

INDIA

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

STATE REPORT: (Odisha) (January 14 -20, 2013)

1.1. Introduction

RMSA was officially initiated in Odisha in 2009 as a partnership between the Government of India and the State government. The first disbursement of funds was received by the State government in the financial year 2009/10. The development partners (World Bank, UK government's Department for International Development and European Union) officially joined the partnership in 2012. Odisha was visited by a two member team comprising Mr. B. B. Pandit (MHRD nominee) and Mr Colin Bangay (DFID) in the first joint review involving central, state government and donor partner representatives.

The main objective of this State review was to assess implementation progress with a specific respect to **programme administration, financial management** and **civil works**. Review of broader RMSA goals was also undertaken though in less depth.

The team visited state capital, Bhubaneshwar and the districts of Keonjhar and Jharsuguda. Meetings were held with Ms. U. Padhee, Commissioner cum secretary, Government School & Mass Education Department, Odisha. The mission was accompanied in the field by the RMSA State Project Director, Mr. N.C. Jena, Mr. K.N.Sharma, Deputy Director and Mr. C.S. Mohapatra, Planning Coordinator. Mission members interacted with students, parents, teachers, headmasters, District Education Officers and District Collectors during the course of the mission. Full details of the programme and those met are included in **Annex 1**.

The mission members would like to express their appreciation to everyone who gave time, co-operation and hospitality during the visit and in particular, to Mr. Mohapatra for his excellent handling of logistics and responsiveness to data requests.

1.2 Overview and Key Issues

Odisha has made a good start at implementing RMSA. Of particular note was the States Government's handling of both supply side issues (such as provision of buildings and additional teachers) and demand side issues (such as provision of bicycles and conditional cash transfers) consecutively through the combined efforts of departments of education and tribal affairs.

The RMSA SIS skeleton team of staff is competent and dedicated and delivering in many areas. While staffing remains a major challenge – Odisha has taken a pragmatic and long term view in addressing staffing issues; paying market rates for contract teachers and using a sub-contractor to source specialist services such as data entry.

The education department's Student Help-line is exemplary in many ways. It is a good example of SSA and RMSA working together – thereby sharing overhead costs. It gives students a direct voice; data collected is being used to inform the geographical focus and theme for official

inspection visits. Most importantly, when, after careful investigation, poor or inappropriate performance is identified it is acted upon -sending a clear message that there are consequences for poor performance.

Odisha is also notable for the flexibility evident with the way it deals with civil works. Though there is a set school building design – there is also recognition of the need for variations and build to respond to local conditions.

Finally, though in the earliest of stages, Odisha has begun a process for sample monitoring student performance. This should be encouraged and could be further strengthened with support from the likes of the RMSA Technical Cooperation Fund (TCF) and the Teacher Education through School-Based Support – India (TESS-I) programme that will pilot in Odisha and six other states.

Key Challenges

- The unrealistic projection of fund requirements by the SIS and the flow of funds below initial projections, often towards the end of the financial year is a key area of attention. To impart to the whole fund flow process greater degree of realism there is need for strengthening financial planning at all levels.
- The current 2% MMER is insufficient and is not currently optimally structured to respond to the recurrent cost of running a large programme. This is hampering overall implementation and particularly important monitoring, financial reporting and mentoring activities.
- While a start has been made there is a need to bring the various initiatives together into a coherent long term strategy for driving up learning outcomes and building the momentum for a continual process of quality improvement. This needs to go beyond delivering a programme of training – to looking at broader aspects such as curriculum & examination reform, teacher education, head teacher training, teacher mentoring and providing day to day support of teachers in the classroom e.g. through reinvigorating the states DIETs and BRCs.
- Financial reporting, expenditure monitoring along with utilizing audit as an instrument of financial management need added attention. Requisite capacity building needs to be initiated.

Planning and Appraisal Process

The planning and appraisal process was reviewed with reference to the scrutiny of AWP&Bs submitted by the State MHRD, the related discussions held in the PAB in the MHRD, the Perspective Plan prepared by the State RMSA body, the district plans (Jharsaguda, Keonjhar and Denkanal) and the school improvement plans of nine schools. The objectives that guided this exercise were (a) adherence with the Planning & Appraisal Manual issued by MHRD, focus on 'bottom up' planning, interface between the planning process at different levels within the state, correlation between the plans and budgeting, emphasis on plan appraisals at the district and the school level, manifest prioritization of objectives and expenditure proposals, monitoring of plan implementation, budgets and financial reporting and finally the capacities built up to drive the entire planning and appraisal process.

There is clear and copious evidence of the State RMSA having institutionalized the planning processes down to the school level. An integral link exists between the school improvement plans, district plans and the Perspective plan at the state level in terms of structure of plan documents, the range of objectives and activities covered, the degree of detail in providing hard data of relevance (*invariably drawn from SEMIS*). Interaction with SMDC members, headmasters and teachers indicated that the extent of their value addition to school level plans can at best be only randomly aspirational. Considering the menu of school level planning having largely been set at the national

and the state level there is little scope or flexibility for the communities or the head masters to do otherwise. Commonality in identification of infrastructure gaps, suggested strategies and interventions suggests a significant degree of hand holding undertaken by the State RMSA and the District Project Coordinators. This has been achieved through SAHAJOG II, a capacity building initiative aimed at members of SMDCs and Headmasters in their role as chairpersons of SMDCs with specific emphasis on planning.

School and district level plans as well as AWP&Bs, apart from covering the menu indicated in the RMSA Framework document have tended to include a number of proposals that are aspirational in nature but may not always be supported by requisite due diligence. This tends to make the planning process problematic at the same time the appraisal process should encourage local initiative and more imaginative planning. This would dampen the local initiative and compromise the vigour of the planning process to a certain degree.

The state, district, school plans also do not manifestly indicate an order of priorities. Invariably such prioritization has come about by default during the appraisal at the national level indicating limited interrogation of plans before that and resulting in considerable gap between proposed and sanctioned AWP&Bs in different years.

A related but highly significant aspect of planning process are the shortfalls between the sanctioned funds and actual sums released to state RMSA (see figure 1). This is attributed to a combination of factors including submission of bonds and utilization certificates which are clearly in the remit of the state authority. In the case of Odisha while non-recurring funds sanctioned for AWPB 2009-10 (Rs 174.36 crores) were only partly received (Rs.66.36 crores) that too in September month of the following financial year. Similarly, only a fraction of recurring funds sanctioned for that year (Rs5.04 crores as against Rs 32.84 sanctioned) were received on the penultimate day of the financial year. In 2011-12 against Rs 332.88 crores sanctioned only Rs66.37 crores were received in that year followed by another tranche of Rs185.16 crores in the subsequent year. In contrast to this flow of funds from the state RMSA to DPCs and further to the schools has been remarkably prompt.

**Figure 1 Difference between funds requested, sanctioned and released by date
(Rs in Lakhs)**

Year	Item	AWPB Proposal	Sanctioned amount	Date of Released by MHRD	Amount released by MHRD	Date of released by OMSM
2009-11	Non recur	66850.50	17436.00			
	Recur	29210.18	3282.66	31.03.2010, F-I-79/2009 Sch-1 dt 29.03.2010	504.00	
	Total	96060.68	20718.66			
2010-11	Non recur	111534.4	40328.13	21.09.2010, F-I-79/2009 Sch-1 dt 06.09.2010 (for Non-Recurring of 2009-10)	6636.00	

	Recur	69392.81	4567.58	15.03.2011, F-I-31/2009 Sch-1 dt 03.03.2011 & 02.04.2011, F-I-31/2009 Sch-1 dt 29.03.2011	2347.00+243.00	
	Total	180927.2	44895.71			
2011-12	Non recur	44227.02	33288.67	04.10.2011, F.1-79/2010- Sch.1 dt 28.09.2011 (for Non- Recurring of 2009-10)	6637.16	
	Recur	30110.18	21812.63	04.10.2011, F-1-10/2011- Sch-1 (A) dt 28.09.2011 &04.10.2011 , F-1- 10/2011- Sch-1 (B) dt 28.09.2011	3562.65+2687.38	
	Total	74337.2	55101.30			
2012-13	Non recur	0.00	0.00	14-9-2012, F.1-31/2010 -Sch.1 (A) ,4072.00,F.1- 31/2010 - Sch.1 (B) ,11291.00 , F.1-31/2010 -Sch.1 (C) (60 % for Non- Recurring of 2010-11)	3147.00+4072.00+11297.61=18516.61	Letter No 887 dtd 20-12- 2012893 dtd 20-12- 2012923 dtd 24-12- 2012=Rs 19041.63, Letter No 972 dtd 31-12- 2012 , & dtd 31-12- 2012=4704.61
	Recu	65492.4	16758.29	04-12-2012 , F-1-84/2012- RMSA.1 (SC) & 04- 12-2012 , F- 1-84/2012- RMSA.1 (ST) & 04- 12-2012 , F- 1-84/2012- RMSA.1 (468.00+605.00+1677.56=2750.56	Letter No 966 dtd 29-12- 2012 = Rs 4067.79

				General)		
	Total	65492.40	16758.29			

Both the aspects of planning and budgeting underscore the importance of prompt down communication at all levels to align AWP&Bs and other subordinate plans to a realistically anticipated fund flows as also of appraisal of plans at each level. In this context effectiveness and timeliness financial reporting and its monitoring particularly at the district level where a major bottleneck has been observed, needs to be emphasized. Absence of effective monitoring of expenditure has resulted in accentuated level of outstanding advances as brought out in the available audit reports and under booking of expenditure. Various works, representing a significantly large part of received funds were stated to have been either executed or are at advanced stage of completion the related expenditure has not been booked in absence of utilization certificates from the Rural Works department selected for carrying out construction of school buildings.

At the school level the basic financial books viz., cash books and bank pass books have been properly maintained and up-to-date. These generally reconcile with each other. While similar records are kept at the district level full fledged complement of financial books viz., day books, journals, ledgers and a robust reporting regime does not exist at the district level. This is due to absence of appropriate expertise in the offices of DPCs. Parallel sets of books are maintained at all levels to record fund flows, transactions and balances under different components of RMSA without integrating these into a single overarching set of books supported by a set of subsidiary books obviating need for multiple bank accounts. There is scope for using a software package for financial reporting.

The auditors appointed for the RMSA accounts are chartered accountants picked up from a panel of such accountants maintained by the Comptroller & Auditor General of India. The state RMSA has appointed a lead auditor who apart from auditing RMSA accounts of upgraded schools in some of the districts consolidates the results of audit reported by another set of auditors appointed for remaining districts (each auditing 6 districts). The records of sampled schools are collected at the district headquarters and subjected to audit. While a sum of Rs7200 is paid as remuneration to each auditor for each district the lead auditor is paid an additional amount of Rs10000 for consolidation of audit reports. Generally, the scope of quality seems to be on expected lines. The auditors in their management letter have identified areas of concern (*heavy outstanding advances*) and made suitable recommendations in that regard. A significant gap noticed is the absence of any internal audit arrangement which may have resulted in under-reporting of actual expenditure. The audit reports for the year 2011-12 were not available.

Achievements and Good Practices

- The mechanics of the planning process has been by and large institutionalized.
- The prompt flow of funds through the banking channels from state RMSA to DPCs and to schools has been effectively achieved.
- A reliable basis for financial reporting at the school level exists.
- The state RMSA is considering direct transfer of funds to schools under intimation to the DPCs.

Concerns

- Planning exercise at school and district level needs to be informed by a realistic forecasting of fund flow as also the accurate likelihood of activities that will be actually pass muster in the appraisal process.
- Planning exercise appears to a somewhat straight jacketed as limited flexibility is observed in the appraisal process at the national level
- Adjustment of advances given to implementing agencies and reporting of actual expenditure has not received adequate attention resulting in under-reporting in utilization and consequent drop in flow of funds to the state RMSA and further down.
- Absence of effective financial reporting mechanism at the district besides lack of and professional human resource and support software constitute a weak link in the financial management system.
- Multiple and parallel bank accounts are not conducive to good financial control.

Recommendations

- *Predictability in the quantum and timeliness in flow of funds from the national to state level may be brought about by strengthened finance planning. This will require collaborative effort to ensure required documentation is made available on time.*
- *Immediate attention may be paid to expenditure monitoring to achieve prompt financial reporting*
- *School and district plans need to manifestly indicate plan priorities keeping in view realistic fund flow projections*
- *An effective practice of down communication may be established to inform the planning process*
- *For effective financial reporting an internal audit cell may be established at the district level and staffed by professionally qualified persons.*
- *A certain percentage of funds may be set apart for encouraging state specific initiatives*
- *Qualified accounting staff and software support to financial reporting function may be provided.*
- *Formats of financial reporting including accounting format and structure may be revisited to bring about in them greater degree of clarity.*
- *An abridged version of Financial Management Manual may be prepared for the schools.*
- *Specific set of directions may be issued to auditors requiring them to look at identified weaknesses in programme management, financial reporting and on the robustness of instituted internal controls, absence of appropriate controls.*

Civil Works

Overall the mission was pleased with its observations on civil works. At state level there is scope for tightening scrutiny and ensuring works completion. Serious consideration could also be given to the benefits of using geographic information systems (GIS). Securing utilisation certificates from the Rural development department could be streamlined – as this is currently causing delays in reconciliation of funds – and skews performance reporting. At national level there is scope to both review the schedule of works and to develop and disseminate guidance on more economic, child and environmentally friendly school design with a degree of in-built flexibility.

Civil works constitutes the major item in Odisha AWPB funding proposals over the last three years.

Figure 2. Share of Civil Works in Claimed and Approved Budgets

Year	Odisha AWPB Civil Works Claim (%)	MHRD approval of Odisha claim (%)
2009-10	33.47	84.16
2010-11	57.56	98.04
2011-12	58.27	60.35

As provided by Odisha State Government

Elementary schools selected for upgrade (adding additional classrooms) are identified through manual school mapping as per RMSA norms (see Annex 2). No brand new ‘green field’ schools have been built.

Civil work procurement was reported to follow the stipulations in the RMSA planning and procurement manual (see Annex 2). Civil works funds were transferred in full to the Rural Development (RD) department. Within RD, procurement of works was undertaken at district level by the executive engineers. Three element of school building were identified: structural build up, electrical works, water and sanitation. Of these works estimated to cost over Rs 58.12 lakh the executive engineers tendered the works through the state e-procurement system. For water and sanitation, work was tendered locally by the executive engineer with oversight from the divisional accounts officer.

The new classrooms visited were all begun in 2011. They were of sound construction. However, in most new built schools visited, plumbing and electrical work was still to be fully completed. In order to strengthen works’ supervision the State Implementation Society (SIS) have developed plans to ensure DEOs have greater involvement in oversight.

While the standard RMSA package and high school upgrade plan talks of a library, science and computer labs – the plans and buildings seen consisted of seven roughly equally size rooms situated around a common courtyard. There was no additional provision of electrical points in the proposed computer room – nor water or lab specific bench provision in the science rooms, while the headmasters room and the adjacent office room were equal to the size of the classrooms. Toilet provision was based on two sets of toilets for boys and girls and does not seem linked to student population size – nor direct reference to the state guidelines of 1 toilet per 72 students. Three points arise: Firstly, in the face of growing demand for secondary education the overall utilization of space in the school plans appears sub-optimal. Secondly, a science lab, library, or computer room are defined by the inclusion of equipment, books and computers respectively. Finally, the adding of new build offers a real opportunity for a more careful consideration of sanitary requirements based on the per head needs of the total school population (elementary and secondary). SPD informed that funds for procurement of computers, lab equipment and furniture will be released in the ensuing weeks.

We were informed that in school build there is scope to respond to the particulars of the local environment e.g. in flood prone and cyclone areas – deeper foundations, higher plinths and stronger roof ties are required. Similarly in remote highland areas – local materials like masonry blocks are utilized as these are easier and cheaper to source. As evidenced by the mission’s visit to a three storey school building there is also recognition of the need to build multi-storey schools in areas of land scarcity. The state has plans for these.

Responding to the particular building requirements to ensure safe building in cyclone, flood and earthquake prone areas makes schedule of costs in Odisha higher than the norms stipulated within the RMSA framework. Similarly, securing contractors to work in Naxal affected districts is

difficult and requires higher levels of remuneration. It was also suggested that the RMSA schedule of costs did not reflect recent inflation.

In all schools visited the environs were clean and tidy. Schools passed in transit seemed also to be similarly well cared for. The traditional artwork on the walls was particularly attractive. The SIS team also appear to be encouraging environmental solutions such as 'green fencing' (hedges). Some of the schools visited had school gardens and extra-curricular environmental clubs. All of this is to be commended. Having said this there is still scope for improvement particularly in relation to sanitation, water harvesting and water supply.

Achievements and Good Practices: Clear evidence of school and community pride in their school buildings – the focus on the overall school environment, including art work and display boards and school gardens was excellent. The number for the Student Help-line was prominently and boldly displayed on the front wall in all schools.

Concerns:

- Strengthening monitoring to ensure water and electrical work are completed to schedule.
- Expedite issuing of utilization certificates. Delays in issuing of utilization certificates from RD mean that the work being by the SIS is not recognized in programme and financial reporting.
- Reviewing the utility of the standard school design and ensuring equipment – furniture, books, computers etc are made available to enable the rooms to be used for the functions stated.
- Though the schools visited were well maintained the view that maintenance grants were insufficient was commonly expressed. A doubling of the maintenance grant was suggested as a more reasonable amount.

Recommendations:

- *The Odisha SIS should consider investing in GIS mapping. This would have utility not only for school mapping and identifying school upgrades but could easily be used to integrate other performance data and display it in map form. This has been shown to greatly assist administrators in oversight and resource allocation. The mission was informed that the SSA SIS already has the base digital maps. Working with the SSA team to add all secondary schools to the existing SSA map of primary / elementary schools as well as jointly undertaking school mapping surveys would strengthen data sets and reduce overall costs.*
- *MHRD should consider reviewing RMSA civil works pricing and maintenance norms. The development of a schedule of costs with sub-categories which take into account the higher costs of building in earthquake, flood prone or steeply sloping terrain would accommodate the varying building costs.*
- *MHRD could consider a review and update of its current norms for civil works in particular to ensure school plans best respond to current and anticipated future need – this could include norms that take greater cognizance of population density (rather than distance), required ratios of toilets to boy and girl students, computer labs equipped with appropriate numbers of electrical points and library furniture and books to equip the libraries.*
- *MHRD could undertake research and disseminate guidance on student and environment friendly secondary school design, e.g. ensuring computer labs have adequate electrical points, inclusion of water catchment facilities, better use of natural daylight, improved insulation from heat and cold. This could usefully build on the innovative school design work emanating from DPEP and SSA.*

Progress towards the achievement of Goals

Goal 1: To improve access to secondary schooling

Overall State figures show steady progress in relation to enrolment growing from 787,472 in 2007-08 to 1,089,859 in 2010-11. The state has been successful in addressing supply side constraints – upgrading 698 elementary schools out of a 709 sanctioned under RMSA. The state has also recruited 2,155 teachers from a sanctioned 5,654 with further recruitment ongoing. On the demand side Odisha State Tribal Affairs Department is running an innovative conditional cash transfer programme – which seeks to provide regular finance to ST and SC children direct to their bank accounts to ensure they go to and remain in school – this is currently being piloted in Rayagada district.

According to the State of Secondary Education Report Card 2010-11 Odisha has a predominantly rural population (85%). Almost a quarter (22.1%) of the population are scheduled tribes. SEMIS flash statistics indicates there are 8,729 secondary schools run with an approximate 50:50 split between government and private schools and 3% of schools being run by the Tribal Welfare department.

Figure 3- Percentage share of Private schools, students and Teachers

	% of Schools	% of Students	% of Teachers
Government Schools (Education and Tribal Dept)	55.15	59.19	44.38
Private Schools	44.85	40.81	55.62

Source: State Secondary Education Report Card 2010-1

Overall progress is as provided by State government is as follows:

Figure 4-Access, Enrolment and Retention: goals and achievement

Goal	Achievement
GER of 75% for IX and X by 2013-14	Odisha GER is 68.76% in 2010/11
Universal access to secondary education by 2017	96.24% of habitations have secondary schooling within 5 km
Universal retention by 2020	Odisha retention rate is at 77.09%

Achievements and Good Practices

The Odisha department of education should be commended on its pragmatic approach to securing sufficient teachers and support staff. For technical support staff such as data entry operators the state is sourcing expertise through a contractor. Similarly, the state is contracting its teachers on a six year contract at a rate of Rs. 9,300 per month on entrance. Recruitment is on the basis of a district level cadre – entrants cannot transfer between districts thus providing for greater staffing stability. After six years and assuming satisfactory performance teachers will be absorbed into the regular cadre of secondary school teachers.

The concurrent focus on both supply (inputs) and demand (financial and material encouragements) such as the bicycle scheme and conditional cash transfers to SC and ST children are commendable.

Concerns

- There is a potential danger that schools upgraded under RMSA will appear twice under separate reference numbers in management information systems one for the original elementary school and one for the new IX to X section. This would distort overall record keeping and could lead to problems in effective resource targeting. Cross checking to see this does not occur is advised.
- UDISE currently does not disaggregate by private and private aided. This will be particularly important if private aided schools are brought in to RMSA.
- A concern for the state government under their six year contract scheme will be dealing with inflation adjusted salaries. Without inflation adjustment – challenges of motivation may occur particularly as permanent state based teachers both enjoy higher and inflation adjusted salaries.

Recommendations

MHRD could consider a review of how private and private aided schools are managed within the RMSA programme. This should take cognizance of the recommendations of India's 12th Plan (paragraphs 21:106 – 21:108). In particular specific guidance is needed to address the way private and private aided schools are treated in areas such as school mapping, MIS capture and school inspection and governance.

Goal 2: To bridge gender and social gaps

A. Gender gaps

As elsewhere in India girls in Odisha show lower rates of enrolment at grade IX (48.9%), but interestingly lower rates of drop out and higher rates of transition both from moving from elementary to secondary level and progressing from grade IX to X. Provisional review of state exam board data shows that girls are not performing as well as boys with the student pass rate being 73.64% for boys and 70.97 for girls. This would suggest a need to investigate factors that may account for female under performance and to take necessary remedial action.

Figure 5-Gender and Social Equity in Enrolment and Retention of Students

Indicator	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	
Enrolment(all)	TOTAL	787472	861534	947555	108959
	BOYS	417145	447907	485914	553720
	GIRLS	370327	413627	461641	536139
SC Enrolment	TOTAL	132080	144502	165084	198121
	BOYS	69465	75998	84227	100435
	GIRLS	62615	68504	80857	97686
ST Enrolment	TOTAL	117380	128420	145912	183762
	BOYS	66303	72539	80149	96499
	GIRLS	51077	55701	65763	87263
Dropout Rate	TOTAL	15.09	15.62	23.35	22.91
	BOYS	16.46	16.11	25.51	23.91
	GIRLS	13.5	15.08	20.97	21.92
Gross Enrolment Ratio(GER)	TOTAL	53.88	57.61	61.4	68.76
	BOYS	53.76	57.72	61.18	67.58
	GIRLS	54.02	57.48	59.89	69.27
Net Enrolment Ratio(NER)	TOTAL	35.31	37.5	40.51	52.49
	BOYS	35.08	37.93	40.63	52.27
	GIRLS	35.57	37.1	40.39	52.72
Transition Rate (VIII to IX)	TOTAL	85.6	88.1	83.33	86.83
	BOYS	84	86.01	82.08	86.65
	GIRLS	87.5	89.2	84.68	86.99
Transition Rate (IX to X)	TOTAL	73.27	78.95	84.67	89.83
	BOYS	73.34	78.86	83.02	88.52
	GIRLS	73.21	79.04	86.47	91.21
Retention Rate	TOTAL	84.91	84.38	76.65	77.09
	BOYS	83.54	83.89	74.49	76.09

Indicator	2007-08		2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
	GIRLS	86.5	84.92	79.03	78.08

Achievements and Good Practices

The Odisha education department should be applauded for introducing a student helpline. This could be a ground breaking initiative. The state is acting on the complaints received. It was reported that 13 teachers had been removed for sexual harassment and over 1,000 had their payment withheld for attendance issues. It was also noted how the state was monitoring data in terms of both the types of complaints and where they occurred. This they were using to inform both where and what official inspections would focus upon.

Concerns

- There are multiple concerns associated with girls in school from safety to adequate sanitary provision as girls reach puberty (SEMIS indicates only 58% of schools in Odisha have toilets for girls) and their overall academic performance. These are not just particular to Odisha.

Recommendations

- *The excellent student helpline initiative could be further strengthened by (i) disaggregating complaints by boy and girls; (ii) ensuring that there is report on the actions taken – i.e. how many teachers disciplined – for what issues. On the latter it may be helpful to sensitively disseminate this data to reinforce messages that for the sake of the honour of the whole teaching profession unacceptable behavior by a handful of disreputable teachers will not be tolerated.*
- *Secondary school teachers are predominantly male. Where possible special effort should be made to recruit and support female teachers – who can act as role models for all children.*

B. Social Gaps: Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, Muslim Minority

In all education indicators the figures for scheduled castes and particularly scheduled tribes are less favourable than other sections of the population. Most importantly board pass rates show major differences.

Figure 6_ Social Gaps in Academic Performance

Social Group	% State board pass rate 2010/11	
	Boys	Girls
SC	66.44	60.91
ST	61.63	58.66
OBC	76.30	73.04
Others	82.06	82.04

Achievements and Good Practices

Odisha education department have introduced a programme to provide remedial support to both low achievers and offered voluntary residential camps for students whose education is disrupted in Maoist effected areas.

Concerns

- The remedial and gifted programmes are an encouraging first step. However, from observations, there is scope for significantly more investment in both specialist support materials and pedagogical training to enhance the quality of teaching. The upcoming MHRD Teacher Education Support Programme (TESS –I) which will pilot in Odisha may be a useful ally in further this aim.

Recommendations

- *In all the school in the tribal areas we visited there was a strong desire for the establishment of hostels for boys and girls. This desire did not seem to be driven by the issue of access alone – more a view that the boarding would ensure better nutrition, reduce the financial burden on parents and provide for a better learning environment. Investigating the cost benefit implications of increasing boarding options could be investigated. Costs would clearly be higher both due to the cost of construction and recurrent costs of boarding. While this could be justified to serve those from remote areas (if strict criterion for selection were applied to ensure places went to the most deserving) in a period of expansion of education provision it may not always be the most cost effective option.*
- *Strengthening the mechanisms for information exchange and collaboration between the education and tribal affairs ministries – in relation to the above and other reinforcing initiatives would be worth considering.*

C. Children with Special Needs

The Odisha SIM were of a view that special needs provision predominantly came through the Integrated Education for the Disabled at Secondary School (IDSS). The pervading view was that RMSA does not currently have financial provision for integration of children with special needs. Overall there was little evidence of integration of children with special needs – with only one school visited showing records of having hearing impaired students. SEMIS data suggests that on 18.72% of schools have access ramps for the disabled.

Achievements and Good Practices

Concern was expressed about the integration of children with special needs both at the state presentation and within the field. It was clear there was a willingness to cater for special needs children and also a concern about the overall effectiveness of IDSS.

Concerns

- The impression given by SIS staff was that RMSA did not deal with integration of children with special needs. This however is not the mission member’s understanding. We understand

that clarification is in process and that with the subsuming of the the IEDSS scheme under RMSA this will occur.

Recommendations

- *There is a need to clarify RMSAs position on support to children with special needs together with stronger guidance on how this can be done and what kinds of activity RMSA is prepared to finance.*
- *Along with other secondary activities there is significant scope in securing economies of scale and reducing transaction and overhead costs by integrating small schemes such as IEDSS within RMSA as proposed within the 12th plan document (21.103).*

Goal 3: All children retained in education system

State statistics show a negative trend in terms of student retention rates falling from 84.91 in 2007-08 to 77.09 in 2010-11. Overall while more boys enroll into secondary school transition rates for boys are generally one to two percentage points lower than girls possibly indicating more boys are repeating or leaving school to work. It also would indicate a higher level of motivation amongst girls reaching secondary school stage.

Achievements and Good Practices

Odisha has a very healthy and growing transition rate of students moving from elementary into secondary school. This is critical if overall RMSA objectives are to be made.

Concerns

- It appears that in order to ensure school pass rates are kept high many students are kept back or encouraged not to sit the exam as they are unlikely to pass. This situation in which a large minority of students sits through two years of secondary education with little hope of passing the terminal examination is both inefficient and must be immensely demoralizing for teachers and students alike.

Recommendations

- *Requiring schools to announce both the % of children who sit the grade 10 examination and of those who many pass would give a fairer picture of overall school performance. Focusing on and celebrating only pass rates is likely to encourage 'triage' – a focus on only the most able to the neglect of all other students.*
- *MHRD to consider working with the examination boards to promote curriculum examination reform as stipulated in the 12th plan (paragraph 21.112). Developing a more strongly differentiated curriculum which enables all to achieve some level of pass with clear grade banding could be considered.*

Goal 4: Education of Satisfactory Quality

Educational quality should be measured by the extent to which meaningful learning that equips students for productive and fulfilling lives is imparted to the students. Assessing this involves answering two questions (1) Is what is contained in the curriculum useful and relevant ? (2) Are students learning what is prescribed ? These are substantive questions beyond the remit of a JRM – however in the limited time of this JRM it was clear that significant effort was being put into providing schooling inputs to support learning. Attention was also being placed on the importance of diagnostic assessment of learning to inform a virtuous cycle of assessment, analysis, diagnosis and remedial action that is necessary to drive forward continuous quality improvement. This

work, being undertaken by UNICEF was currently focused at elementary level but the intention was to expand this work into grades IX and X. Of a particular note was the Guidelines for Conducting Unit Tests in Secondary Schools.

It was noted that the state board had made some significant changes in terms of examination papers (the use of combined question and answer papers and parallel questions) to reduce cheating. However, comprehensive curriculum reform was not in process though a cycle of minor reform which informed text book revision was ongoing.

Odisha state was facing a major challenge in recruiting suitably qualified teachers at secondary level. Austerity measures in the last few years had impeded adequate recruitment – though this had now eased, recruiting teachers to the required norms was proving problematic. The state had requested a relaxing of qualification norms to enable to recruit adequate numbers of teachers (particularly women and tribals) and then to upgrade their skills (and qualifications) while they are on the job. A decision on this issue is pending. This however is not within the remit of the MHRD and should be referred to the appropriate authorities.

In no school visited did either students or teachers express a concern over textbook shortages. However, overall, TLMs were in short supply. In particular ICT. No school visited was using computers either for administration or teaching and learning.

The mission witnessed a teacher capacity building programme and was impressed with the comprehensive nature of the training itinerary. While it is a clear effort is being made to deliver a full programme of in-service teacher training by withdrawing teachers from schools – consideration should also be given to in-school and between school support. Re-energising the DIETS and using them for both SSA and RMSA activities and use of cluster based teacher support processes could be considered.

Despite energetic training the mission saw little evidence of inspiring teaching in the classrooms. The teaching that was seen could be categorized as predominantly either ‘chalk and talk’ or copying from the blackboard or textbooks.

Achievements and Good Practices

The ongoing work with UNICEF is promising. The work on identifying current levels of learning as detailed within the ‘Guidelines for Conducting Unit Tests in Secondary School’ also offers great promise at identifying where children really are in terms of learning as opposed to where they are assumed to be in relation to the curriculum.

Concerns

- The focus on quality still seems to be predicated on the assumption that providing more inputs will solve all problems. Concern about overall learning outcomes and the specific learning challenges that specific groups such as children with special needs or tribal populations still need to further developed.

Recommendations

- *The state could consider collating and aggregating data by district and state by using the results format of page 9 of the document ‘Guidelines for Conducting Unit Tests in Secondary Schools’ This would give an indicative snapshot of real levels of learning.*
- *The current training and support materials could be even further strengthened, diversified (use of audio and video) and more broadly disseminated (use of mobile phone sim cards, internet) through collaboration with the TESS India programme which will pilot in Odisha.*

- *Strengthening local level support through cluster groups and energizing the SCERT, DIETS and BRCs would be a great assistance. Collaborative work with the SSA SIS to finance the proper staffing and equipping of DIETS (e.g. ensuring all DIETS have internet connectivity and a minimum ICT equipment would be a big contribution.*
- *ICT and CAL could make a big difference. However extreme caution is required. Learning from the experiences of SSA and mistakes of other programmes is clearly needed. (see <http://blogs.worldbank.org/edutech/worst-practice>).*

Program Management

The state level RMSA which functions under the overall supervision and guidance of the Executive Committee headed by the Secretary, Secondary Education and is responsible for overall programme management of RMSA. Its working is reviewed by a Governing Council which is headed by the state Chief Minister and includes the Minister of School and Mass Education and the Chief Secretary besides the Secretary Secondary Education and the SPD. Day to day administration of the RMSA rests with the SPD. Both the bodies have held at least one meeting to decide on important preparatory meetings like the programme implementation structure, distribution of responsibilities and powers etc.

At the district level there is a District Committee which is a broad based aggregation of all stakeholders. The District Education Officer has been designated as the District Project Coordinator of RSMA. PDC/DEO along with his retinue of regular subject specialists and other administrative staff is responsible for project implementation. Since each district could have 250-400 upgraded high schools certain headmasters have been designated as cluster Head Masters to assist DEOs in overseeing the implementation of the mission.

At the state headquarters of RMSA more or less, the entire staff complement except the Financial Advisor and supporting accounting and engineering is in place. At the district level, however, there exists a significant HR gap. This gap has acutely impacted the monitoring of the implementation in regard to civil works and financial reporting. The position in regard to capacity building of teachers, headmasters and SMDC members is relatively better.

At the school level major deficiency exists in the teaching staff. Against a target of 5654 teachers to be recruited engagement of 2155 teachers on a contractual basis was stated to be in progress. It was observed during the visits to a few schools in Jharsuguda and Keonjhar districts that most of the contract teachers present had joined only recently and were relatively new to the task.

The overall impression one gathers is that a great deal of success has been achieved in undertaking all the preparatory work and various other follow up steps in implementing RMSA in the state. Most remarkable is the enthusiasm and optimism that seems to have been generated in the communities being serviced by the upgraded schools. Driven by changing societal values there is a distinct trend in many blocks that puts premium on the enrolment of girls and is indicative of the encouragement given to them for securing education upto at least the secondary level and, in a few cases, even beyond.

At the school level all the SMDCs are functional. Through a capacity building module called SAHAJOG-II Headmasters of upgraded schools and the SMDC members have been exposed to the objective, scope and content of RMSA as well as their own role and responsibilities in workshops extending upto 5 days each. In all 82692 SMDC members and 1336 master trainers have attended these workshops.

During visits to the schools it was observed that the reasonable regularity of meetings held by these bodies and resolutions passed were verifiable from the minute books maintained up-to-date as well through interaction with the members of SMDCs. The matters discussed in these meetings ranged from utilization of funds, attendance of teachers, quality of teaching and improvements to the school infrastructure. Even as there was a feeling that all members of these committees were not fully cognizant of the scope of their role there were some who appeared to be definitely clear about their role and fully involved. The headmasters as the chairpersons of SMDCs seem to have by and large succeeded in involving the community members in building their respective institutions and found their support in rising to the challenges faced with. Staff shortages particularly of teachers was the constraint shared across the board. Barring a few exceptions the burden of handling accounting and financial reporting tasks has invariably been taken by the headmasters themselves.

At the district level the DEOs supported by the regular experts and staff have by and large held together the programme implementation structure and performed reasonably well. As stated above tremendous effort has gone into institutionalising the planning routine and building capacities in planning as well as pedagogy. However, the aspect of monitoring seems to have been dealt with less effectively owing to shortage of staff complement and funds under the MMER component. The overall effectiveness of the programme management can be gauged from the extensive data maintenance, consolidation of district plans, maintenance of up and down communication, programme reporting, coordination and monitoring being undertaken by the office of SPD, particularly since 2010 when a dedicated organization unit was established for implementation of RMSA in the state. A noteworthy initiative being taken by state RMSA is to rope in retired teachers of quality to offset shortage of eligible teachers in the short term and to impart instruction to students on honorarium basis for specific subjects on an intermittent basis. Similarly effective convergence of various other schemes with RMSA has been established. The most visible example of such convergence is the provision of bicycles to students under a different scheme enabling them to attend school. Much scope though remains in securing similar convergence with other schemes such as KGBV, MNREGS, mid-day meal scheme, provision of hostels under TSP. At this stage, there, however, is no confirmation of the qualitative improvement achieved in the standards of pedagogy or the degree to which knowledge or skills have been imparted to the students. In absence of sufficient funds under the MMER component no such research activity has been undertaken so far.

The programme implementation has been severely handicapped in terms of its scale as well as speed by the inadequacy, and unpredictability of funds flowing from the national to the state level. In the first year of the mission(2009-10) practically no funds were available for implementation of RMSA in the state. The pace of implementation as also the utilization of funds has shown an upswing since 2010-11. The misalignment of budgeting, funding and expenditure observed in the first two years of RMSA i.e 2009-2011 is likely to be rectified provided MOHRD increases allocation of funds in the current year. During the current year much of the backlog in expending available funds seems to have been eliminated and with enrolment of teachers, completion of works and distribution of annual maintenance grants. Procurement of furniture, computers and laboratory equipment the expenditure was stated to be in progress. It can be expected that at the end of the year 2012-13 the picture of fund utilization will be more optimistic.

The procurement process for contracting out works, services and acquiring required supplies operates within the framework of state GFR and, by and large, no major difficulty is envisaged. There exists considerable scope for improving MMER aspects of the implementation, particularly at the district level. Also, a clear need exists to revisit norms of funding the MMER component. Evidently, the scale of MMER activities has no correlation with the magnitude of funds for works and procurement. The current basis of computing this component of funds,

therefore, lacks rationale and tends to place states/ districts/ schools requiring lesser degree of asset creation at a disadvantage.

Achievements and Best Practices

- Establishment and activation of a programme management structure of RMSA despite limited availability of funds and competent staff.
- Credible capacity building at the school /SMDC level.
- Involvement of retired teachers to cope up with deficiency of teachers

Concerns

- Inadequate MMER support at the district level
- Residential accommodation for school teachers needs sharper focus

Recommendations

- *Monitoring below the district level for clusters of schools may be encouraged particularly in states with large number of schools in a district*
- *Secondary schools not covered under RMSA or those strengthened by addition of more classrooms may be provided funds for amenities like furniture etc.*
- *Assessment of programme management and implementation arrangements (including financing & procurement) could be strengthened.*
- *An assessment of State, district and sub-district monitoring systems in place.*
- *Identify best practices; Specific interventions that have been successful and can be replicated*
- *Identification of areas for further qualitative research/ case study.*

Conclusion

Given that RMSA is in its early years of implementation it is not surprising there are a few teething problems. However, given the scale of RMSAs ambition and the likely acceleration in demand for secondary education emanating from the increasing numbers graduating from grade VIII concerted efforts are needed to address and finesse administration processes urgently. There is also a need to engage with the challenges of learning outcomes and educational quality now and not assume this can only be done once the all the requisite education inputs have been put in place. Finally the specific needs of the most disadvantaged, particularly special needs children and those from remote tribal areas deserve even greater attention than they currently receive.

Annex 1: Persons met Itinerary followed

OPEPA -15-01-2013

Venue: Mahanadi Conference Hall

1. Smt Usha Padhee , Commissioner-cum- Secretary S & ME Deptt , Odisha
2. Sri Naryan Chandra Jena, State Project Director OMSM
3. Sri Srikanta Prusty , Director Secondary Education
4. Sri Jagannath Patel , Chief Engineer RW-II
5. Prof Nihar Ranjan Patnaik , Director TE & SCERT
6. Prof D P Nanda , President Board of Secondary Education
7. Sri Sata Mohan Senapati , DEO Bhadrak
8. Santosh Kumar Patra, DEO Ganjam
9. Radha Mohan Panda , DEO Khurda
10. Sri Kulamani Nath Sharma , Deputy Director
11. Sri Madan Mohan Mohanty
12. Sri Gouranga Chandra Jena, Reader in Education
13. Sri L N Nayak , Executive Engineer , RW-II
14. Sri Dibakar Sarangi , Sr lecture , SCERT
15. Sri M K Ray, DEO Kenderpara
16. Smt Nibedita Mohaptra , Finance Officer OMSM
17. Smt Sujata Patnaik, Asst Director OMSM
18. Sri Chandra Sekhar Mohaptra , Planning Co-ordinator OMSM
19. Sri Prakash Kumar Joshi , DEO Balasore

List of schools visited

Jharsuguda district-16-01-2013

1. **Badhara Upgraded High school**
School Upgraded in -2009-10 (Under RMSA)
Head Master- Gouranga Charan Das
No of High school teachers- 06
Enrollment- Class- IX- 85, Class- X-37
2. **Kanakpura Upgraded High school**
School Govt High school.
Head Master- Mirdha Kissan
No of High school teachers- 06
Enrollment- Class- IX- 72, Class- X-113
3. **Pithinda Upgraded High school**
School Upgraded in -2009-10 (Under RMSA)
Head Master- Santosh Kumar Nayak
No of High school teachers- 03
Enrollment- Class- IX- 78, Class- X-54

Keonjhar district-17-01-2013

- Balabhadrapur Upgraded High school**
School Upgraded in -2009-10 (Under RMSA)
Head Master-
No of High school teachers- 06

Harichandanpur Govt High School

School High school

Head Master- Dillip Kumar rout

No of High school teachers- 03

Enrollment- Class- IX- 34, Class- X-5

Haladhar Upgraded High school

School Upgraded in -2009-10 (Under RMSA)

Head Master- Dillip Kumar rout

No of High school teachers- 03

Enrollment- Class- IX- 34, Class- X-5

Closing Meeting: 19-01-2013

Venue: Office Chamber of Commissioner- cum- secretary S & ME Deptt

1. Smt Usha Padhee , Commissioner-cum- Secretary S & ME Deptt , Odisha
2. Sri B B Pandit
3. Mr Colin Bangay
4. Sri Naryan Chandra Jena, State Project Director OMSM
5. Sri Srikanta Prusty , Director Secondary Education
6. Sri Jagannath Patel , Chief Engineer RW-II
7. Prof Nihar Ranjan Patnaik , Director TE & SCERT
8. Sri Chandra Sekhar Mohaptra , Planning Co-ordinator OMSM
9. Smt Laita Patnaik , Education Officer, UNICEF

ANNEX 2: Civil Works Details

QUESTION	ANSWER		
What percentage of Odisha's AWPB claim was on civil works and how much was granted by MHRD spend?	Year	Percentage claim of civil works	Approval percentage of Civil works
	2009-10	33.47	84.16
	2010-11	57.56	98.04
	2011-12	58.27	60.35
How do you identify which schools to upgrade/what criteria do you use to select?	<p>Opening of new secondary school has been approved by the up-gradation of existing elementary school and the infrastructure was proposed on the land of the existing school. Five step exercises used to be done</p> <p>Step1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each and every habitation may be listed for mapping exercise • Habitation wise population with availability of schooling facility with distance data may be collected through GIS or Manual Mapping <p>Step2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listing of all habitations/ villages to identify served area through GIS or Manual Mapping • The available High schools and details of school from SEMIS High schools and their catchment area <p>Step 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listing of all habitations/ villages to identify un-served area through GIS or Manual Mapping • Details of Upper primary schools located in the catchment area from DISE Distance with other High schools Distance Matrix exercise. • A list of UPS prepared which are eligible for upgrading into secondary level as per the norm. <p>Step 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual physical verification by a team comprising of block and district level officers for confirming details of Secondary schools. • Actual physical verification a team of block and district level officers for confirming details of Upper Primary Schools eligible for upgrading into secondary level. <p>Step 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the final verification & prioritization. • Proposal for filling the year wise existing gap in the existing secondary schools • Proposal of new schools selected for opening. 		
What proportion of schools are upgrade and what proportion are brand new build from scratch?	100 % New schools are from up-gradation		
What is the average unit cost for school build?	For New school building with 2 section the unit cost is Rs. 58.12 lakhs & For New school building with 2 section the unit cost is Rs. 46.86 lakhs		
Do MHRD and State schedule of works costs vary-if so why?	The works allocated/approved under RMSA is based on the normative cost irrespective of the unit cost formulated by the state based on their state schedule of rate. There by it may vary.		

How is civil works procurement done? Who does the works ? Are there financial thresholds for different types of procurement?	After coming into effect of the Financial Management & Procurement Manual on 1.4.2012 the civil works procurement have to follow the procurement methodology as per the manual. The limits as per the manual are as follows	
	Serial No	Procurement Type
	1	No Tender or Direct Purchase (Certificate to be furnished as per rule under 145 of GFR 2005)
	2	Three member committee (Certificate to be furnished as per rule under 146 of GFR 2005)
	3	Limited Tender
	4	Open Tender
	5	Open tender using e-procurement process for Civil works, goods & services.
	6	Service Contract
	(a)	Direct Contracting (without three quotations)
	(b)	Limited Tender
	(c)	Open Tender
	Whereas before coming into effect the FMP manual the Civil Works was supposed to be undertaken either on Contract Basis as per rules or by the Community as is laid down in the RMSA Framework.	
How is civil works scrutinised to ensure high quality safe school building?	<p>As per the RMSA Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The SMDC will inspect the work sites, take stock of progress of non-recurring expenditure under various components of the scheme & their quality aspects. - The State Mission and State Government by a well-structured channel and field visits will monitor all aspects of implementation including performance of all Districts on the quality and pace of implementation of all the components of the scheme for which funds are released. - A Physical Audit of the works undertaken will be conducted to verify the quality of works and to check that the expenditures incurred have led to the creation of durable assets. The TSG and the Resource Persons of Centre/State Mission will undertake regular visits to districts in order to monitor the quality of programme implementation. 	
What are the key guidance documents regulation design blueprints that you use for school building?	The bureau of Indian Standard codes, National building code, the state PWD building code & bye- laws and the directions issued by the competent authorities/ department/ Ministry of the state & centre and the framework of RMSA.	

Are there standard designed used within these state? Do your use local material depending on the particular characteristics of each location/zone	There is no standard design in place for civil works. The state is having the flexibility to go for state specific design and to use local material. Only the size of the rooms are specified.								
What are the major climate/environment. National hazard adaptations in the school buildings being built e.g. plinths in flood areas? Earthquake resistance cyclone/ high wind resistance etc? Water catchment in dry areas?	The adaptation of design/measures are completely based on the codal provisions of bureau of indian standards & National building code								
What is the ratio of children to number of toilets provided with In your schools?	As of now one toilet block comprising of two lavatory and two urinals each for boys & girls per school provision is in place.								
What provision is made for safe and fuel efficient catering facilities in your schools?	Secondary section of the school doesn't have the catering facilities.								
What are the key challenges/opportunities in civil works, school design and civil works in your states?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orissa falls under Zone II & Zone III of the earthquake zonal subdivision and some of the portion of the state is facing second highest basic wind speed especially Bhubaneshwar zone & the strip of the state situated at the bank of bay of bengal. The unit cost of construction • Five districts are falling in Multi-hazard prone zone, the details is as follows- <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Type</th> <th>Districts</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Cyclone and Flood</td> <td>Ganjam</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Earthquake, Cyclone & Flood</td> <td>Baleshwar, Cuttack, Puri</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Earthquake and Cyclone</td> <td>Dhenkanal</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Type	Districts	Cyclone and Flood	Ganjam	Earthquake, Cyclone & Flood	Baleshwar, Cuttack, Puri	Earthquake and Cyclone	Dhenkanal
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