



INDIA
RASHTRIYA MADHYAMIK SHIKSHA
ABHIYAN (RMSA)

Fourth Joint Review Mission
4th to 12th August 2014

Aide Memoire

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Acronyms

AWP&B	Annual Work Plan and Budget
ASER	Annual Survey of Education Report
ATR	Action Taken Report
BE	Budget Estimates
BRC	Block Resource Centre
CAL	Computer Aided Learning
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education
CCE	Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation
COBSE	Committee of Boards of Secondary Education
CTE	College of Teacher Education
CTET	Common Teacher Eligibility Test
CTS	Child Tracking Survey
CRC	Cluster Resource Centre
CWSN	Children with Special Needs
DCF	Data Capture Format
DFID	Department for International Development
DIET	District Institute of Education and Training
DP	Development Partner
DoSEL	Department of School Education & Literacy
Ed.CIL	Educational Consultants India Limited
EMIS	Educational Management and Information System
EU	European Union
EVS	Environmental Science
FM&P	Financial Management and Procurement
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio

GoI	Government of India
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
IASE	Institute for Advanced Studies in Education
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IDA	International Development Association
IEDSS	Integrated Education of the Disabled at Secondary Stage
IGNOU	Indira Gandhi National Open University
IPAI	Institute of Public Auditors of India
IRT	Item Response Theory
IT	Information Technology
ITPDP	In-service Teacher Professional Development Programme
IUFR	Interim Unaudited Financial Report
JRM	Joint Review Mission
KGBV	Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya
MCS	Model Cluster School
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development
MI	Monitoring Institutions
MS	Mahila Samakhya
NAS	National Assessment Survey
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research & Training
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
NCFTE	National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education
NCTE	National Council for Teacher Education
NE	North East
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIAR	National Institute of Administrative Research
NIC	National Informatics Centre
NPE	National Policy of Education
NPEGEL	National Program for Education of Girls' at Elementary Level
NLAS	National Learning Achievement Survey
NUEPA	National University of Educational Planning & Administration
OBC	Other Backward Caste
OOSC	Out of School Children
PAB	Project Approval Board
PGT	Post Graduate Teacher
PISA	Programme for Student Assessment
PMIS	Project Management Information System
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institutions
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PTR	Pupil Teacher Ratio
QMT	Quality Monitoring Tool
RCI	Rehabilitation Council of India
REMS	Research, Evaluation, Monitoring and Supervision
RIE	Regional Institute of Education
RMSA	Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan
RMG	Repair and Maintenance Grant
RTE	Right to Education
SC	Scheduled Caste
SCERT	State Council for Educational Research and Training

SDP	School Development Plan
SES	Selected Educational Statistics
SFD	Special Focus Districts
SFG	Special Focus Groups
SIEMAT	State Institute for Educational Management and Training
SMC	School Management Committee
SMDC	School Management and Development Committee
SPO	State Project Office
SPD	State Project Director
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
SSHE	School Sanitation and Hygiene Education
ST	Scheduled Tribe
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
TE	Teacher Education
TET	Teacher Eligibility Test
TGT	Trained Graduate Teacher
TLE	Teacher Learning Equipment
TLM	Teaching Learning Material
TOR	Terms of Reference
TSC	Total Sanitation Campaign
TSG	Technical Support Group
UAM	Universal Active Mathematics
UC	Utilization Certificate
UDISE	Unified District Education Information System in Education
UEE	Universal Elementary Education
UPS	Upper Primary School
UT	Union Territory
VEC	Village Education Committee
VER	Village Education Register
WSDP	Whole School Development Plan

Guiding Principles and Recommendations

Evidence Should Guide Action: Increasing evidence enables more context specific and tailored responses – but also requires more rigorous quality assurance and verification mechanisms:

Recommendations:

- MHRD should initiate a rigorous quality assurance process of initiatives deemed ‘good practices’ before they are shared across states and recommended for replication. (Rec. 1)
- The Mission recommends rigorous interrogation through a study on GER and NER to clarify (i) discrepancies between exit flows from elementary and entry flow to junior secondary. (ii) the number of students who enter grade nine and complete lower secondary education

(disaggregated by categories). This must triangulate information from key data sources e.g. UDISE, 2011 Census, and National House Hold Survey. (Rec. 10)

- MHRD supports remedial action programmes that respond to NAS and other learning study findings, e.g. by requiring submission of State remediation plans based which cite evidence of need as part of the AWPB process. (Rec. 14)

Greater collaboration across the delivery structures could both enhance strategic planning and help address human and financial resources shortages: MHRD lead by example and use its convening power at state level to initiate collaboration, exploit synergies, achieve economies of scale and deliver collective strategic planning.

Recommendations:

- MHRD take the lead in bringing together the key funders of teacher education (SSA, RMSA and Teacher education scheme) to develop a vision and strategy for integrated secondary teacher education (pre-service, in-service and communities of practice) which is inclusive of state teacher educators, head teachers and teacher's voices. (Rec. 13)
- MHRD takes the lead in setting out a national research agenda, and encourages such work by a wide variety of institutions and agencies at the national, state and local levels. (Rec. 3)
- MHRD and states conduct a review of the necessary core staffing structures of RMSA, and those where more effective linkages with SSA would be beneficial. (Rec. 5)
- The monitoring and supervision system would benefit from further strengthening. Participatory monitoring strategies driven by greater data availability and transparency at state, district, block and school levels offer real promise. Combined monitoring regimes with SSA staff could improve efficiency and deliver greater utilization of scarce human resources such as accountants and engineers. (Rec. 10)

Data/ information that is publically available and is presented in ways that are easily understood is more likely to be used:

Recommendations:

- UDISE should build GIS mapping and map based presentation of data into its functions and enhance its capability to provide comprehensive, accurate and real time data for decision making at all levels from the MHRD to schools across the country. (Rec. 6)
- MHRD ensure long term institutional arrangements supported by recurrent budget are put in place to archive NAS data and facilitate greater public access. (Rec. 15)
- All material developed through RMSA should be released as open education resources available on the web to enable widespread collaborative use and refinement. A free an open environment is essential for the evolution of content and tools. (Rec. 16)

State short and medium term planning needs strengthening – this can be promoted by MHRD through the AWPB process:

Recommendations:

- States should be encouraged and supported to prepare 3-year plans for quality improvement, which are discussed as part of the one-year PAB approval process. (Rec. 2)
- State-level RFDs, reflecting the national indicators, need to be developed and used by states and MHRD during the PAB process to guide priorities for action. (Rec. 4)

RMSA should encourage greater use of ICT to accelerate RMSA implementation. ICT has much to offer

across: participatory planning, financial management and teacher, administrator and student education.

Recommendations:

- RMSA should support and build capacity in collaborative resource creation by teachers and teacher educators e.g. OERs, podcasts, video, animations, virtual labs etc. (Rec. 16)
- Financial management competence is a major constraint. MHRD should urgently consider commissioning on line self-help resources: which could include online FMP manual, FAQs, downloadable spreadsheet templates, and self-help courses. Training material should include self-assessment and MHRD could incentivizing participation by offering a certificate for those who demonstrate acquisition of the required knowledge and understanding. (Rec. 21)

RMSA must urgently address the speed with which funds disbursed are converted to expenditure which benefits students.

Recommendations:

- Further attention is needed to accelerate utilization and reduce the growing amount of unutilized funds held by SIS. Civil works appears a particularly problematic area where collaborative work with States to understand challenges and devise solutions is required. (Rec. 20)
- MHRD and states should wherever possible publish the real time data on transfer dates and amount of funds to the State treasury from MHRD and to the RMSA society from the State treasury on RMSA portal. (Rec. 19)
- MHRD should follow up with 18 States who have not submitted the procurement plans for the FY14-15 to furnish the same at the earliest. (Rec. 22)
- There is a need to analyse the data reported by States and check their reasonableness vis-à-vis releases by the Central and State Governments. This analysis should be conducted on a state-wise basis in order to ensure appropriate support is given to those State with the largest challenges in financial management. (Rec. 23)
- The SIS of each State should provide clarification and/or take remedial actions against the audit observations and report back to MHRD by December 31, 2014. (Rec. 24)
- States should reconcile the differences between unaudited and audit expenditure by December 2014 and going forward such reconciliation statements need to be prepared and included in the Annual Financial Statements. (Rec. 25) –As provided in the FMP Manual, SISs need to ensure that an appropriate system of grant reconciliation and tracking of UCs exists at the district and state levels. Rolling out of the Central Plan Monitoring System (CPSMS) could be considered. (Rec. 23)

The treatment of aided schools needs clarification to States and further investigation of opportunities to optimize the contribution of aided schools to further RMSA aims is required:

Recommendations:

- MHRD guidance that aided schools should be considered in the same way as government schools in determining whether a habitation is considered to be ‘served’, as already required within the RMSA framework should be clearly communicated to avoid possible duplication in school provision.
- MHRD should carry out further consultations with state governments to understand their perspectives on the role of aided schools in meeting RMSA objectives. These consultations, and the further work leading on from the study prepared for the JRM, could take place before the next JRM.

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- **Introduction**

- Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) is a Programme of the Government of India, implemented in partnership with the State Governments with the main objective to make secondary education of good quality available, accessible and affordable to all young persons. The scheme seeks to enhance enrolment in classes IX and X by providing a secondary school within a reasonable distance of every habitation, to enhance retention and completion of grade X, to improve quality of education imparted at secondary level by ensuring all secondary schools conform to prescribed/ standard norms, to remove gender, socio-economic and disability barriers and to achieve near universal enrolment in secondary level education with the GER exceeding 90 percent by 2017, i.e. by the end of the 12th Five Year Plan. The Programme was launched in 2009.
- RMSA is supported by domestic resources, supplemented partially by external funding from the Development Partners – the World Bank’s International Development Association (IDA) and United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID). As per the respective Agreements, the GoI and Development Partners (DP) carry out a Joint Review Mission (JRM) twice a year. The main objective of the JRM is to review progress in the implementation of the programme with respect to RMSA’s goals, with a particular emphasis on a small number of issues, and to discuss follow-up actions in the light of the Terms of Reference (TOR) agreed upon for each JRM.
- The Mission put special focus on their work on the following aspects of the programme:
 - Understanding the government aided schools sector at secondary level – their funding, infrastructure, management, functioning, staffing and teacher availability, classroom processes – in order to recommend how they can support the RMSA objectives.
 - Review of the progress of developing large scale student assessments at the national and state levels, establishment of the learning assessment systems (including sampling, tools,

data collection and analysis that have been conducted or are being planned) at the secondary level.

- Assessment of procurement procedures following the post procurement review, conducted in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand.
- Review of the Results Framework Document against RMSA objectives
- This is the Fourth JRM of RMSA and was held from 4th to 12th August 2014. The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Mission and details of the Mission composition are attached at Annexes 1 and 2. This is a desk-based review, though the Mission had the benefit of interaction with several states on the special focus topics.
- The Mission would like to acknowledge the great work done by the teams in MHRD, TSG, and the states who met with the Mission. The Mission would like to put on record the Mission's gratitude to all the above mentioned.

• **Overview, Key Issues and Recommendations**

- JRM is gratified to record that MHRD followed a constructive and positive approach in respect of role and support of JRM specifically and RMSA generally. The Ministry has been proactive in receiving and responding to suggestions which has greatly emboldened and empowered review of various provisions and approaches of the Abhiyan. This gives the Mission optimism that the Abhiyan can move forward to meet its challenges successfully.
- Last three joint review missions have addressed key issues thrown up for study and learning by the programme since inception. Five years into implementation, RMSA is at a cusp when, resources deployed on the Abhiyan can yield results, only if financial outlay is maintained at a level cognizant of demands and expectations. The realisation of demographic dividend is contingent on this investment being made at the appropriate time. Secondary education of good quality is an essential foundation for young people's aspirations to pursue further education, become good citizens and productive workers.
- Successful education systems are those around which there is a consensus on the broad policy directions and which pursue those directions consistently over the long term. This Mission therefore makes no apology for returning to many themes that previous JRMs have discussed: the big issues facing the RMSA Programme are not solved in six month time periods. Instead, the Mission has tried to add value by suggesting what the next steps might be for moving forward on these long-term agenda items.

Deepening the understanding of outcomes and improving equity in learning

- Enrolment, Completion and Learning as an upward spiral of completing the learning outcome process was mentioned by JRM III. Emphasis on these separate but mutually reinforcing areas must be part of the thrust of the Abhiyan upto 2017 and even beyond for universalization.

- RMSA investments have to drive up the equity slope. Successive JRMs have pointed to the imperative of equity in access to secondary education. Equity in participation, in learning, across geographies, through institutions public, aided and unaided, of streams formal, open, technology enabled, vocational, of students differently abled as well as resourced, is of the essence of education. Equity must be the cornerstone to take the RMSA to the next level.
- Further, RMSA should strongly articulate a raised ambition that moves beyond equity in access to delivering to equity in learning. This will require recognition of, engagement with and action on variances in learning achievement between different groups highlighted by NAS and other measures of learning. It is important to move beyond measurement of averages to look at the spread of learning performance within states (the evidence presented by the Class VIII NAS data is compelling here). There is a real need to shift the large numbers of students that fall in the lowest levels of performance. To do this will require remedial action that takes in account the realities of their current learning level and not designed from an assumption that they are at levels of learning expected by the curriculum.
- The JRM fully embraces the outcome-orientation of the RMSA Programme. However, this orientation is yet to make a difference to the quality of state plans. The promotion of overall Quality Plans during the AWP&B process is an exciting development; but, planning for learning (quality) should now focus on more components of quality beyond excursion trips science fairs etc.
- Bearing in mind the need for a longer term and more holistic strategy, *the Mission suggests that State prepare 3-year plans for learning improvement, which are discussed as part of the one-year PAB approval process.* These plans, updated each year during the AWP&B process, could help states develop consistent programmes over time. These plans should include concrete proposals to the way that processes in the classroom and schools can be improved as well as mechanisms for assessing progress in improving learning. Throughout there should be a priority to equity in learning. Supportive advice on these plans might also be planned, for example from the National Resource Group, though this advice should respect each State's approach rather than trying to impose a single, best way of how to improve quality..
- Fortunately, the RMSA Programme already includes flexibility and tools to help States formulate these plans – though to date States are not taking advantage of these opportunities. For example, the teacher training norms do not require every supported teacher to get exactly 5 days of training at one face-to-face training session. Moreover, the RMSA Programme has promulgated guidance on Equity Action Plans and on Innovation proposals, which provide plenty of good ideas, illustrative activities and flexible funding (which is not norm-based). These tools could help States think through, and MHRD fund, outcome-oriented plans for improving learning.
- MHRD does good work in facilitating cross-state sharing of good practices in different aspects of the programme. This could be at national forums, but also through inter-state interaction and exposure visits. *However, a mechanism should be evolved for rigorous evaluation of the 'good practices' before they are shared across states and recommended for replication.* The evaluation should clearly bring out the conditions under which the practice originated the nature of support and enabling conditions that were available and why it seemed to be effective. Without such an analysis, there is a risk of practices being picked up and implemented at scale in contexts very different from where they had originally succeeded. This is an important learning from SSA.

Planning as participation

- The mission was impressed by the RMSA's efforts to move beyond extractive data collection to encouraging the sharing and use of data so as to promote 'planning as participation'. Particular mention of GIS is made in this regard, as it has immense potential in a whole range of planning, communication and participation fields for both administrators, educators and community members (including SMDCs members). This will not necessarily require expensive equipment as adequate GPS software is loaded on most smart phones commonly used in India. Very good examples of creative use of GIS are available around India.
- The gaps in, and potential of, UDISE in leading to a paradigm change in the programmatic of RMSA has come in for comment in successive JRMs. Considering this data a valuable resource, effort is needed to drive up ownership of data, proactive sharing for analysis and research, and communication and display for knowledge building. The Mission commends the initiative of RMSA to develop an integrated web portal for EMIS and arrangements for archiving and making data accessible to the end users. The Mission recognises this as a step towards 'democratisation' of data which would, in future also strengthen ownership and increase use of data at all levels, which in turn would improve the quality of that data. Capacity building is needed to make a reality of this vision.
- The Mission welcomes the growing outcome orientation of the RMSA program and use of the Result Framework Document (RFD) for the purposes of planning and strategizing of various programmatic initiatives. There has been notable progress in terms of cleaning of data, correcting inconsistencies and offering definitional clarity on calculation of key indicators. Recognition of UDISE as the official database, as recommended in previous two JRMs, is an important step towards better reporting and reduction in data discrepancy for the purposes of program monitoring. The UDISE is also now regarded as the main data source for development of AWP&Bs which is helpful for the PAB decisions. Data comparability has become more reliable and coherent in the last two rounds of UDISE (2012-13 and 2013-14) due to a significantly improved data capture format, expansion in coverage of schools across all school management types (with about 95 percent of private unaided schools included in the database) and a more rigorous data collection process. *An obvious next step is for States to develop their own RFDs.*
- The trends being exposed through this increase in data availability lead to a large number of questions which require explanation (some of which are raised in this Aide-Memoire). The lack of understanding of secondary education, especially how it appears in individual states (and districts and schools), demands an extensive programme of research, analysis and evidence gathering. It is encouraging that this work also includes emphasis on making information and results more easily understood by those who need to use it. The JRM learnt of some commendable work, including by Regional Institutes of Education, NCERT and the Technical Cooperation Agency. *Much more is needed, where we recommend the MHRD takes the lead in setting out a national research agenda, but also encourages such work by a wide variety of institutions and agencies at the national, state and local levels.*

Institutional Engagement

- JRM appreciates the emerging institutional arrangements indicative of greater coherence in envisioning, management and oversight of the RMSA, as evidenced by the merger of the four

schemes with RMSA, the creation of the NRG and the NROER. These are important developments, the further growth and plenitude of which will be watched with interest.

- Having said that, we may also add, however, that much greater coherence is waiting to be forged. Linkages between SSA, RMSA and the Teacher's Education Scheme has been emphasised earlier. We also find ourselves convinced that institutional frames of the SCERTs, DIETs, CTEs, IASEs and BRCs need to forge linkages and emerge as composites to address overarching issues of teachers' training, data mining, data analysis, and altogether a resource sharing environment. Some concrete examples of better linkages across programmes are indicated already, such as UDISE data collection and integration of ICT@Schools, while there are some other quick wins, such as joint planning for teacher in-service education and professional development, sharing of accountants and other financial management staff, utilizing engineers for civil works monitoring, use of experienced contract managers, more rapid collection and transmission of UC to ensure further funds flow, and the use of locally-based teacher training institutions (BRCs, DIETs). The Mission believes that much, much more can be done in this area to help more effective implementation on the ground.
- Similarly, more effective integration of planning and implementation of RMSA into Departments and Directorates of Secondary Education is an urgent need (spurred on by, but also importantly independently of, the transfer of funds through State treasuries); this was a lesson that SSA learnt which is readily applicable to RMSA. The Mission also believes that more effective institutional arrangements are essential for the Abhiyan to accelerate progress and utilize resources more effectively.
- The Mission remains concerned that there are insufficient management, administrative and support structures in States. Anecdotal evidence suggests that States feel the Management, Monitoring, Evaluation and Research funds are still inadequate. The Mission is concerned that, while the percentage increase recently approved is to be welcomed, a somewhat higher percentage of a small amount is still too little to fund the necessary structures. With the Programme not expanding at the rate anticipated (or desired), the resources for MMER are likely to remain small. Most striking is the lack of structures at the district and sub-district levels and below. Better coordination and integration with SSA Societies and with Departments/Directorates would help. *But the Mission recommends that a review of the necessary core staffing structures for RMSA is undertaken.*

Providing the most to those who need the most

- On the management of the programme, the JRM finds it axiomatic that the goals of the RMSA will be achievable in the measure in which the weakest of its partners deliver on them. The last JRM pointed to the low GER states and the need to address them. Equity needs to be understood across states, regions, and schools, necessitate a differentiated management kitty, cognizant of this inequity. A higher complement of administrative and support staff, availability of untied funds, opportunity to leverage higher RMSA allocation based on indicators of performance, and flexibility in norms so as to reach the unreached must be considered for these states and regions. Those with particular and deep needs require different solutions. These states, regions or districts could also require more directed support from national level institutions, State RMSA Societies, SCERTs and others to be able to plan more context-specific strategies and implement them effectively.
- The Mission believes that this is part of a wider and, perhaps, deeper problem. Activities planned for and implemented under the RMSA do not yet take cognizance of the actual

learning needs of the actual children who attend school in Classes IX and X. All the evidence gathered at this and previous JRMs is that many, many children in Class IX do not have the foundation skills to be able to access the curriculum expected in the first year of secondary education. Moreover, the children in secondary education are going through the difficult adolescent years, characterized by a high degree of emotional, physical, physiological and psychological change; and, importantly, different children experience these changes at different times and in different ways. Much work is needed so that schools can 'know their students' and respond to these needs appropriately and sensitively. The experience of organisations working in this area should be tapped.

Emerging issues

- Discussions with MHRD, the state governments and within the JRM team during this Mission have highlighted a number of emerging issues of major significance. How these issues are addressed will determine to a significant extent how successful the Abhiyan is in meeting its goals. The Mission did not however have the time or evidence to explore these issues in more depth. Such exploration may be considered for future JRMs. In this section, we identify five major issues, while Annex 1 offers an indicative list of questions that need to be addressed, through data gathering, analysis and consultation.
- Fortunately, with respect to the first issue on in-service support to teachers some work is underway. There are two issues in particular – vocational education and ICT integration – which require understanding the perspectives and needs of states and, especially, districts, where the real programme implementation takes place.
- **In-service support to teachers.** There is insufficient information on a wide range of aspects of in-service programmes under RMSA. The proposed Teacher Training Evaluation Study is therefore a welcome step, which recognizing that it cannot answer all the open questions. The Mission encouraged the NCERT/TCA, which is managing this study, to identify clearly what issues will and which will not be addressed. To guide this process, and additional work that would be needed, the annex identifies a range of questions which need to be explored.
- **Vocational Education.** The Vocational Education Scheme is now part of the RMSA Programme. The mission has been informed that Vocational Education is being introduced in the state curricula. The practical consequences of this need to be explored, as they relate to curriculum, facilities and teachers and the impact on the life trajectories of students enrolled in these courses.
- **The use of ICT in education and for learning.** The Mission welcomes the integration of the ICT@Schools into the RMSA Programme; an essential first step to making ICT work as a tool rather than an end in itself. There was a strong consensus in the JRM that ICT has profound potential to offer new solutions to the problems that the Abhiyan is facing and will face in the years ahead. This Aide-Memoire has identified some of this potential in the data collection and planning processes, forming professional learning communities for teacher continuous professional development, collaborative creation of digital open educational resources, as well as in the training on procurement and financial management issues. Clearly much more needs to be done.
- **Gender.** The Mission is pleased to see that overall the Gender Parity Index is close to 1, meaning that, overall, enrolment of girls matches their expected levels relative to boys. But gender equity is about both boys and girls and must be seen in multiple other ways related to

curriculum and classroom experiences, gender profiles of staffing, and effective strategies for addressing these specific equity gaps.

- **Finally, there is a need for a wider debate on the desired outcomes in secondary education.** Being a high stakes assessment, the nature of the class X public examination largely determines the content and teaching practice at the secondary stage. For bringing about any significant shift in the teaching-learning process and the emphasis from rote memorization to ‘understanding’ concepts, the prerequisite is a significant change in the approach and structure of the class X public examination. This would require building consensus around what is valuable to learn and how this should be tested, so that changes in the examination can support changes in teaching practice. An encouraging start has been made in this regard, both through the National Assessment Survey which is offering a different perspective on student learning but more especially because of the engagement of the State Boards in that process. The Mission hopes that that engagement can be continued into the dialogue which will rightly be required when the NAS results for Class X become available. These are likely to be difficult discussions, which will require good will and an open mind on all sides, and MHRD may give consideration for the appropriate venues for these discussions.

Recommendations

- MHRD should initiate a rigorous quality assurance process of initiatives deemed ‘good practices’ before they are shared across states and recommended for replication.
 - States should prepare 3-year plans for quality improvement, which are discussed as part of the one-year PAB approval process.
 - MHRD takes the lead in setting out a national research agenda, and encourages such work by a wide variety of institutions and agencies at the national, state and local levels.
 - State-level RFDs, reflecting the national indicators, need to be developed and used by states and MHRD during the PAB process to assess the plans.
 - MHRD and states conduct a review of the necessary core staffing structures of RMSA, and those where more effective linkages with SSA would be beneficial.
 - UDISE should build GIS mapping and map-based presentation of data into its functions and enhance its capability to provide comprehensive, accurate and real-time data for decision-making at all levels from the MHRD to schools across the country.
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- **Overall progress against RMSA Goals**

Overall spending against Goals

- **Spending under RMSA is heavily dominated by two types of activities – civil works and staff salaries.** These two activities absorbed 61.6 percent and 24.6 percent of expenditure in 2013-14, respectively (the pattern is similar across years). This is due to releases being made

against old commitments for civil works; new approvals in recent years have had a lower proportion of funds allocated to civil works.

- Of the remaining amount, there has been very few resources spent on teacher and staff training (which covers all types of training for all types of staff), training for community leaders and SMDCs, and on quality and equity interventions. The funds on innovations can be significantly increased with some creative planning. It is also noticeable that there are no resources spent on innovative activities (an earlier section of this Aide-Memoire discusses the potential for this budget head). There may be many reasons for low spending in these categories, but certainly in training for SMDCs there is much to learn from the SSA experience.

Expenditure by Activity: FY 2013-14

Expenditure	Country Total	
	(Rs. Lakhs)	% of total expenditure
Opening of new schools	123168.70	27.0
Strengthening of existing schools	149594.86	32.8
Major repair	7730.46	1.7
Teacher quarters	341.27	0.1
Other non-recurring	128.00	0.0
Staff for new schools	0.00	0.0
Staff for schools sanctioned in previous year	107593.35	23.6
Additional staff for existing schools	4343.48	1.0
Annual school grant	29701.61	6.5
Minor repair	10511.77	2.3
Teacher/Staff Training	3118.06	0.7
Quality Interventions	5039.73	1.1
Equity Interventions	898.15	0.2
Interventions for Out-of-school Children	0.00	0.0
Guidance and counselling	114.36	0.0
Training of Community Leaders/SMDC	929.78	0.2
Innovative Activities	0.00	0.0
MMER	12584.79	2.8
State Components	0.00	0.0
Total	455798.37	100.0
Source: MHRD IUFR		

Goal 1: To improve access to secondary schooling

- **The Mission notes positive progress achieved in terms of enrollment of children in school.** The percentage of served habitations has gone up from 69 percent in 2011-12 to 76 percent in 2014-15. More than 90 percent of the total approved schools over the last 6 years are now functional. These schools in total have an enrolment of 6.8 lakh students with an average of 74 children per school. There has been a steady increase in enrolment with a reported rise of 32 percent from 28.3 million in 2009-10 to 37.3 million in 2013-14. While some of this increase may be attributed to an increase in the coverage of the private unaided schools, especially in the

last two rounds of the UDISE (2012-13 and 2013-14), the enrolment in the government and aided schools has also gone up significantly by about 23 percent during the same period due to expansion of schools and additional classrooms under RMSA. There is, however, an erratic trend in the enrolment data when disaggregated by school types between 2009-10 and 2013-14 due to data limitations as depicted in the chart below.

- **The Net Enrolment Ratio remains worryingly low at 45.6 percent.** This calls out urgent examination and understanding, as it seems to suggest that 55 percent of the children in the appropriate secondary education age group are either out of school, studying in elementary education, or are leaving school before completing the secondary level. With the high levels of NER at in elementary education, it would be expected that this would translate into secondary education. And yet there remains a huge gap between NER and GER. The Gross Enrolment Ratio has improved significantly from 57.9 percent in 2009-10 to 71.7 percent in 2013-14.
- **The JRM noted that there is a need for reconciling several other trends with this overall figure.** In particular, two figures which should be expected to have helped NER to improve significantly.
 - The reported annual drop-out rate for Class IX and X is 14.54 percent (2012-13), but comparable figures for drop-out for earlier years are not available.
 - Significant progress has been achieved in the transition rate from elementary to secondary since last year. The transition rate from class 8 to 9, without adjusting for repeaters, has gone up from 91.3 percent in 2009-10 to 97.5 percent in 2013-14 and the increase is more significant for girls. This positive trend may be due to migration of boys from government and aided schools to private unaided schools at the secondary level (this anecdotal evidence needs to be confirmed by proper research and analysis). After adjusting for repeaters, the transition rate comes down to 88 percent in 2012-13 and 91.9 percent in 2013-14.
 - Near universal NER in elementary education.
- Overall progress on NER in secondary education depends heavily on on-time graduation from elementary education. The RMSA Goal for completion of secondary education must therefore be tempered by an understanding of the dynamics in elementary education.
- **This Mission noted good progress on using GIS mapping combined with satellite imagery to decide on school location** in order to ensure optimal size of schools as well as equitable distribution of schooling facility across geography. Many states have reported and the presentation made also suggested use of GIS across states to open new schools. This is an encouraging development. However, this is also an area where more work needs to be done especially to make it a tool for community (including SMDC) engagement and for decentralised planning and monitoring. It would be good to have a more detailed discussion around usage and impact of GIS mapping in a forthcoming JRM.
- **The progress on provisioning of core infrastructure facilities is a matter of concern, with only 3.4 percent of schools with the expected facilities.** It is very clear from the data trend that this area requires urgent attention under RMSA. While this RFD indicator (schools with all 10 core infrastructure and teaching facilities, per the prescribed standards) has improved

marginally from 1.3 percent of schools under all managements in 2009-10 to 3.4 percent in 2013-14, the government schools depict a much grimmer picture with only 0.6 percent of the schools having all 10 core facilities in 2013-14. A cumulative figure of last 6 years for strengthening of schools shows that only 30 percent of the total approved facilities have been completed.

- **Monitoring and supervision support remain a bottleneck in RMSA.** There is lack of adequate monitoring structures under the program in states from districts downwards. The progress of last 5 years shows steady increase in schools and the teaching force but there has not been a corresponding increase in the management and supervision staff. This has resulted in overload of work for the existing staff and also in some cases negligence towards some of the crucial activities particularly support to teachers in classroom settings.

Goal 2: To bridge gender and social gaps

- The last year has seen closing of the gender gap in enrolment to a significant extent. At the national level, gender parity has shown substantial progress, standing at 0.98 in 2013-14 showing that the participation of girls is almost at par with boys at the secondary level. The gender and social equity indices are also positive and have remained steady (0.9) in the last four years since the programme began. There is improvement on the indicators on share of the SC, ST student enrolment and this increase is more significant for the share of SC and ST girls in the government and aided schools. However, there are state and district wise variations in gender and social equity.
- The enrolment of children with special needs in secondary education has increased from 76,000 in 2009-10 to more than 200,000 in 2013-14. But there seems to be lack of information/evidence on what is provided for these children in classroom settings as well as the challenges to their social inclusion. Mainstreaming CWSN at the secondary stage is a huge challenge where the curriculum is both complex and overloaded even for the general category of students. A greater understanding is required about the nature of interventions under IEDSS and what are the linkages established between SSA and RMSA to address the needs of CWSN. Addressing the needs of children from special focus groups (for e.g. in areas affected by civil strife, urban deprived settings and minority communities) remains a challenge and requires focussed strategies.

Goal 3: All children retained in Education system

- The 2013-14 UDISE does not contain any data on retention at the secondary level. There is only data available for primary level retention. In addition, information on completion of secondary education is not available. The JRM was informed by NUEPA that one reason is the presence of 'external' students who enrol for the Class X examinations in schools but are not attending classes at these schools, plus the UDISE data does not allow these students to be excluded from the analysis. Clearly this is an issue which needs to be examined and understood in much greater depth. Therefore the JRM is not able to comment on progress against this goal.

Goal 4: Education of satisfactory Quality

- Making progress on this goal is especially difficult. This difficulty in major part arises from the lack of understanding/consensus on what quality means and, even with that understanding, how to improve it. This is also an area in which learning from SSA is hardest, because the nature of learning in secondary education is quite different.
- **Secondary Graduation Rate: This has increased from 63.7 percent in 2009-10 to 75.8 percent for all schools in 2013-14.** In the government schools, the rate has gone up from 46.4 percent to 61.2 percent during the same period. The Mission noted the change in the calculation of this indicator in the NUEPA presentation from the RFD shared earlier with the Mission members (from the percent of students appearing in Class 10 examinations out of those enrolled in Class 9, to the percent of students passing Class 10 exams out of those enrolled in Class 9) and suggested that this be revisited as it does not give a comprehensive picture of what percentage of students complete two years of secondary education. There are three difficulties identified in the discussion with NUEPA: first, this scenario is also influenced by the cases of students who are held back from appearing in the grade 10 exam based on their weaker performance; second, many children not enrolled in a school appear for the examination at that school; and third, examination pass rates are not comparable across states. Further work is needed to develop an appropriate indicator or indicators in this area; this is important work as it will help support the outcome-orientation of the Programme.
- **Teacher availability remains problematic.** While teacher deployment has improved in the last five years (proportion of government secondary schools with minimum 6 teachers up from 62.2 percent in 2009-10 to 79.2 percent in 2013-14), the deficiency in the availability of core subject teachers is affecting quality of teaching-learning adversely in secondary schools. The proportion of government schools with the core five subject teachers stands at 23.4 percent in 2013-14 compared to 22.5 percent in 2009-10. However, this indicator shows fluctuation over the years and across school types as reflected in the chart below. The Mission notes with some concern the status of teacher vacancies across states. There are over 40 percent vacancies in the states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand and UP, and between 25-40 percent in Bihar, Haryana, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, and Rajasthan. The vacancies in new schools remain at an overall 53.76 percent, while 30.38 percent of additional teacher positions approved in 2011-12 are unfilled. In addition, examination is needed at the state and district levels of the number of schools where there appear to be more teachers than are needed for the enrolled students, but the teachers are not being re-deployed to other schools.

Source: NUEPA. Note: A = Actual; P = Projected

- **Overall coverage of in-service training remains poor.** The table below indicates the percentage of teachers covered in in-service training. These percentages indicate that substantial numbers of teachers are undertaking training; however, the historical lack of such training means that all teachers need access to training every year.

2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2014-15
30.05	23.28	37.41	26.69	30.39

Source: Data provided to JRM by MHRD

- The revised scheme of vocational education was approved by the Cabinet in February 2014 and is still in a nascent stage of implementation. Till date 2035 schools in 24 states/UTs have been covered under this scheme. Integration of Vocational Education component in RMSA is a

critical step towards fulfilling a major gap in secondary education sphere and therefore commendable. This issue is flagged in the Overview as a key emerging issue.

- The Mission is also pleased to note the growing recognition of school leadership to improve overall functioning of schools. Pilot activities undertaken by National School of Leadership set up under the aegis of NUEPA are noteworthy. Emphasis on improved school leadership places school at the heart of education system and needs to be factored in while planning for school improvement.

Recommendations:

- The Mission recommends sustainability and scaling up of the school leadership initiative with adequate resource and capacity planning of apex institutions in the long run.
- Development of indicators to assess progression towards completion of secondary education.
- The difference between GER and NER calls for further investigation, both to understand what can be understood from the existing data, what additional studies are needed, and how states can plan appropriate activities. This investigation will need to look at the situation state-wise.
- Provision of core infrastructure facilities in schools requires immediate attention. The Mission strongly recommends that greater administrative efforts are deployed in the states to speed up the completion of these facilities. Given that this is an area of obvious priority, the lack of progress requires further understanding.
- The gap in monitoring and supervision system needs to be addressed online resources and tools at state, district, block and school levels are one option. In addition, RMSA must collaborate with SSA staff resources and teacher institutions to maximize the use of limited resources
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• **Learning Equity**

- **The mission was encouraged by the growing attention to ‘equity in learning’ as part of the outcome orientation of the RMSA Programme.** There is the development of the National Assessment Survey (NAS) at Class X, and initiatives to develop school standards, school based improvement strategies and enhancing school leadership. These critical fields of endeavour are powerfully inter-related. If developed and implemented well these could be mutually reinforcing – ensuring the ‘sum is greater than the parts’. RMSA management can play an important role in brokering and incentivising coordination.

Equity

- **The agenda for learning enhancement has to be strongly focused on the equity dimension.** NAS and other achievement surveys clearly show a high degree of variance in learning achievements across groups, schools and also within the same classroom. There should be a clear expectation that teachers understand the diversity in students' learning levels and are adequately prepared to deliver the secondary curriculum while dealing with such diversity. This should include regular diagnostic assessment to understand students' progress and learning problems to help adjust teaching strategies and support specific students who are taking more time to learn a particular concept.
- **A concern is the way that state plans for remedial instruction seems to be driven mechanically by the notional funding norm of 20 percent of students who are deemed 'slow learners'.** The funding norm should be seen simply as a way of allocating funds. This could lead to the perpetuation of standardized training packages that pay insufficient attention to specific student contexts, learning need and total numbers of students requiring support as identified by NAS and other learning assessments. But the planning for the use of these funds should be driven by the needs of children in schools and classrooms at the local level. It may be that in some classes or schools all children need help, in others only 15 percent; equally activities focused on the 15 percent may become activities relevant for all children. In the long term, 'remedial education' needs to be about regular in-class teaching strategies for ensuring equitable learning.
- There also need to be closer linkage with elementary education. The performance of junior secondary education is integrally associated with the capacity of elementary education to establish firm learning foundations. Efforts to encourage greater collaboration across all levels – from senior management to use of a cluster / feeder elementary schools for a given junior secondary school could be encouraged.

Children with Special Needs

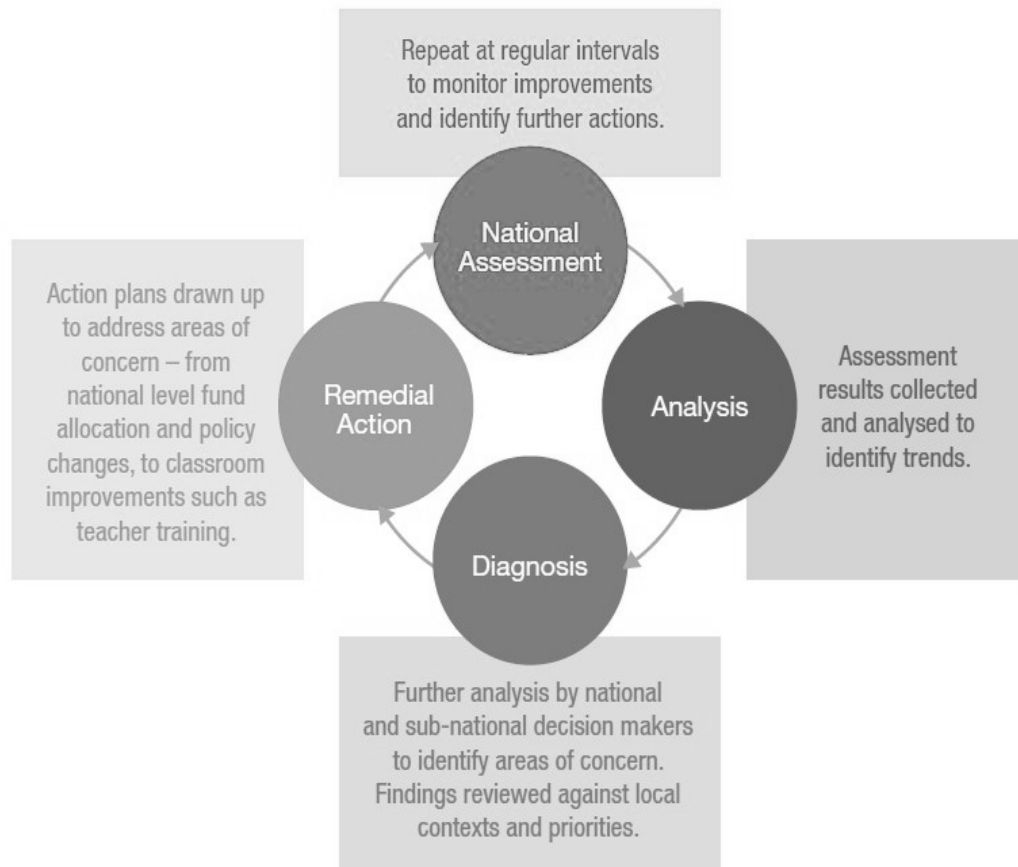
- **The issue of addressing learning needs of CWSN is complex.** RMSA should be commended on its efforts to address physical impediments to access. The next challenge is to address learning challenges of over 2.2 lakh enrolled CWSN. National level statistics reported to the mission tell a positive picture. However, information from NAS suggested we need to know more on the particular challenges faced by CWSN disaggregated by their particular needs (and NAS did not find significant numbers of CWSN in its sample). Moreover, in data presented to the JRM, they are relatively fewer children with physical disability who have been identified, compared to children with other special needs. Further research in this area related to the specific challenges of secondary education is needed with a view to inform affordable policy options and strategies. This Mission reiterates the view of JRM III that RMSA would benefit significantly from close interaction with and learning from the SSA experience of working with CWSN.

Learning Assessment

- **The mission praised the efforts made by NCERT and TCA to make the NAS both more scientifically robust and accessible,** e.g. through the use of infographics. NCERT must continue to further develop NAS in each subsequent round. The value of NAS is in identifying what is being learnt and what is not across India's diverse student body. Of particular importance if gains in 'equity of learning' are to be made is identifying patterns of learning

under-performance disaggregated by gender, socio economic group, parental and school based characteristics (e.g. rural / urban, school size).

- **Assessment alone is not enough – it is its suitably targeted corrective action informed by robust research and analysis (rather pre-conceived assumptions) that will.** The mission supports NCERTs commitment to address the weak link in the learning improvement cycle (see below), i.e. from diagnosis to remediation. Findings on identified learning impediments need to be accompanied by practical policy options, guidance, and capacity building support to better enable State level institutions to act. This will require considered reflection by NCERT and others which goes beyond a supply driven view predicated on what is needed is more of the same, e.g., exhortations that all will be well if NCF 2005 and NCERT textbooks are used. More collaborative approaches that engage with, listen to and build the capacity of State based institutions are needed.



- **Making assessment data more widely accessible will help with the needed diagnoses.** The greater diagnostic power of NAS through its use of Item Response Theory was recognised. Three areas warrant specific mention (i) NAS provides accurate information on the ‘spread’ of learning performance – rather than ‘mean average’ scores (that can give false impressions from outliers at the highest level of performance) was seen as a very important feature of which more

should be made. (ii) IRT provides the considerable advantage of statistically valid comparability across geography and time. As such the value of NAS data grows with successive assessments. Therefore it is critical that robust archiving and retrieval of this national resource is ensured; (iii) NCERT has made commendable efforts to make NAS data more accessible through attention to the way it is communicated. A similar effort is now needed to make the data sets more readily available (with appropriate protocols) to enable secondary data analysis by researchers which could further strengthen our understanding of learning achievement and learning challenges.

- **The Mission cautiously welcomes the number of quality related initiatives being undertaken by states.** Action by states will be essential to improve learning outcomes, and therefore states' interest in measuring and understanding why learning levels are what they are is welcome. However, the Mission was concerned that an increasing number of states are doing learning assessments which may not always be well focused or constructed. Many states are conducting census-based assessments which are expensive, technically difficult to do well and avoid teaching the test, and generate clear actionable conclusions. Moreover these assessments absorb considerable capacity of state agencies, which is therefore not available for other activities. A higher priority should be given to states understanding and addressing the learning impediments identified in the NAS. MHRD could help states by commissioning some simple guidelines on the purpose, principles and types of learning assessment (and to what use they can legitimately be put) to ensure where State based learning assessments are conducted they are both empirically robust and complementary to NAS.

School Standards, Monitoring and Improvement

- **Setting high standards and expectations can raise performance of schools, if those standards and expectations are appropriate to a school's area of responsibility.** There is copious evidence in the field of education (and more broadly) that establishing realistic but stretching expectations tends to enhance performance. Standards need to be codified across key levels of educational delivery – State, District, School and ultimately teacher. This is important so as to ensure that accountability for meeting standards is fairly assigned across the system, i.e., if districts fail to perform their roles then it would be unfair for the consequences of this failure to be borne by the school or ultimately the teacher. As India embarks on establishing school standards in education, it should ensure that these standards are part of efforts to support schools to meet and exceed the standards, thereby establishing a virtuous cycle of school improvement. Many models of school improvement and monitoring have been developed and tested around the world which can offer useful lessons.

Leadership Training

- **If there is an expectation of making school management more accountable then it there must also be effort to build school management capacity, while also enabling them to exercise greater levels of decision making in managing schools.** It is encouraging that NUEPA work will focus on both existing and aspiring school heads as well as promoting the concepts of 'distributed leadership'. This approach provides broader opportunities to develop

the professionalization of the teacher cadre by taking exposure to leadership training as a criterion in the recruitment process. The mission is therefore very encouraged that NUEPA is looking at these three interconnected areas of standards, school based supervision and support and school leadership training in a holistic manner. It is important that NUEPA also draws from the wealth of state based experience in these matters.

In-service Support to Teachers

- **The dearth of Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) for in-service training of secondary school teachers in every state is a major challenge which requires coordinated efforts to address.** There is a real need to develop a vibrant 'ecosystem' of teacher education at both pre and in-service. Critical challenges include developing a systematic strategy for teacher educator development and addressing poor infrastructure, vacant faculty positions. While this may not be in the direct remit of RMSA, RMSA management has an important voice an input to add to internal MHRD deliberations on this area. There are good education and teacher education institutions that offer real potential in assisting the goals of RMSA. Such as the CTEs and IASEs (which currently are mostly engaged with pre-service teacher education) and SCERTs and some DIETs. In addition, departments of education in universities and colleges remain an untapped source. These should be included in the conceptualization, planning and implementation of teacher professional development programmes.
- A continuous professional development model requires regular academic support visits to schools, teacher meetings and sharing of practice and other opportunities for learning that are not supported by the prevalent 'master-trainer' cascade model of training. RMSA could play a catalytic role in promoting and supporting through the AWPB process greater professional peer interaction and mentoring amongst teachers to generate dynamic learning communities. ICT provides new and exciting ways of doing this. Karnataka is a good example of where this is happening.

Curriculum and materials

- **RMSA should mandate that all resources – from curriculum materials to NAS datasets – created under RMSA should be released as 'open educational resources' (using the 'creative commons' licensing approach adopted by NROER).** Curricular (information) resources are invariably created using digital methods / tools, but are seldom available for easy sharing. Furthermore materials should be made available on the NROER platform so that it can be re-used and adapted by others. Similarly important national data such as that in UDISE and NAS should be placed in the public domain for re-use and revision (with associated user protocols as necessary). State based professional learning communities of teachers, school leaders and teacher educators can collaborate to create open educational resources furthering large scale availability of local, contextual resources, a need identified by the JRM as critical to quality education. While UDISE has made great strides in this area, there is a great deal more that could be done with NAS. Given the significance of this data it is essential to make sure these are securely stored with appropriate security and backup provision. In combinations and greater data openness have the potential to accelerate knowledge creation, reduce curricular resource development time, improve quality reduce costs and build stronger communities of practice.

- **Increasing evidence from learning assessments show that entry level students are underprepared to participate in secondary education.** The majority of students attending government and aided schools come from the more underprivileged sections of society. Better understanding of the learning needs of marginalized students and tailored responses to meet them will ensure equitable learning. The success of curriculum, materials and learning enhancement inputs depends on the extent to which they are aligned to the actual profile, contexts and needs of learners (as well as teachers).
- **Overall, curriculum overload, in multiple dimensions, is a concern that has been expressed in NCERT's curriculum studies across several states, as report to the JRM, and this continues to remain an issue.** Even in states that have adopted NCF-05 and NCERT's textbooks, learning assessment show low learning levels. This points to a need for greater understanding of the profiles of both students and teachers. Armed with this information, curriculum and materials design should be better able to accommodate classroom reality and support more realistic learning support.
- **Boards of Secondary Education are key stakeholders in and need to be engaged with.** Secondary education processes are clearly driven by the Board Examinations, with all components being geared to preparing students to pass in these. This has led to the growth of a plethora of textbooks, guide-books and support materials published by a variety of providers (often prohibitively priced and beyond the reach of the poorer students) which are of variable quality. RMSA could play an important role in brokering dialogue between state boards, NCERT, concerned NGOs and private publishers and printers aimed at developing robust assurance mechanisms to ensure students benefit from affordable, well designed, and learning-friendly textbooks.

Recommendations

- MHRD lead by example and use its convening power at state level to initiate collaboration, exploit synergies, achieve economies of scale and deliver collective strategic planning across different Centrally Sponsored Schemes, especially related to teacher education. This may require a review of the current implementation arrangements to ensure they help support collaborative activities and shared use of institutions and other resources where appropriate.
- MHRD supports remedial action programmes that respond to NAS findings and other studies which identify learning needs through the AWPB process, e.g. by making State remediation plan proposals eligible for RMSA funding.
- MHRD develop an institutional arrangement with sufficient recurrent budget to secure the necessary human and material resources to develop a secure archive and user friendly retrieval system for NAS data. This should be as open access as possible to enable secondary data analysis (by suitably qualified people) thereby increasing opportunities for further research to build the evidence base around learning performance and challenges.
- All material developed collaboratively through RMSA should be released as an open education resource available on the web to enable widespread use and refinement. A free an open environment is essential for the evolution of content and tools. RMSA should support and build capacity in collaborative resource creation by teachers and teacher educators e.g. OERs, podcasts, video, animations, virtual labs etc.

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- **Government aided schools at the secondary level**

- **Aided schools contribute significantly to the secondary education sector, though with variations across states.** For the country as a whole, there are 7.9 million children in aided schools, representing 23 percent of total enrollment; a little over half of the number in government schools. Aided schools are however heavily concentrated; 7.1 million pupils are found in just 8 states/UT (Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh). In each of these states, with the exception of AP, plus Goa, Meghalaya and Mizoram, more than 20 percent of pupils are in aided schools. In these states, where the government schools are fewer in number, these schools are playing an important role in providing an expansion to coverage.
- **Given this, India, and individual Indian states, will only be able to meet their RMSA objectives with the contribution of the aided sector.** It is evident that states with significant aided school populations met with during this JRM, these schools are considered very much part of the government sector. The policies and Government support to aided schools is mostly in terms of teachers salary, against sanctioned posts. Teachers are appointed by the school management body but in accordance with the recruitment policy laid down by the government. In some states such as West Bengal the selection is done through conducting state level bodies. The school management is responsible for the day to day administration of these schools, in accordance with the norms laid down by the government but the level of government involvement varies between minimal (Meghalaya) to substantial (West Bengal) from state to state. Recently, in Assam the government has 'provincialised' the aided schools and in West Bengal, the aided schools have been transformed to "Sponsored" schools. All the aided schools charge nominal fees, as determined by the government and sometimes the same or very similar to fees charged in government schools, but sometimes more – though there needs to be further investigation of this to find out the extent of this.
- **Overall, at both the national and state levels, aided schools share many of the characteristics of their government school counterparts.** Aided schools resemble the government schools in their state more than aided schools in other states. Aided schools tend to be somewhat larger and located in more in urban areas. Aided schools are more like government schools than they are different, and more like those schools in their state than aided schools in other states. For example, according to UDISE, in India as a whole, 53 percent of aided schools, and 46 percent of government schools, have more pupils than their reported classrooms would permit (based on RMSA norms): the corresponding figures in Karnataka are 48 percent and 40 percent, in Mizoram, 13 and 9 percent, and in UP, 57 and 39 percent. One significant area of difference between aided and government schools relates to size: overall, aided schools have on average 207 students compared with 170 in government schools; and some states with large numbers of aided schools the differences are even bigger (in Tamil Nadu aided schools are on average twice as big). This is likely connected to the fact that aided

schools tend to be more concentrated in urban areas than government schools (though of course given the geography of Indian states, most aided schools are in rural areas).

- **It is encouraging, therefore, that some of the components under the RMSA Programme are already available to aided schools.** Aided schools have been able to access resources under the ICT @ Schools, Vocational Education and IEDSS schemes, even before these Schemes were integrated into RMSA, and recently these schools have been able to access the RMSA components dealing with teacher training and quality enhancement (though not civil works or teacher salaries). For example, for 2014/15, training was approved about 132,000 teachers in aided schools received training, compared to about 296,000, which is in rough proportion to the number of teachers in each type of school management. This suggests, at least with respect to this element, aided and government schools are treated equitably by states (though more disaggregated analysis is needed to understand this more fully and to learn whether the approvals have been translated into actual implementation of training for different groups of teachers).
- The JRM believes it is important that further work on aided schools, continuing what was done in preparation for this JRM by deepening the analysis on the basis of the JRM discussion and extending it to more states, is completed to understand more fully the way aided schools vary across states, particularly with respect to the type of students they serve and whether their school outcomes are any better or whether incentivizing for better performance is a viable option. This would provide a stronger evidence-base on which policy decisions could be made about the role of aided schools in RMSA and to explore the pros and cons identified above.

Recommendations:

- Aided schools should be considered in the same way as government schools in determining whether a habitation is considered to be 'served', as already required within the RMSA framework. This is an approach to planning which is in line with the view states take of aided schools for meeting state objectives; however some states met with during the review considered a habitation served only if there was a government school present.
 - MHRD may carry out further consultations with state governments to understand their perspectives on the role of aided schools in meeting RMSA objectives. These consultations, and the further work identified above, could take place before the next JRM.
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- **Procurement and Financial Management**

Procurement

- **All States are required to follow the RMSA Manual on Financial Management and Procurement** issued by MHRD on 24th January 2012 for their procurement of works, goods and consultancy activities. This is applicable for all procurement done on and after 1st April 2012. As pointed out in last JRM, the officials in most of the states are aware of the FM & P Manual, but they are still lacking in using/ applying the terms and conditions of the manual in procurement activity.
- **In the first three years of the program, the civil works constitute the major procurement activity in states (approximately 60 percent of the volume of procurement)** though there were no civil works sanctions in FY 12-13. The total expenditure on civil works for the FY 13-14 is approximately Rs. 3236 crore against the total expenditure in that year as Rs. 5103 crore. JRM noted that in 13 states, civil works are being executed by PWD and in others by various state public sector undertakings; procurement work in the majority of States is done at State and district level with very few States doing this at SMDC level. JRM noted that the procurement powers of SMDCs for civil works have been increased from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 30 lakh.
- **JRM is pleased to note that in all States, NIC web portal is in operation and functioning.** However, in 19 states, e tendering process is followed for all major procurements above certain threshold.
- **The design of RMSA envisages Post Procurement Review (PPR) by both the MHRD and the World Bank independently on sample basis.** In FY 13-14, the first post procurement review was conducted by Bank in four States viz., Uttarakhand, Andhra Pradesh, Mizoram and Maharashtra. Regarding independent PPR by MHRD, the JRM was informed that MHRD has issued a notice inviting EOI on 30th July 2014 and is expecting to award the contract by December 2014. MHRD is planning to complete the review in all the states in a two year period.
- **Sanctioned cost norms for civil works have been clarified.** In last JRM, it was noted that one of the reasons for delay in taking up sanctioned work was low sanction cost which was fixed by MHRD on normative cost instead of the Schedule of Rates of the State Government and it was not clear who will bear the difference. However it is now clear from the action taken report on last JRM recommendation that the additional fund required for this difference between State SOR and normative cost will be borne by State Governments. From 2014-15 FY, MHRD has agreed to use the state Schedule of Rates as the basis for sanction of civil works in PAB.

Concerns

- **There are still a number of states without a Procurement Plan** (as was observed also during the last JRM). As envisaged in the FM&P Manual, the first step in the procurement activity is preparation of a realistic procurement plan based on AWP & B, as the base document for monitoring the procurement activities in each state. It is heartening to note that as on end of July 2014, some 18 states have submitted their procurement plan for the year 14-15 to MHRD.
- **In preliminary conclusions from the PPR conducted by the World Bank, it is observed that the State implementing agencies in the reviewed states are not aware of all the conditions indicated in the FM&P manual.** The general findings in variance with FM&P Manual conditions are as follows: No procurement Plan; less bidding time than specified in the Manual; not advertised in widely circulated national newspaper; standard bidding document not used; contract awarded after expiry of bid validity period; and providing a clause for lower and/ or higher limit for bids in the bid document. These are simple and easily-avoidable nonconformities. Therefore there is a need for training to implementing agencies on procurement conditions. The number of people that need the necessary training is very large,

and unlikely to be done rapidly through the current training mechanisms; especially with the turnover of staff.

- **Further from PPR reports, it is noted that there is considerable delay in execution of contracts in the States** and there is a need for closer monitoring and supervision of civil works by the District offices as well as SMDCs.
- **Funds are now released to State Government directly through treasury.** Consequently, the State Government have more responsibility and they have to work closely with MHRD, and state societies with state education department to ensure that funds are released on time to State societies so that they are able to use the releases for efficient and effective procurement.
- **There continue to be huge training needs.** It is a common lament of JRMs that more training is needed. The large numbers and significant turnover indicate to this JRM that the current methods of providing training are unlikely to be able to respond adequately to the needs. New modalities are needed; and financial management and procurement procedures seem tailor-made for online/self-paced learning approaches.

Recommendations

- MHRD and states may publish the real time data on transfer dates and amount of funds to the State treasury from MHRD and to the RMSA society from the State treasury on RMSA portal.
- States to ensure effective monitoring mechanisms at all levels. With more delegation of financial powers to SMDC, it is important that States should strengthen support at the district level with technical resource person to supervise, monitor and offer hand-holding technical support to SMDCs for civil works supervision. There is a need for greater convergence of staffing at district level among SSA and RMSA.
- MHRD could commission the development of some self-learning materials, including good practice examples, FAQs and templates, on FM&P manual processes (covering both procurement and financial management aspects), and place these on the RMSA portal for access by all staff of implementing agencies. This training material should include self-assessment and MHRD may consider offering a certificate for those who demonstrate acquisition of the required knowledge and understanding
- MHRD may follow up with 18 States who have not submitted the procurement plans for the FY14-15 to furnish the same at the earliest.

Financial Management

- The Mission was pleased to note that the PAB meetings for FY 14-15 have been completed for all 36 States and Union Territories by May 2014 and Rs. 1270 crores (against a BE of 5,000 crores and which includes an ad hoc release). This should allow more rapid implementation and this good practice should become standard practice in future years.
- **Actual funds released for the Program by Government of India in FY 2013-14 has declined by about 4% compared to FY 2012-13** (see table below). This indicates a slight decline in the pace of implementation in FY 13-14 despite the higher Budget Estimate indicating that the programme was expected to continue to expand.

Year	Budget Estimates	Revised Estimates	Opening Balance of Funds with States	Funds Released by GoI	Funds Released by States	Other Receipts	Expenditures Reported by States	Unspent Funds with States
2009-10	1353.98	550.00		549.00	238.47	20.52	81.03	726.96
2010-11	1700.00	1500.00	726.96	1481.87	353.14	25.52	900.57	1686.92
2011-12	2423.90	2512.85	1686.92	2500.00	1091.95	101.81	1678.27	3702.41
2012-13	3124.00	3172.00	3702.41	3171.00	1056.50	133.54	2402.84	5660.61
2013-14	3983.00	3123.00	5660.61	3045.88	1413.81	176.82	5103.57	5193.55
Total	17584.88	10857.85		10747.75	4153.87	458.21	10166.28	

Note: 'Unspent funds with states' includes advances given to construction agencies.

Source: TSG, MHRD.

Rs. Crores

- Based on data presented in the table above, the closing balance of funds available with States as on March 31, 2014 is Rs. 5,194 crores, which includes advances given to construction agencies. There is a need to analyse the data reported by States and check their reasonableness vis-à-vis Releases by the Central and State Governments, Other Receipts, Expenditures Reported and funds under the non-recurring head parked with Construction Agencies. To promote accountability and transparency, MHRD may wish to put up on its portal State-wise and year-wise data on fund releases (Centre & State), utilization reported and the balance of funds lying with States. Similar practices have benefitted other flagship Centrally Sponsored Schemes like NREGA.
- As required by the Financing Agreement between the GoI and the World Bank, Audit Reports of all State Implementing Agencies for FY 12-13 were submitted to the Development Partners. Audit Reports of 28 States have been qualified by the Auditors. Some of the key audit observations that need to be addressed are listed below.

Interim Unaudited Financial Reports versus Audited Expenditure: Analysis shows an over- all difference of about INR 660 crores (20 percent of expenditures reported in IUFR for FY 12-13) between expenditure reported in IUFR and the audited expenditures. There are large differences in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Maharashtra, Manipur, Mizoram, Odisha, Rajasthan Tamil Nadu, UP and Uttarakhand.

Releases reported as expenditures: The FM&P Manual states that all funds released to the districts and School level units are classified as advances and indicated as such in the books of accounts. These advances shall be adjusted based on utilisation certificates received. Advances, if not actually spent for which accounts have not been settled, should be shown as advances and not as expenditure. The Manual also lays down that funds for recurring grants should be released to districts and schools only after UCs of previous grants have been furnished to the SIS and Districts respectively. Data furnished by States and observations of auditors indicates that several States have not complied with this provision and do not have appropriate system of reconciliation of grants to schools and tracking of Utilisation certificates.

Interest earned on Project Funds parked in Bank Accounts of construction agencies other than State PWD: In some States, advances towards civil works have been given to State level corporate entities. There is a need to take stock of the status of utilisation of such funds as also of the interest earned on such funds in the bank accounts of such entities.

Audit of Schools in Jammu and Kashmir: In Jammu and Kashmir, most of the schools did not turn up for the audit of FY 12-13 and therefore amounts transferred to them were treated as unutilized. The Office of the State Project Director needs to take urgent steps to get the audit of Schools for FY 12-13 completed.

Review of audit reports submitted by the States suggests that there are wide variations in quality of State audits and the overall audit regime would benefit from further strengthening.

- The Mission noted that the system of Internal Audit of the Program is non-existent in almost all States (a finding also of JRM III). An internal audit system helps to address lapses in internal controls in a timely manner rather than leaving them to be identified during annual external audits. Considering the size of the Program, its geographical spread and varying staff skills at various levels of implementation, the importance of obtaining quality audit assurance on appropriate use of funds and proper implementation of internal controls cannot be emphasized enough. As reported to the JRM, many states have yet to introduce a system for internal audit of the RMSA programme.

Recommendations

- There is a need to analyse the data reported by States and check their reasonableness vis-à-vis Releases by the Central and State Governments, Other Receipts, Expenditures Reported and funds under the non-recurring head parked with Construction Agencies. This analysis should be conducted on a state-wise basis.
- The SIS of each State should provide clarification and/or take remedial actions against the audit observations and report back to MHRD by December 31, 2014.
- States should reconcile the differences between unaudited and audit expenditure by December 2014 and going forward such reconciliation statements need to be prepared and included in the Annual Financial Statements.
- Rolling out of the Central Plan Monitoring System (CPSMS) could be considered to help states and districts with grant reconciliation and tracking of UCs.