

Effective Management of NP-MDMS through Bal Sansad in Jharkhand

Summary:

Bal Sansad allows children to be at centre of the issue faced during implementation of NP-MDMS scheme at school level. The model allows children to be prime participant in identifying issues in implementation of scheme at school level, designing solution for key issues, taking consensus from all student representative and school academic and admin representative and operationalizing the consensus.

Objectives and Rationale:

The NP-MDMS targets all children enrolled at elementary stage in government and government aided, local body schools Alternate and Innovative Education centres under the Education Guarantee Scheme. The scheme covers about 983 Lakhs children across 11.34 Lakhs schools, spread all over the country. However, there are wide disparities that are observed in terms of coverage of scheme across states and Union Territories. Some states are providing MDM till class 12th as well like Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh while some states are still struggling with effective and efficient implementation model for scheme on ground such as Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. This is mainly due to strong community participation. The government has thus adopted a multi-faceted approach that has mixed results for community participation. Considering the value chain of NP-MDMS, the community participates across the design and planning, implementation of programme, monitoring of programme as well as reporting of the same at state and central level. One of the key interventions adopted by state of Jharkhand is Bal Sansad, a portrayal of Parliament of India. For Bal Sansad, the schools organize two group of children, where one group act as a 'Government', headed by a Prime Minister who is supported by other ministers and the other group act as an 'Opposition'.

Key Stakeholders:

The school, its students, head of school, schoolteachers and SMCs members participate in Bal Sansad model.

Implementation Strategy:

The Bal Sansad Minister looking after MDM, counts the number of children present and informs Saraswathi Vahini (CCH), monitors the cleanliness of kitchen and serving area and also ensures that every child washes his/her hand before MDM. They ensure that children sit in rows while taking MDM. The unintended consequence of this model is that the children administering MDM for Bal Sansad also helps in distribution of food.

Resource Utilization:

The entire concept of Parliament is translated to children. The Sansad organizes its meeting once a month and evaluate the month's work. During the session, opposition also act as an active contributor by seeking appropriate reasons for work not done. The whole team of students running the Bal Sansad then take required decision in presence of head of school, to solve the issue. This innovative model of collating student's feedback, participation in effective monitoring has not only brought transparency and accountability of school education system but also provided a wonderful leadership development experience among students to solve their school's issues.

Impact:

The impact of Bal Sansad was significant in terms of bringing right kind of issues whether it was related to quality of food material, managing and maintenance of inventory, preparation of MDM, equity and inclusivity within availing MDM etc.

Replicability and Sustainability:

The practice of Bal Sansad is easily replicable and sustainable since it involves students at the heart of solving issues. The concept of Bal Sansad has been picked up in states like Jharkhand and Maharashtra.