is the version of the final report.

1.10.1 Study Limitations

The following limitations were faced by the study team while undertaking the primary survey:

- Student's enrolment and retention data from 2001-02 was not provided to the study team by the sampled schools despite visiting the schools twice. Due to the repeat visit that the teams had to undertake there was delay in data collection activity as well.
- There was delay in getting responses from District and Block level officials, as they were engaged in preparation for General Election 2014.
- The study team had to visit some of the schools twice to get the student's responses and observe the process followed for MDM.

1.11 Report setting

This report is organised into eight chapters of which Chapter-1 provides introduction of the study followed by Chapter-2 which talks about the assignment and deals with the methodology adopted in the study, sample size and sampling strategy. Chapter-3 details the process followed in implementation of the program. Chapter-4 provides analysis of findings based on primary and secondary data collected during the study. Chapter-5 deals with detailing of impacts based on conclusion drawn from findings of Chapter- 4. Chapter-6 deals with best practices and factors for scaling up of the program. Chapter-7 has documentation of some best practices of other States. Chapter-8 deals with the gaps and recommendations.

3 Implementation Process of MDM Programme

This section includes details of the Departments responsible for imparting education in Chhattisgarh and inter-linkages between them.

3.1 Implementation Structure for Mid-Day-Meal (MDM) Programme in State

1.1.1.1 Institutional Structure

School Education Department is the Nodal agency at the state level for effective implementation of MDM programme, followed by district office headed by District Education Officer and block level office looked after by Block Education Officer. These staff is supported by additional regular staff having additional charge of MDM, staff strength of the Department is attached in Appendix B. It was observed that they are not fully devoted to this program and have other liabilities other than Mid-Day Meal Program. Though School Education Department is the nodal agency for implementation but it has two window system – out of a total 146 blocks, 61 blocks are managed by School Education Department and 85 blocks are taken care of by Department of Tribal Welfare. Thus, the information & fund flow also takes through these two Departments.

In Chhattisgarh, there are mostly two agencies working for Mid-Day Meal Programme viz SHGs and Sarpanch of Gram Panchayat. Apart from these agencies, some Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), Headmasters and SMCs also manage the MDM programme in schools of Chhattisgarh (number of agencies managing the MDM programme is presented in table below). The system for payment of honorarium to cook-cum-helpers and implementing agencies is through banks or e-banking in most parts of the state, but in few blocks payment of honorarium is made by cheque.

Table 3.1: Agencies Managing the MDM Programme

S.No	Type of Agency	Number
1.	Gram Panchayat	11,019
2.	Women Self Help Group (WSHG)	31,681
3.	Non-Government Organization (NGO)	6
4.	Headmaster (HM)	340
5.	School Management Committee (SMC) & other	4839

Source: Directorate of Public Instructions, November 2013

There are 261 National Child Labour Project (NCLP) schools run by Labour Department in 11 districts of the state. More than 12000 children of labourers were enrolled during 2012-13. As per GOI guideline, these NCLP primary schools are also eligible for Mid-Day Meal as per primary schools, thus they are also included in the program. In total, more than 47000 Primary & Upper Primary Schools are availing the benefit of MDM and have 31583 kitchen sheds; another 16221 kitchen sheds are yet to be constructed as per the AWP&B 2013-14.

Total number of schools taking benefit of Mid-Day Meal in the state is as follows:

Table 3.2: Number of Schools & Students benefitting from MDM

S. No	School Management	Number of Schools		Number of Students	
		2012-13	2013-14	2012-13	2013-14
Primary Schools					
1.	Government Schools	33,125	33,159	24,41,873	22,72,758
2.	Aided Schools	274	276	40,294	38,924
3.	Madarsas	132	130	12,138	12,246
4.	Bal Sharmik	261	239	12,720	12,267
	Total	33,792	33,804	25,07,025	23,36,195
Upper Primary Schools					
1.	Government Schools	13,821	13,881	13,73,386	13,63,856
2.	Aided Schools	167	169	26,681	25,970
3.	Madarsas	24	25	1,291	1,356
	Total	14,012	14,075	14,01,358	13,91,182

Source: Directorate of Public Instructions

3.2 Norms for Allocation of Funds & Food grain as per Guidelines

3.2.1 Fund Flow Arrangement

Planning and budgeting systems for the MDM are based on school level consumption needs. Schools prepare estimations of the total annual requirement based on the number of students consuming MDM throughout the year and the number of working days on which MDM is expected to be served. This data is aggregated at the block, district and state levels. Based on this information, State Governments prepare an Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWP&B). This AWP&B is submitted to the Project Approval Board (PAB) of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (M/oHRD) for review and approval. Allocations and release of funds by Gol are based on the PAB approved AWP&Bs (Figure 3.1).

3.2.1.1 Central to State Level

The Gol provides 75 percent of the total approved allocations for both recurring grants – cooking costs and CCH. The financial rules require that Gol release its annual financial share to the state government treasury in three to four instalments. The first instalment is split into two releases; a) an ad-hoc grant released in April. This grant cannot exceed more than 20 percent of the previous years' release. State governments are expected to provide Gol with information on unspent balances from previous years by June. Upon receipt of this information, the balance of the first instalment is released to states by July adjusted on the basis of the unspent balances remaining with the state; b) the second instalment is released by September/October. This instalment is based on the progress of expenditure incurred out of the first instalment and release by the state of its own share of resources; and c) the third and final instalment is released after receipt of utilization patterns up to the third quarter of the financial year. This instalment is usually released by January. Central assistance as sanctioned during the last five years is as follows:

Table 3.3: Central Assistance Sanctioned -MDMS

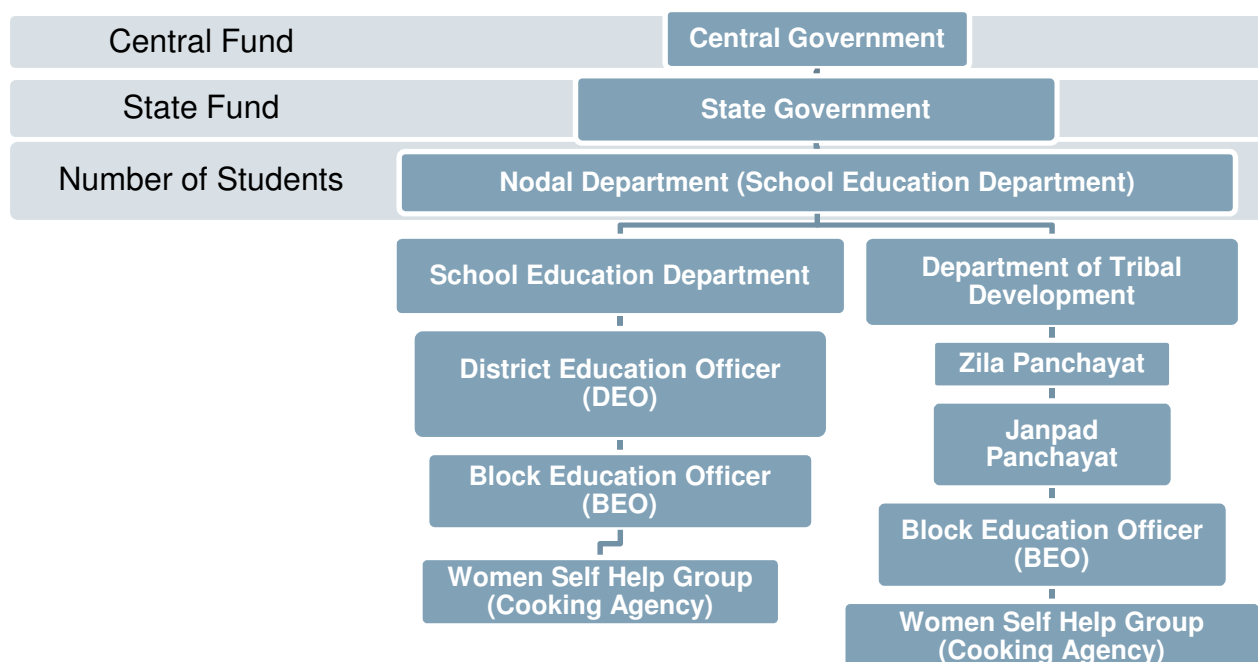
S.No	Year	Sanctioned Amount (INR Lakhs)
1	2012-13	31259.17
2	2011-12	40700.04
3	2010-11	35491.04
4	2009-10	13710.54
5	2008-09	11080.40

Source: <http://mdm.nic.in/>

3.2.1.2 State Government to District Level

Once funds reach the state treasury, the state government is expected to add their share to the pool of funds and release the fund onwards to districts. These funds are released as per the different “heads of expenditure” – i.e. cooking cost and cook-cum-helper. These funds are released in quarterly instalments via electronic transfers to district bank accounts. MDM guidelines clearly specify that states are responsible for sending funds onwards to districts in a timely manner irrespective of receipt of funds from GoI. Once funds reach district bank accounts, the district administration is tasked with transferring funds onward to schools. The arrangements of the Departments involved in Mid-Day Meal programme in Chhattisgarh is depicted in the figure below:

Figure 3.1: Fund Flow Arrangement MDM Program



Source: Department of School Education, Chhattisgarh

During visit to the different levels of stakeholders, it was reported that in MDM programme the fund flow mechanism follows exactly the same as mentioned in the guidelines of the Central and the State Governments. In rural areas, the fund is directly transferred to the bank account of Women Self Help Group (WSHG) from District Education Officer (DEO), while in urban areas the fund is transferred through Municipal Commissioner to the concerned WSHG.

3.2.2 Food grain Flow Mechanism

According to MDM Guidelines⁹, food grains are allocated bi-annually to states by the Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSeL), MHRD. These allocations are based on the number of students enrolled in schools and working days approved by the PAB for the previous year.

Allocations are made separately for primary schools (Standard 1-5) and upper primary schools (Standard 6-8). The first six monthly allocations are in an ad-hoc transfer made in the first week of February of the previous financial year. The quantum of grain allotted is determined by the number of children and number of school working days approved by the PAB for the previous year.

The second and final allocation is made in the first week of August and is based on Utilization Certificates (UCs) sent by the State Government detailing the quantity of food grains received and actually consumed at the school/cooking agency-level¹⁰ in the previous financial year. These UCs are to be submitted by the state latest by 30 June each year. The second instalment of allocation is made after taking into account the unspent balance available with the state (both in terms of the balance from the previous year's allocation as well as the current allocation).

On receiving the food grain instalment from GoI, the State's MDM Directorate prepares an allocation letter detailing the district-wise allocations of food grains, based on the number of students enrolled and the number of working days approved for that particular district. This allocation letter is sent quarterly to the Basic Shiksha Adhikari (BSA) – the district official in-charge of implementing MDM. A copy of the allocation letter is also sent by the MDM Directorate to the Food Corporation of India (FCI) regional office. On receipt of this letter, the FCI regional office issues a Release Order to the FCI district office to release grains.

In Chhattisgarh food grain is supplied by Nagrik Apurti Nigam(NAN) which is also the lifting agency for the food grain. NAN is fully online, every activity can be tracked by their online report. Due to this system, the payment is made at the state level without any proper system of acknowledgement of receipts of food grains. As far as food grain management, including adequacy of allocation, timeliness of lifting, transportation and distribution and suitability of storage at different levels are concerned, Chhattisgarh is considered best in the country because the state PDS is functional online which makes it the responsibility of the concerned district education officer to release the food grain allocation according to the demand by the blocks through online action. So the question of inadequacy of food grains does not rise and if at all a

⁹MDM guidelines: http://mdm.nic.in/Files/Guidelines/4.Dec_of_FCI.pdf

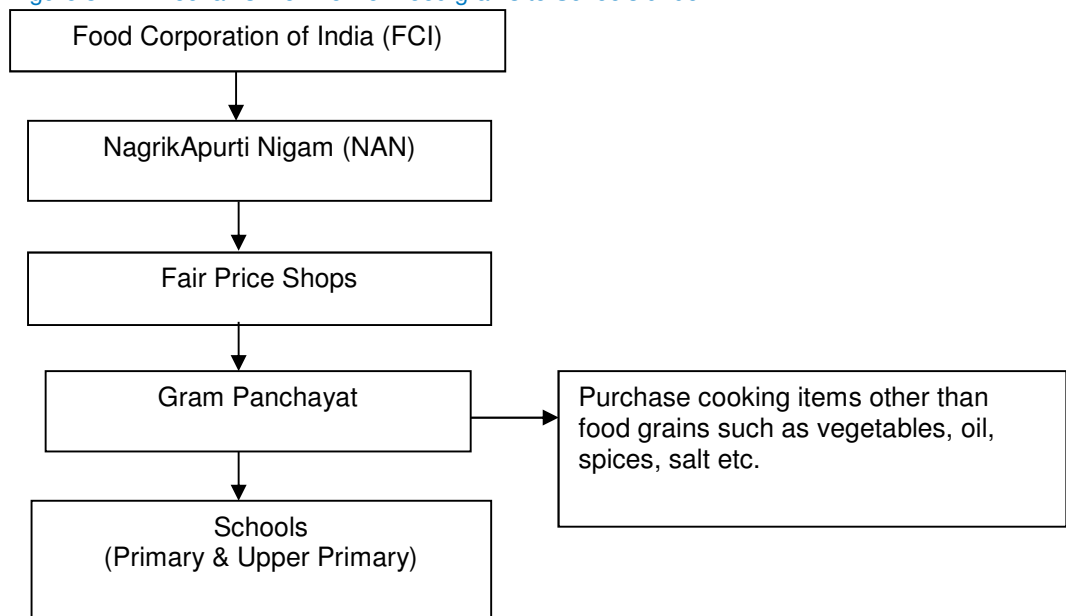
¹⁰In some states the cooking of the meal has been outsourced to NGOs who are responsible for supplying cooked MDM to schools. In these cases, foodgrains would be supplied directly to the cooking agency of the NGO.

problem occurs, all District Collectors are instructed to arrange food grains from other programme, as Chhattisgarh is rice bowl of India and it has the DCP system (Decentralized Procurement of food grains).

After the submission of State AWP&B and according to the demand, the FCI releases food grains allocated to the state. The State Civil Supplies Department through NAN reallocates food grains to their agencies in concerned districts i.e. to District Manager under Civil Supplies Department. The District Manager after getting requirement figure of food grains from block level with list of schools, transfers it to different fair price shops. Cooking agencies lift the food grains from these fair price shops ascertained to them. All of the 146 blocks of 27 districts are issuing coupons to cooking agencies according to enrolment. Hence, due to good PDS system and a Nodal Agency “NAN” working under the direction of Government of Chhattisgarh for storage, lifting and transportation of food grains to all fair price shops of the state, there seems no systematic problems in the State.

A Mid-Day Meal Cell has been established in the state since July 2007. This cell looks after State's Mid-Day Meal Programme headed by an Additional Director of Public Instructions. This cell coordinates with other related departments. The flow of food grains mechanism is depicted in figure below:

Figure 3.2: Mechanism of Flow of Food grains to Schools under MDM



Source: AWP&B, 2013-14

3.3 Mid-Day Meal Norms

As per the data available from Directorate of Public Instructions, the food grain norms are as follows:

Table 3.4: Mid-Day Meal Norms

S.No.	Items	Quantity per day/child	
		Primary	Upper Primary
1	Food grains	100 gms	150 gms
2	Pulses	20 gms	30 gms
3	Vegetables (leafy also)	50 gms	75 gms
4	Oil & fat	5 gms	7.5 gms
5	Salt & condiments	As per need	As per need

Source: Directorate of Public Instructions, November 2013

Cooking cost per child per school day based on Central- State sharing for last three years is as follows:

Table 3.5: Cooking Cost – Central: State Sharing (in Rupees/child/school day)

S.No.	Stage	2011-12			2012-13			2013-14		
		Central	State	Total	Central	State	Total	Central	State	Total
1	Primary	2.17	1.23	3.40	2.33	1.32	3.65	2.51	1.41	3.92
2	Upper Primary	3.25	1.15	4.40	3.49	1.21	4.70	3.75	1.30	5.05

Source: Directorate of Public Instructions, November 2013

Engagement of cook-cum-helpers

- A separate provision for payment of honorarium to cook-cum-helper @ Rs. 1000/- per month has been made. The guidelines indicate that one cook-cum-helper may be engaged in a school having up to 25 students, two cooks-cum-helpers for the schools having 26 to 100 students and one additional cook-cum-helper for every additional 100 students.
- The expenditure towards the honorarium of cook-cum-helper is shared between the Centre and the State Governments on 75:25 ratio basis.

During interaction with DEO and BEO it was reported that under MDM programme, the Government is providing Rs3.92/student/meal to Primary School students while for Middle School students Rs. 5.05/student/meal is provided. Apart from the money, rice is provided through Public Distribution System and honorarium to cook-cum-helper @ Rs. 1000/- per month is also paid. The per student allocation and honorarium was confirmed by the school level authority (teachers, principals and SDMC members) as well as by the Women Self Help Groups who are engaged in cooking and serving the food. The Women Self Help Groups also confirmed that they are responsible for procuring of food items and provide cooked food to school students on regular basis as per the decided menu. The menu of MDM is decided in consultation with Government authorities and members of School Management Committee. However, Women Self Help Group did complain about delay in release of funds and also about inadequate release of fund. Due to fund issues, WSHGs are unable to earn profit, but they are continuing because the program is benefiting their own children.

3.4 Monitoring Mechanism

The success of MDM depends upon the coordination among different stakeholders and proper monitoring adopted at various level for providing timely nutritious food to the students. The programme is monitored at State, District, Block and School level.

3.4.1 State Level

At the state level, the Department of School Education is the nodal agency to implement & monitor MDM at State level through a Web enabled MIS that ensures:

- Effective and de-centralized planning process based on relevant data
- Smooth and timely flow of food grains and cooking assistance
- Prompt information about food grain / fund utilization
- Better Inventory control
- Timely and automatic report generation
- Transparency & wider dissemination of information on implementation of MDMS.

In order to run Mid-Day Meal in the state smoothly, the Department of School Education with the help of National Informatics Centre (NIC) has developed an online monitoring system for Mid-Day Meal and distribution of rice. Calculation of cooking cost is also being done by this system.

In a nutshell, MDM cell has been established at DEO offices. They usually monitor the programme along with other programmes. At block level BEOs and BRCs are involved in the monitoring of MDM. At school level Village Education Committee normally do the job of monitoring. In this way effective monitoring system has been evolved at each level. The same mechanism is discussed in details in the following sections:

3.4.2 District Level

For implementation and monitoring at the district level, a Monitoring Committee has been set up under the chairmanship of District Collector with members from different departments including School Education, Tribal Welfare, Revenue, Food & Civil Supplies and PRI members. District Education Officer is responsible for monitoring the MDM program, and to ensure quality and quantity of food served to students which are randomly verified by them. District Education Officer (DEO) ensures the release of fund to the Women Self Help Group (WSHG) and deals with any problem in the respective district.

3.4.3 Block Level

At the block level, Block Development Officer (BEO) is responsible for monitoring the MDM programme at block level. At BEO's office, the nodal officer for Mid-Day Meal enters the information in the online monitoring software with the help of computer operator. On the basis of attendance of school and average rate of attendance of children, the distribution of food grain is made for next month. This work usually finishes between 5th to 12th of each month. The Women Self Help Group (WSHG) put the demand for rice to

the BEO and they place it on the online demand system, once this is approved the concerned WSHG is able get it from PDS shops.

3.4.4 School Level

Similarly at the school level, comprehensive and easy formats are maintained such as daily attendance register for recording children availing MDM, stock books for food grains & other cooking items, cash book for cooking cost etc., this information is then consolidated at Block and District levels. The daily attendance of Mid-Day Meal benefited children are noted in school MDM register. At the end of each month, these attendances are entered in the prescribed proforma provided by BEO of concerned block. In the proforma itself the available food grain and unspent amount of previous month is filled and afterwards the collected information is submitted at BEO office with the signature of the concerned headmaster & head of cooking agency by cluster coordinator before the 5th of every month.

The information is then fed into digital format through data entry and is used to monitor and maintain accounts and generate reports at district level. Thus, schools play crucial role for monitoring the MDM programme. School Management Committee (SMC) is constituted at school level with members of Gram Panchayat, Parents, Senior Teachers and students of the school. SMCs conduct monthly meeting of the school wherein all members participate to discuss the issues and resolve it. During the meeting it was found that they discuss all concerned issues of school including quality of MDM. They provide advice to WSHG for better implementation of program. The head of the school monitors the whole process of cooking the food and ensures good quality food is served to the students. But they have no power to take immediate action on WSHG if they are found ineffective to manage the MDM.

3.4.5 Call Centre Facility

At the state and district level, with the help of European Commission, a Call Centre facility with toll-free number is being established, through which complaints against MDM could be registered and timely action could be taken for resolving the same. A dedicated mechanism for public grievance redressal at the district level has also been set up in some select districts so that any complaint against the MDM can be received and resolved. This toll free number has been widely publicized. After getting complaints from school level, the MDM cells of that Block and District are required to rectify it immediately. Work is in progress to establish the same in all districts as well. The details of complaints registered and action taken during 2012 are as follows:

Table 3.6: Complaints Registered & Action Taken

S.No	District	Complaints		Nature of Complaints
		Received	Action Taken	
1.	Raipur	21	16	Delay in payment of Cooks' honorarium, Dispute on cook's engagement , cooking cost, Self Help Groups
2.	Bilaspur	32	29	
3.	Bastar	29	27	
4.	Janjgir Champa	16	11	

S.No	District	Complaints		Nature of Complaints
5.	Durg	23	21	'members ,Quality of food ,delay in rice allocation etc.
6.	Surguja	31	30	
7.	Korba	23	19	
8.	Mahasamund	16	15	

Source: AWP&B 2013-14

During visit it was reported that the programme is being monitored at District, Block, School and Community levels. District Education Officer is responsible for monitoring the MDM scheme and to ensure good quality and quantity of food served to students. It was reported by the stakeholders (SDMC members, School teachers) that DEO visits their school without prior information and physically verifies the quality and quantity of food served and also other aspects of MDM. The DEO ensures release of fund to the WSHG and speaks to them in case of delay or any other problem in the respective district. Similarly, Block Development Officer also visits the school as part of monitoring. The rice demand is generally assessed by the WSHG and then indicated to the school Principal. The Principal then submits the demand to the BEO. BEO places the online demand to DEO for approval. Once the demand is approved the concerned WSHG collects the rice from PDS shop.

Teachers play crucial role in monitoring the MDM scheme. The School management Committee comprises members of Gram Panchayat, Parents and Senior Teachers of the school. They visit the school and participate in the monthly meetings of the school. During the meetings it was found that they discuss all concerned issues of school including quality of MDM. They provide advice to WSHG for better implementation of scheme. The Head of the school monitors the whole process of cooking the food and ensures good quality food is served to the students. However, it was reported that they do not have power to take immediate action on WSHG and as a common practice all complaints are made to the headmaster, who in turn warns the MDM supplier, but the suppliers do not address grievances pertaining to quality of meal. Thus, an internal effective grievance redressal mechanism should be implemented, wherein respective Headmaster can lodge complaint. For instance, a special helpline number could be created for Headmasters to record issues emerging in their schools. The specific grievance could then be recorded in the IVRS database along with details on the specific official responsible for resolving this grievance. A tracking system can also be introduced to enable the Headmasters to track progress of their grievance.

However, it was observed that no indicator based monitoring of the schemes was introduced to measure impact on of scheme in nutrition and health status of students. Periodical health check-ups were also not being organised by the district authorities.

4 Study Findings

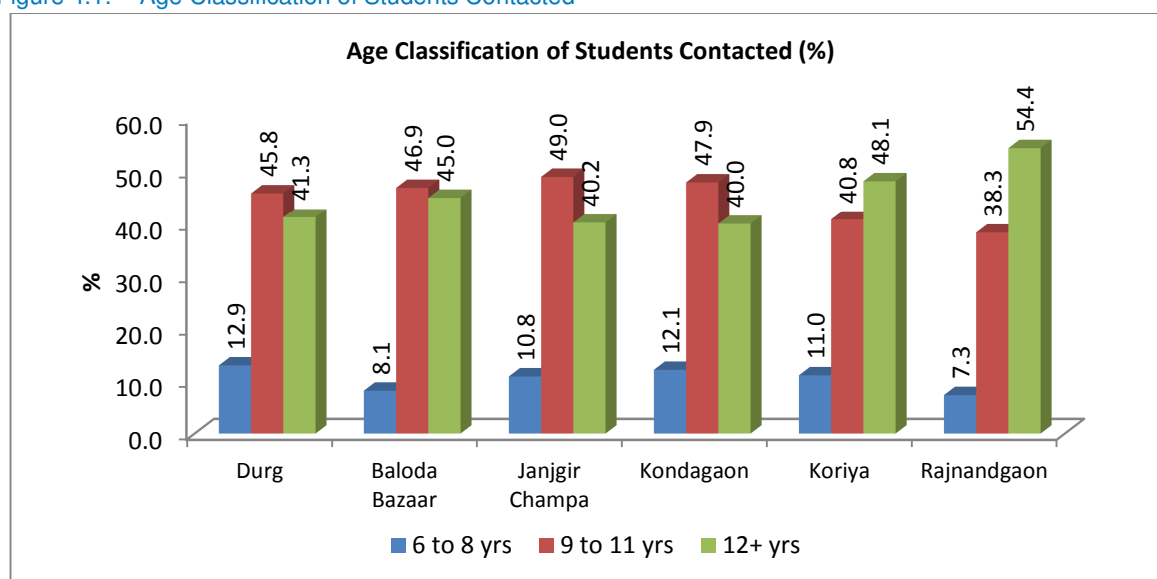
4.1 Findings from Students

4.1.1 Profile of Students

In total, 2880 students of 96 sampled primary and upper primary schools were surveyed to assess the benefits of MDM program. Assessment was made on various parameters such as the socio-economic profile of students, type of utensils used quantity & quality of MDM served, timings of serving meal and issues as well as barriers.

In terms of age classification more than 40% of the students belong to above 9 years of age in all districts except Rajnandgaon. Around 7-13% of the students belong to 6 to 8 years' age group (Figure 4.1).

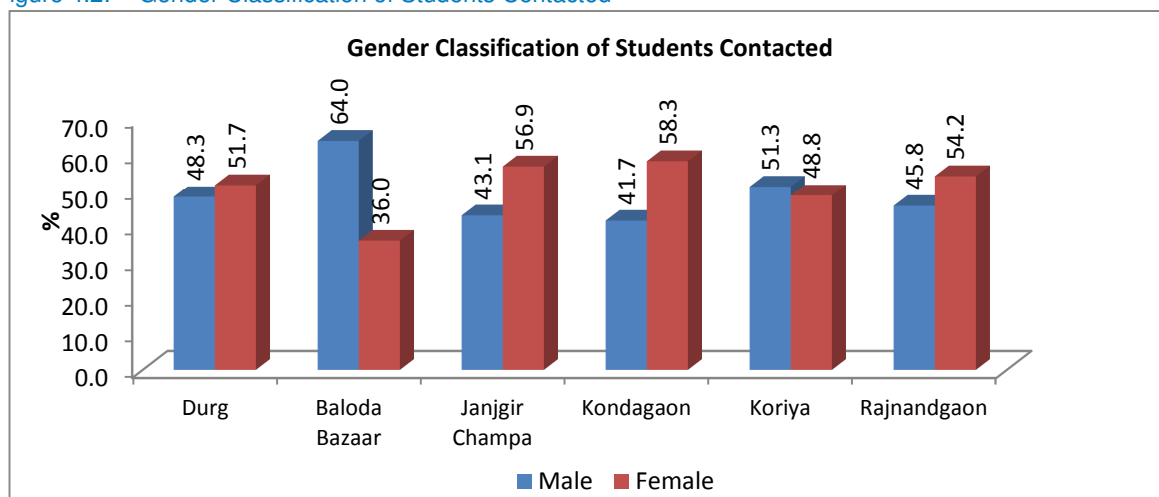
Figure 4.1: Age Classification of Students Contacted



Source: MM Study

Looking at the gender wise distribution of students, it can be seen from the Figure 4.2 below, that around 50% students are girls except in Baloda Bazaar district wherein the figure is 36% females. Thus, proportion of boys is lower and varies between 41% in Kondagaon to 48% in Durg except in Baloda Bazaar where 64% boys were contacted.

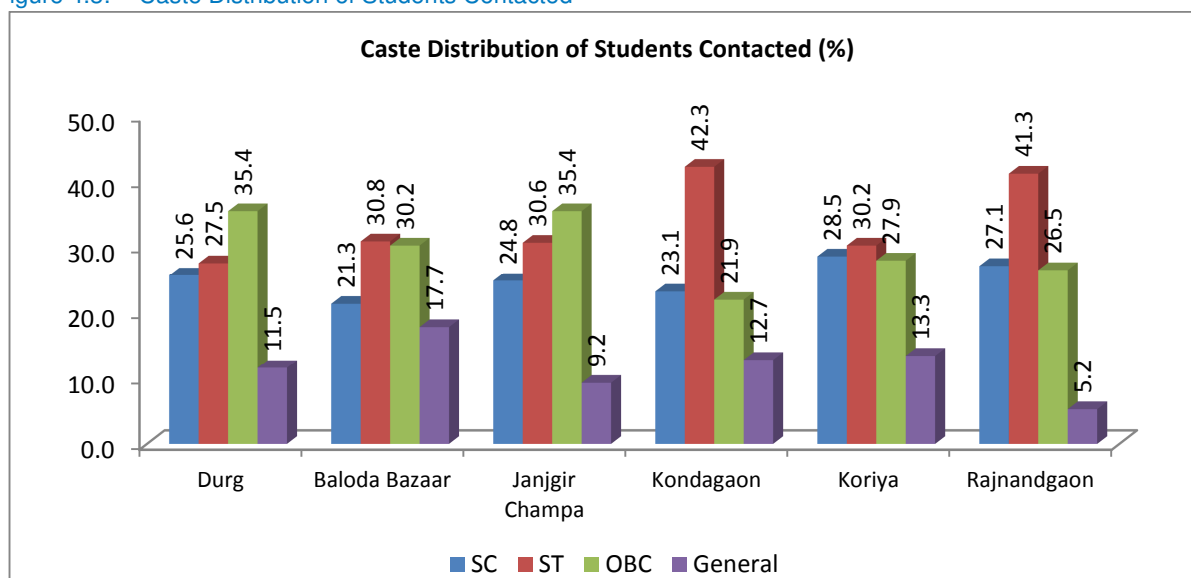
Figure 4.2: Gender Classification of Students Contacted



Source: MM Study

Looking at the figure below, it can be stated that around 42% of the respondents in Kondagaon & Rajnandgaon districts belong to Scheduled Tribes, followed by 30-35% students from Other Backward Castes; General category students were quite less in sampled schools, they were between 5-12%.

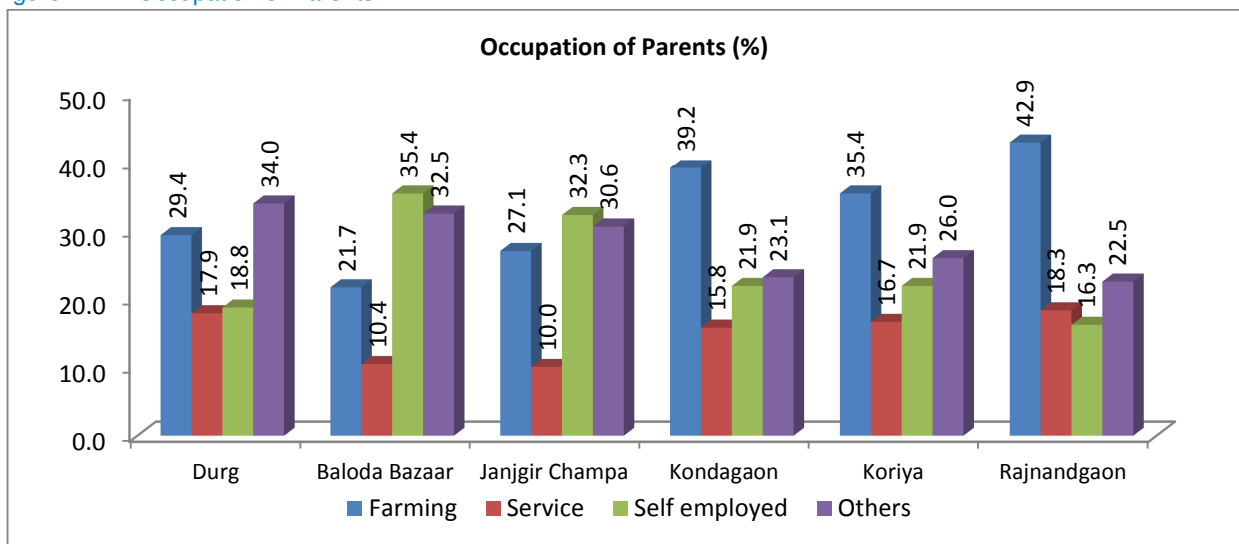
Figure 4.3: Caste Distribution of Students Contacted



Source: MM Study

So far as occupational profile of parents is concerned, it was found that majority of the parents in Kondagaon (39%),Koriya (35%) and Rajnandgaon (43%) districts are from farming community followed by self-employed parents in Baloda Bazaar (35%) and Janjgir Champa (32%); in Durg district wherein 34% parents have occupation such as waged labourers (Figure 4.4)

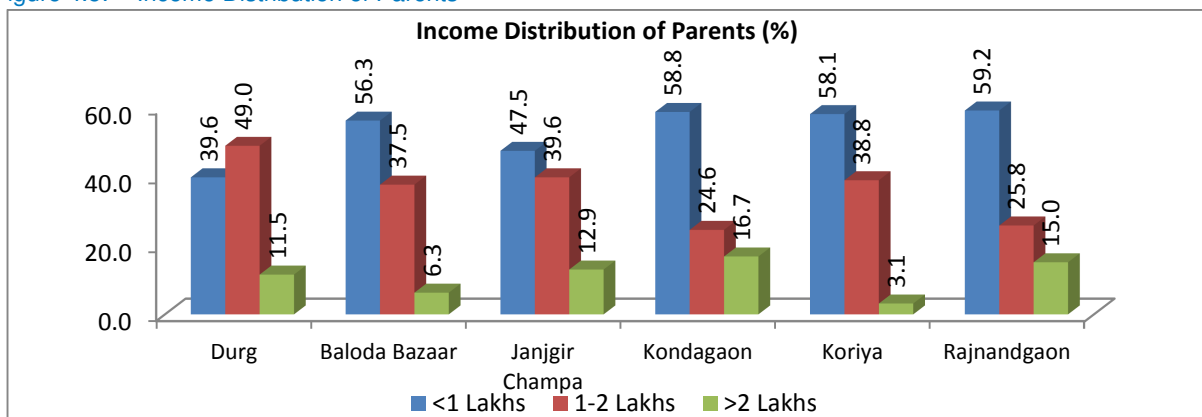
Figure 4.4: Occupation of Parents



Source: MM Study

In order to assess the socio-economic profile of students, the occupation of parents and their income level were assessed. In all districts except Durg, majority (more than 50%) of the parents have annual income of less than Rs1 Lakh. In Durg, 49% of the parent's annual income is in the range of Rs 1-2 Lakhs, followed by 39% in JanjgirChampa and Koriya districts (Figure 4.5).

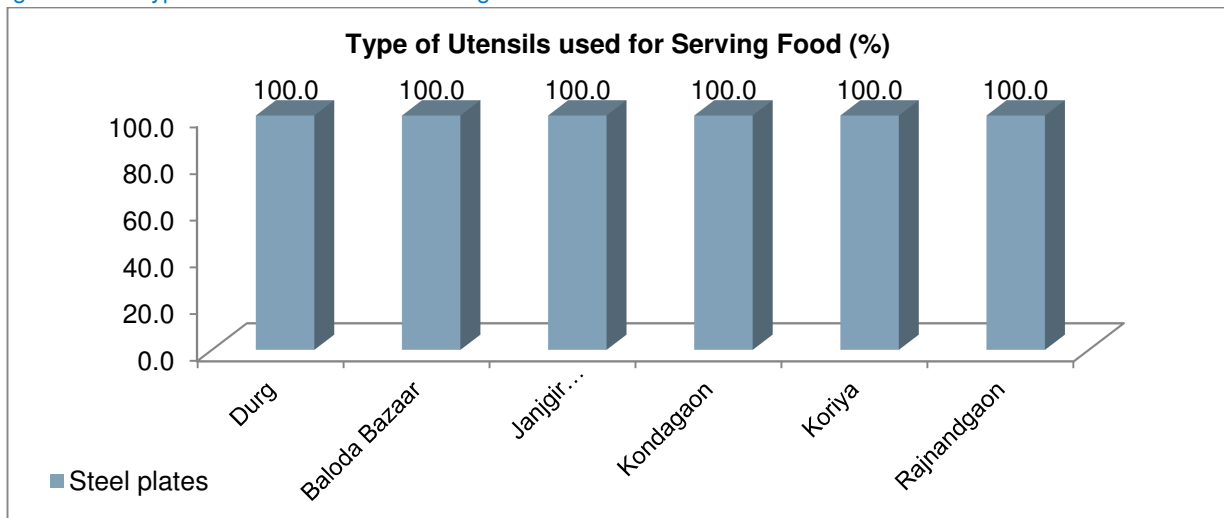
Figure 4.5: Income Distribution of Parents



Source: MM Study

On enquiring about type of utensils used for eating the food, all have responded the use of steel plates. (Figure 4.6)

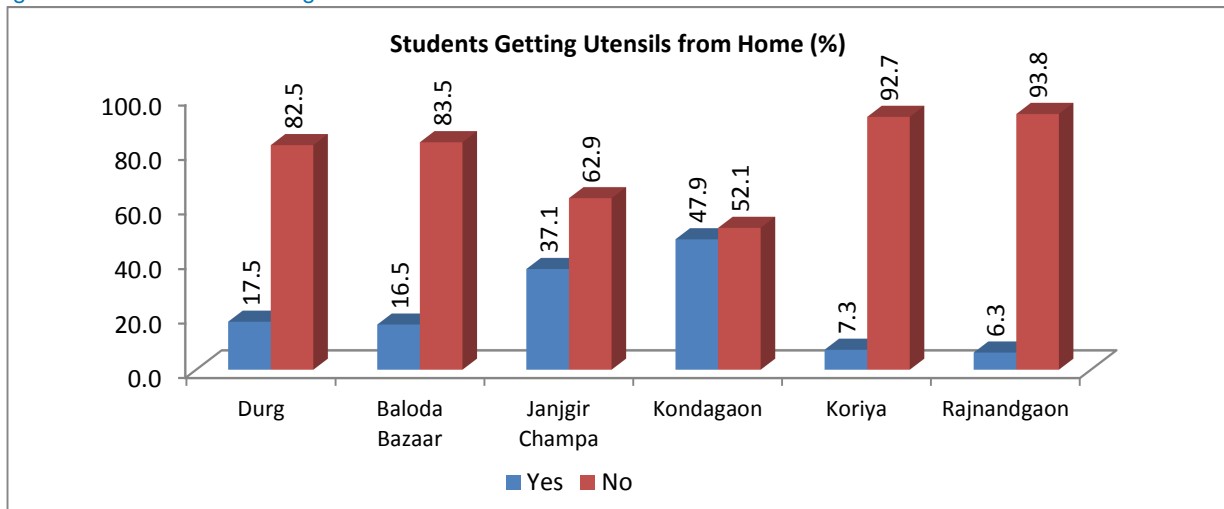
Figure 4.6: Type of Utensils used for Serving Food to Students



Source: MM Study

About 37% and 47.9 % of the students in Janjgir Champa and Kondagaon stated that they bring the utensils such as plates from home; the reason is that after eating in school they can take the food home if left over in plate. Drinking water is available for the students which is either stored in the bucket or directly from the hand-pump but is not served along with the meal by the helpers. If students need water they have to bring water by themselves.

Figure 4.7: Students Getting Utensils from Home

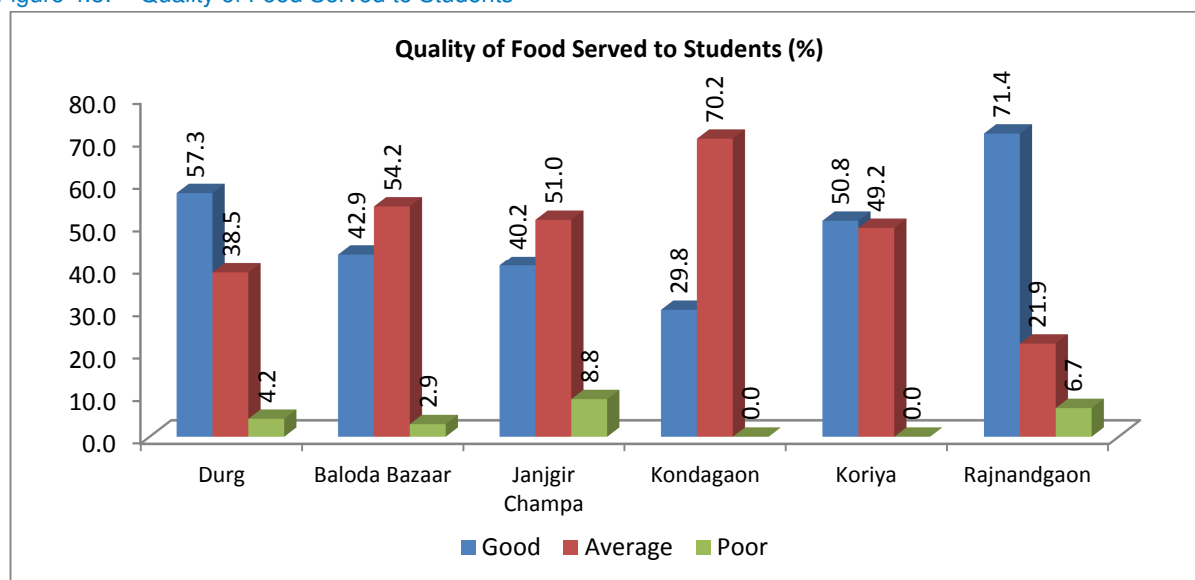


Source: MM Study

All students wash their hands before eating and teachers also ensure that every student has washed his/her hands; though students wash hands only with water and no soap is used.

In terms of the quality of the meal, around 71% students in Rajnandgaon stated that the quality of food was good as it tastes good with proper ingredients and is served hot. While in Kondagaon, the students opined it to be of average quality. About 50% of the students in all other districts found the quality to be average (Figure 4.8). Students opined that the menu was monotonous with dal, rice and seasonal vegetables which most of the time is either potatoes or bottle gourd along with pickle.

Figure 4.8: Quality of Food Served to Students

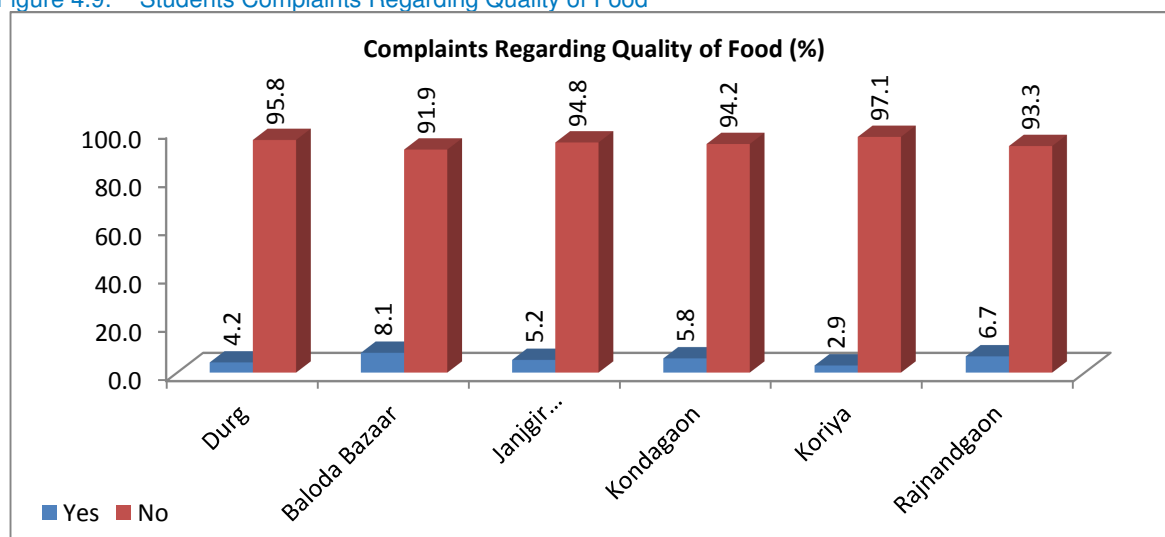


Source: MM Study

Children like the hot cooked meal but complain that the menu is monotonous with dal, rice and vegetable; they suggested that *papad*, *salad* and some sweet should also be served along with the meal. During the focus group discussion in rural cluster, some parents stated that their wards go to school regularly and attend classes before lunch is served, have meal and return to their home. Those students who were not satisfied (about 2-7% students) with the quality of food were asked to give examples as to why they do not like the meal. Students stated various reasons such as dal is uncooked and has too much water, rice is half cooked and not properly cleaned, sometimes pickle is not given etc.

Parents particularly in the tribal areas were happy with the meal because it has motivated their children to attend school regularly. Further, more than 90% students in all sampled districts opined that they do not have any major issue with the quality of food but suggested to include salad, roti and sweet in their meal (Figure 4.9).

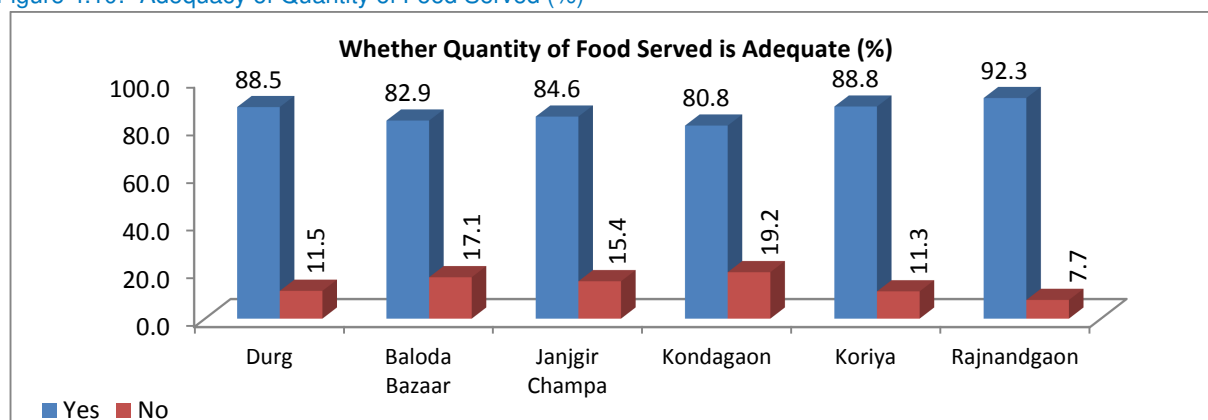
Figure 4.9: Students Complaints Regarding Quality of Food



Source: MM Study

More than 80% students (Figure 4.10) in all sampled districts did not have any issue with the quantity of food served; those who were not satisfied stated that second serving is not given to them because of which they remain hungry. Similarly the quantity of food served varies from student to student with younger ones are served with lesser quantity as compared to others. To this, the teachers responded stating that young students waste a lot of food either by not eating or by spilling it. Thus, the first serving given is of small amount and the students are free to get the second or more servings if they feel hungry.

Figure 4.10: Adequacy of Quantity of Food Served (%)



Source: MM Study

In addition, some students also opined that they do not like to stand in queue, hence they should be served while sitting and eating. Some parents also opined that those students who are non-vegetarians should be served eggs at least once a week. Senior students stated that as the younger students in primary/ lower

classes are served meal first, the quantity of food left for upper primary students is less and therefore they do not get proper meal.

4.2 Findings of Headmaster & Teachers

4.2.1 General Profile of School

In total, 96 Primary and Upper Primary co-educational schools were surveyed for evaluating the MDM programme in 6 sampled districts, as mentioned in table below:

Table 4.1: Sampled Schools

S.No	Districts	Primary Schools	Upper Primary Schools
1.	Durg	8	8
2.	Baloda Bazaar	8	8
3.	JanjgirChampa	8	8
4.	Kondagaon	8	8
5.	Koriya	8	8
6.	Rajnandgaon	8	8
	Total	48	48

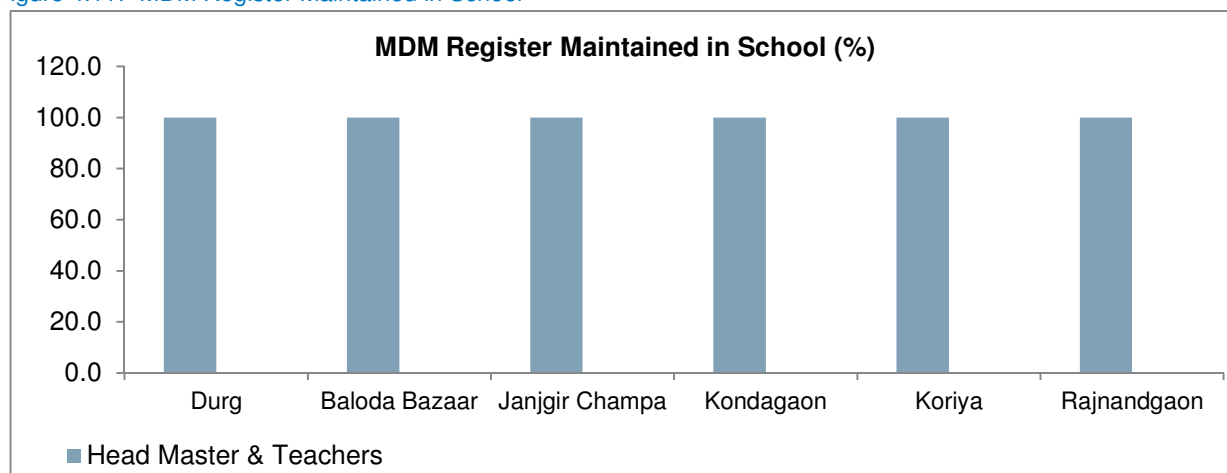
Source: MM Study

By 1990-91, Madhya Pradesh (which included the Chhattisgarh region) was implementing the “Mid-Day Meal Programme” with its own resources on large scale, initially distributing grains. Mid-Day Meal Programme of giving cooked hot meals was started in October 1995 in the undivided State of Madhya Pradesh. At first the programme was launched in only tribal blocks, which provided hot cooked meal to children of Primary school. The reason for providing Mid-Day Meal in only Tribal blocks was because they were basically residential schools and due to hostel facilities it was easy to engage a permanent cook for cooking food for the children for noon. However since 2001, MDM was implemented in all schools. Thus, majority of the Headmaster’s (95%) opined that MDM in the schools started in 2002-03.

Mid -Day Meal Programme is credited with encouraging enrolment & attendance. After the Universalisation of the Mid-Day Meal Programme significant numbers of research studies have pointed out to both enhanced enrolment and retention level in primary schools. Some studies have also indicated higher performance levels. School teachers play a major role in implementation of Mid-Day Meal programme in school, to ensure transparency and openness in all aspects of programme implementation.

To assess this aspect of the program, about 288 respondents (96 Headmasters and 192 Teachers) were contacted to understand the process of implementation and to get the feedback of the programme in terms of issues and constraints as well as the successful factors. On asking whether the MDM register is maintained in the schools, all Headmaster and teachers contacted affirmed that it is mandatory to maintain the MDM register in school and they have been following and updating it regularly (Figure 4.11).

Figure 4.11: MDM Register Maintained in School



Source: MM Study

4.2.2 Mechanism of Supply of MDM

As discussed, MDM is being implemented in all government schools (Primary and Upper Primary schools) through Women Self Help Group (WSHG) at the school level. In few cases, earlier the Headmaster of the concerned school was responsible for MDM, but currently only WSHG are taking care of MDM. The Women Self Help Group is responsible for procuring food items and provides cooked food to school students on regular basis as per the decided menu. The menu of MDM is already decided in consultation with respective Government Authority and members of School Management Committee (SMC).

The empaneled SHGs are given the responsibility of certain number of schools where the MDM has to be provided primarily in the urban areas (it is easier to supply food as the condition of roads is good and the schools are nearby); in rural areas most of the schools have kitchen sheds within the premises.

The meal is prepared by the SHG member (cook & helpers) and starts late in the morning as the food has to reach school/needs to be ready earliest by 12:30 PM (each school has time duration for lunch between 12:30 to 2:30 PM; see Figure 5.2). Food is cooked in cooking sheds of school or in open area where cooking sheds are not available. Sometimes food is also prepared in the house of SHG members or the Panchayat President. If the food is cooked at some other location, then it is packed in aluminium utensils and delivered to schools in auto rickshaw.

Serving the meal is a smooth procedure in all the schools. The helper or teachers distribute the meal to students. At times, students of higher classes such as V, VII and VIII standards also assist teachers in distributing the meal. As a common practice, students first wash their hands and line up outside the classroom/ corridor/ veranda and each student picks a plate in which food is served. After eating the meal the children usually wash their plates with water and keep it aside, which is further properly cleaned by the helper. The teacher responsible for MDM distributes and observes the students while they are eating and

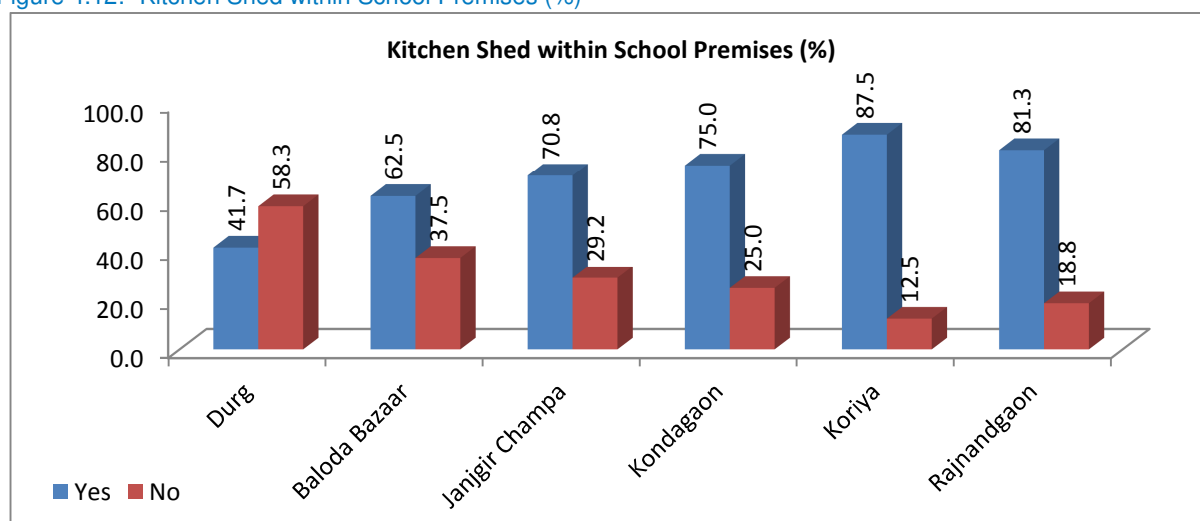
also supervises that the area is cleaned by the helper after students have finished eating their meals. On an average per school, at least 2 teachers are responsible for MDM.

4.2.3 Availability of Infrastructure

4.2.3.1 Kitchen sheds

About 60% or more Headmasters and teachers in all sampled districts opined that kitchen shed is within the school premises. Mott MacDonald study team observed that in urban locations, the kitchen shed is separate while in rural locations it is within school premises. For example, in Durg district most of the kitchen sheds were either separate or food is cooked centrally by the Self-help Group named **SakhiSaheli**. In the contacted four schools of Adarsh cluster of district Durg, the SHG **SakhiSaheli** was found serving the food. This SHG cooks the food centrally and then transports to the group of schools in the same locality. In tribal locations of Koriya and Rajnandgaon, kitchen sheds were found within school premises.

Figure 4.12: Kitchen Shed within School Premises (%)



Source: MM Study

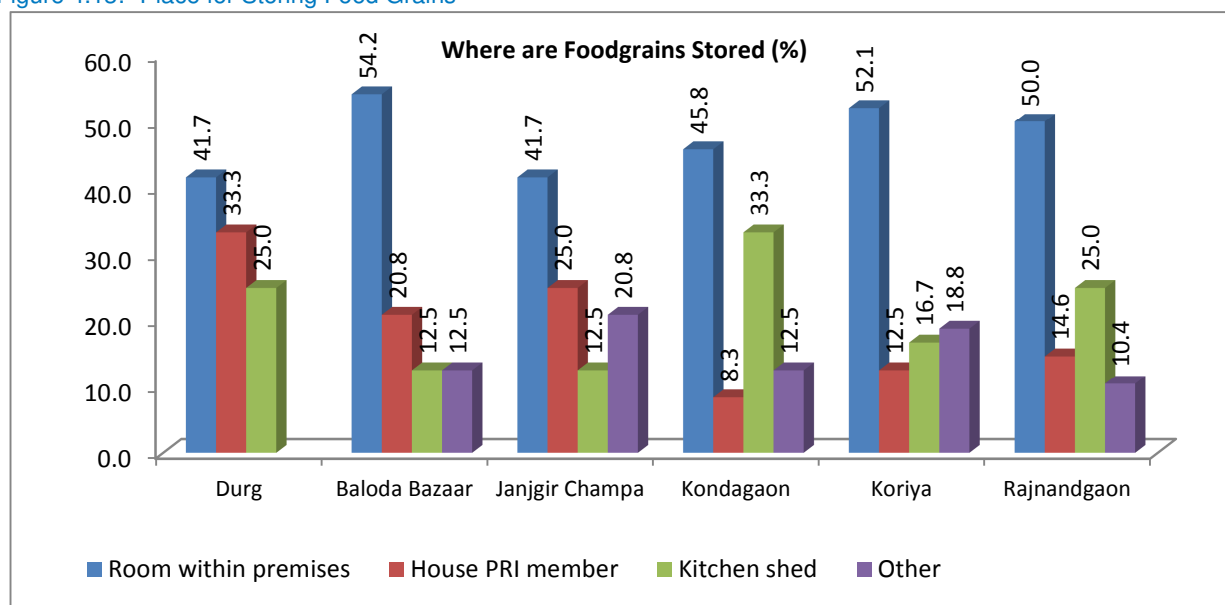
Our team also observed the place of cooking and it was found that food was primarily being cooked in the kitchen shed, however in some cases it was cooked either in the veranda or in the PRI members' house. On being asked about the timings of serving the meal, majority of Headmasters and teachers in Baloda Bazaar (62%) and Rajnandgaon (56%) opined that the meal is served between 1:30 to 2:30 PM and in other districts it is served in between 12:30 to 1:30 PM.

The study team also enquired about total time taken to distribute the food, to which the Headmasters and teachers opined that it all varies from school to school and number of students. However, on an average 2 to 2.5hr are required to cook and serve the food to students in MDM.

4.2.3.2 Store room

The study team also enquired about the storing facility available for storing the food grains; more than 40% of the Headmasters and Teachers stated that the food grains are stored in a separate room within the school premises in all the six districts. 33% responded that they are keeping food grains at PRI members' house in Durg district. 33% responded that they keep food grains in Kitchen Shed in Kondagaon district (Figure 4.13). The study team also observed the place where food grains were stored and in majority of the cases it was stored in containers made of plastic or aluminium, in the tribal areas particularly food grains were stored in plastic or jute sacks. In none of the places our study team found that the eatables were kept in open.

Figure 4.13: Place for Storing Food Grains

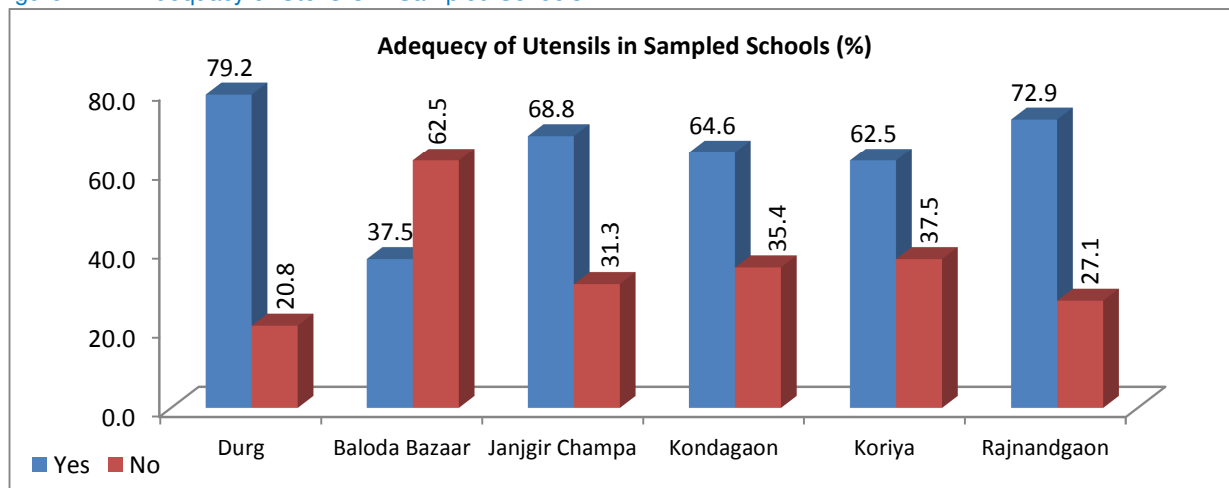


Source: MM Study

4.2.3.3 Utensils

On enquiring about type of utensils used, all Headmasters and teachers stated that steel plates are used. Headmasters and teachers were asked about the sufficiency of utensils available with school for serving the MDM, about 79% in Durg and only 38% in Baloda Bazaar stated that they have sufficient number of utensils (Figure 4.14).

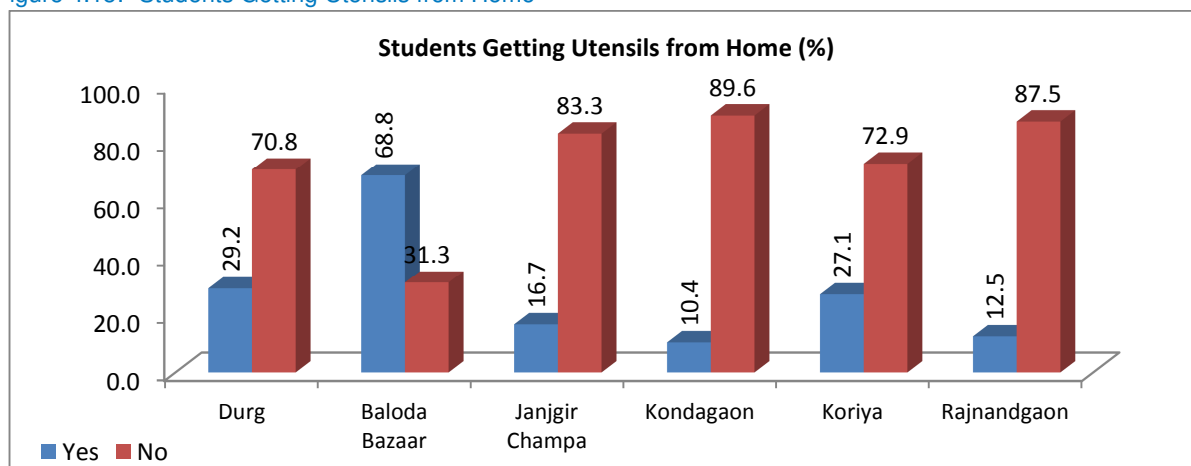
Figure 4.14: Adequacy of Utensils in Sampled Schools



Source: MM Study

Headmasters and teachers were asked whether students bring in their own utensils to school to which they opined that some students do carry their own utensils as they carry the leftover food with them while going back from school (Figure 4.15).

Figure 4.15: Students Getting Utensils from Home



Source: MM Study

4.2.4 Cleanliness & Hygiene

With respect to cleanliness and hygiene maintained in the place of cooking as well as space and arrangement where meal is served, as a common practice the kitchen shed and utensils are cleaned before the food is cooked, however in some places it was observed that there was lack of proper

ventilation and light in the kitchen sheds. Also at some locations food was cooked in verandah or open which was not safe. Thus study team felt that precautionary measures while cooking should be taken and for this the SHG members should be given proper training. Though it was not mentioned to us by the Headmasters or teachers and neither our team had observed this during the visit but some students reported that sometimes they are asked to clean the area where the food is served. On being asked about the hand wash facility available in the school, the Headmasters and teachers stated that they ensure that all students do wash their hands before and after eating the meal; however the study team observed that students washed their hands with only water and no soap was available for this purpose.

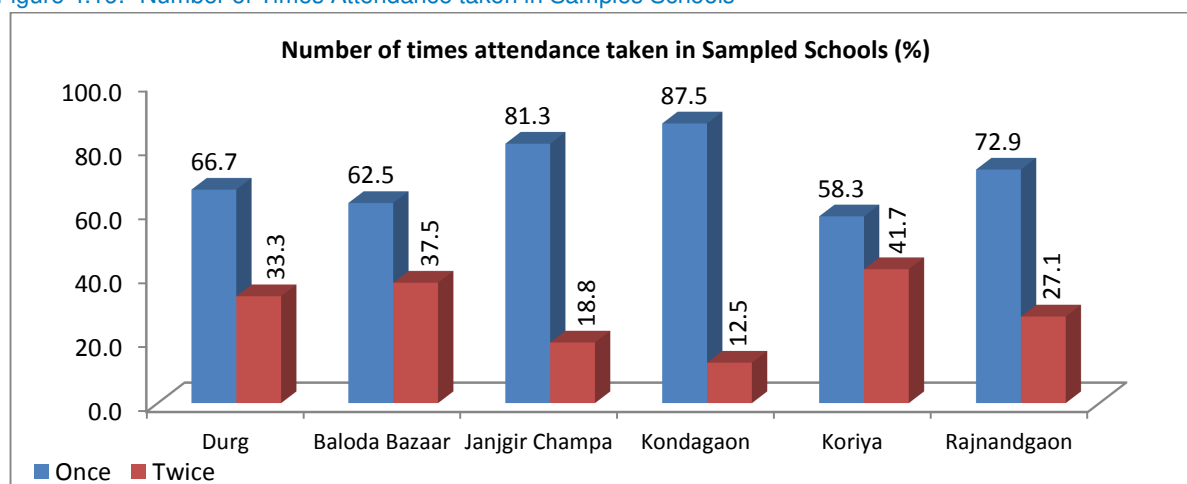
4.2.5 Quantity and Quality of Food Served

Headmasters and teachers stated that though quantity of food served to every student is the same but while distributing the food, teachers are careful that food is not wasted. Thus, for young students the first serving is less in quantity, but all students are free to take more servings as per their requirement. Regarding the quality of food, they opined that sometimes the SHG does compromise in the quality such as there have been instances where dal was too watery, rice is half cooked or not properly cleaned etc. However, no serious issue has been observed. When such complaints are made by the students, the Headmaster gives his feed back to the SHG about the quality but still if the complaint is not resolved then a written complaint is logged with the Cluster Coordinator and Block Education Officer for necessary action.

4.2.6 Headmasters and Teachers perception on Enrolment, Attendance and Retention of students

Headmasters and teachers were asked about the number of times the attendance is taken in schools, to which most of them (more than 60% in each district) opined that it is taken once a day before MDM is served; however in Koriya district 41.7% said that attendance is taken twice (Figure 4.16).

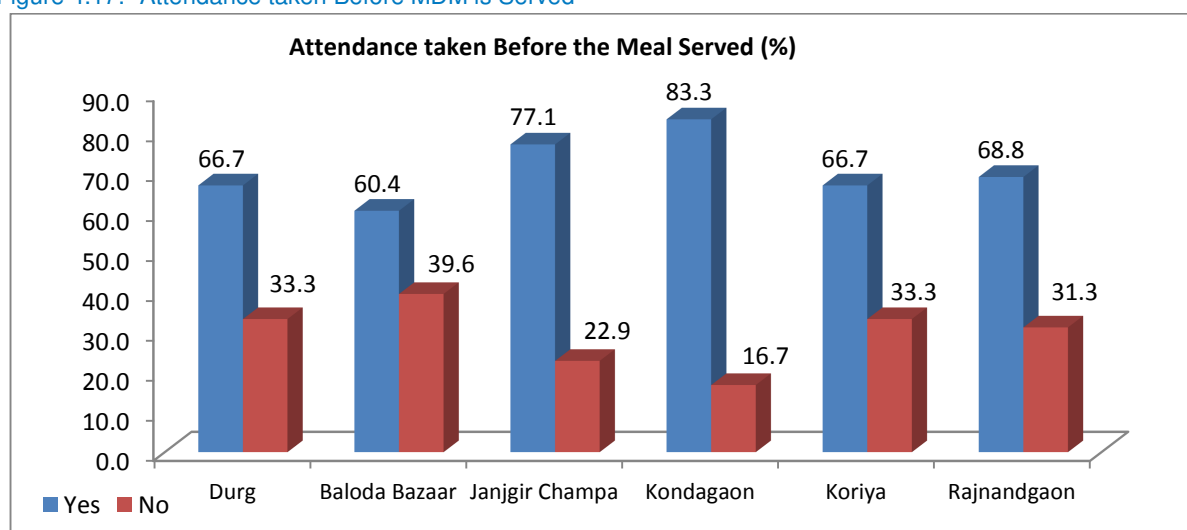
Figure 4.16: Number of Times Attendance taken in Samples Schools



Source: MM Study

Attendance is usually (more than 60% of the Headmasters and teachers stated) taken either in the morning or before serving the MDM while in few schools it is taken twice-in morning and afternoon (Figure 4.17).

Figure 4.17: Attendance taken Before MDM is Served



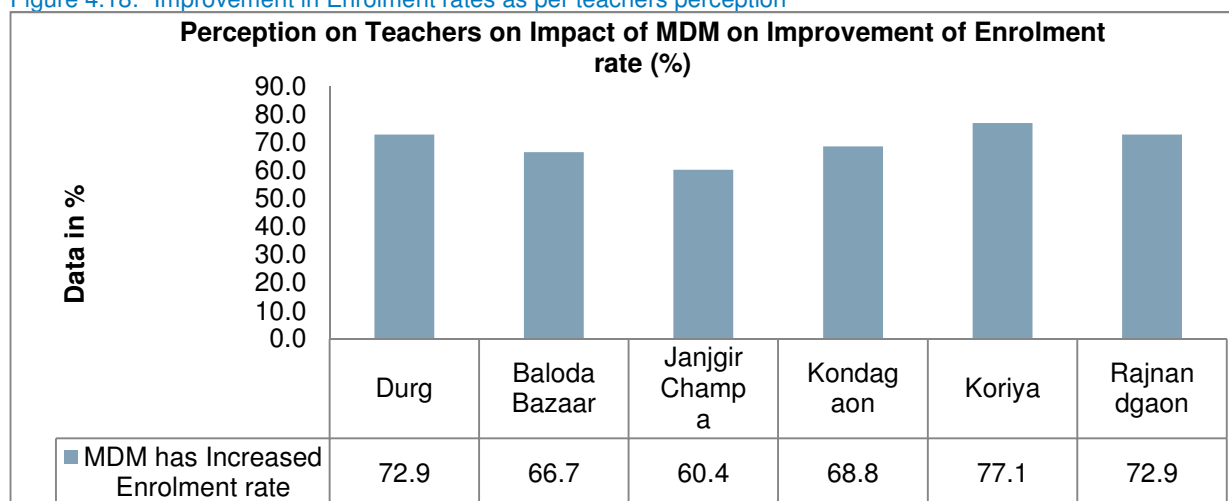
Source: MM Study

Each day for preparing the MDM, previous day's attendance is considered and accordingly cooks are provided food grains by the cooking agency or by village sarpanch. At school level, head of the schools maintain the register and at the time of inspection present the register before the inspection authority. Every day, food grains are measured based on attendance and cooked by the designated cooking agency. The children sometimes carry their own utensils and in some blocks utensils have been provided by school development committees. Students are ensured to wash their hands, sit together and have their meals. Cleaning up, after eating is also emphasized upon. The process is supervised by school teacher and public representatives (if interested). It was observed by the study team that some parents were SHG members also.

Timing of taking attendance is also crucial, as this gives a better picture of importance and benefit of MDM to students. Thus (60% & more) Headmasters and teachers usually take attendance before the MDM is served i.e. in the morning.

The figure below depicts the perception of Headmasters and teachers on impact of MDM as our team had asked whether there has been improvement in attendance, enrolment and retention rates among the students due to implementation of MDM programme.

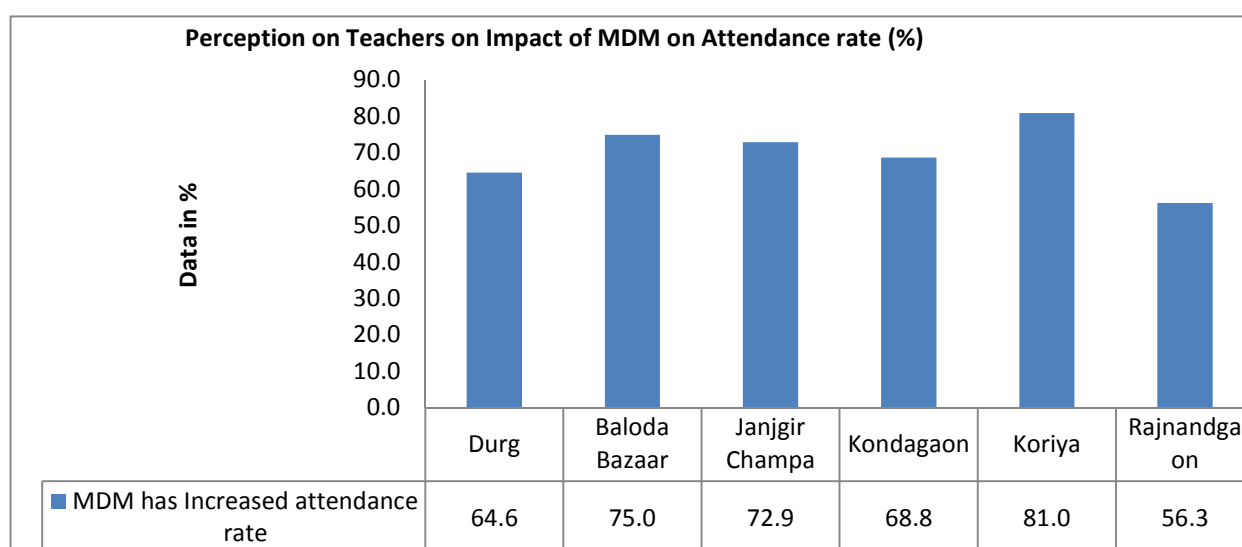
Figure 4.18: Improvement in Enrolment rates as per teachers perception



Source: MM Study

As high as 81 per cent teachers of district Koriya perceive an improvement in attendance rate due to MDM followed by 77 per cent of the teachers of Koriya who perceive improvement in enrolment rate as well. (Figure 4.18).

Figure 4.19: Improvement in Attendance rates as per teachers perception

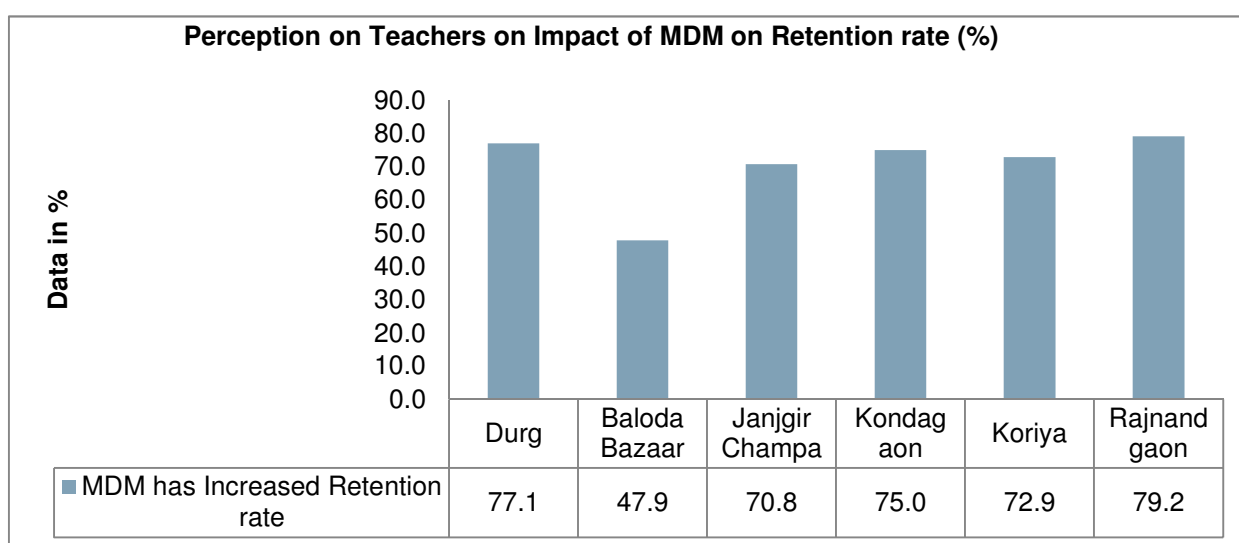


Source: MM Study

In general more than 70 per cent of the teachers perceive increase in retention rate due to MDM scheme however, proportion of teachers in Baloda Bazaar (48%) perceive that improvement in retention rate may

be due to the fact that it is a semi-urban areas have many private schools in the vicinity, hence after attending Government school for few years the students go to private schools

Figure 4.20: Improvement in Retention rates as per teachers perception



Source: MM Study

4.2.7 Participation of PRIs/SDMC

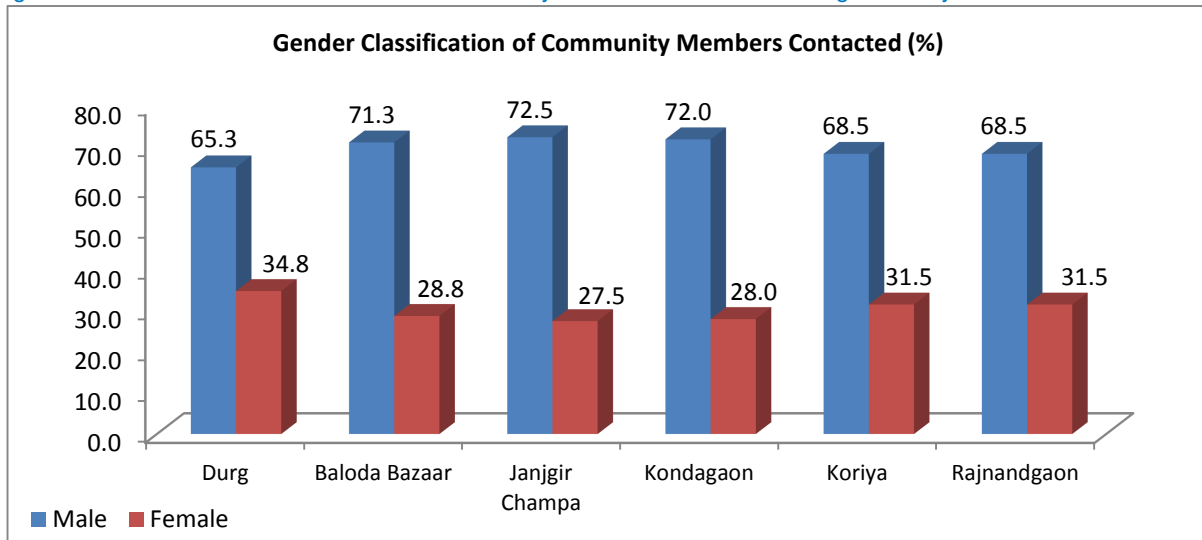
School Management & Development Committee (SMDC) plays an important role for better implementation of MDM program. SMDC includes members of Gram Panchayat, Parents and Senior Teachers of the school as well as students. SMDC members have regular meetings and they discuss about the concerned issues of school including MDM. One PRI member is a member of school management committee and they play important role after raising public concern about any issue of school. In Kondagaon district, some funds are provided by them for purchasing kitchen articles.

4.3 Findings of Community Members

In total, 2400 community members residing near 96 sampled primary and upper primary schools or whose children are studying in these schools were surveyed to assess their perception of the benefits of MDM programme. Assessment was made on various parameters such as the socio-economic profile of community members, type of utensils used, quantity & quality of MDM served, timings of serving meal and issues as well as barriers.

Looking at the gender wise distribution of students, it can be seen from the Figure 4.21 below, that more than 70% of the community members are male while the female percentage hovered around 30% across all study districts.

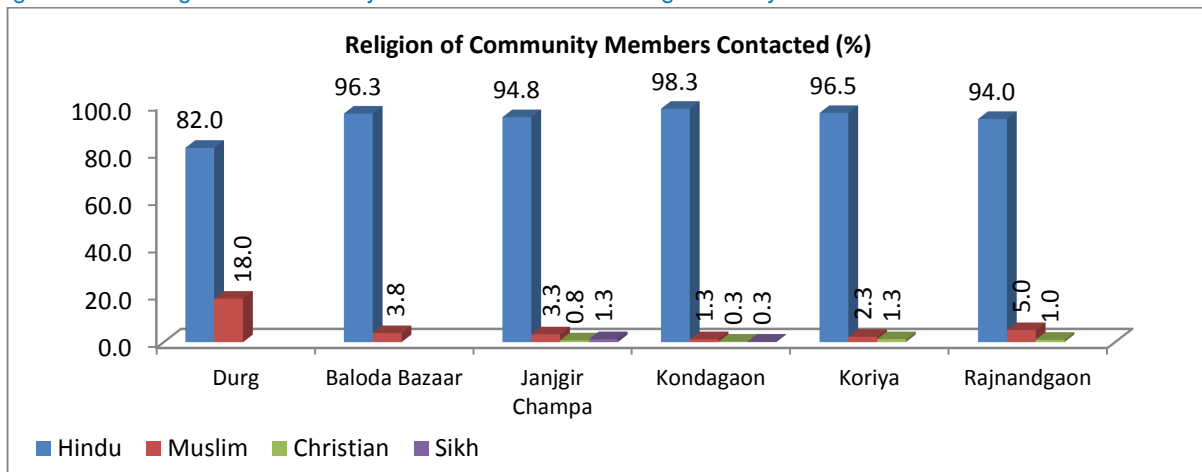
Figure 4.21: Gender wise Distribution of Community Members Contacted during the study



Source: MM Study

Looking at the figure below, it can be seen that more than 80% of the community members contacted are Hindus, followed by Muslims. In Durg, about 18% contacted community members are Muslims.

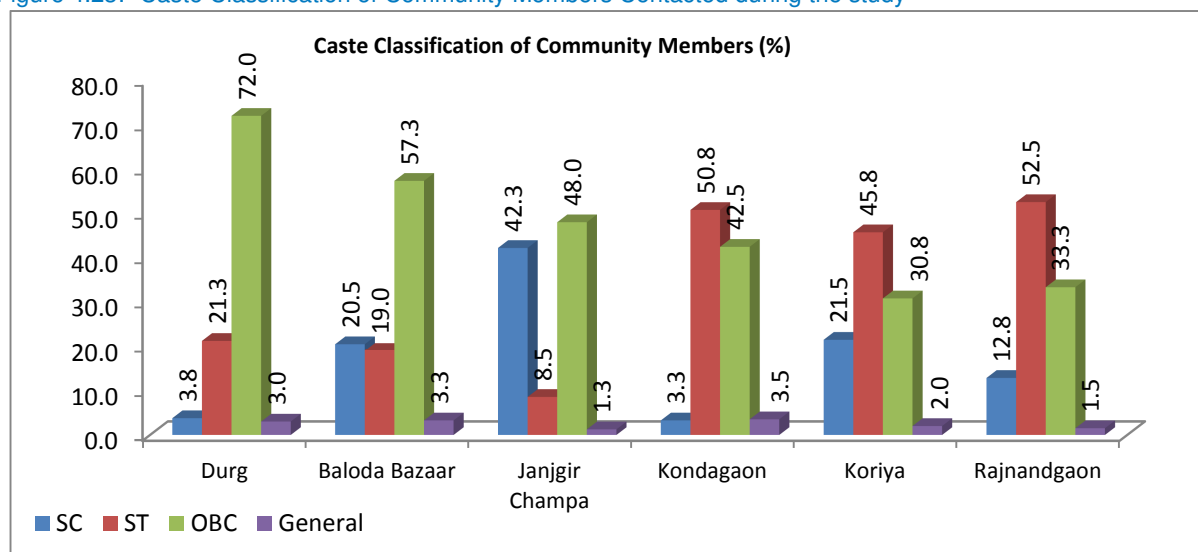
Figure 4.22: Religion of Community Members Contacted during the study



Source: MM Study

Looking at the figure below, it can be stated that 72% of the community members in Durg district are from Other Backward Castes. In Kondagaon&Rajnandgaon districts, 50% belong to Scheduled Tribes; General category is quite less in all the sampled districts ranging between 2-3%.

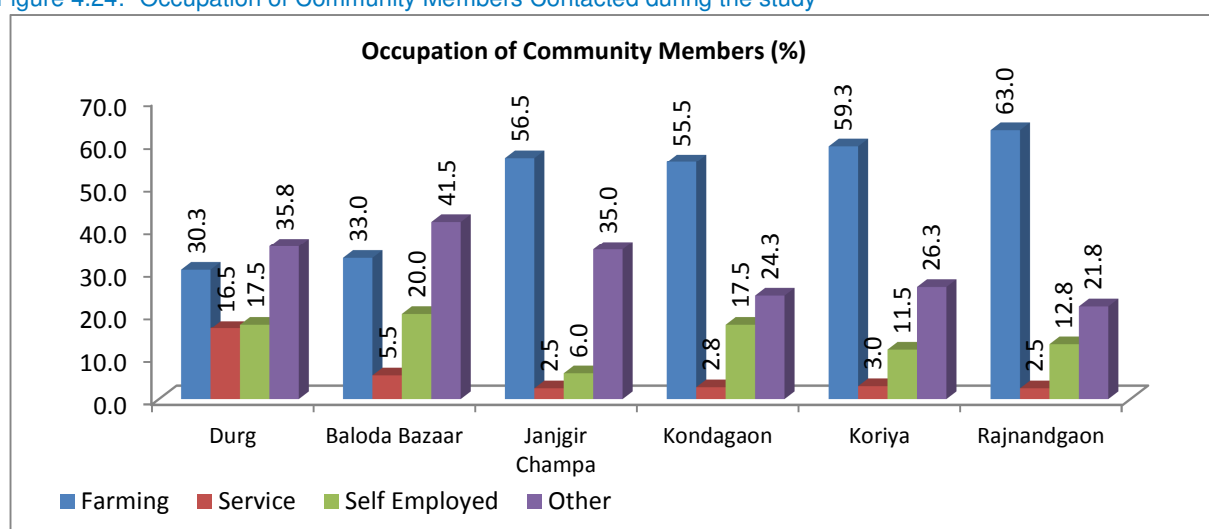
Figure 4.23: Caste Classification of Community Members Contacted during the study



Source: MM Study

Majority of the community members contacted in Rajnandgaon (63%), Koriya (59%) and Kondagaon (56%) districts are from farming community followed by other occupation such as waged labourers in Baloda Bazaar (41%) and 35% in JanjgirChampa&Durg.(Figure 4.24)

Figure 4.24: Occupation of Community Members Contacted during the study

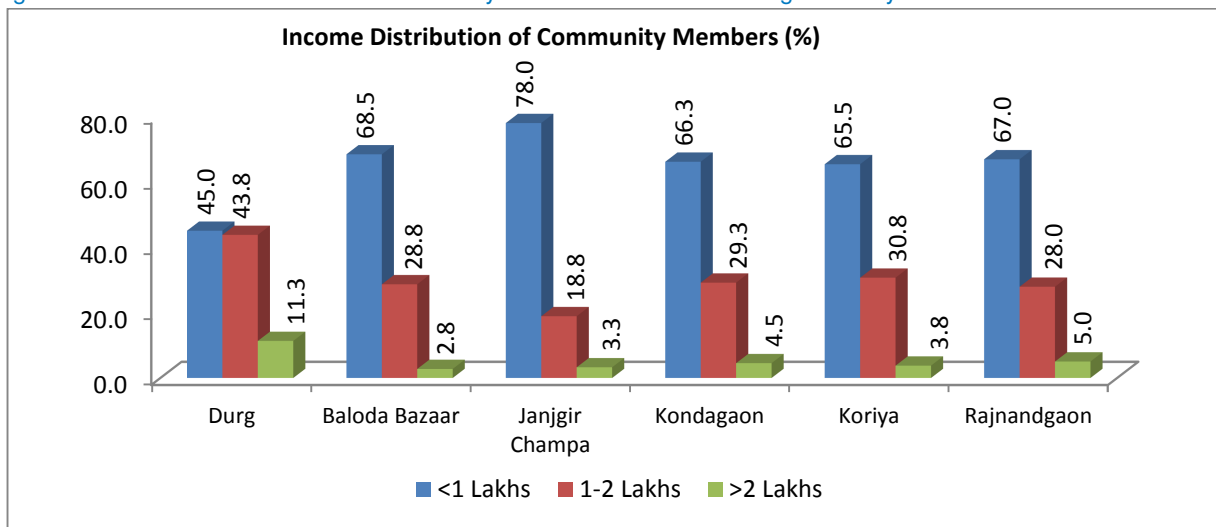


Source: MM Study

For assessing the socio-economic profile of community member's, apart from their occupation, the income level was also looked at. In all districts except Durg, majority (more than 60%) of the community members

had annual income of less than Rs.1 Lakh. In Durg, 45% of the community members had the annual income in the range of Rs. 1-2 Lakhs, followed by around 30% in JanjagirChampa and Koriya districts (Figure 4.25).

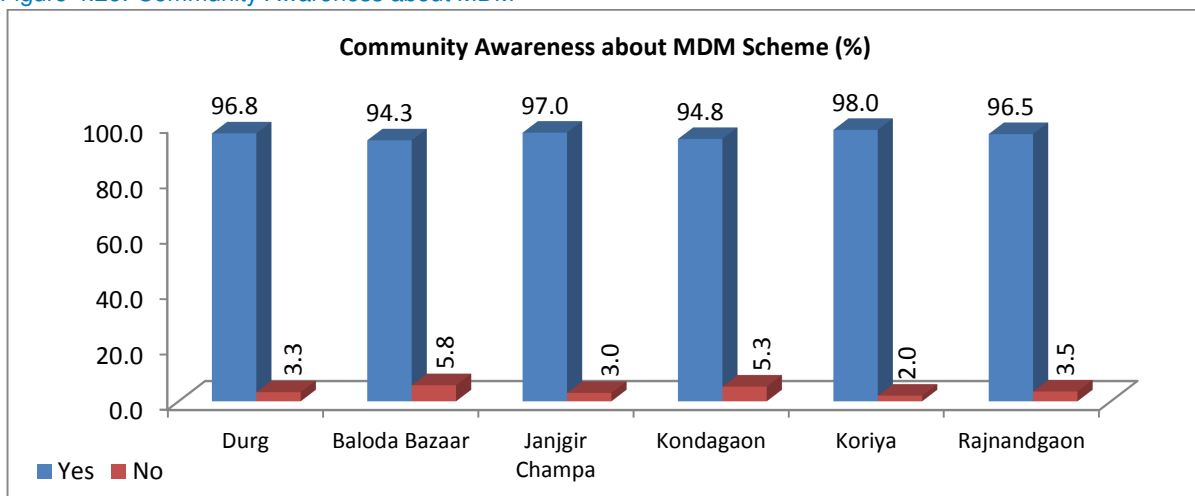
Figure 4.25: Income Distribution of Community Members Contacted during the study



Source: MM Study

It was found that the level of awareness amongst the community members with respect to MDM programme was good, more than 95% respondents were aware about the program and its implementation in school.

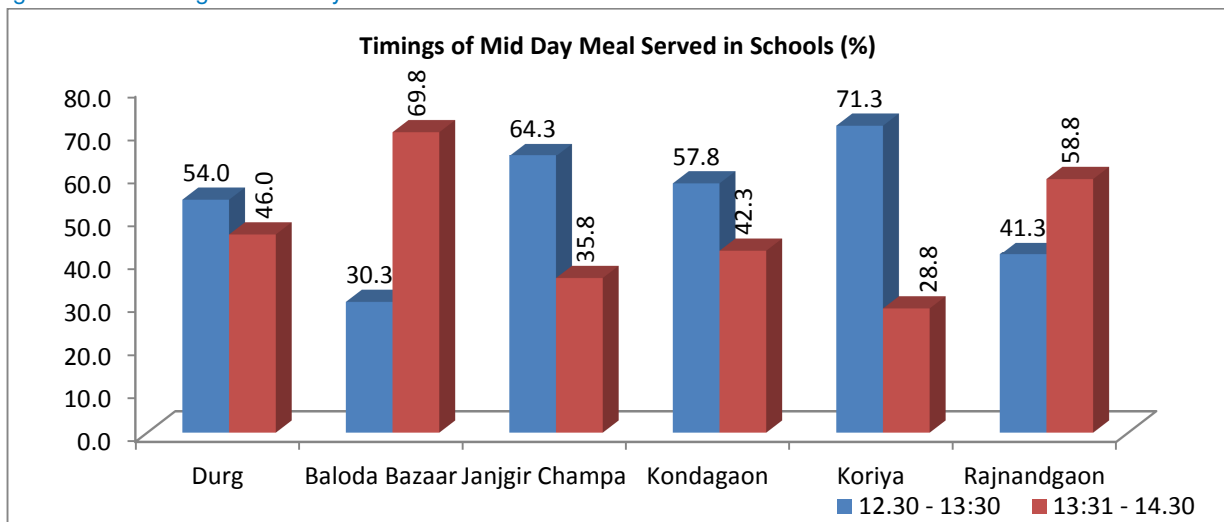
Figure 4.26: Community Awareness about MDM



Source: MM Study

On discussing about the timings of serving MDM, in Baloda Bazaar (70%) and Rajnandgaon (59%) community members stated that the meal is served between 13:31-14:30 PM; in all other districts it was informed that the meal is served between 12:31-13:30 PM. (Figure 4.27)

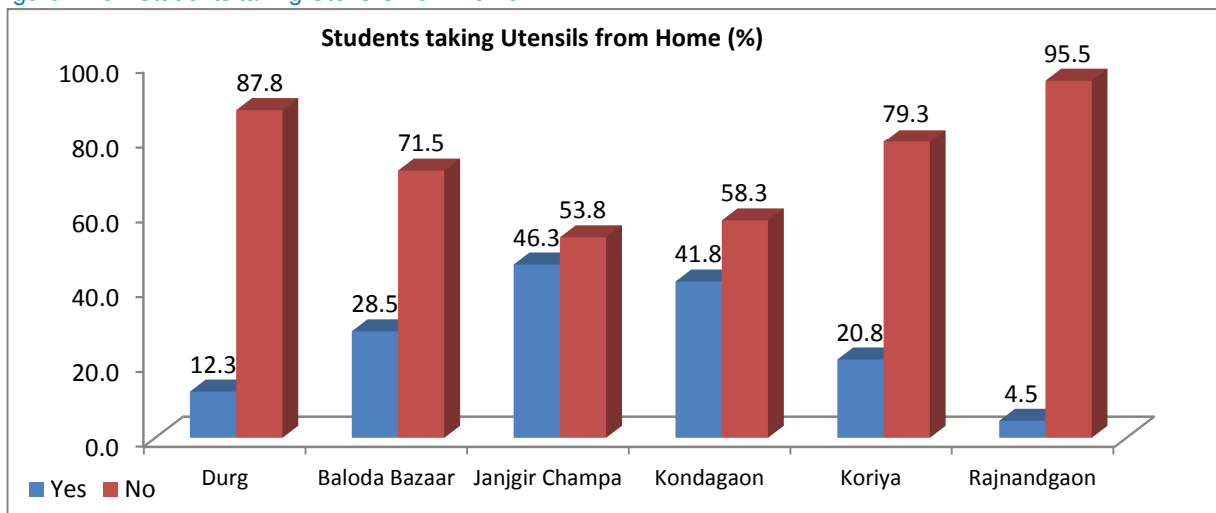
Figure 4.27: Timings of Mid-Day Meal Served in Schools



Source: MM Study

On enquiring about type of utensils used, all the community members stated that the food is served in steel plates. Further, about 46% and 42% of the community members in Janjgir Champa and Kondagaon respectively stated that their children bring utensils such as plates from home; the reason is that after eating in school they can take the left-over food to home if remaining in plate.

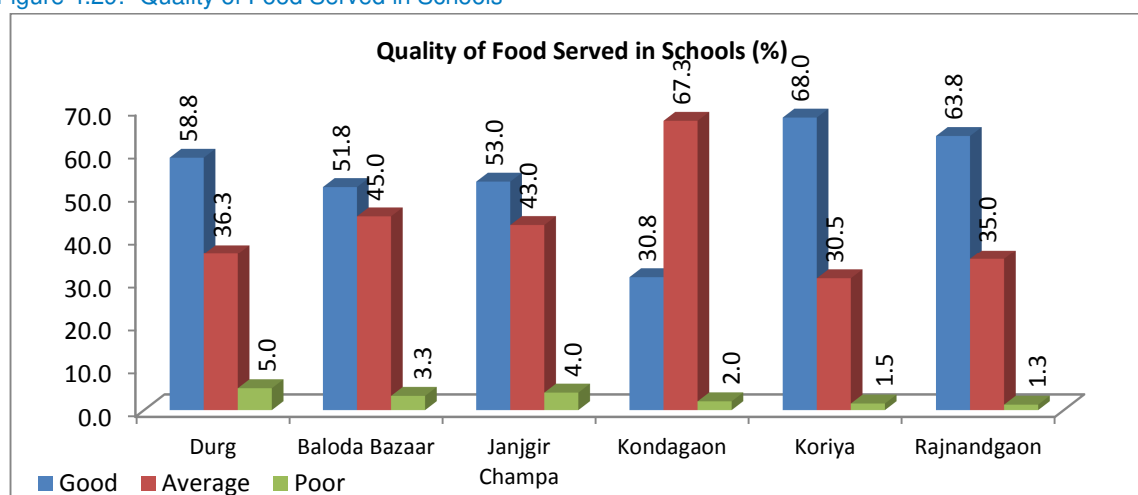
Figure 4.28: Students taking Utensils from Home



Source: MM Study

In terms of the quality of the meal, around 68% community members in Koriya and 64% in Rajnandgaon stated that the quality of food was good as it tastes good with proper ingredients and is served hot. While in Kondagaon, community members opined that it was of average quality. About 50% of the community members in the other districts found the quality to be average (Figure 4.29). Community members also opined about the menu is monotonous with dal, rice and seasonal vegetables which most of the time is either potatoes or gourd along with pickle.

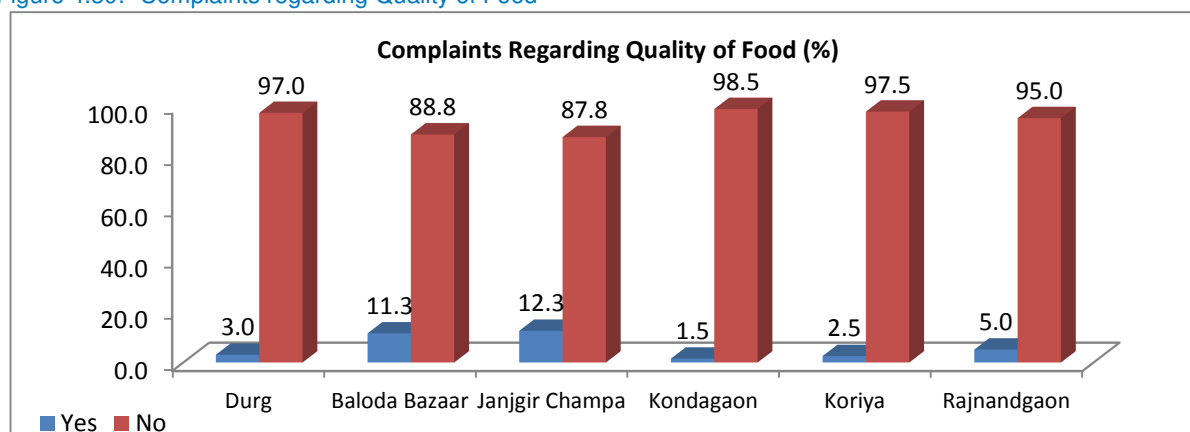
Figure 4.29: Quality of Food Served in Schools



Source: MM Study

Community members particularly in all the districts stated that they are happy with the meal being served because it motivates the children to attend school regularly and also saves one time meal for the households. Further, more than 85% community members in all sampled districts opined that they do not have any major issue with the quality of food but suggested that salad, roti and sweets could be included in the meal (Figure 4.30).

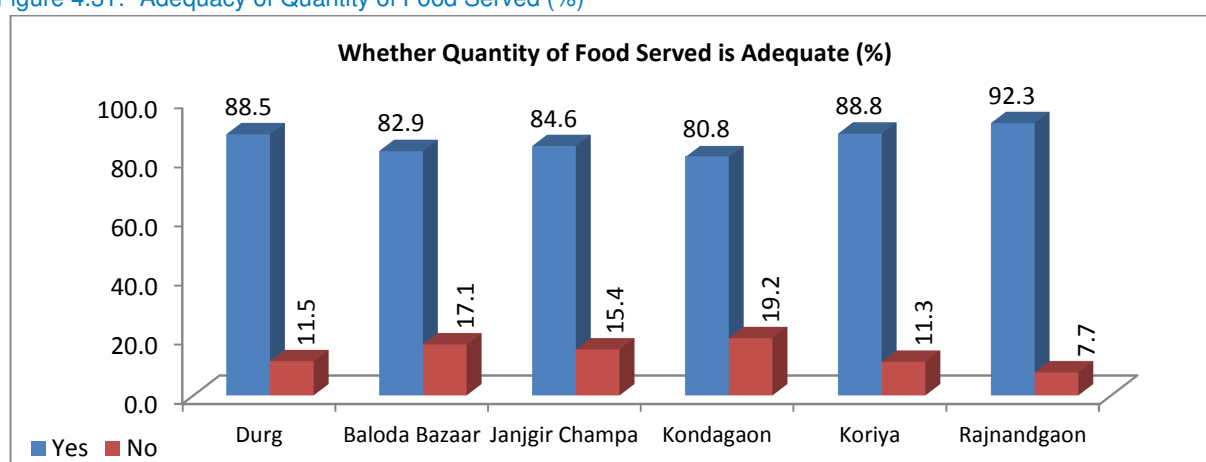
Figure 4.30: Complaints regarding Quality of Food



Source: MM Study

More than 80% community members (Figure 4.31) in all sampled districts did not identify any issue with the quantity of food served; those who were not satisfied stated that second serving is not given to the children because of which they remain hungry. Similarly the quantity of food served varies from student to student as younger ones are served less quantity as compared to others.

Figure 4.31: Adequacy of Quantity of Food Served (%)



Source: MM Study

4.4 Findings- Parent Teacher Association (PTA)/ School Management Committee (SMC) Members

In total, interactions were held with 192 members of PTA/SMC in 96 sampled primary and upper primary schools to assess the benefits and issues as well as barriers of MDM programme. School Management Committee (SMC) plays an important role for better implementation of MDM programme and has been formed at school level, however in Chhattisgarh they are at nascent stage and require capacity building. SMC includes members of Gram Panchayat/ Ward member or Councillor, Parents and Senior Teachers of the school as well as students. SMC members regularly have meeting and discussions about the concerned issues of school including MDM. As observed during the field visits, the SMC have been formed in each of the sampled schools and they conduct regular meetings as well (SMC meeting registers were verified). However, while interacting with members, the team felt that they are not fully aware about their function, duties and responsibilities as a SMC member. In such a case, some influential representatives discuss the issues in SMC meetings and take the decisions while other members merely sign the register. Thus, active participation of these members is absent in such meetings, for which capacity building is required.

SMCs were formed under Right to Education Act with a mandate to provide platform to mobilise community participation to monitor MDM. To leverage this platform, a comprehensive capacity building

module must be developed in partnership with SSA. The capacity building training based on the manual must be provided to all executive committee members of the SMC on a bi-annual basis.

SMCs are an effective mechanism wherein MDM can be monitored at micro level thereby ensuring quality of food as well as appropriate utilization of funds. It was found that all PTA/SMC members were aware of MDM programme as they have their children studying in the respective schools who are availing the benefit of this programme. It is suggested that the SMC members should meet once a month and discuss the following issues:

- Plan & support for the development of the school through expansion and augmentation of school facilities
- Ensuring enrolment and retention of students by conducting community mobilization activities such as enrolment drive
- Ensure distribution of incentives such as mid-day meals, text books and other reading materials, uniform etc. and attend to other needs of the school
- Specifically monitor the implementation of Mid-Day Meal in the school
- Prepare an annual account of receipts and expenditure of the school in a separate register as well as prepare the School Development Plan

4.4.1 Impact on students enrolment, retention, attendance & learning enhancement

On enquiring about the impact of MDM on enrolment, retention and attendance of students, the PTA/ SMC members opined that there has been a positive change on all the three parameters and an improvement has taken place. More importantly, the students learning ability particularly in the rural locations has been enhanced which helps them to concentrate and perform better in the classroom due to improvement in the nutritional status. This is due to the fact that these students either come from economically weaker background and both the parents go out for work early in the morning, thus leaving the children at home hungry. These children then go to school without eating anything or their elder siblings prepare only rotis and give them. Eventually these children are empty stomach and hungry, which hinders their process of concentration & learning.

4.4.2 Issues with Quality, Quantity & Regularity of Cooked Meal

PTA/ SMC members stated that there were no major issues with respect to quantity, quality and timely supply of cooked meal, though there have been occurrences of overcooked or undercooked meals, watery dal etc. thus an internal effective grievance redressal mechanism should be implemented, wherein respective headmasters can lodge complaint. As a common practice all complaints are done with the headmaster, who in turn warns the MDM supplier, but the suppliers do not address grievances pertaining to quality of meal.

It is suggested for instance that a special helpline number could be created for Headmasters to record issues emerging in their schools. The specific grievance could then be recorded in the IVRS data base along with details on the specific official responsible for resolving this grievance. A tracking system can also be introduced to enable Headmasters to track progress of their grievance.

4.5 Findings of SHG Cook (Cooking Agency)

A total of 96 cooking agencies (SHGs) representatives were interviewed in 96 sampled Primary & Upper Primary Schools. Self Help Groups which act as cooking agencies play a major role in MDM programme. These SHG members are involved in various processes right from the beginning of preparing food, serving and cleaning such as cleaning of food grains, cutting of vegetables, cooking, cleaning the area used for serving, serving the food & allied utensils and cleaning the vessels.

All the SHGs contacted have been supplying the cooked meal to schools since 2001-02. Sakhi Saheli is a big NGO and the SHGs facilitated by it provide cooked meal to around 89 schools in Durg district. The other SHGs provide cooked food to 1-2 schools. The MDM mechanism for supply of food grain is same in all sampled districts i.e. Demand is raised by School and it is submitted to BEO; BEO requests DEO to approve the demand on line; after the approval the SHG receives it from Public Distribution System. All SHGs contacted have kitchen shed within school premises and for storing food grains also there is a separate room in school where it is stores in containers either made of plastic or aluminium.

Cooked food is supplied to schools between 1:00-1:30 PM as stated by SHG members. And same quantity of food is distributed to every student. They have not received any complaint regarding the quantity & quality of cooked meal /food. However they opined that funds allocated are too less and should be increased as prices of cooking materials have gone up.

4.6 Findings on Health & Hygiene

During visit to schools it was observed that there was an overall awareness about hand washing with soap before eating, but the practice greatly varies from school to school and child to child depending upon the availability of soap, functional Wash facility and hygiene inculcated. It was observed that schools in urban locations are having soaps available for hand wash but in all the rural school, no soap was found for this purpose. The MDMS guidelines provide that necessary interventions like regular health Check-ups, provision for de-worming tablets and supplementation of micronutrients like Vitamin 'A' dosage and IFA tablets are to be provided in convergence with the National Rural Health Mission. However, none of the schools reported following this part of the guideline.

4.7 Findings on Preparation towards untoward Incidences

The Government of India has issued guidelines on handling of untoward incidences (on 22nd July, 2013)and the State Government has issued necessary instruction to Deputy Commissioners and DNOs to take steps to avoid any untoward incident in the school. As per the instructions issued, if any such incident occurs, the same should be reported to Head Teacher/District Education Officer/District Health Officer/ District Collector. Necessary instructions should also be issued at district level to ensure immediate treatment of students at Primary Health Centre/Community Health Centre. District officer should ensure the facility of immediate treatment to the students in the nearby Health centre or the task of treatment in the school should be entrusted to a doctor. During visit, the study team enquired with the schools about the

action required to be taken by the school authorities in case of occurrence of any untoward incident and a large number of schools were found ignorant about the instructions.

4.8 Conclusions

The study conclusions is categorised into following heads.

4.8.1 Implementation of the program

During interaction with DEO and BEO it was reported that under MDM programme, the Government is providing Rs. 3.92/student/meal to Primary School students while for Middle School students Rs. 5.05/student/meal are provided. Apart from the money, rice is provided through Public Distribution System and honorarium to cook-cum-helper @ Rs. 1000/- per month is also paid. The per student allocation and honorarium was confirmed by the school level authority (teachers, principals and SDMC members) as well as by the Women Self Help Groups engaged in cooking and serving the food. The Women Self Help Groups also confirmed that they are responsible for procuring of food items and provide cooked food to school students on regular basis as per the decided menu. The menu of MDM is decided in consultation with government authority by members of School Management Committee. The rice demand is generally assessed by the WSHGs and then indicated to the school Principal. The Principal then submits the demand to the BEO. The BEO places the online demand to DEO for approval. Once the demand is approved, the concerned WSHG collects the rice from PDS shop.

- However, Women Self Help Groups did complain about delay in release of funds and also inadequate release of funds. Due to fund issues WSHGs are unable to earn profit, but they are continuing because the program is benefiting their own children.
- During visit it was reported that the programme is being monitored at District, Block, School and Community levels. District Education Officer is responsible for monitoring the MDM scheme, quality and quantity of food served to students. It was reported by the stakeholders (SDMC members, School teachers) that DEO visits their school without prior information and physically verifies the quality and quantity of food served and also other aspects of MDM. The DEO ensures the release of funds to the WSHG and speaks to them in case of delay or any other problem in the respective district. Similarly Block Development Officer also visits the school as part of monitoring.
- Teachers play crucial role for monitoring the MDM scheme. The School management Committee comprises members of Gram Panchayat, Parents and Senior Teachers of the school. They visit the school and participate in the monthly meeting of the school.
 - During the meeting it was found that they discuss all concerned issues of school including quality of MDM. They provide advice to WSHG for better implementation of scheme. The head of the school monitors the whole process of cooking of food and ensures good quality of food is served to the students.
 - However, it is reported that they do not have power to take immediate action on WSHG, as a common practice all complaints are done with the headmaster, who in turn warns the MDM supplier, but the suppliers do not address grievances pertaining to quality of meal. Thus an internal effective grievance redressal mechanism should be implemented, wherein respective headmaster can lodge complaint. For instance, a special helpline number could be created for

Headmasters to record issues emerging in their schools. The specific grievance could then be recorded in to the IVRS database along with details on the specific official responsible for resolving this grievance. A tracking system could also be introduced to enable Headmasters to track progress of their grievance.

4.8.2 Role of PRIs/SDMC/PTA in implementation of MDM

- **Participation of PRIs/SDMC** - School Management & Development Committee (SMDC) plays an important role for better implementation of MDM program. SMDC includes members of Gram Panchayat, Parents and Senior Teachers of the school as well as students. SMDC members regularly have meeting and discuss about the concerned issues of school including MDM. One PRI member is a member of school management committee and they play important role after raising public concern about the any issue of school. In Kondagaon district, some funds are provided to them for purchasing kitchen articles.
- **Parent Teacher Association (PTA)/ School Management Committee Members (SMC):** School Management Committee (SMC) plays an important role for better implementation of MDM programme and has been formed at school level, however in Chhattisgarh they are at nascent stage and require capacity building. SMC includes members of Gram Panchayat/ ward member or councillor, Parents and Senior Teachers of the school as well as students. SMC members regularly have meeting and discussions about the concerned issues of school including MDM. As observed during the field visits the SMCs have been formed in each of the sampled schools and they do conduct regular meetings (SMC meeting registers were verified). However while interacting with members the team felt that they are not fully aware about their function, duties and responsibilities as an SMC member. In such as case some influential representatives discuss the issues in SMC meetings and take the decisions while other members merely sign the register. Thus active participation of these members is absent in such meetings, for which capacity building is required.
 - SMCs are an effective mechanism wherein MDM can be monitored at micro level thereby ensuring quality of food as well as appropriate utilization of funds. All PTA/SMC members are aware of MDM program as they have their children studying in the respective schools who are availing the benefit of this program. The SMC members meet once a month and discuss the following issues:
 - Plan & support for the development of the school through expansion and augmentation of school facilities
 - Ensuring enrolment and retention of students by conducting community mobilization activities such as enrolment drive
 - Ensure distribution of incentives such as mid-day meals, text books and other reading materials, uniform etc. and attend to other needs of the school
 - Specifically monitor the implementation of Mid-Day Meal in the school
 - Prepare an annual account of receipts and expenditure of the school in a separate register as well as prepare the School Development Plan.

4.8.3 Profile of Students

- **Caste classification of students** - Around 42% of the respondents in Kondagaon & Rajnandgaon districts belong to Scheduled Tribes, followed by 30-35% students from Other Backward Castes; General category students were quite less in all the sampled districts ranging from 5-12%
- **Income classification of parents** - In all districts except Durg, majority (more than 50%) of the parents have annual income of less than Rs.1 Lakh. In Durg, 49% of the annual income of the parents was in the range of Rs. 1-2 Lakhs, followed by 39% in JanjagirChampa and Koriya districts.

4.8.4 Level of Awareness on MDM programme

- Level of awareness amongst the community members with respect to MDM program was good, more than 95% respondents was aware of the programme and its implementation in school.
- However, awareness on untoward Incidences was found nil, which is a serious concern

4.8.5 Availability of Infrastructure

- **Availability of Kitchen sheds** –Our study observed that in urban locations, the kitchen shed was separate while in rural locations it was within school premises. For example in Durg district, most of the kitchens sheds were separate and in tribal locations of Koriya and in Rajnandgaon kitchen sheds were within school premises.
- **Availability of Store room** - More than 40% of the Headmasters and Teachers stated that the food grains are stored in a separate room within the school premises in all the six districts; 33% responded that food grains are kept at PRI members' house in Durg district and in Kitchen Shed in Kondagaon district.
 - The study team also observed the place where food grains were stored and in majority of the cases in containers made of plastic or aluminium, in the tribal areas particularly food grains were stored in plastic or jute sacks. Our study team did not find eatables kept in open.
- **Availability & adequacy of utensils** – All the Headmasters and teachers stated that steel plates are used but only 79% headmasters in Durg and 38% in Baloda Bazaar stated that they have sufficient number of utensils. Thus, it can be stated that in general there is an issue of availability and adequacy of utensils.
 - **Students getting utensils from Home** - About 37% and 47.9 % of the students in JanjagirChampa and Kondagaon bring utensils from such as plates from home; the reason is that after eating in school they can take the left-over food to home if remaining in plate

4.8.6 Quality & Quantity of Food Served

1.1.1.1 Students Perception on Quality & Quantity of Food Served

- **Quality of food served** – the quality of food was found more or less good since;
 - around 70% students in Rajnandgaon stated that the quality of food was good - it tastes good with proper ingredients and is served hot while in Kondagaon students opined it to be of average quality.
 - about 50% of the students in all other districts found the quality to be average.

- Students also opined that the menu to be monotonous with dal, rice and seasonal vegetables which most of the time is either potatoes or bottle gourd along with pickle.
- more than 90% students in all sampled districts opined that they do not have any major issue with the quality of food but suggested that salad, roti and sweet in their meal could be included
- PTA/ SMC members stated that there were no major issues with respect to quantity, quality and timely supply of cooked meal, though there have been occurrences of overcooked or undercooked meals, watery dal etc. thus an internal effective grievance redressal mechanism should be implemented, wherein respective headmaster can lodge complaint.
- Around 68% of community members in Koriya and 64% in Rajnandgaon stated that the quality of food was good as it tastes good with proper ingredients and is served hot while in Kondagaon students opined it to be of average quality.
- **Quantity & adequacy of food served** – the quality of food was found more or less good since:
 - More than 80% students in all sampled districts did not have any issue with the quantity of food served; those who were not satisfied stated that second serving is not given to them because of which they remain hungry. However, teachers mentioned that young students waste a lot of food either by not eating or by spilling it. Thus, the first serving given to young students is of small amount and the students are free to get the second or more servings if they feel hungry.

4.8.7 Impact of MDM Programme

4.8.7.1 PTA/SMCs perceptions

- **Impact on student's enrolment, retention, attendance & learning enhancement** -PTA/ SMC members opined that there has been a positive change on all the three parameters and an improvement has taken place on enrolment, retention and attendance of students. More importantly students learning ability particularly in the rural locations has been enhanced which helps them to concentrate and perform better in the classroom due to improvement in the nutritional status. This is due to the fact that these students either come from economically weak background and both the parents go out for work early in the morning, thus leaving the children hungry at home. These children then go to school without eating anything or their elder siblings prepare only rotis and give them. Eventually these children are either empty stomach or hungry, which hinders their process of concentration & learning.

4.8.7.2 Headmasters and Teachers' Perceived Impact of MDM Programme

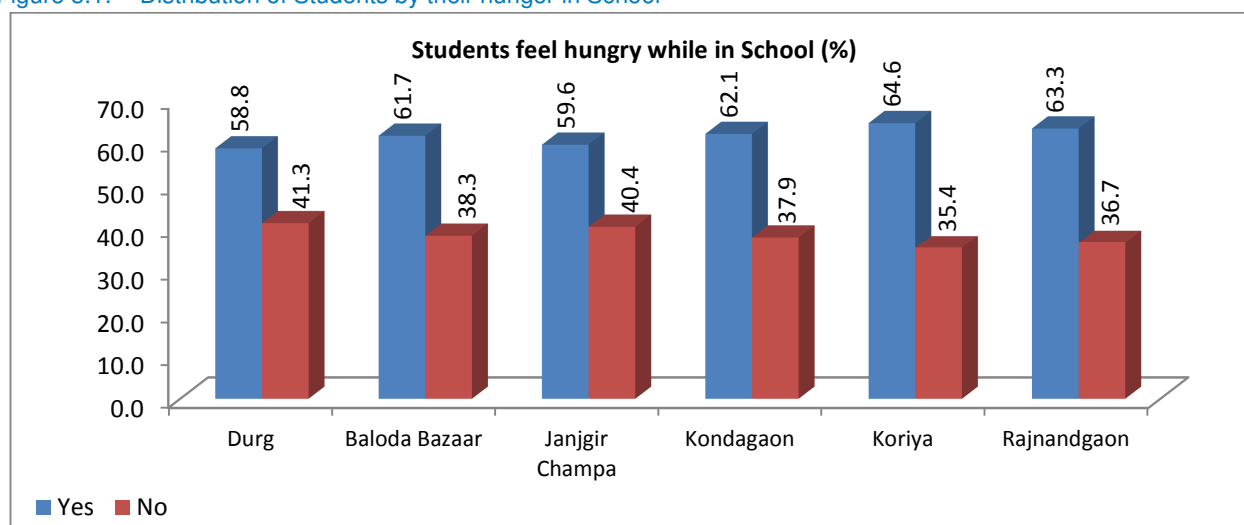
- **Improvement in attendance, enrolment and retention rate among the students** – attendance of students in Koriya is good according to 80% of Headmasters & teachers as compared to 56% in Rajnandagaon; status of enrolment also seems to have improved as opined by 60% in Jangir Champa and 77% in Koriya. Similarly, retention rate was less in Baloda Bazaar (48%), this could be due to the fact that it is a semi-urban area having many private schools in the vicinity, hence after attending Government school for few years students go for private schools, retention rate is somewhat good in Rajnandgaon (79%).
- **Number of times attendance taken** - more than 60% schools opined that it is taken once in a day in the morning; however in Koriya district 41.7% said that attendance is taken twice.

5 Assessment of Impact of Mid-Day Meal Program - State

5.1 Classroom Hunger

Assessing the situation of students in terms of classroom hunger, 60% and more students opined that they are hungry while they come to school. When asked about the reasons for them being hungry, the students said that their parents go out to work early in the morning so there is nothing cooked at home; some students said that their mothers have been suffering from prolonged illness and are unable to cook while some students said that as they would be getting to eat in school so their parents do not feed them at home before they come to school. But, it was observed by the study team that children from economically sound background do have their breakfast before coming to school.

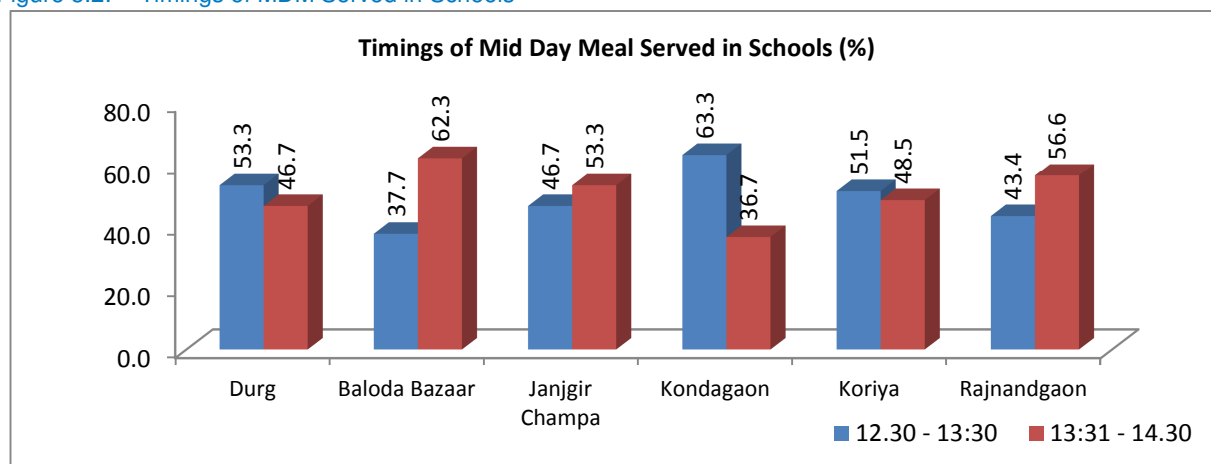
Figure 5.1: Distribution of Students by their hunger in School



Source: MM Study

As can be seen from the figure below, with respect to the timings, wherein the MDM is served in schools, 62% students in Baloda Bazaar & 57% in Rajnandgaon opined MDM is served between 1:30-2:30 PM, while in rest of the sampled districts, it is between 12:30-1:30 PM.

Figure 5.2: Timings of MDM Served in Schools

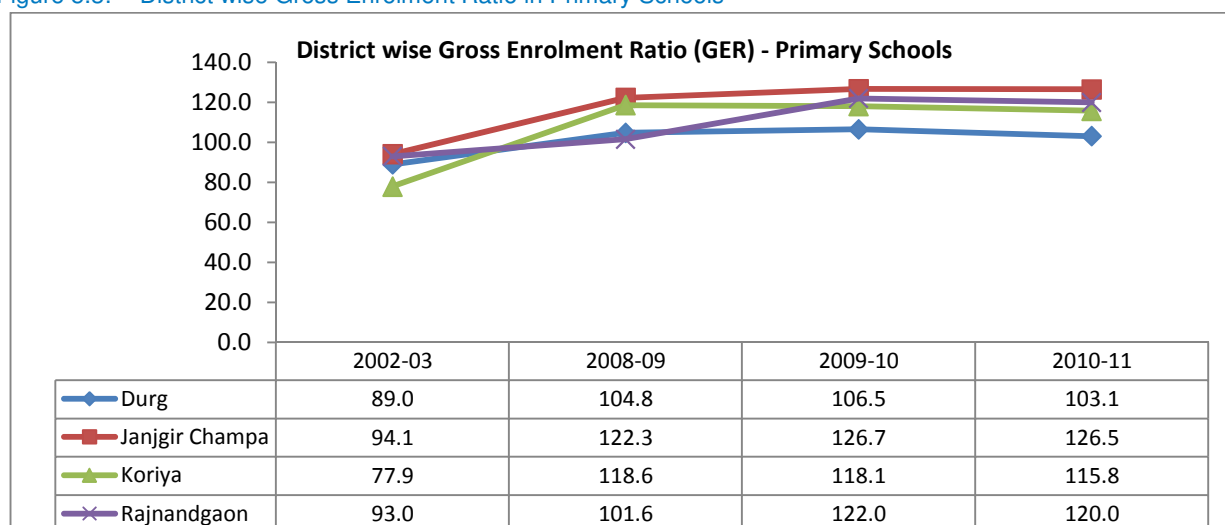


Source: MM Study

5.2 Fresh Enrolments

We have collated the data pertaining to the district wise Gross Enrolment Ratio and Net Enrolment Ratio to assess whether there has been a change/ improvement in the enrolment ratio – this could, of course, be linked to MDM programme. The school wise data was not made available to the study team during their visit to the school and hence the data of DISE has been used for this analysis. The figure below collated for primary schools depicts a clear trend of improvement of GER in Rajnandgaon from 2002-03, whereas in other districts there has been improvement till 2008-09, after which the GER has stabilized.

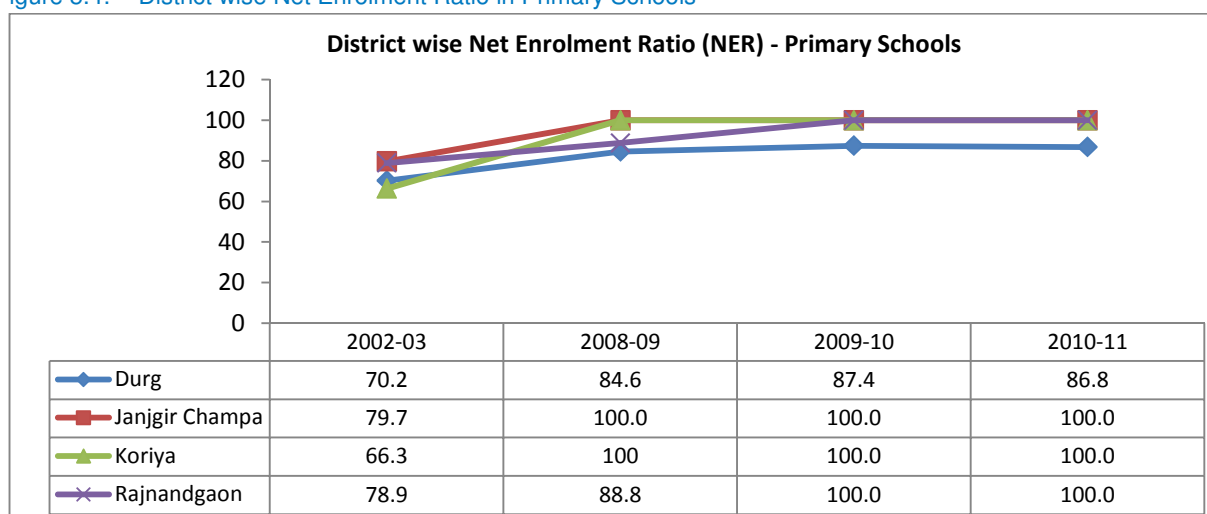
Figure 5.3: District wise Gross Enrolment Ratio in Primary Schools



Source: <http://dise.in/drc.htm>; GER/NER data after 2010-11 not available

Analysis of the net enrolment ratio (Figure 5.4) in the primary schools, the same trend can be observed for these schools in all the districts. Hence it can be concluded that there has definitely been an improvement in the GER & NER from 2002-03, this could be attributed to the MDM programme.

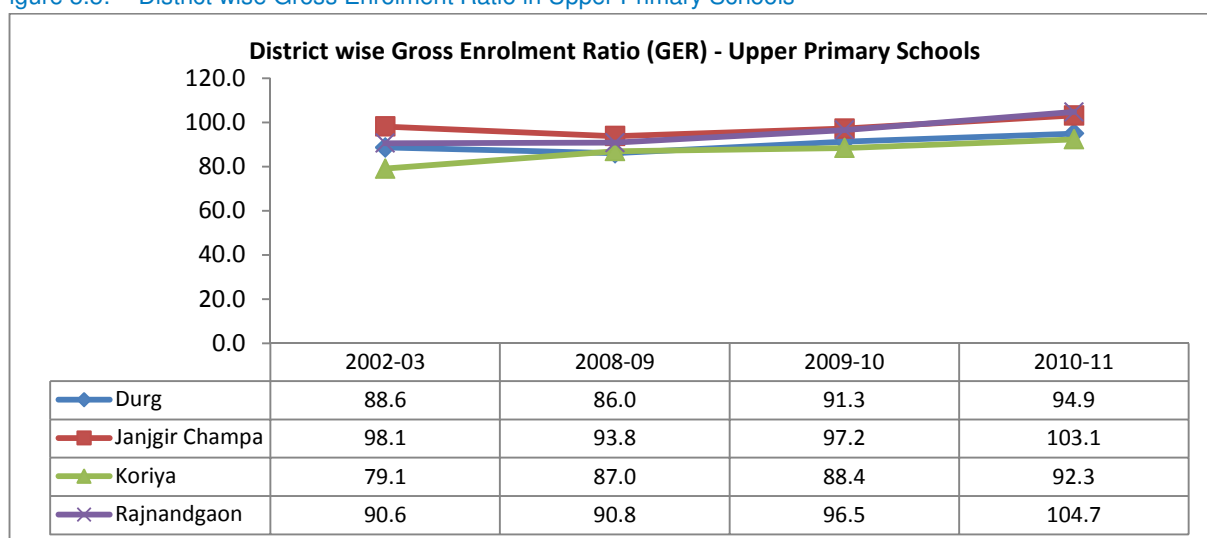
Figure 5.4: District wise Net Enrolment Ratio in Primary Schools



Source: <http://dise.in/drc.htm>

Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for upper primary schools was collated and analysed. It can be seen from the figure below that there has been a marginal increase over the years (from 2002-03 to 2010-11) in GER which could be attributed to the MDM programme.

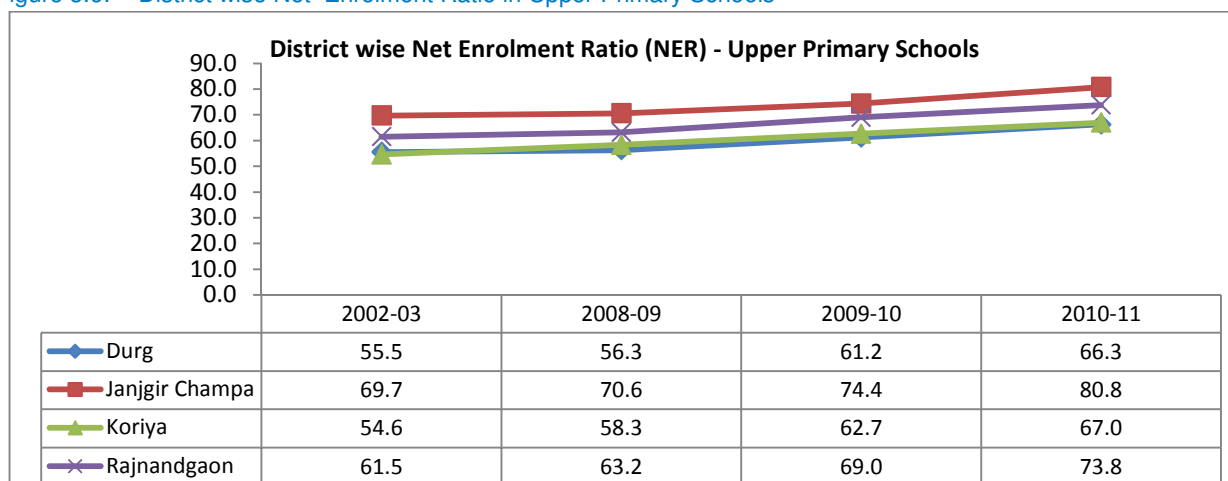
Figure 5.5: District wise Gross Enrolment Ratio in Upper Primary Schools



Source: <http://dise.in/drc.htm>

While comparing Gross Enrolment Ratio with Net Enrolment in Upper Primary schools it can be seen that there has been a steady increase since 2002-03 (Figure 5.6), with Koriya experiencing an increase of 22.7% in 2010-11 followed by Rajnandgaon (20%), Durg (19.5%) and Janjgir Champa (15.9%).

Figure 5.6: District wise Net Enrolment Ratio in Upper Primary Schools

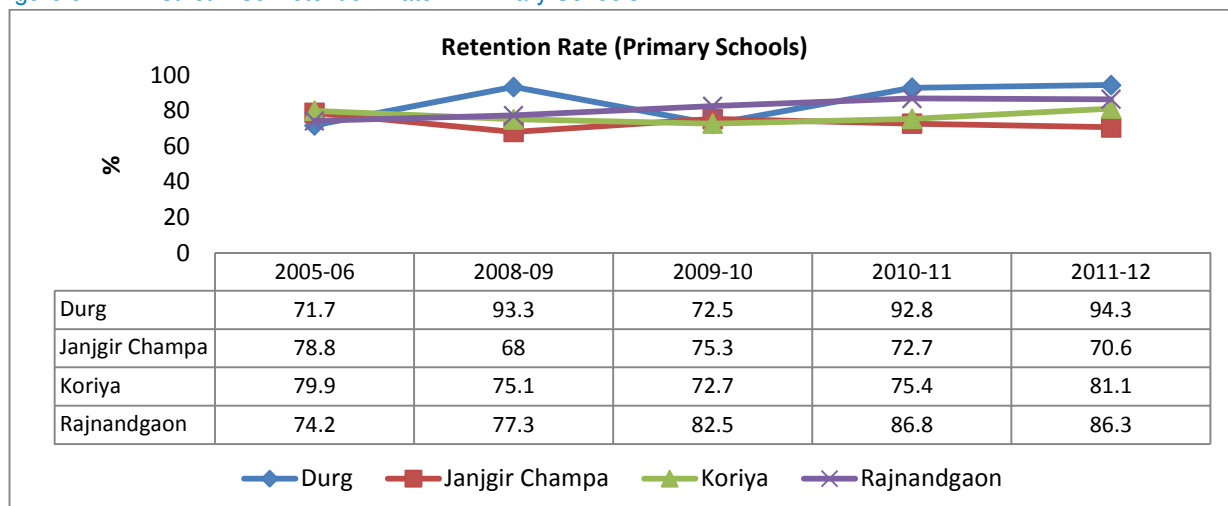


Source: <http://dise.in/drc.htm>

5.3 Retention of Students in School

As can be seen from the figure below, there has been increase in the retention rate in the primary schools in the districts of Durg (22.6%) and Rajnandgaon (12.1%) and a marginal increase of 1.2% can be seen in Koriya in last four years

Figure 5.7: District wise Retention Rate in Primary Schools



Source: <http://dise.in/drc.htm>

5.4 Social Equity

While interacting with students and teachers and discussions on the process of how MDM is served and consumed by the students, most of the students responded that they sit together and eat the meal. The place of eating is either near to kitchen or in verandah/ corridor or inside the school. Students either sit in line with their plates or stand in a queue to get the meal from the person serving. Teachers also confirmed that there is no issue of social inequity among the students and no such case has been reported to them. However, they confirmed that some students bring their own plates but it is due to fact that they can carry the leftover food with them while going home. Thus, apart from enhancing school attendance and child nutrition, MDM programme has been able to foster equality among the children.

As children learn to sit together and share a common meal, there is weaning of caste prejudices and class inequality. Further, in our social structure often the girls are treated with inequality and are much more affected by hunger and malnutrition than boys. Thus, the mid-day meal programme can also reduce this gender inequality by giving equal opportunities in education, food and upbringing for the girl child.

The study team did not observe any caste, gender and community wise discrimination in seating arrangements in the classrooms visited and also while MDM was served and eaten by the children in the sampled schools.

5.5 Attendance of Students in School

Every day on the basis of previous day's attendance, cooks are provided food grains by the cooking agency or by village Sarpanch. At school level, the head of the schools maintain the register and at the time of inspection, they present the register before the inspection authority. Every day, food grains are measured as per attendance and food cooked by the designated cooking agency. The children sometimes carry their own utensils and in some blocks, utensils have been provided by school development committees. The children are made to wash their hands, sit together and have their meals. Cleaning up, after eating is also emphasized upon. The process is supervised by the school teacher and a helper. Efforts are on to involve parents in this work.

5.6 Role Played by Other Departments

The study team observed that there was lack of information sharing and coordination among various government departments. Officials from different departments associated with MDM like Health, Nutrition, Education, Revenue/Rural Development, Civil Supplies, Finance etc., should be made aware of their specific roles with an emphasis on the need to work in co-ordination with other departments. The Directorate of Public Instructions should proactively ensure that discussion of MDM programme becomes part of a mandatory (regular) agenda item of other coordination meetings such as Urban Development Authority/ District Rural Development Authority coordination meeting or block level meetings so that departments engage and participate in the linkages.

Further, officials from other departments like Rajiv Gandhi Shiksha Mission, Health and Social Welfare too should be involved and monitor MDM when they visit blocks/villages. Thus, all these departments should also be a part of the monitoring cell and feed into the regular monitoring mechanism of the MDM programme. Separate targets should be set for each Department for undertaking inspection of schools.

5.7 Participation of SMDC, PRI & Parents

School Management & Development Committee (SMC) should play an important role for better implementation of MDM programme but it is at nascent stage in Chhattisgarh and requires capacity building. SMC includes members of Gram Panchayat, Parents and Senior Teachers of the school as well as students. SMDC members have regular meetings and discuss about the concerned issues of school including MDM. A PRI member is also a member of school management committee and he/she plays important role in raising public concern about any issue related to school. In districts such as Kondagaon and Rajnandgaon some funds are provided by SMC for purchasing the kitchen items. Also, it was found while interacting with the SMC members and parents that they are also the members of SHG which provides cooked meal to their schools, thus this enables them to ensure quality meals are supplied to schools.

The Right to Education (RTE), through its mandate to create SMCs, provides an important platform to mobilise community participation in monitoring MDM. To leverage this platform, a comprehensive capacity building module must be developed in partnership with SSA. The capacity building training based on the manual must be provided to all executive committee members of the SMC on a bi-annual basis.

5.8 Teachers Perception of Impact of Mid-Day Meal

As per the headmaster and teachers of the schools surveyed, midday meal has brought about an increase in the enrolment and retention of children. An enhancement in the attendance of students has also been observed due to the programme. According to the teachers, the children look forward to the meals provided and are enthusiastic to come to schools. However, the programme has also increased teacher's responsibility.

6 Best Practices & Case Studies

In Chhattisgarh, there are 261 NCLP schools that are run by Labour Department in 11 districts. In these schools, 13668 children of labour were enrolled during 2012-13. As per the GoI guideline, these NCLP primary schools are also eligible for Mid-Day Meal as per primary school norms after new circular of GoI that all NCLP schools children should be provided MDM as per Upper Primary School norms from December 2011.

The Mid Day Meal program in Chhattisgarh shows a positive and encouraging impact on education through improving the enrolment and retention rate, since GER has increased so is the retention rate. The meal is drawing children to school, particularly those from poor families. Teachers and parents indicate that attendance of children is much better because of this and the cooked meal is the key to it. Our visits to the schools suggested that the meal is a great highlight of the school day and children genuinely look forward to it. Hence, MDM and its various aspects have enabled to connect students to teaching.

6.1 Nagrik Apurti Nigam

Chhattisgarh is first state to implement decentralization of food grains allocation and transportation to district level, in Chhattisgarh food grains are supplied by NAN (Nagrik Apurti Nigam) and the lifting agency is also NAN. This agency, NAN is fully online, every activity of NAN can be reviewed by their online report. For this online system, NAN has been awarded by the Central Government. Due to this system, payment is made at the state level without any system of acknowledgement of receipts of food grains. In the state PDS is functioning through this online system which made it the responsibility of the concerned district education officer to release the food grain allocation according to the demand by the blocks through online. The FCI releases food grains allocation to state and within the state, State Civil Supplies department through NAN allocates food grains to their agencies of concerned districts i.e. to district manager under Civil Supplies Department and after getting requirement figure of food grains from block level with list of schools to different fair shops. The cooking agencies are lifting food grains from the fair price shops ascertained to them. In all the 146 blocks of 27 districts, coupons are issued to the cooking agencies according to enrolment. Hence, due to good PDS system and a Nodal Agency "NAN" working under the direction of Government of Chhattisgarh, the storage, lifting and transportation of food grains to all fair price shops of the state is not an issue nor the state is facing any problem on this count.

The rice is lifted and transported by NAN through online system in the Chhattisgarh. The rice lifted by cooking agency from PDS is entered in the online system. After verification by district Collector and DEO, the figure of lifted quantity is sent to state office of NAN and Directorate of School Education. After getting the figures of all districts of the lifted rice, the quarterly bill is raised by NAN. The payment of cost of food grain and transportation is done at state level.

6.2 Cooking and serving of food through Women Self Help Groups

It was observed that a group of 8-10 women (Self Help Group) comprising of mothers of the children of the school are responsible for running the program at school level. SMCs are also in place and they help to organise the required food items. The cooking cost of food-grains and honorarium of cook-cum-helper is

taken care by the WSHGs and thus, teachers are relieved from day-to-day intricacies of running the Programme.

6.3 Case Studies

6.3.1 Rajnandgaon

Mandakini is studying in class 6th in Govt. Middle school Majhiapara under Mohla Block of Rajnandgaon district. She told that her father is small farmer and agriculture is the prime economic activity for them. Her parents used to go for agriculture work in early morning carrying with them cooked food. They return home in late evenings. It is, almost a daily routine of her parents during agriculture season. She stated that it would be difficult for them to come from agriculture field and cook food for her, hence, she had to go to field to take meal with her parents. She told that her parents cannot come home for cooking meal so she had to go to field for meal. In this case it was difficult for her to continue class after lunch session. The Mid Day Meal helped her to access to meal at proper time and now she is able to continue the study. At the same time it minimised the worriedness of her parents about their child.

6.3.2 Kondagaon

Students of Govt. Girls Primary School, Pharasgaon (despite being a girl's school this school was converted to co-educational because of very low enrolment of girls) do not meal as per prescribed menu of the MDM. Students get only two food item either Rice-Pulse or Rice-Vegetable in lunch in a day. When asked about not following the prescribed menu to Head of the school, it was found that only twenty students are enrolled in this school and the prescribed cost for cooking is very less. Cost is calculated on the number of students present in the school on particular day, the cost for cooking food for less numbers of children becomes more than the prescribed cost of the Government. As the calculated cost is more than prescribed cost, so no self-help group is willing to do this job. The head of the school told that one SHG became ready to do the same subject to reduction in food item i.e either Rice-Pulse or Rice-Vegetable in a day. Representative of SHG told that cooking for fewer students is not profitable for them even sometimes they have to incur expenses from their own account. They have suggested that it is only possible if government has to provide minimum support cost even student is lesser than that number.

6.3.3 Janjgir Champa

Students of Govt. Middle School Rahuod, Pamgarh shared problems regarding Mid-Day Meal and non-availability of teachers in the school. They told that the SHG sometimes do not provide adequate food to students because they cook less amount of food. The problem of getting less food was complained to the teachers but they never acted on that. Due to this issue many students didn't take mid-day meal in the school. At the same time they responded that most of the times the class goes less due to shortage of teachers which also hampers the monitoring of MDM. The school has only two regular teachers in position against a sanctioned strength of five posts. The school has no female teachers despite of a big number of girls students are enrolled here. The anguish of the students about short of teachers reflected in their words that "they come to school for good education not for meal". So they require teacher not food. But

some of the students underlined the importance of MDM as their parents were not able to provide food during lunch time due of their engagement in other works.

6.3.4 Koriya

MDM Scheme is going well in Govt. Middle School Bhainswar. This school has separate kitchen shed for cooking. There is a separate store room for rice and other utensils. The Community members are also involved for the implementation and monitoring of MDM in the school. No social discrimination was found in this school. Most of the children enrolled in this school belong to local village only. Members of School Management Committee visit the school regularly for monitoring the quality of food, cleanliness in the kitchen and helping to cook for serving the food. Roshini is studying in lass 7th in this school. She underlined the importance of MDM for continuation of her study. Her parents are farmers and sometime work as agricultural labourers in nearby villages. Due to availability of good food in the school during lunch her parents send her to school.

6.3.5 Durg

Adarsh Govt. Girls Middle School, Durg is one of the best school in the urban area with good infrastructure facilities like buildings, furniture and drinking water etc. There are adequate numbers of teachers in the school. The SMC members show keen interest in school activities and in conducting monthly meetings. Mothers of the students were found very active and dedicated for the monitoring of the MDM in the school. The Head teacher maintains all the records regarding MDM. Quality food is provided in the school under MDM scheme. During the study it was found that some of the students were not taking MDM in the school. They used to bring meal from their homes only. The same report was confirmed by the school teachers and parents. They shared that it is a morning school and lunch time is around 10 am. Students don't like to take rice in the morning so they carry bread in lunch-boxes from home. This case is of worth for consideration w.r.t. time to provide the MDM and its Menu as per the needs of the local situations.

6.3.5.1 : Students taking home made meal



6.3.6 Baloda Bazar

In Govt. Middle School-Bansurkuli, Mid-Day Meal (MDM) is cooked and served by a Women Self Help Group. The Government has constructed kitchen cum store room for mid-day meal scheme. The teachers of the school play important role in monitoring of mid-day meal scheme. Most of the students are from the low income groups of the village. Their parents are not in a position to spare much time for the school activities as they have to go to work every day. However, the School Management Committee was found very active in monitoring at various level of process of MDM. They told that one of the member of SMC remain present every day at the time of mid-day meal preparation and distribution. They also keep vigil on cleanness and hygiene of cook and students. It helps better management of MDM for providing good food to students.

7 Replicable Best Practices of Other States

The ambitious scheme of providing Mid-Day Meal (MDM) has two major objectives of improving health and education of the poor children. The scheme has the mandate to ensure one-third of the nutritional requirements of child for which the administrative and logistical responsibilities are enormous. The scheme is doing well in Chhattisgarh however, providing nutrition is a complex issue, many a times MDM has low nutritional value in comparison to the daily requirements and much lower in nutrients such as protein, fat, iron and iodine in relation to the meal quantity in particular. Moreover, nutrition is also linked with health and hygiene, students require Vitamin, Folic Acid, Iron, even de-worming medicines and micro-nutrients. This cannot be delivered alone by the Department of Education hence, convergence with other programmes and Departments is suggested. The option for delivering other services along with the nutritious meal to the students could be adopted, as already in practice in some of Indian states, details are tabulated below:

Table E.1: Best Practices of MDM in Indian States

Sr. No	States	Health	Infrastructure Development	Capacity Building	Others
11.	Andhra Pradesh	Routine health check up done once in two months/free necessary medicines / D.T.P/ TT injections in some districts			
12.	Bihar		B.E.P provides for hut construction	UNICEF provides training of officials and resource persons	
13.	Haryana			Food & nutrition board, GOI for training	
14.	Himachal Pradesh		SSA provides for construction of kitchen sheds	Training through DIET	
15.	Jharkhand	Apna Swasthya Apne Haath – School health in Sanitation Education programme			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective management of MDM through Bal Sansad (Child Cabinet) in Jharkhand • Kitchen Garden and Bio Intensive Garden (BIG) ensuring quality food in MDM in Jharkhand
16.	Karnataka	Supply of Vitamin A, Iron tablets & deworming tablets			
17.	Maharashtra	Routine check-up done once in a year by the nearest PHC doctor			
18.	Madhya Pradesh		PHED provides for water Supply	SSA provides for training to PTA	
19.	Tamil Nadu		SGRY, Slum Development provides for Urban areas, SSA		
20.	West Bengal		SGRY, BRGF &		

Sr. No	States	Health	Infrastructure Development	Capacity Building	Others
			SDP for the construction of kitchen sheds		

Several State Governments have evolved practices to improve the implementation of the MDMS in their states. These include involving mothers of students in implementation of the scheme in Uttarakhand and Jharkhand; creation of kitchen gardens, i.e., food is grown in the premises of the school, in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Punjab and West Bengal; construction of dining halls in Tamil Nadu; and increased community participation in the implementation of the scheme in Gujarat. Following are some of the best practices in details:

7.1 Innovative Practice adopted in Jharkhand - SHGs are involved for supplying fresh vegetables

An innovative convergence programme was conceptualised in Jharkhand for supplying fresh vegetables to schools and Anganwadi centers. For which District and Block level Education Officials are coordinating with the School Management Committee for formation of Self Help Groups of farmers who grow vegetables and supply it to the nearby schools and Anganwadis in reasonable rates. This enables the farmers to get a ready market in their locality and saves transportation cost, it has also supported local employment. At the same time it has added value to the quality and nutrition level of MDM.

7.2 Effective management of MDM through Bal Sansad (Child Cabinet) in Jharkhand

In Jharkhand, every school has a Bal Sansad (Child Cabinet) consisting of active senior students of the school. It consists of some Ministers and their Deputies other than their leader as Prime Minister and the Deputy PM. Major activities performed by Bal Sansad are:

- Count the exact number of children who are present in school every day and inform the Saraswati Vahini.
- Monitors the cleanliness by ensuring that every child washes his/her hands properly before taking MDM and wash the plates and keeps at proper place afterwards.
- Ensures that all the children sit in rows and help Saraswati Vahini members to distribute MDM.
- Bal Sansad checks the material of MDM. It ensures that the waste material is thrown in the Garbage pit.

7.3 Apna Swasthya Apne Haath – School Sanitation and Hygiene Education programme In Jharkahnd

This programme is directly related to children of schools who ensure their good health and sanitation keeping them clean. The Bal Sansad does health check-ups by using tazos (small cards carrying health logos) indicating cleanliness of Ear, Eye, Nose, Teeth, Nail, Dress, Hair and Bath. The Bal Sansad ensures the cleanliness of school premises, classroom, kitchen, hand pump. The Bal Sansad ensures that the soap

is kept near the hand pump so that children use it after using toilet and before taking MDM. The Bal Sansad also ensures the use of dustbin in every class.

7.4 Kitchen Garden and Bio Intensive Garden (BIG) ensuring quality food in MDM in Jharkhand

Kitchen Garden is good concept to provide quality food in MDM. In such type of gardens minimum quantity of water is required. Here bio compost is used instead of chemical manure. The vegetables grown in Kitchen Garden are of good quality and enhance mental development of children. Generally this garden is made through bio-fencing by bamboo around the garden. Crops are grown on rotation basis during the year so that different vegetables may be provided for MDM.

7.5 Public Private Partnerships in Andhra Pradesh

Public Private Partnership (PPP) can be the way in which the Cooked Midday Meal can be provided in schools. PPP involves a contract between the Government agencies and a private institution where the onus of providing a public service is on the private institution. Under the PPP mode, the quality of service being provided is expected to improve which can result in an improved performance of the cooked mid-day meal scheme. In Andhra Pradesh, the involvement of a number of private bodies in the implementation of CMDM in the state has resulted in visibly better performance. In rural areas, Self Help Groups/SEC/Temples/NGOs and charitable Trusts/Group of Parents are identified by the Mandal Revenue Officers (MRO) as the implementing agencies. In Urban areas Community Development Societies/NGOs/SHGs/DWCRA/School Education Committees and other Agencies like Temples /NGOs of proven track record/charitable trusts/Groups of parents are identified as implementing agencies by a committee headed by the MRO. Naandi Foundation has taken up the programme in the districts of Vishakhapatnam and Hyderabad. The Naandi Foundation has established a central kitchen at Hyderabad from which midday meal is supplied to 1,01,394 children in 891 schools in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. Similarly the centralized kitchen established in Vishakhapatnam city by the same NGO which covers 35,734 children in 111 schools. In Tirupati district, ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) is meeting the Midday Meal requirement of about 8500 children in 65 schools.

8 Gaps & Recommendations

The MDM programme in Chhattisgarh is having a positive impact on education through increasing retention and also improving equity and reducing the gender gap. The meal is drawing children to school, particularly those from poor families. Enrolment has not increased to a large extent but one of the important contributions of MDM, as envisaged, is the reduction in drop outs. Teachers and parents indicate that attendance of children is much better and that the cooked meal has one of the major reason. Our visits to the schools suggested that the meal is a great highlight of the school day and children genuinely welcome it. The programme is important in terms of its potential for substantially, improving the health of the younger generation of the country.

Based on our interactions with various stakeholders at different levels some gaps have been identified and are listed below.

8.1 Gaps

8.1.1 Monitoring & Evaluation of Scheme

The scheme (MDM) is monitored closely at four levels monitoring; State, District, Block and School. To ensure smooth functioning of the scheme the Department of School Education has also developed an online monitoring system for Mid-Day Meal and distribution of rice with the help of National Informatics Centre (NIC), the system also calculates cooking cost. MDM cell has been established at DEO offices. District officials usually monitor the programme along with other programmes. At block level, BEOs and BRCs are involved in the monitoring of MDM. At school level, Village Education Committee normally do the job of monitoring. In this way effective monitoring system has been evolved at each level.

However, it was observed that no indicator based monitoring of the schemes was introduced to measure impact of scheme in nutrition and health status of students. Periodic health check-ups were also not being organised by the district authorities.

8.1.2 Delay in release of Funds

During interactions it was reported by most of the WSHG that there is a significant delay of 3 to 4 months in releasing cooking cost to them. They are based in the villages wherein only rice is made available through PDS but they are putting their own resources for purchasing several items like vegetables and oil. Sometimes, they also buy in credit from nearby shops at higher rates. On account of this improper flow of funds and the quality of meals suffers in many schools.

8.1.3 Delay in Flow of Information to Nodal Office at Block Level

Out of total 146 blocks, 85 blocks come under Block Education Officer of Department of Tribal Welfare and rest 61 blocks come under Department of School Education. Thus, as two different departments are involved, at times the information from state and district level gets delayed in reaching to the Nodal Department managing that block. This issue is primarily faced in rural remote locations.

8.1.4 Delay in serving of Mid-Day Meal in schools

It is observed that meal is not served prescribed time (i.e 1.00 pm.) in the schools while often children come without taking breakfast to schools.

8.1.5 Absence of Internal Grievance Redressal Systems

In the present delivery structure, there are no formal systems by which school Headmasters can lodge complaints in the event of delays in receipt of funds, grains, issues with SHGs and seek redressal. Based on study findings, absence of such systems has disempowered Headmasters and has created unnecessary delays in attending to the issues. In the absence of such systems, Headmasters also feel no sense of responsibility to try and address the problem and take necessary actions in resolving such issues. Building a formal system for Headmasters to lodge complaints in the event of any issue and making these systems public will go a long way in addressing these problems.

8.1.6 Absence of Health Check-up

No health check-up is undertaken for the students taking the benefit of MDM. For example, in Anganwadi centres, every month the child undergoes a health check-up to assess the impact of ICDS. As the children grow there are other health related issues also, such as anaemia, calcium deficiency and hygiene related problems which further trigger lack of concentration and weakness etc. in the children. The students in school do take one meal in the form of MDM, thus this makes all the more necessary that their health status is checked from time to time.

8.1.7 Lack of adequate staff for MDM at the state, district and block level

While interacting with the state officials it was reported that there is shortage of officials and employees at state, district and block levels. There is no dedicated MDM staff at the block level (these responsibilities have been given to elementary education staff who manage education specific programs and for whom MDM is not always a priority). High staff vacancies exist with no recruitment taking place. In many cases, transfers of staff and resultant vacancies in key positions have resulted in delays in signing off on key financial documents.

8.1.8 Inadequate Infrastructure at School Level

Though the food grains are stored at school level either in the kitchen shed or store room, however study team observed that proper storage facility or storing space is not available at school level. The food grains are stored in one of the class rooms or in any other room where other furniture and other items are kept. Proper utensils are also not available sometimes, especially in the tribal areas it was seen that food grains are kept in the sacks made of plastic or jute, therefore there is always a danger that rats/ rodents might eat it. In addition, plates in which the meal is served are also inadequate; therefore some students have to wait for their turn. After the first lot of students finish eating their meal then the plates are washed and given to

the remaining students for serving MDM. Thus old cooking and serving utensils need to be replaced from time to time.

8.1.9 Weak School Management Committees (SMCs)

During field work we found that in most schools the SMCs role does not extend beyond the requisite signing of cheques or cursory monitoring of MDM preparation. Moreover, several Headmasters and teachers interviewed did not consider SMC members to be monitors, nor did they consider their visits to the school to be 'monitoring' visits. In one school in Kondagaon, when the SMC President complained to the Headmaster and the *Pradhan* about the poor quality of meals, the Headmaster told him that he had no right to ask questions. SMC member's interviews cited the lack of adequate training which is seen as a reason for the reduced involvement of SMCs as monitors.

8.2 Recommendations

The recommendations based on the study findings are as follows:

8.2.1 Introduction of Indicator Based Monitoring & Evaluation of MDM Scheme

The scheme (MDM) is monitored closely at four levels monitoring; State, District, Block and School. However, it was observed that no indicator based monitoring of the schemes was introduced to measure impact of scheme in nutrition and health status of students. Periodical health check-ups were also not being organised by the district authorities. Hence, it is suggested that the scheme should integrate with the Health programs.

While our survey showed that the MDM programme has been functioning in all the schools surveyed, there needs to be concerted efforts to ensure food safety, quality as well as optimum utilization of resources. There is an urgent need to ensure that all necessary information is shared with all those involved in this programme. Primarily, it needs to be stressed that MDM is a right of every student; hence PRI members or the SHGs should strictly follow the guidelines for implementing it.

For implementation of indicator based monitoring, it is essential that schools maintains data for each student and this data is validated and physically verified by officers at the District and Block levels who should visit fifteen schools in each month to see that children are getting nutritious and hygienic food and it is improving their health. Every month respective officials need to submit the report to the state department on self-attested form through Fax that they have inspected the schools.

8.2.2 Timely release of Funds

It is observed that Government of India is paying recurring assistance to the States in three instalments and the Finance Department of the State Government is releasing funds in advance. Timely release of fund is somewhere stuck at district level. Hence, it is suggested that the State Government pays more

attention and close monitoring is done so that the cooking cost to the schools and cooks are getting paid in time.

8.2.3 Timely serving of Mid-Day Meal in schools

It is observed that meal is not served prescribed time in the schools while often children come without taking breakfast to schools. In such situation, it seems appropriate that meal is served by 12:00 PM or some tiffin could be served at 11.00 am so that children do not suffer from hunger and can concentrate on teaching/learning processes in class-rooms.

8.2.4 Guidelines for Women SHG workers

It is observed that women SHG workers/cook/helpers involved in cooking and serving of food do not keep adequate level of hygiene at both personal level and with the food while cooking. It is recommended that apart from capacity building of these SHG workers, a clear set of guidelines should be prepared and strictly implemented. The components of the guidelines may including the following-

- Personal hygiene i.e. washed cloths, head/hair tied with cap, hand wash with soap before cooking, clean nails.
- Hygiene in cooking food i.e. to ensure that vegetable are washed in prescribed manner, rice and dal are cleaned properly
- Hygiene of the space where food is cooked
- Hygiene of the utensils in which food is cooked and served

8.2.5 Menu of the Mid-Day Meal to be followed

In most of the cases, children have put their concern regarding meal to be monotonous. The vegetables are repeated often. But in principle it was found that the Menu of the MDM is pre-decided with approval of competent Government Authority with verity on each day. But in practice the menu is often not followed by the cooking agencies/SHGs. Hence, it is recommended that the Menu should be decided with possible variations in the items cooked each day and once decided it should be followed by schools/cooking agencies/SHGs concerned.

8.2.6 Timely Flow of Information to Nodal Office at Block Level

Proper mechanism and clear demarcation of such blocks having issues in fund flow should be made through notification and should be circulated to all nodal offices at block level as well as at state and district offices.

8.2.7 Mandatory Health Check-up at School Level

Replicating the model of Anganwadi Centre, Health Check-up in schools should be made mandatory on 6 monthly basis. This would ensure that proper nutrition is being provided to the students in school and in case of any health issue further diagnoses and treatment can also be given.

MDM needs to be linked with other health programs as well by provision of essential medications. Parents need nutrition and health education so they can be aware of the effects of under-nourishment among children in this age group (6 to 14 years), its impact and what could be done about it. MDM is an entitlement of every child attending school to ensure his/her growth and development, at the same time if school links it with health check-ups and supply of doses of required micronutrients then it will serve the nutrition need of the child.

8.2.8 Strengthen staff availability for MDM at the state, district and block levels

Increasing MDM staff capacity and building systems to deal with vacancies is critical to streamlining the transfer system. As there is a separate cell which deals with planning and implementation of MDM, thus it is recommended that dedicated staff at all the three levels should be placed and would regularly monitor this flagship programme.

8.2.9 Strengthening Infrastructure at School Level

A separate study should be conducted at school level to assess the adequacy of infrastructure available and based on this funds should be allocated at school level for purchasing utensils/ containers for storing food grains and serving items for MDM. Even SMC members should raise this issue in their monthly meetings and should get these resolved with the support of Block Education Officer. In Kondagaon and Rajnandgaon district, in some schools SMC members with the help of community had purchased the plates and provided these to the schools. Such successful models can be replicated in other schools and districts as well.

8.2.10 Strengthening and Training of SMC members

The RTE, through its mandate to create SMCs, provides an important platform to mobilise community participation in monitoring MDM. To leverage this platform, a comprehensive capacity building module must be developed in partnership with SSA11. The capacity building module must be provided to all executive committee members of the SMC on a bi-annual basis.

It might be useful to organise separate MDM training sessions outside of the regular SMC sessions. Training session must be undertaken at the cluster level and each training session must not comprise more than 20 SMC members being trained at any point of time. Key areas covered during the capacity building sessions must include:

- Implementation and management procedures for MDM (roles and responsibilities, fund flow system, procurement process)
- Awareness about citizen charters and key information provided in them
- Key entitlements under MDM programme
- Developing a monitoring strategy for MDM. This should include:

¹¹ SSA is responsible for organising SMC trainings and developing training manuals

- How to read and understand key MDM registers (financial & physical verification registers, bank account pass book and cash book)
- How to read attendance registers and match attendance registers with MDM registers
- How to read and understand transparency boards
- How to develop a monitoring strategy (For instance, SMC members could be encouraged to identify MDM monitors in the SMC, create monitoring sheets that these sheets can be filled up after monitoring visits, consolidate monitoring sheets and read them out during the SMC meeting)
- Grievance redressal: This should include a module on how to register a complaint and how to use mechanisms like filing RTI to monitor progress on the complaint.

All these can be done by setting up a centralised call centre or helpline with a toll free number in which SMC members can call with specific queries. To provide local support to the SMC, the community mobiliser/resource person can initiate a campaign to identify and train volunteers (educated youth in the village) in every school to provide support to the SMC.

In addition to training SMC members, MDM Departments should develop links with Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Departments (RDPR) at the state level and introduce an MDM training module in the Panchayat trainings that are undertaken by RDPR Departments.

8.2.11 Building & Strengthening Internal Grievance Redressal System

Building a formal system for Headmasters to lodge complaints in the event of any issue and making these systems public will go a long way in addressing these problems. For instance, a special helpline number could be created for Headmasters to record issues emerging in their schools. The specific grievance could then be recorded into the IVRS database along with details on the specific officials responsible for resolving this grievance. A tracking system can also be introduced to enable Headmasters to track progress on their grievance.

8.2.12 Some Innovations for Better Implementation and its Scalability

MDM to be directly linked to education: The existing curriculum may be linked with MDM like names of vegetables may be taught to the students by providing the same in their food. Also, practical lessons could be drawn on hygiene and sanitation, importance of nutrition, kinds of food and their nutritive value, cooking methods that prevent the loss of nutritive value of food, weights and measurements, basic sums of mathematics-related to addition, subtraction, multiplication, division. The methodology of such practical training could also involve children in some involvement in the programme.

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Appendix A. Sampled Schools

A.1 Sampled Schools for Primary Survey

Sl. No	Zone	District	Block	Type of Cluster	Name of Cluster	Type of School	Name of School
1	Central zone	Durg	Durg	Urban	Adarsh	Primary School	Govt. New Primary School Padmnabhpur
2						Primary School	Govt. Primary School Potiakala
3						Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Borsi
4						Upper Primary School	Adarsh Govt. Girls Middle School Durg
5				Rural	Chandkhuri	Primary School	Govt. Primary School Pisegaon
6						Primary School	Govt. Girls Primary School Chandkhuri
7						Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Kolihapur
8						Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Konari
9			Dhamdha	Urban	Dhamdha	Primary School	Govt. Girls Primary School Dhamdha, Ward No-7
10						Primary School	Govt. Navin Primary School Dhamdha, Ward No-2
11						Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Tamer Para
12						Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Dhamdha, Ward No-7
13				Rural	Litiya	Primary School	Govt. Primary School Semariya
14						Primary School	Govt. Primary School Jogigufa
15						Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Litiya
16						Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Chicha
17	Central zone	Rajnandgaon	Chhuikhadan	Urban	Gandai	Primary School	Smt Rani LachchhanKuwanr Bai Primary Girls School Pandaria
18						Primary School	Govt. Primary School Baherabhatha
19						Upper Primary School	Govt. Navin Middle School Gandai
20						Upper Primary School	Govt. Boys Middle School Pandaria, Gandai
21			Rural	Ataria Road	Primary School	Govt. Primary School Kukurmuda	
22					Primary School	Govt. Primary School Manpur	
23					Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Ataria Road	
24					Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Bhardagod	
25			Mohla	Urban	Mohla ¹²	Primary School	Govt. Primary School Dhobedand
26						Primary School	Govt. Girls Primary School Mohla
27						Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Mandinpingding (Dhenu)
28	Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Kumjamtola					

¹²Mohla is not officially declared as urban but it has urban characteristics and it is block headquarter of Mohla Block

Sl. No	Zone	District	Block	Type of Cluster	Name of Cluster	Type of School	Name of School
						School	
29						Primary School	Govt. Primary School Herkutumb
30						Primary School	Govt. Primary School Hidded
31			Rural		Pendakoda	Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Majhiapar
32						Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Hardatola
33						Primary School	Govt. Girls Primary School Pharasgaon\$
34						Primary School	Janpad Primary School Pharasgaon
35			Urban		Pharasgaon	Upper Primary School	Govt. Girls Middle School Pharasgaon
36						Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Bazarpara
37						Primary School	Govt. Primary School Bhimabhata
38						Primary School	Govt. Primary School Ghodsoda
39			Rural		Alore	Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Alore
40						Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Parchhipara
41	South zone	Kondagaon				Primary School	Govt. Primary School Dhodhrapara
42						Primary School	Janpad Primary School Keshkal
43			Urban		Surdongar	Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Borgaon
44						Upper Primary School	Govt. Girls Middle School Keshkal, Mungbadi
45						Primary School	Govt. Primary School Sidawand
46						Primary School	Govt. Primary School Gourgaon
47			Rural		Kohkameta	Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Kohkameta
48						Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Gudaripara
49						Primary School	Govt. Girl Primary School Bhatapara (Putrishala)
50						Primary School	Govt. Main Hindi Girl Primary School Bhatapara
51			Urban		Main Hindi	Upper Primary School	Govt. Girl Middle School Bhatapara
52						Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Bhatapara-2
53						Primary School	Govt. Primary School Khaparadih
54	Central zone	Balodabazar				Primary School	Govt. Primary School Mudhipar
55			Rural		LalBahadurShastri	Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Surajpura
56						Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Rajadhar
57						Primary School	Govt. Primary School Tikaripara
58			Bilaigarh		Bilaigarh	Primary School	Govt. Primary School Bagalabhata
59						Upper Primary School	Kasturba Gandhi BalikaVidyalaya, Bilaigarh

Sl. No	Zone	District	Block	Type of Cluster	Name of Cluster	Type of School	Name of School	
60	Central zone	Janjgir Champa	Rural	Bansurkuli	Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Tikaripara		
61					Primary School	Govt. Primary School Devarbod		
62					Primary School	Govt. Primary School Arjuni		
63					Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Bansurkuli		
64					Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Tadapara		
65			Central zone	Janjgir Champa	Urban	Akaltara	Primary School	Govt. Primary School Gopiapara
66							Primary School	Govt. Girl Primary School Akaltara
67							Upper Primary School	Govt. Gurughasi Das Middle School, Akaltara
68							Upper Primary School	Govt. Kunwar Bhuwan Bhaskar MS Akaltara
69							Primary School	Janpad Primary School Khod
70	Rural	Katanai			Primary School	Govt. Primary School Pachari		
71					Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Katnai		
72					Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Mouhadiah		
73					Urban	Rahoud	Primary School	Govt. Primary School Subhash Nagar, Rahoud
74							Primary School	Govt. Primary School SabariaDera, Rahoud
75	Primary School ¹³	Govt. Primary School, Rahoud						
76	Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Rahuod						
77	Rural	Pamgarh	Primary School	Govt. Primary School Urahia				
78			Primary School	Govt. Primary School Indira AwasPamgarh				
79			Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Keshla				
80			Upper Primary School	Govt. Girl Middle School Pamgarh				
81			North zone	Koriya	Urban	Sonhat ¹⁴	Primary School	Govt. Boys Primary School Sonhat
82	Primary School	Govt. Primary School Bikrampur						
83	Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Sangawankala						
84	Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Bodar						
85	Rural	Rajauli			Primary School	Govt. Girl Primary School Rajauli		
86					Primary School	Govt. Primary School Khodri		
87					Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Bhainswar		
88					Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Badra		

¹³There is only one Upper Primary School (UPS) listed in Urban area of Rahod Cluster so one UPS is replaced by one Primary School

¹⁴There is no urban cluster in Sonhat block. So both selected clusters are rural clusters.

Sl. No	Zone	District	Block	Type of Cluster	Name of Cluster	Type of School	Name of School
89			Khadgawan	Urban	Haldibari	Primary School	Govt. Primary School SadakDafai
90						Primary School	Govt. Primary School Mohan Nagar
91						Upper Primary School	Govt. Girls Middle School Haldibari
92						Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Galhapani
93				Rural	Khadgawan	Primary School	Govt. Girl Primary School Khadgawan
94						Primary School	Govt. Primary School Dubchhola
95						Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Akharadand
96						Upper Primary School	Govt. Middle School Pondidih

Appendix B. Institutional Structure & Staff Strength

Details presented below are based on the data available from Annual Work Plan & Budget (AWP&B) 2013-14

B.1 State Office

S. No	Designation	Post Sanctioned	Working	Vacant
1	Director	1	1	0
2	Additional Director	1	0	1
3	Deputy Director	1	1	0
4	Assistant Director	1	1	0
5	Programmer	2	2	0
6	Accountant	1	1	0
7	Clerical Staff	3	1	2
8	Computer Operator	2	2	0

B.2 District Office

S. No	Designation	Post Sanctioned	Working	Vacant
1	District Education Officer (DEO)	27	27	0
2	Assistant Director	27	27	0
3	Accountant	27	27	0
4	Clerk	27	27	0
5	Computer Operator	54	54	0

B.3 Block Office

S. No	Designation	Post Sanctioned	Working	Vacant
1	Block Education Officer (BEO)	146	146	0
2	Assistant Block Education Officer (BEO)	2927	270	22
3	Accountant/ Clerk	146	130	16
4	Computer Operator	292	292	0

B.4 Chhattisgarh divisions and districts within

Bastar Division	Durg Division	Raipur Division	Bilaspur Division	Surguja Division
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bijapur ▪ Sukma ▪ Dantewada (DakshinBastar) ▪ Bastar (Jagdalpur) ▪ Kondagaon ▪ Narayanpur ▪ Kanker (Uttar Bastar) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kawardha (Kawardha) ▪ Rajnandgaon ▪ Balod ▪ Durg ▪ Bemetara 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dhamtari ▪ Gariyaband ▪ Raipur ▪ Baloda Bazar ▪ Mahasamund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bilaspur ▪ Mungeli ▪ Korba ▪ Janjgir-Champa ▪ Raigarh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Koriya ▪ Surajpur ▪ Surguja (Ambikapur) ▪ Balrampur ▪ Jashpur

Appendix C. Officials Contacted

C.1 Officials Contacted in Sampled Districts

Sl. No	Name	Designation	Contact no
STATE LEVEL			
1.	Mrs. Jyoti Chakraborty	Assistant Professor	7587499933
2.	Mr. M.K. Nayak	Assistant Director, DPI	9827191631
3.	Mr. T.K. Sahu	Deputy Director	9826116562
4.	Mr. N.K. Pradhan	Assistant Director, SCERT	7587499911
5.	Mrs. PratimaAwasthi	Additional Director, SSA	9826156845
6.	Mr. Alok Sharma	Assistant Prof (SIEMAT-SCERT)	9826425519
7.	Mr. U. K. Chakraborty	Assistant Professor	9425202374
8.	Mr. R.C. Sahu	Deputy Director (Fin), SCERT	9826532691
9.	Mrs DeeptiBannerji	Assistant Commissioner, Tribal Development	9406016590
DISTRICT- DURG			
1.	Mr. SM Swami	Asst. Director, Durg	9424108604
2.	Mr. Chandrashekhar Kothari	Cluster Coordinator, Durg	9406047482
3.	Mr. RC Deshlehre	BEO, Dhamdha	9179692484
4.	Mr. KV Rao	BEO, Durg	9425234414
5.	Mr. Vivek Sharma	ABEO, Durg	9827996610
DISTRICT- RAJNANDGAON			
1.	Mr. B S Shrivastava	Asst. Director, Rajnandgaon	9329023209
2.	Mr. H S Verma	BEO, Chhuikhadan	9827942940
3.	Mr. B N Tiwari	ABEO, Chhuikhadan	9406329150
4.	Mr. Farasram	BEO, Mohla	9424275949
DISTRICT- KONDAGAON			
1.	Mr. N S Markom	BEO, Pharasgaon	9993605614 9479150017
2.	Mr. R K Bhatti	BEO, Keshkal	9406432907
3.	Mr. Kalyan Singh Dhurve	Cluster Coordinator	8827658518
4.	Mr. Yagya Patel	MDM Incharge, Kondagaon	9406467438
5.	Mr. Mujb Rahman	CAC, Alore	9425594113
6.	Mr. SushantSajjal	CAC, Pharasgaon	9179114898
DISTRICT- BALODABAZAR			
1.	Mr. K N Verma	BEO, Bhatapara	9424222837
2.	Mr. S P Gupta	ABEO Bhatapara	9329215968
3.	Mr. Lahre	BEO, Bhilaigarh	9907625400
4.	Mr. Maravi	Asst. Director	9827465726
DISTRICT- JANJGIR CHAMPA			
1.	Mr. Satish Pandey	DEO, JanjgirChampa	9425252177
2.	Mr. Ravi Sahu	ABEO, Akaltara	9977508874
3.	Mr. I L Dhirhi	ABEO, Akaltara	9098837460
DISTRICT- Koriya			

Sl. No	Name	Designation	Contact no
4.	Mr. Rajaram Singh	BEO, Sonhat	8120979761
5.	Mr. RameshwarSahu	ABEO, Sonhat	9407718893
6.	Mr. Bakhla	BRC, Sonhat	8103335176
7.	Mr. BE Mire	BEO, Khadgawan	7879612434