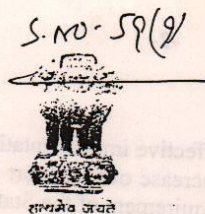


अर्जुन सिंह
RJUN SINGH



LETTER ISSUED

D.O.No. 12-15/2001-CD-1

मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्री

भारत

नई दिल्ली-११० ००१

MINISTER OF

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
INDIA

NEW DELHI-110 001

22 DEC 2004

Dear Shri Ahluwalia,

Please refer to my D.O. letter of even number dated 26th August, 2004 wherein I had requested you to consider earmarking of funds for supplementary nutrition under the ICDS programme in the States' Annual Plans.

2. As you are aware, the NCMP contains Government's commitment to universalize the ICDS Scheme to provide a functional Anganwadi in every settlement and ensure full coverage of all children. It also envisages that nutrition programmes, particularly for the girl child, will be expanded on a significant scale. Moreover, in response to a Public Interest Litigation, the Supreme Court has directed the Government of India to state the time-frame to increase the number of AWCs so as to cover 14 lakh habitation and to revise the cost norm of Re.1 for supplementary nutrition fixed in 1991. The issue of universalisation of ICDS with quality has also been taken up by the Chairperson, National Advisory Council with the Prime Minister vide her letter dated 11th November, 2004 (copy enclosed).
3. The proposal for expansion of ICDS Scheme to cover 467 additional Projects and 1,88,168 additional Anganwadi Centres required by the States, as per the existing population norms, is under process and will be submitted to the Planning Commission shortly. As regards revision of cost norms for supplementary nutrition fixed way back in 1991, the same have been doubled vide Deptt. of Women & Child Development letter dated 19.10.2004 (copy enclosed).
4. As mentioned in my earlier letter of 26th August 2004, the States are not providing adequate funds for supplementary nutrition in their Plan Outlays and Budgets. Their actual expenditure is further less than the Plan allocation. You will appreciate that supplementary nutrition is the most important component of the ICDS Scheme aimed at bringing down the level of malnutrition among young children, which today stands at 47 per cent. In fact, supplementary nutrition is the main attraction for the targeted beneficiaries to attend Anganwadis. In the absence of supplementary nutrition, the beneficiaries are also deprived of other services envisaged under that ICDS Scheme viz. immunization, health check-up, pre-school education, referral services etc. This results in diluting the impact of the Scheme in improving the nutritional and health status of children.
5. The States are not providing adequate funds for supplementary nutrition even at pre-revised cost norms. There are States which are using the funds provided under nutrition component of PMGY only for supplementary nutrition. the revised cost norms would further increase their burden. In fact, while some States (West Bengal, Meghalaya) have represented that the Central government should bear the entire cost of supplementary nutrition some other States (Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh) have stated that in view of increased cost norms and proposed expansion of the Scheme, the Central Government should share the expenditure on supplementary nutrition.

6. We, therefore, feel that to ensure effective implementation of the Scheme and achieve its objectives, it would be necessary to increase our support to the States. Our suggestion therefore, is that 50 per cent of the total requirement of the States for supplementary nutrition under ICDS Scheme be met by the Central Government. It is estimated that this would involve financial implication of about Rs.1250/- crore per annum at the existing beneficiary level. With the proposed expansion of the Scheme, the financial implication may increase to about Rs.1500/- crore per annum, when all new Projects/Anganwadis become fully functional. However, in the event of acceptance of this suggestion, the existing liability under nutrition component of PMGY would come down and net financial implication will get reduced to that extent.

7. While the finer details and modalities for release of funds can be worked out later, I request you to kindly consider this important issue on a priority basis and let us have your views in the matter.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

(ARJUN SINGH)

Shri Montek Singh Ahluwalia
Deputy Chairman
Planning Commission
Yojana Bhavan
New Delhi

Copy forwarded to:

Ms. Syeda Hameed, Member Secretary Planning Commission, Yojana Bhavan, New Delhi.

(Chaman Kumar)

Joint Secretary to the Govt. of India

nd
B.M. 4
8
23/2