INDIA

RASHTRIYA MADHYAMIK SIKSHA ABHIYAN (RMSA)
1ST JOINT REVIEW MISSION

State Report: (Mizoram)
(January 14 -20, 2013)

Introduction

A team of the Ist Joint Review Mission comprising two members - Prof. Neelam Sood (GOI representative) and Prof. Geeta Kingdon (World Bank representative) visited Mizoram between Jan 14-20, 2013 and had discussions with the Minister of Education, State and District level officials, school functionaries and SMDC members etc. Detailed discussions were held with SPD, Dy SPD (Planning and others), State Project Engineer, FAO, SPO staff, DPCs and Dy DPCs, school heads/ acting heads, teachers, technical staff both at State and District levels, BRCs, SSA review team, students, parents, community members, SMDC chairpersons and other members. Names of some the individuals met are appended at annexure I.

The team would like to thank the Minister of Education for a detailed discussion on the key issues in secondary education faced by the State and all the individuals for their time, attention and warm hospitality.

The team visited two districts namely Champhai and Aizawl. In addition to some private schools visited unannounced, the following seven schools were visited as per the plan made with the State. The team had detailed discussions with the school heads, teachers and also interacted students and SMDC members:

1. Govt Khawzawl Secondary School, Headmaster –M.I Singh
2. Khawzawl Hr. Secondary School, Headmaster –Joseph Lalnunkunga
3. Govt. Champhai Secondary School, Headmaster –C. Rosiama
4. Govt. Zakhawthar Secondary school, Headmaster –Ngurthangpuii
5. Govt. Tuipui Secondary school, Headmaster –Lalthazova
6. Govt. Saitual Secondary School, Headmaster- Vanlalhriatpuia
7. Govt. Chaltlang Secondary School, Headmaster –. Biakkungi

Overview and Key issues

Main Achievements

- The state has registered an increase of 8 per cent in secondary enrolment between 2010 and 2011. This is impressive as it comes on top of an already very high base of Gross Enrolment Ratio
- One hundred and fifty-four existing Government Secondary Schools (GSS) have already been strengthened by the construction of new classrooms and other facilities such as computer room, library, science lab, toilets etc. The quality of construction of these civil works is good. Forty-five more such schools are in the pipeline. Apart from this, 23 brand new Secondary schools have been constructed
- Out of 929 habitations in Mizoram, 385 have been covered by secondary schooling facilities within a distance of 5 kms.
- GIS school mapping has been done with the help of Mizoram Remote Sensing Application Centre (MIRSAC)

- All headmasters and teachers for 23+32+26 new schools have been appointed and are in position. In one sense, this is an achievement, though the team had some reservation on this issue, as stated later in the report.

Issues in the state

Selection of sites for new schools: One of the key issues is the selection of sites for construction of new schools under RMSA. Here there are two concerns: creation of new schools in areas where there is already a glut of schools and, on the other hand, creation of new schools in areas that are too sparsely populated. Firstly, the state has been submitting proposals for new schools even in habitations already served with existing government secondary schools. Moreover, when identifying the location for new schools, the state RMSA Mission does not take into account any existing private schools in the locality. Moreover, new schools have been constructed in areas that already had one or even two existing nearby government secondary schools (GSS). E.g., in Saitual town in Aizawl district, which already had 2 existing GSS and 2 existing private SS within a one Km area, a new GSS has been constructed under RMSA, which we visited.

Second is the concern about the creation of new GSS in remote habitations where the maximum possible school strength is too small according to RMSA norms which stipulate a minimum enrolment size of 50. E.g., a new RMSA school is sanctioned and awaiting construction (after e-procurement) is in Tuipui (Champhai district) which has 90 households – and no other villages within a 10 Km radius – capable of producing a theoretical maximum school strength of possibly 20-22 children in classes 9 and 10 taken together. Such a size is too small to provide an active, vibrant school. The relaxation in the norm from 50 enrolment to 30 has been accorded by the PAB keeping in view the Hilly and Sparsely populated habitations to ensure better coverage, but it seems undesirable to have such small schools as stand-alone schools.

Unit cost of schools: The SPD and Deputy SPD expressed concern about the paucity of resources, in particular that only 58.1 lakh rupees is provided for a four classroom school when it actually costs them between 130 to 200 lakh per such school. It was reported that the cost of construction is higher in hilly areas since the foundations need to be deeper to hold back the mountain in an earthquake prone area, and since there are higher transportation and labour costs in such terrain. It would be useful for Mizoram to make a comparative study of unit cost of a school across the different hilly states of India, e.g. north-eastern states as well as J&K and Himachal.

Unviably small schools: The Tuipui school – which the Mission visited – is one of 32 new schools sanctioned in unserved locations, the construction of which is pending due to e-Procurement not being in place as yet. Pending the construction, teachers have already been appointed in these new schools. During our discussion with the teachers employed at this school, the Mission felt that this kind of makeshift arrangement was unsatisfactory, not only because of the maximum possible school size being below the RMSA minimum enrolment of 50 but also because the cost per pupil will be extremely high. In the Tuipui GSS, the 8 staff's total salary bill is approximately Rs. 2 lakh per month for a maximum of 15 attending children[1], yielding a high per student salary cost of Rs. 13,333/- per month or Rs. 1,60,000 per child per annum, with each teacher teaching only 5 lessons per week. Given the small number of children, the decision to start Secondary Schools in such locations and employing the full contingent of 8 staff seems unwise. Solutions could include (a) provision of bus transport to the children of such villages; and (b) upgrading the existing Middle schools in such locations to secondary school status. MHRD may follow up on these ideas.

[1]Even though the enrolment is 32 children, the attendance register showed and the teachers complained that only about 15 children attend school and that even among them, some have to leave after the first 1 or 2 lessons to help parents with farming etc.

Integrated primary, middle, secondary schools: The Mission was informed that the state has a policy of not running secondary school sections in existing Middle Schools, and keeping primary, middle and secondary schools as separate schools. MHRD may take this up with the state. This policy needs rethinking as it would be pedagogically, socially and economically beneficial to children if a full school from primary to secondary is run in one location. This would allow the benefits of greater diversity of the student body, sharing of teacher and other resources across middle and secondary sections, and overall economies of scale. Private schools in Mizoram usually have grades all the way from class 1 to 10. In a similar spirit, the 32 interim schools in unserved areas such as Tuipui (which are temporarily housed in sites such as the local Village Council office) could more usefully be established on the premises of the existing feeder Middle School in the same locality, by construction of two classes and other requisite infrastructure there, if there is space.

Inclusion of private schools while planning*:* The State does not take into consideration the existing private- aided/unaided schools in the vicinity while planning towards USE. As per the Framework for Implementation of RMSA, non-government schools should also form part of RMSA consideration zone.

Language Medium*:* There is considerable drop out between upper primary and secondary and, within secondary, again substantial drop out between class 9 and class 10. One important factor behind this drop out is thought to be the change in the medium of instruction after class 8. Upto class 8 the medium of instruction is Mizo but from class 9 upwards, it changes to English. It may be useful to introduce English more substantially from middle school onwards, rather than only from class 9. Early introduction of English could be an important factor behind the evident popularity of private schools in Mizoram. MHRD may take this up with the state.

Attention to Learning levels: A central issue is the lack of focus on education quality, especially on learning outcomes of students. The state implementation report mentioned access indicators but did not mention learning levels. The Framework for Implementation of RMSA (para 3.1.5) asks that States' "micro planning exercise will include a number of studies on the Baseline assessment in a district, in order to reflect the current situation with regard to learning achievements".

1.3 Planning and Appraisal Process

As a preparatory activity, the state govt has constituted a high-level Task Force, headed by the SPD as chairman, Dy SPD being the secretary. Other representatives include FAO, State project engineer and pedagogy - representative. The state has purchased some additional equipment such as 3 computers etc and has hired some additional manpower at the lower level including 10 LDCs, one assistant, 2 support staff etc at the state level only. At the district level, DPC has a dual charge and no additional support staff has been hired. It was reported by the Dy SPD that in the absence of any funds for capacity-building, they have not planned any activity for capacity building of the staff dealing with RMSA. Some DPC's had been appointed recently and some have come on a transfer after departmental promotion. The mission feels that the district-level of management needs strengthening as weakness at this level can adversely affect the planning process. While the State has undertaken some activities such as identifying deficiencies in existing secondary schools and under -served areas to establish new schools, they are not considering at the moment to go for identifying potential upper primary schools for upgradation.This was discussed in both meetings with the SPD and the Minister, but the State informed that as they had some problems in the past when attempt was made to bring middle schools closer to high schools, they found resistance among the headmasters, so they preferred to keep their schools primary, middle and high schools as stand-alone and do not plan to integrate them with each other to make 'comprehensive' schools.

The state also has a specific position on streamlining non-government schools. Instead of viewing these as partners in achieving USE, they seem to be more keen on widening access only through Govt schools and would like to see the private schools shrink gradually. The team also met the head of a private aided school who reported that their enrolment was going down. On another note, we also observed and were informed by govt. school teachers that many children who find it difficult to cope up in grade IX, due to English

medium and their parents being worried for their grade X board exam results, tend to leave govt schools for private school. The data provided by the state officials in Table 5 shows this too.

The State is making the educational plans by school mapping/SEMIS data. Data capture formats are used for gathering information at school-level, information is consolidated at the district level. One-day workshops are organized at the district level where staff is given an orientation by the Head Masters on Data Capture Format. District plans prepared by the planning teams are consolidated at the State level and the Annual Work Plan is prepared. Base-line assessment of districts is done with the help of SCERT. It seems SCERT is in the process of consolidating information on children with special needs (CWSN) and this has therefore not been really used in the planning. The team felt that this was an important aspect and that the state needs to make greater efforts to work on this to get the information of CWSN soon. The information required for economically marginalised children is also needed so that this can feed into the planning process. The mission felt that the State needs to gear towards building district-level capacity for planning and working closer with the SCERT to get more inputs required for planning.

However, the State's initiative in improving school mapping also merits a special mention here. We were informed that the data given by the Mizoram Remote Sensing Application Centre (MIRSAC) did not cover some remote sub-villages (as these had not been identified/declared yet), so the planning team actually took the initiative, their MIS staff obtained manual information with the help of GPS machine on the spot, measured latitude and longitude of the places and thus added 4-5 new sub-villages namely CC Khawpui: CTI (Sesawng); Airfield and Tuirial Jail: and Phunchawng. The mission team would like to place on record an appreciation for this initiative on their part to improve the mapping of locations. This information was thus used for planning.

The State is in the process of entering data on secondary schools using UDISE.

The State informed that they were able to plan the number and location of their schools mostly based on the criteria of population density and keeping in mind the transition rates from elementary to secondary.

As reported by the State, and seen in Table 3 here, out of 929 habitations, 385 habitations have been covered by a secondary schooling facility within a radius of 5 km, and 544 still remain uncovered. Of these 544, 371 habitations are eligible for secondary school as per the norms. Out of 110 schools proposed by the state government, so far, PAB has approved 81 new schools, 23 have been completed, another 32 have been approved. Having seen the new RMSA government schools in the two visited districts – many created in localities that already had existing government and private schools – the mission team feels that the identification of habitations regarded as ‘eligible for a new school under RMSA’ needs to be revisited.

The mission took up this point about the need for putting a new secondary school in place in these locations where they had government, aided and private secondary schools in the vicinity. The state informed us that this was being done as a deliberate measure to discourage the private schools from operating in the field, as they were trying to move towards establishing government schools in all the locations. But RMSA norms do not promote the idea of duplicating schools by the creation of new Government schools in areas that already have a private (aided or unaided) school. Moreover, since the data provides evidence of increase in demand for private schooling in Mizoram (one aspect of which is seen in Table 5), it is fruitless and counter-productive to attempt to divert children from private schools to government schools especially since private school attendees are children that are willing and able to pay for their education.

State has not yet made any monitoring tools on their own. Currently, the monitoring tools used by them include Quarterly Reporting Format given by EdCil, Quarterly Civil Works Reports and Quarterly Financial Reports (adapted by the state) are used for monitoring several issues such as teacher training, civil works and financial issues etc. These formats are used by the schools and submitted on quarterly basis with information filled-in. The state has not made use of RMSA Results Framework.

Discussions held with SMDC members led us to believe that there was a need for greater involvement of the members in planning and other school related issues including academic activities.

Concerns

State needs some more orientation and appreciation for decentralized planning, planning for social equity and CWSN. There seems to be a tendency to dismiss the need for the latter by thinking that SCERT will give them some information in this regard as they do not have the capacity to handle such issues. The team also felt that there is a need to make special efforts to enhance the involvement of SMDC members and teachers in school management. Sanitation facilities in some of the schools visited left much to be desired.

Recommendations

- *It is not part of MHRD thinking to use RMSA funds to create extra capacity where other (aided and private) secondary schools already exist. The identification of habitations regarded as 'eligible for a new school under RMSA' needs to be revisited.*
- *Use of the RMSA Results Framework is important and will help the state to monitor progress and remain focused on results.*
- *District and block level structures need strengthening for greater participation in planning and management of RMSA. For micro-planning, more inputs, studies etc from SCERT and other sources may be used to understand the base line status better and plan accordingly. Planning for inclusion of children from low socio-economic groups and children with special needs may to be taken up on priority basis.*
- *It would be useful for the State to prepare its own monitoring tools.*

Civil works

Against sixty per cent of the total budget asked by the State Govt for civil works, fifty-five per cent was released. The State has enhanced access facilities to a great extent as seen from the following table.

Table 1: Schools strengthened / newly built as indicated below:

Year	Strengthened/ upgraded (only secondary)	New
2009-2010	154	23
2010-2011	45 (under construction)	32
2011-2012	-	-
2012-2013	-	-

The state asked for strengthening of all the 199 existing govt. secondary schools and approval was given in 2009-2010 for 154 initially. As such the state did not need to identify any particular school. All 154 have been strengthened the remaining 45 are under the process of being strengthened.

However, it may be noted here that the State has not proposed for upgradation of any of its upper primary schools which are 1395 in number. The team discussed this issue in a great detail with the state planning team and SPD and flagged it in the meeting with the minister as well. We were informed that in the past they had tried to integrate primary with middle and middle with high schools as well. It seems that headmaster of primary or middle school does not feel comfortable reporting to the headmaster of higher stage school in his campus and this affects the administrative functioning. This practice thus has been suspended since then and they prefer their primary, middle, secondary and higher secondary schools to remain as stand -alone institutions. The team however can understand that on one hand, with this arrangement, the schools serve far flung habitations and some children may have to cover smaller distances to attend school, but integration of schools can yield several advantages stated elsewhere in this report.

It must be mentioned here that the construction quality of the schools seen by the team (out of 154 categories) was very good. The state may like to put in place some mechanisms for the maintenance of the school buildings.

The mission was informed that minor repairs were carried out in all the existing 198 government schools @ Rs 25k for each school and funds released to the SMDC has been utilised to carry out repairs minor repairs such as window panes, toilets, electrical fittings etc as per the needs identified by the SMDCs.

New schools

Need for new schools are assessed through mapping of habitations by size of population and the availability of feeder govt. schools. Apart from 23 newly established schools, another 32 were proposed to be constructed during the current year. However this proposal has been postponed due to the requirement for following the e-procurement process as the amount involved is more than 50 laks. Meanwhile they have made some make- shift arrangements to run these 32 schools in existing primary/ upper primary schools or village council's office for which teachers were appointed and salaries released in the year 20111-12.

Mizoram govt is moving towards e- procurement process. Core committee was formed for this purpose under the chairmanship of the chief secretary. SPO is following it up with NIC to hasten the process.

Unit cost of the MHRD of 58.1 lacs is found much lower that what the state feels is the actual cost of constructing a school in Mizoram (more than 100 L) due to high labor cost, transportation costs, need for levelling the ground in mountainous areas, deeper foundation required this being an earthquake area. The mission advised them to attempt a comparative analysis of the unit costs with those of other north-eastern states facing similar topographical conditions/issues.

Quality and supervision of work: Team was informed that they are not able to supervise the construction work for new schools and that may be the reason why the team found somewhat low quality as seen by seepage in the walls in new schools. However, the same was not true in the other category of 154 schools since the construction could be supervised by the school personnel.

Environmental / safety /climate change adaptations:

Digging deeper foundation, being a mountainous area and earthquake prone zone, special preparation is needed in terms of levelling of ground, deeper foundation. Visibly, the newly created structures were clearly the best buildings around. Quality of construction was very good.

Key Challenges/ opportunities

One of the key challenges perceived by the state is about starting the construction of new 32 schools for which the state feels that they do not have the capacity to manage e-procurement- neither the technical knowhow nor the technological capacity to adopt e procurement process in near future and this is likely to delay the construction.

Among the existing schools strengthened, we observed that in places use of local materials was made e. g a big room was created using bamboo material and community had also helped in the construction. This room was used by children for indoor play and miscellaneous activities.

Achievements

All the 154 existing schools proposed for strengthening have been completed as per the schedule. In all the three schools where civil works was observed by the team, quality of civil works was found to be good

Concerns/ Recommendations

In two of three schools constructed newly, seepage of water was observed. General maintenance of the school was found to be poor as seen from broken windows in Zawkithawr etc. Within a period of one year of new construction this was not expected.

Maintenance of school buildings and planning for better upkeep of sanitation facilities is recommended. In this regard, greater involvement of SDMC members may be planned and specific roles may be given.

Progress towards achievement of goals

Goal 1: To improve access to secondary schooling

The State has a total of 554 secondary schools, of these, 222 are govt., 4 are central govt., 131 govt., aided and 197 private schools. Aizawl being the capital has the maximum number of schools and a fairly high number of private schools, being an urban area. Three districts that are smaller (area-wise) Kolasib, Saiha and Serchhip have a much lower number of schools, especially private unaided. Apparently private schools that function for- profit will not be attracted to these smaller districts but the State may give special consideration while planning to broaden secondary schooling facilities in the State and may like to consider different norms for some areas.

Table 2: Number of Secondary Schools in the State

Sr. No	District	Govt.	Central Govt.	Aided	Pvt.
1	Aizawl	67	1	36	87
2	Champhai	32	1	27	13
3	Kolasib	16	0	8	5
4	Lawngtlai	19	0	5	22
5	Lunglei	38	1	23	45
6	Mamit	22	0	11	4
7	Saiha	11	0	9	16
8	Serchhip	17	1	12	5
Total :		**222**	**4**	**131**	**197**

Source : SEMIS 2011-12

District-wise details of habitations served and unserved by secondary schools within a distance of 5 kms are indicated below.

Table 3 : District-wise Served and Un-served habitations covered by Secondary Schools

Sr. No	Name of District	Total No. of Habitations	Habitations Covered by Secondary School	Habitations without Secondary School	Habitations eligible for Secondary School as per Norms
1	Aizawl	182	107	75	20
2	Champhai	107	62	45	31
3	Kolasib	54	32	22	8
4	Lawngtlai	176	34	142	115
5	Lunglei	189	66	123	113

6	Mamit	98	32	66	50
7	Saiha	74	26	48	26
8	Serchhip	49	26	23	8
Total		**929**	**385**	**544**	**371**

Source : GIS School Mapping

As stated earlier, of these 544 habitations without secondary schools , 81 have been approved in 371 habitations that are eligible. While 23 are complete, balance 58 are yet to be constructed. Mission felt that there is a need to plan the location of these schools more carefully taking in view several considerations including serving the children from poor socio-economic groups. Although these schools can be deemed to be functional (some located in VC's office), there is a need to reconsider these locations. Since salaries for 1+5 teachers for each of these schools have already been released, this requires urgent attention of the State

Gross enrolment ratios are fairly good both in case of boys and girls in all districts (table 3). Difference between boys and girls enrolment is not much except for two districts. In Mamit it is fairly high and is in favor of boys whereas in Serchhip, girls are enrolled in far greater numbers.

Table 4 : Gross Enrolment Ratios

Sl. No	**Name of District**	**GER**					
		2011-12			**2012-13 (Target)**		
		Male	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
1	Aizawl	70.09	75.59	72.87	71.01	75.97	73.52
2	Champhai	66.84	74.39	70.54	68.78	76.94	72.80
3	Kolasib	66.48	64.93	65.72	68.14	65.84	67.00
4	Mamit	73.19	57.63	65.60	75.82	58.97	67.58
5	Lawngtlai	67.97	67.36	67.67	71.10	69.75	70.43
6	Lunglei	45.15	44.56	44.86	45.53	44.30	44.92
7	Saiha	58.73	56.35	57.56	59.00	56.67	57.86
8	Serchhip	73.21	92.04	82.22	74.80	93.84	83.91
Total :		**66.97**	**69.30**	**68.12**	**68.46**	**68.59**	**69.39**

Source: SEMIS & Projected Population

Examining the pattern of total enrolment in classes 9 and 10 in the years 2010 and 2011 reveals that overall there is no drop-out from grade 9 to grade 10 between these two years. As the table below shows, roughly 18000 students were enrolled in grade 9 in 2010 and roughly the same number were enrolled in grade 10 in 2011, meaning a 100% transition rate from grade 9 to grade 10.

Table 5:Transition from Grade IX to X

	Grd IX (2010)	**Grd X (2011)**	**Change**
Govt.	7693	7187	-506
Aided	4755	4039	-716
Pvt.	5414	6652	+1238
Central	141	160	+19
Total	**18003**	**18038**	**+35**

Source: Data provided by the State

However, as the table shows, there was considerable movement between school-type between these grades. The number of children enrolled in government schools fell by 506 and in Aided schools by 716, but the number of students in private schools rose by 1238, showing a large increase in the enrolment-share of private schools. Although there was 100% transition from grade 9 to grade 10, a substantial part of the transition was pro-private. The Mission was told that many of the weaker children in government schools leave after class 9 to join private schools, in order to increase their chances of getting good board exam results in High School.

In other words, all children seem to have transited from Grade IX to Grade X (estimating by this data), but there is a shift visible from Govt to private schools between Grade IX and Grade X.

Achievements

Gross enrolment ratios are good, particularly for girls.

Concerns

The gap between GER and NER is quite high.

	GER	**NER**
Boys	67	39
Girls	69	42

This implies that children are not moving in age-appropriate fashion. The mission could not assess whether it is due to late enrolment or repetition.

Recommendations

The State may like to analyse the reasons for low NERs. The State may also reconsider the sites/ locations for new 58 schools yet to be built

Goal 2: Gaps in access to secondary education by economic status

Access in enrolment in secondary education varies significantly by economic status in Mizoram. Using somewhat older data from the National Sample Survey of 2007-08 (64th round), it was estimated by the team that among the age group of 15-17 year olds (children of roughly secondary grade age), only 41.5 per cent of the children from the poorest economic quintile were enrolled in school, the corresponding figure for the top quintile was 89.3 per cent. For this estimation house-hold per capita expenditure which can be taken as a proxy indicator for income was used

Goal 3: All children retained in education system

For the first time, this year the Project Approval Board (PAB) sanctioned money for Bridge Courses for weak students, to ensure learning, prevent drop-out and encourage retention in school. However, the proposal from the state for bridge course funds was received by the MHRD in July 2012 and the sanction order was sent in September 2012, and was received in October 2012, so the Courses have not taken place yet. Teachers have received 5 days' in-service each year in which they are also taught methods of Remedial teaching for weak children. This annual training is given by DIET Resource Persons and is subject-wise. Up to 20% of children enrolled in class 9 can be taken up for remedial teaching in a bridge course to support their retention within the education system. The State officials informed us that they have planned to give special remedial classes to grade 9th students in March 2013 focusing on maths.

It needs to be borne in mind that those who quit school part way through the secondary school cycle may not be dropping out of the learning system altogether. Some proportion of them goes on to a variety of vocational courses and trainings, though we do not have tracked data on each individual student to know about their destination after they quit school.
A major reason cited for non-retention / drop-out of children at the secondary stage in Mizoram is that children are challenged by the change in the Medium of instruction when they move from the Mizo-medium middle schools to the English Medium secondary schools.

Recommendation
The policy of entirely Mizo medium upper primary schools can be revisited, to ease the difficulties children experience due to the change of medium of instruction in secondary school. Greater use of English language teaching in Middle schools would also be in line with increasing parental demand for an English Medium education.

Conclusion on access

In conclusion regarding access, it can be stated that the State has made an assessment of unserved habitations as per RMSA norms. As they have upgraded all the existing secondary schools, they did not have to identify any schools. School mapping exercise is undertaken using technology as well as done manually. Availability of secondary schooling facilities in the State and well as in the districts seems fairly good, however greater care is required in selecting sites for locating new schools. Secondary schools after strengthening do have proper infrastructure, physical facilities including spacious classrooms (The State has build larger classrooms, in some cases combined science lab and library), rooms are ventilated, facilities for sanitation and drinking water created computer labs are there with computers displayed (only the hardware on display, no software installed). Headmaster room , office, supplies all in place according to prescribed norms. There seems to be no regulatory mechanism in case of other category schools. The state has not yet made any state-specific norms for secondary schools (neither for private).

Out of the thirty-two supposedly functional schools (housed in VC office/other locations as an interim arrangement), there were two in the districts visited by the team and due to large distances, the team could only visit one. Though generalization based on one school visit is not fair, yet the team would like to record that the school and its location did not inspire much confidence. There were benches placed, but bare walls and bare look, with no material around did not look like a space that has been used for teaching-learning. Quality of interaction could not be observed as by the time reached there, it was late evening and students were not there though all the staff including headmaster was present. There are no major issues related to electricity. connectivity etc, except for poor signal in some parts and for some time.

The mission team suggested that the State could attempt convergence with other schemes of the GOI, particularly Tribal Welfare ministry could be approached as we are talking about tribal children.

Goal 4: Education of satisfactory quality

Curricular reform: Reform of secondary school curriculum was started by the Mizoram SCERT in 2009 and in 2012, it revised the syllabus again. State officials informed that the RMSA Mission Society is not directly involved in curriculum reform or curricular issues.

Teacher availability**:** There is excellent teacher availability in government secondary schools and indeed, if anything, there is evidence of over manning. The reported mean PTR in the state is merely 11.24 pupils per teacher. In kolasib district, it goes as low as 9.43.

Table 6: Pupil Teacher Ratios (estimated for 2012-13)

Name of District	PTR	
	2011-12	2012-13
Aizawl	11.24	10.90
Champhai	12.57	12.00
Kolasib	9.84	9.43
Mamit	10.22	9.67
Lawngtlai	14.92	14.17
Lunglei	16.22	15.70
Saiha	10.04	9.74
Serchhip	11.42	10.98
	11.24	**11.46**

Source : SEMIS 2010-2011

This low PTR is obviously partly due to small habitations/low population density in the hilly terrain, but is also partly due to abandonment of government schools and rise in demand for private schooling in the bigger towns (SEMIS shows that 65% of all Higher Secondary and 35% of all Secondary schools in Mizoram are now private unaided). Teachers were visibly plentiful in the schools we saw during the Field visit, with very low PTRs, varying between 5 (in Tuipui) to 13 (in Khawzhaw). This calls into question the economic viability of small secondary schools in sparsely populated areas due to the high recurrent cost per student.

Teacher training: The state has recruited a large number of BA qualified teachers without subject specialism in mind, so that now it needs to look into deploying/recruiting subject-specialist teachers. The great shortage of B.Ed. trained teachers has meant that the state has to rely on in-service B.Ed. training. Teacher training for secondary school teachers has not started in earnest yet. DIETs currently cater only to training elementary school teachers and we were told that the staffs at the College of Teacher Education in Mizoram and the SCERT are busy with their current work loads. Moreover, there is no budget to take teachers to the SCERTs or the Regional Institutes of Education (RIE's) for training.

Given the poor performance of teachers in TET in state after state, the question of the quality of teacher training was raised with the State education officials. Clearly, when planning the training of both existing and newly appointed untrained teachers, Mizoram needs to ensure that the training curricula answer the needs of the teachers, e.g. strengthening their subject-matter knowledge.

Availability of TLMs: In most of the schools visited during the JRM field trip, some TLMs were visible in the classrooms. These consisted mostly of charts on maths, biology, chemistry and geography, though there was also a globe in one school. While a science laboratory was provided in all visited schools (except the newly started Tuipui school which currently runs in the Village Council hall), there was little evidence of its use. Similarly, while computer labs existed in the visited schools, there was no computer teacher, the computers did not have software installed, and they were not in use by the students.

***Teacher support and academic supervision*:** Secondary school teachers are given 5 days' in-service training each year at the district level. Supervision arrangements include school visits by the District Education Officer (DEO) and the Circle Education Officer (CEO). At present BRCs and CRCs are not in use for secondary schools but it makes sense that these existing teacher support structures be used to provide support to secondary school teachers. The JRM team visited two Block Resource Centres and stayed at one, and found them to be spacious, well equipped and well staffed. For example, the BRC in Saitual has 18 full time staff and a wonderful, large, conference hall, to serve 59 primary and middle schools.

Classroom practices: While we could not observe the classroom practices of teachers during our visit, we interacted substantially with children and teachers, to understand classroom practices. We enquired whether teachers ask children questions and whether children asked them questions, and the kinds of questions. In one school, when we asked which subjects they enjoyed, a high proportion of students said science (the children had recently visited a science centre in Aizawl and presumably this exposure had ignited their interest). In some classrooms, the green /black board quality would hinder the teacher explaining when writing on the board.

Pupil assessment systems/ grade 10 board exams

Providing its test items have validity and reliability, High School board examination performance of students can be a very useful indicator of learning levels. In 2012, the High School pass percentage in Mizoram was 83.7%[2]. This high pass rate is perplexing given the low learning levels evident during our class-room interactions with students, and reported generally low levels of attainment at the elementary level in ASER and NCERT's National Assessment Survey. A dialogue between RMSA officials and the State examination board about the quality and reliability of the examinations would be fruitful.

Student learning levels

Neither the State Implementation Report, nor the conversation with State education officials mentioned learning levels of students. When the issue of 'quality' of secondary education was raised, the discussion veered to enrichment programs such as excursion trips for teachers/students, science exhibitions, art and dance class, etc. While these may be quality related ***inputs***, they are not the same thing as students' learning ***outcomes*** in literacy, numeracy and the various subjects. Moreover, two crucial measures of even *quality of inputs* are missing from consideration: "teachers' competence/knowledge/ability to teach their subject" and "teacher attendance/time-on-task". The lack of attention to learning levels is of concern, in light of the SSA experience which showed that quality should be thought about at the same time as expanding access, rather than sequentially. The Twelfth 5-Year Plan by the Planning Commission is emphatic about the importance of learning levels, mentioning the importance of learning levels 20 times in the first 10 pages of the chapter on Education. To cite from para 21.14: "The four main priorities for education policy have been access, equity, quality and governance. The Twelfth Plan will continue to prioritise these four areas, but will place the greatest emphasis on improving learning outcomes at all levels."

Recommendations

- *To ensure that the training curricula answer the needs of the teachers, e.g. strengthening their subject-matter knowledge*
- *To ensure that both the science labs and computer are used every week, these should be time-tabled with specific time slots for their use. Computers need to have software installed.*
- *Block Resource Centres are spacious, well equipped and well staffed, and the possibility of using them as secondary school teacher support structures should be actively explored.*
- *Pursue quality of secondary education by measuring, monitoring and tracking learning levels. The high school pass rate of 84% is incongruous with the generally low levels of educational attainment at the elementary level recorded in other data (e.g. ASER) and the state will do well to study the reasons, in consultation with the Mizoram Exam board.*

Financial management

The RMSA program in Mizoram is managed by the Mizoram Education Mission Society (MEMS), registered under the Societies Registration Act. The Society also looks after the SSA program in Mizoram.

[2] Among 'Regular' candidates, i.e. those who take exams after studying in a school. It was a much lower 39.5% among the 'private' candidates, i.e. those that do not study in a school but take the exam after self-study.

It has a General Body (headed by the Chief Minister) and an Executive Committee (headed by the Chief Secretary) with other members including the Finance Secretary and the Director of School Education, etc.

The State Project Director has a bank account in the State Bank of India at Aizawl for the State Project Office. At the district and school level, the bank account is in the Mizoram Rural Bank (MRB). Bulk electronic transfer of RMSA funds comes from MHRD to State Bank of India. The 10% matching share by the state is transferred by the State government treasury into the same SBI account into which central government funds arrive. Money is sent electronically to District Program Coordinators and the MRB has its branches in the remotest parts of the state. Districts then send the funds electronically to the SMDCs, which maintain their own bank accounts in rural bank branches.

The state and districts use the RMSA Manual for Financial Management and Procurement (FMP) for planning and financing issues. Instructions in the manual are carefully followed in the State, they informed. Preparation of financial regulation is in process. Cash book, ledger, journal, and bank reconciliation statement are maintained properly at all levels. Book keeping is to be computerized.

Districts are authorized to incur expenditure with approval from the SPD in accordance with the manual. An auditor is appointed with the authorization of the Society and he audits the annual RMSA expenditure at all the three levels State, district and SMDC. In the first 2 years, the auditor has been A. Paul and Company and in the 3rd year Susanta Roy and Co. The utilization certificates are submitted by schools to the District Project Officer who in turn provides UCs to the state office, which then sends it on to EdCil in Delhi. The Auditor's report shows that the SMDCs sometimes to do not retain/submit their vouchers. While quality of Civil Works in SSA is monitored by two independent agencies employed by MEMS (Nexus and Royal Engineering), there is no such monitoring mechanism yet under RMSA. Specific training on the FMP Manual has not been provided but they only recently received the Manual for the first time last month (though had the draft manual before).

Table 7 : Financial progress

(Rs in lakhs)

Expenditure		Opening Balance	GOI releases	State releases	Available fund (including interest & other receipts)	Expendi-ture	Unspent Balance	% Exp to available fund	Shortfall/ Excess in state share
Financial Year 2009-10 (Audited)	**R**	0	62	12.9	74.9	136.8	-61.9	182.64	
	NR	0	1579	136.6	1715.6	7.1	1708.5	0.41	
	Sub Total	**0.0**	**1641.0**	**149.5**	**1790.5**	**143.9**	**1646.6**	**8.04**	**-32.9**
Financial Year 2010-11 (Audited)	**R**	-61.9	147		130	222.1	-92.1	170.85	
	NR	1708.5	1761	300	3769.5	606.5	3163.0	16.09	
	Sub Total	**1646.6**	**1908.0**	**300.0**	**3899.5**	**828.6**	**3070.9**	**21.25**	**88**
Financial Year 2 011-12 (Audited)	**R**	-92.1	1743.3	147	1866.2	1485.3	380.9	79.59	
	NR	3163	1879.9	168	5210.9	3611.3	1599.6	69.30	
	Sub Total	**3070.9**	**3623.2**	**315.0**	**7077.1**	**5096.6**	**1980.5**	**72.02**	**-87.6**
Financial Year 2012-13* (Un Audited)	**R**	380.9	1128.5	0	1590.7	1821.5	-230.8	114.51	
	NR	1599.6	4281.8	0	5881.5	1793.3	4088.2	30.49	
	Sub Total	**1980.5**	**5410.3**	**0.0**	**7472.2**	**3614.8**	**3857.4**	**48.38**	**-601.1**

as on 31st Dec 2012									
Grand Total	**R**	0.0	3080.8	159.9	3434.9	3665.7	-230.8	106.72	0.0
	NR	0.0	9501.7	604.6	10106.4	6018.2	4088.2	59.55	0.0
	Sub Total	**0.0**	**12582.5**	**764.5**	**13541.3**	**9683.9**	**3857.4**	**71.51**	**-633.6**

Fund utilization has increased from 8 per cent in 2009-10 to 72 per cent in 2011-12 including recurring and non recurring. In 2012-13, the fund utilization was 48 per cent by the third quarter of financial year. 71 per cent fund has been utilized out of the available fund since 2009-10 under RMSA.

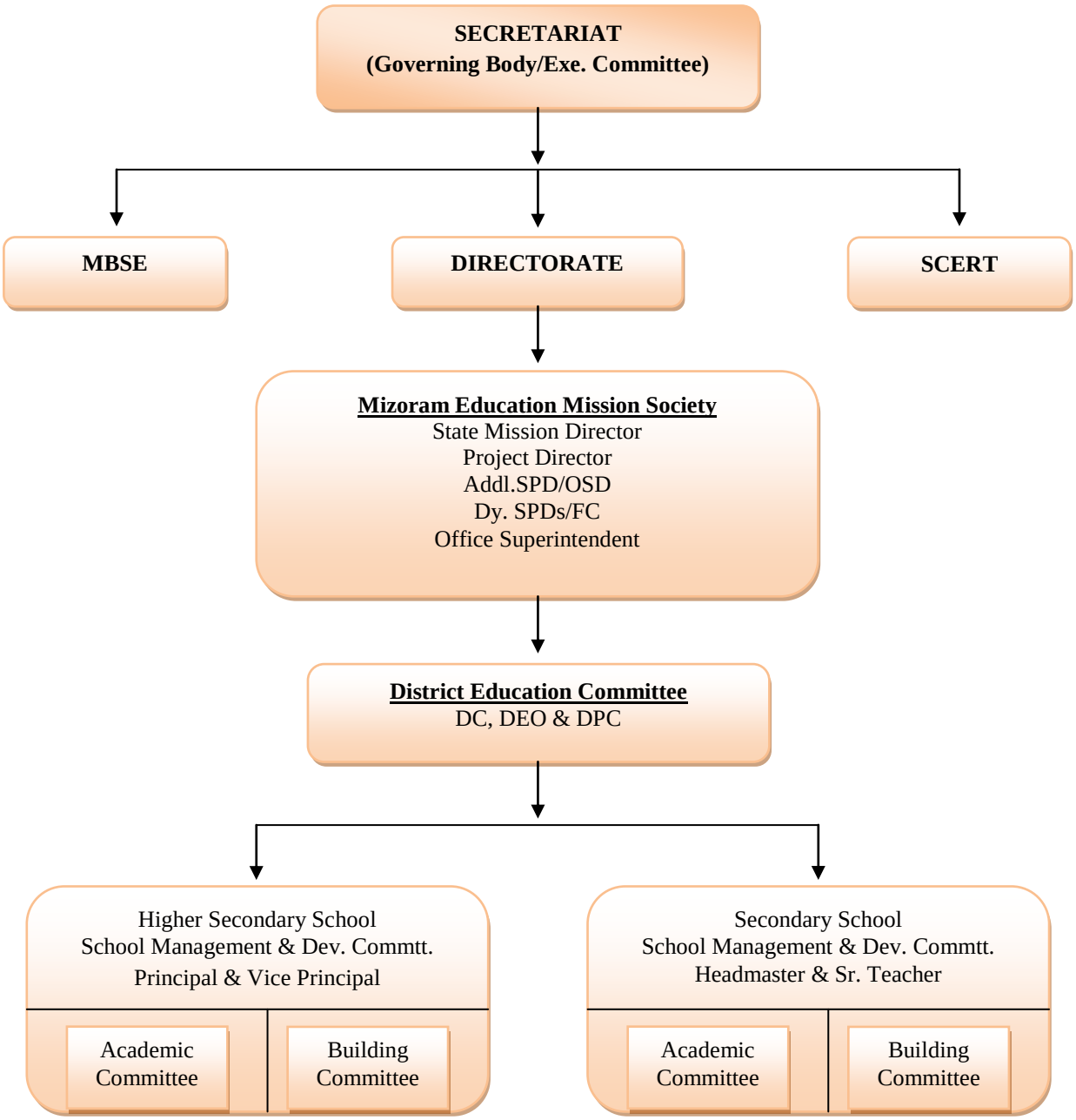
As regards, the expenditure against approval of recurring activities, more than sixty per cent expenditure has been incurred on the components such as school grant, minor repair, and teachers training. In 2011-12, funds were utilised on components such as karate training of girls, exposure visit (within and outside state), study tour of teachers, science exhibition, salary of staff and training of SMDC members etc. In case of non-recurring activities, 54 per cent has been utilized on civil works in the last three years. Of the total utilized, about 20 per cent has gone to the construction of 23 new schools and seventy-two on strengthening the 199 existing secondary schools.

Recommendation

- *Audit reports are clear and show overall good accounting practice. However, the auditors have also made several recommendations in their annual audit reports of the last 3 years, to further improve the transparency and efficiency of RMSA accounting. The state mission may pay heed to these suggestions and establish good financial practice, especially training SMDC members and district and state level RMSA functionaries.*

Programme Management

Organogram below indicates the programme management structures:



At the district level, District programme coordinators are appointed who have a dual charge of DEO as well. DEO's office is used by the DPO and as and when necessary DEO's help is sought. The State informed that due to low management budget, they have not filled up the sanctioned positions indicted below:

1. District Programme Coordinator (DPC)
2. Deputy District Programme Coordinator
3. Two Coordinators – One Finance and one for common intervention
4. One assistant MIS
5. One LDC (lower division clerk)
6. One Dak-runner

Table 8: Staff positions (State and District) under RMSA

SPO STAFF STRENGTH UNDER RMSA		
Sl. No	**Name of Post**	**Numbers of Post**
General		
1	SPD	1
2	Addl. SPD	1
3	Dy. SPD	2
4	Superintendent	1
5	Intervention Coordinator	4
6	Project Assistant/P.A. of Officers	6
7	Daftary	1
8	IVth Grade	5
Account Section		
9	FAO/FC	1
10	Sr. Accountant	1
11	Accountant	1
12	Cashier	1
13	IVth Grade	1
Engineering Section		
14	Project Engineer	1
15	Asst. Engineer	1
16	Junior Engineer	1
17	IVth Grade	1
MIS Section		
18	MISO	1
19	Asst. MISO	1
20	DEO	1
21	IVth Grade	1
DPO STAFF STRENGTH UNDER RMSA		
Sl. No	**Name of Post**	**Numbers of Post**
General		
1	DPC	1
2	Dy. DPC	1
3	Head Assistant	1
4	Intervention Coordinator	4
5	Project Assistant/P.A. of Officers	4
6	Daftary	1
7	IVth Grade	3
Account Section		
8	Sr. Accountant	1
9	Cashier	1
Engineering Section		
10	Asst. Engineer	1
11	Junior Engineer	1
MIS Section		
12	Asst. MISO	1
13	DEO	1

There are no staff at the block level. Information on vacancies could not be obtained. Some of the SPO staff and MIS staff have received training at NUEPA. At the state-level roles are quite clear and they perform their functions quite efficiently, though many a times they have to double up and perform miscellaneous roles. At the district level, there seems to be more ambiguity and participation was found to be generally on the low key. In the absence of a specific monitoring mechanism, there are delays in carrying out the activities, but overall the SPO seems efficient and manage most work. The general impression the mission got was that district level structures as well as SMDC structures required to be invigorated. The mission did not find much efforts to mobilize community. General discussions with the community and SMDC members gave an impression about low level of their involvement.

Recommendation

- *District level and SMDC members – these two levels need to be strengthened with capacity building and training, to enhance their active participation in planning and program management.*

Annexure I

Some of the key officials met during field visit

State Project Office:

SPD- Sh. Lalhmaccuana

1. V.L. Malsawma, Dy. SPD (Planning)
2. Lalliansanga, FAO
3. Azaria Laltinkima, SPE
4. K. Vanlalruati, Coordinator
5. Rebecca Vanlalduhawmi, LDC

District Office- Champhai District

1. Lawmawma, DPC
2. Hualrikhuma, Dy. DPC
3. Samuel Lalrinzuala Chhangte, Coordinator Finance
4. Dr. Lalsangliani, Coordinator
5. Isaac Vanlalzuala, Asst. MIS Coordinator

District Office- Aizawl District

1. Lalhlimpuia Khiangte, Dy, DPC
2. C.Lalnlunmawia, Coordinator
3. R.D. Lalnunmawii, Asst. MIS Coordinator

Schools Visited:

8. Govt Khawzawl Secondary School, Headmaster – Mr. M.I Singh
9. Khawzawl Hr. Secondary School, Headmaster – Mr. Joseph Lalnunkunga
10. Govt. Champhai Secondary School, Headmaster – Mr. C. Rosiama
11. Govt. Zakhawthar Secondary school, Headmaster – Miss Ngurthangpuii
12. Govt. Tuipui Secondary school, Headmaster – Mr Lalthazova
13. Govt. Saitual Secondary School, Headmaster- Mr Vanlalhriatpuia
14. Govt. Chaltlang Secondary School, Headmaster – Mrs. Biakkungi