

**Status of Implementation of Food and Work related Schemes in Bihar  
2004-2005**

*State Advisor's Report  
April 2005*

*Submitted to the Commissioner of the Supreme Court, Dr. N.C. Saxena*

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## Contents

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Pages</b>
1.	Introduction	1-2
2.	Midday Meal Scheme	3-8
3.	Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)	9-15
4.	Targeted Public Distribution Scheme (TPDS)	16-19
5.	Antyodaya Anna Yojana	20-23
6.	Annapurna Scheme	24-25
7.	National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS)	26-29
8.	National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS)	30-31
9.	National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS)	32-35
10.	Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY)	36-41
11.	Appendix	42

## Introduction

The legal battle for right to food began with a writ petition filed in the Supreme Court (SC) in April 2001. The case People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) Vs. Union of India and others (writ petition [Civil] No. 196 of 2001) argues that the right to food is the fundamental right of Indian citizens, and follows from the right to life. Though the litigation was initially a specific petition on the drought prevailing in the state of Rajasthan during that time, today, it has adopted a much broader scope.

The Court has passed significant interim orders for upholding and strengthening the various government schemes – directly food-based, and social security and work related. The schemes that have been covered in the ambit of the SC orders is the Midday Meal scheme (MDM), Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Antyodaya Anna Yojana, Annapurna Scheme, Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS), National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS), National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) and Sampoorna Gramin Rojgar Yojna (SGRY).

In interim orders dated May 8, 2002 and May 2, 2003, respectively, the SC appointed Dr. N.C. Saxena and Mr. S.R. Sankaran as the Commissioners of the court for the purpose of monitoring the implementation of the writ petition. Further, the commissioners appointed advisors in each major state (currently in 11 states), to assist them in monitoring the interim orders passed by the court. The advisors provide regular updates to the commissioners on the status of implementation in the state, and henceforth highlight the need for redressal mechanism. The state governments are also requested to appoint a 'nodal officer' to enable periodic interface with the commissioner and the advisor.

This report by the state advisor is compiled as a contribution for the sixth report of the Commissioners appointed by the Supreme Court (SC).

The report highlights the poor status of implementation of food and employment related schemes in Bihar. It throws light on the procedural hassles for availing the benefits of the scheme. It attempts to chart out the barriers in the various stages of implementation of the programmes – beginning from the state till it reaches the final beneficiary.

### Main functions of the advisor

- Analysis of state performance using macro data
- Rigorous participatory research;
- Response to emergencies;
- Ensuring the functioning of an effective micro-level grievance redressal system;
- Ensuring dissemination of information by the state governments;
- Articulating alternative demands regarding state policy especially on hunger;
- Preparing periodic state reports;
- Establishing a permanent monitoring mechanism for hunger-related issues;
- Ensuring accountability for failures of state functionaries.

The report is based on: (i) official data collected from the respective departments of the state government; (ii) interviews of key officials of the relevant departments at the state, district and block levels; and (iii) observations from the field. Field studies were undertaken to understand the systemic bottlenecks in implementation rather than to assess overall status of implementation.

Excessive centralisation of power reflected in unnecessarily lengthy and complex procedures inflict the working of the schemes. Involvement of a number of validation and sanctioning authorities makes the beneficiary run from pillar to post, acting as a discouraging factor and breeding corruption. Supervision and monitoring systems seem to have collapsed in the state. There seems to be no fear of penal action amongst officials resulting in lack of accountability. Poor system of record keeping and statistics at the field level fails to give genuine feedback to the state authorities.

Most of the schemes suffer from lack of adequate provisioning of funds for which both the Centre and the State should be held responsible. Moreover, the entire process from sanction to release and allotment of funds is characterised by unnecessary complications and centralisation of power, and leads to avoidable delays. For instance, if a budget is passed by the legislative assembly, where is the need to take 'n' number of sanctions just to get the money released.

In order to meet the SC deadlines, the state has taken hurried steps in some schemes without creating proper infrastructure facilities, basic provisions and regular monitoring. For instance, the Midday Meal scheme is being implemented in the entire state but performance on-ground is far from satisfactory. Similarly, in ICDS, the number of aanganwadi centers has increased considerably but their functioning is yet to be assessed.

Little work has been done on the front of information dissemination. During survey of two blocks of Patna district, it was found that no hoardings were put up in the villages. Wall painting was found in one of the two block offices surveyed.

Overall, performance of all the schemes is dismal barring some positive developments in ICDS and MDM. It seems that the directions and orders of the Supreme Court have not evoked the desired changes in the state. The irony remains that we are still struggling with the state to implement its own schemes!

## **Midday Meal Scheme**

The scheme was initiated in Bihar in September 2003. It began in ten districts of the state, and with effect from December 2004, the entire state has been covered under MDM scheme. The objective of the programme is, “ (i) to boost “universalization of primary education (classes I to V) by improving enrolment, retention, attendance and learning levels of children especially those belonging to the disadvantaged sections, (ii) to improve nutritional status of students at primary stage and (iii) to provide nutritional support to students of primary age in drought-affected areas during summer vacations also”.<sup>1</sup>

The scheme aims to provide cooked midday meal with minimum 300 calories and 8-12 grams of protein, to all children studying in classes I to V in (i) Government, local body and government aided schools and (ii) EGS and AIE centers

### Orders of the Supreme Court

#### November 28, 2001

- The Supreme Court directed the States and Union Territories to implement the Midday Meal Scheme by providing every child in every Government and Government assisted primary school with a prepared midday meal with a minimum content of 300 calories and 8-12 grams of protein each day of school for a minimum of 200 days.
- Those governments providing dry rations instead of cooked meals must start providing cooked meals till February 28, 2002 in all government and government aided primary schools in all half the districts of the state ( in order of poverty ) and must within a further period of three months extend the provision of cooked meals to the remaining parts of the State.
- Directed the Union of India and the FCI to ensure provision of fair average quality grain for the scheme on time.
- The States/ Union Territories and the FCI were directed to jointly inspect food grains. If the food grain is found, on joint inspection, not to be of fair average quality, it will have to be replaced by the FCI prior to lifting.

#### May 2, 2003

- States that have not implemented the order on MDM scheme to immediately start providing mid-day meals in at least 25 % of the districts (with priority to poorest districts).

#### April 20, 2004

- All states have to start implementing the mid-day meal scheme latest by September 1, 2004. Centre was directed to make financial provisions for midday meal infrastructure, and also reply to Abhijit Sen Committee's suggestion that centre share a part of conversion costs.
- The court asked the Government of India to state when it is planning to implement the Prime Minister's announcement to extend mid-day meals upto class Xth.
- Dalits to be given preference in appointment of cooks and helpers
- In drought affected areas, midday meals shall be provided even during summer vacations.
- The central government shall make provision for the construction of kitchen sheds and shall also allocate funds to meet the conversion cost of food grains into cooked midday meals. It shall also periodically monitor the low offtake of the food grains.
- Attempts shall be made for better infrastructure, improved facilities (safe drinking water etc.), closer monitoring

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<sup>1</sup> Guidelines on National programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Mid-Day Meal Scheme), Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, December, 2004

In view of the Supreme Court order dated April 20, 2004 <sup>2</sup>, the government of Bihar issued a notification on December 18, 2004, ordering the implementation of the scheme in the entire state. The status of implementation, however, is weak. In a survey conducted by the advisor in 51 schools across 13 districts in the state, midday was found to be given in only three schools falling in one district.

### Coverage of schools

The table below shows the number of schools where the scheme is ongoing.

Time period	No. of schools
Sept 03-Dec 03	2578
Jan 04-Dec 04	15429
Dec 04 onwards	61495

### Dismal performance of the midday meal scheme in Bihar

A random survey was conducted across 13 districts in Bihar from February 7-15, 2005. The objective was to determine the number of days on which meal was provided to the children in January' 05. The survey was purposively conducted for the month of January, to ascertain the implementation status after the notification of the state government was passed (on December 18, 2004) to implement MDM in the entire state. Enquiries about the execution of MDM were conducted in minimum three schools in each district. A total of 51 schools were surveyed, in which MDM was being provided in three schools of the Sitamarhi district namely. The schools provided the meal for 15 days in the month of January.

### Inadequate allocation by the centre

Allocation of foodgrain (rice) by the centre has shown a downward trend, falling from 24529 mt in 2003-04 to 19583 mt in 2004-05.

### Poor offtake of grain

The performance of the state with regard to offtake is quite poor. According to the data provided by the state government, Bihar has lifted 7700 mt of grain (upto Sept. 04). The table below shows the allotment and offtake figures of the state over a three-year time period.

Year	Allotment (mt)	Offtake (mt)	Percentage of Offtake
2002-03	24287	13647	56

<sup>2</sup>All such States/UTS who have not fully complied with the order dated 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2001 shall comply with the said directions fully in respect of the entire state/UT, not later than September 1, 2004.

2003-04	24529	16925	68
2004-05 (upto Sept 04)	19583	7700	39

Due to limited coverage of the scheme in the year 2003-04, the figures given above primarily represent distribution of dry ration. The state authorities were unable to provide the actual figures of allocation and offtake under the **cooked** midday meal scheme. The same may be true for the year 2004-'05.

#### **Problem from the field: transporting grain from the block office to the schools**

During midday meal survey conducted in East Champaran and Supaul districts of Bihar (Dec 10-24, 2004), it was observed that a major hurdle in the smooth implementation of the scheme was non-allocation of rice from the block office to the schools. In most of the schools, the headmaster and the teachers had to procure rice from the block office. Another problem, which surfaced during the survey was the frequent absence of the allocation officer in the block. Many headmasters complained that despite giving prior dates, the officer on duty to deliver the rice is usually unavailable. This led to additional burden of transportation and sparing out additional time.

In Supaul, every school was allotted a single instalment of rice-either it was delivered by block or procured by the school. Khichdi was cooked till the time the instalment exhausted.

#### **Inadequate expenditure by the state**

According to the Department of Primary and Mass Education, they allocated and fully utilized Rs. 13.51 crores under the state plan for the midday meal scheme in the year 2003-04. For the year 2004-05, the allocation in the state budget has been increased to Rs. 98.34 crores. However, this is far below the required amount of Rs. 308.76 crores<sup>3</sup>

<b>Year</b>	<b>Funds available (in crores)</b>	<b>Funds required (in crores)</b>
<b>2003-04</b>	Rs 61.85 (PMGY- Rs 48.34 and State Plan- Rs.13.51)	Rs. 308.76
<b>2004-05</b>	Rs. 146.68 (PMGY- Rs. 48.34 and State Plan-Rs. 98.34)	Rs. 308.76

A total of Rs 1.64 as conversion cost per child, per meal has been provisioned under the scheme, which includes the cost of fuel, pulses, rice, salt and remuneration of the cook, which is higher than the all India average of Rs. 1.17 (as of August 27, 2000)<sup>4</sup>. Out of the

<sup>3</sup> The figure is calculated by 9413646 (total no. of children enrolled in class I to V in both rural and urban areas) x 1.64 x 200

<sup>4</sup> Recommendations on Midday Meals, based on deliberations of the National Advisory Council on August

total cost, Re. 1 is provided by the centre for meeting conversion cost (since Sept, 2004) and the remaining 0.64 paise is borne by the state. The state government, however, feels that the amount is inadequate to provide quality meals and diversify the menu.

As per the official estimates, bifurcation of Rs. 1.64 (in phase I – Sept 2003 to Nov 2004), is as under:

Cost of pulses – 0.75p

Cost of fuel, salt, turmeric, oil and *masala* – 0.25p

Cost of labour – 0.64p

The bifurcation has undergone a change in the current financial year 2003-04, (Dec 18, 2004 onwards):

Cost of labour – 0.50p

Other cost – Rs 1.14

### **Allocation from PMGY**

According to the information provided by the state government, Bihar has been allocated Rs. 48.34 crores per annum from the Additional Central Assistance (ACA) under PMGY, earmarked by the Planning Commission, since year 2003-04. The amount, released in two installments, is utilized for meeting the conversion cost of MDM. The first installment, released in August 2004 of Rs. 24. 17 crores, enabled the government of Bihar to expand the scheme from three blocks in ten districts to all the blocks in these ten existing districts. And the second instalment, which will be released in January, 2005 of Rs. 24. 17 crores, will assist the state government in expanding the scheme to the entire state.

### **Kitchen Shed**

As per the information provided by the state government, Bihar state has not initiated the process of constructing kitchen shed from the funds available under the Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (till December 2004).

### **Utensils**

In March 2004, the state government released Rs. 2000 per school (from Sarva Shikha Abhiyaan), for maintenance-related works. Later in the month of November, the state government notified the schools to utilize the released amount for purchase of utensils for MDM. Due to the lag, most of the schools had already utilized the amount, leaving no funds for utensils. Currently, the primary education department is in the process of collecting information from the schools, who have exhausted the amount and require additional funds for utensils.

### ***Field observations***

### ***Remuneration of the cook***



The state government cook has reduced the wage of the from monthly sum of Rs. 2000 to 50 paisa per child, per meal. According to the state officials this has been done in view of the irregularity of MDM.

In East Champaran district of Bihar, out of the 12 schools surveyed, five were paid a daily remuneration of Rs. 50 to each cook (two cooks appointed in each school). Two schools gave monthly remuneration wherein one paid Rs. 1,000 while the other paid Rs. 2000.

In Supaul district, on the other hand, from the seven schools surveyed the team was able to interview only two. Of the two cooks interviewed, one received remuneration of Rs. 50 per day and other Rs. 60 per day. They complained about the daily wage rate system of the job, as it failed to provide job security.

MDM survey brought to light the insecurity of work amongst the cooks. Many of them were rendered jobless due to discontinuance of the scheme. Their remuneration, on an average, was Rs. 50 per day, paid on the day 'khichdi' was prepared. Irregularity in cooking, further lead to fluctuations in their wages.

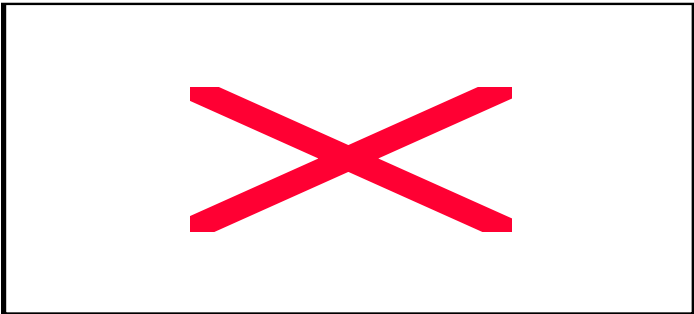
#### ***Process of selection of the cook***

In both the districts, no specific pattern of appointment of the cook surfaced. In some schools, the School Education Committee president or the *mukhiya* of the village randomly asked one of their acquaintances to prepare the food, while in others, the headmaster appointed the person of his choice.

#### ***Cooking arrangements***

MDM is cooked in the open (generally the *veranda*) in most of the schools. In East Champaran, meal is cooked in the open in six schools, while three have put up thatched roofs for the process. A permanent room for cooking was found only in one school in the district. Two schools cooked meals in the classroom itself. The cooking arrangements are depicted in the diagram below

Caste of the cooks
As per the SC order dated April 20, 2004, dalits are to be given preference in the appointment of cooks for the scheme.
This was, however, not found to be implemented in East Champaran and Supaul districts of Bihar. During the survey, the team interviewed ten cooks, and none of them belonged to the dalit category.



Sheds in many schools were found to be broken or damaged, due to discontinuance of the scheme. If the kitchen shed (leakproof) is not constructed in the coming months, it will be difficult to continue the programme during the rainy season.

### ***Water facilities***

More than 50 per cent of the schools did not have a handpump within the school premises.

### ***Stagnant menu***

In the past one year of its implementation, the menu of the mid-day meal scheme in Bihar has not changed. The scheme is commonly known as the '*Khichdi*' programme as only *khichdi* is served on an everyday basis. According to the government authorities, "what else can we cook in a small budget of Rs.1.64 per student?"

### **Recommendations**

The immediate concern is to institute a mechanism for ensuring that the foodgrains reach the school without involving the school teacher or local functionaries. Regularity of supply of grain must be ensured.

Allocation of funds should be adequate. Allotment and release of funds should be regular.

Infrastructural facilities like utensils, water facility, kitchen shed, etc. are poor and need to be strengthened. Quality norms must be strictly adhered to.

The government must ensure that the schools open on official days and food is cooked without exception. This will also ensure regular employment for the cook.

Supervision system needs to be tightened. Orientation of School Education Committee about the MDM programme is essential. Linking midday meals with the school health programme will help in achieving overall goals of MDM.

## Integrated Child Development Scheme

Aimed at protecting children in the age group of 0-6 years from under-nutrition by providing supplementary food, ICDS was launched on October 2, 1975. The scheme plays a significant role in checking mortality rate amongst children below the age of six.

### Orders of the Supreme Court

#### November 28, 2001

Directed the State Governments./ Union Territories to implement the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) in full and to ensure that every ICDS disbursing centre in the country shall provide as under –

- Each child up to 6 years of age to get 300 calories and 8-10 grams of protein;
- Each adolescent girl to get 500 calories and 20-25 grams of protein
- Each pregnant woman and each nursing mother to get 500 calories & 20-25 grams of protein;
- Each malnourished child to get 600 calories and 16-20 grams of protein.
- Have a disbursement centre in every settlement.

#### April 29, 2004

- The court directed to cover all children under the age group of 0-6 years.
- GoI has been directed to state the time period within which it proposes to cover all the 14 lakh habitations in the country.
- The GOI should consider revision of the norm of rupee one for every child, a norm fixed in 1991.
- All sanctioned anganwadis to be made fully operational by June 30, 2004.
- The sanctioned anganwadis to supply nutritious food/supplement to the children, adolescent girls and to pregnant and lactating women under the scheme for 300 days in a year.

#### October 7, 2004

The court discussed measures such as increasing the number of anganwadis from six to 14 lakhs, increasing the norms for supplementary nutrition, abolition of contractors in provision of food, provision

The programme also provides supplementary nutrition to pregnant and lactating women. Apart from nutrition, the scheme also caters to the need for pre-school education, immunization programmes, health and referral check-ups.

One center enrolls 40 children in the age group of 6 months to 3 years and 40 children in the age group of 3-6 years. In addition, it enrolls 16 pregnant and lactating mothers. In general, there is a provision of providing 60 gms of cereals and 30 gms of pulses. However, in the age-group of 6 months to 3 years, 12 children are supposed to be severely malnourished (grade III & IV). For these children and pregnant and lactating mothers (16 in number) the provision is double, i.e., 120 gms of cereals and 60 gms of pulses.

For pregnant and lactating mothers, and children up to 3 years, the provision is to provide them with take home ration (THR) on a twice a month basis. Cooked food is to be

provided at the center for pre-school children in the age group of 3-6 years. The quantity of the grain is considered to be sufficient to meet nutritional requirement of 300 calories and 10 gm. of protein in children upto 6 years; 600 calories and 20 gm of protein in case of severely malnourished children, and 500 calories and 20 gm of protein in case of pregnant and lactating mothers.

**Coverage: Aanganwadi centers**

The population of the state is 8,28,78,796 (2001 census). As per the present norm of one ICDS center per 1000 population Bihar should have 82878 AWCs. But the central government has sanctioned only 60587 centers for the state, resulting in a shortfall of 22291 AWCs in Bihar. The scheme covers 393 blocks, as sanctioned by the centre, but 139 blocks remain fully or partially uncovered.

No additional projects have been sanctioned by the central government since 2002-2003. However, on the positive side, the number of aanganwadi centers has more than doubled since November 2001. The increased number of aanganwadi centers is amongst those sanctioned by the Centre prior to 2002-2003, This is a step towards having an Aanganwadi center in every settlement. According to officials, out of the sanctioned 60587, the number of centers operational as of end March 2005 is 59484.

<b>Time period</b>	<b>Sanctioned No. of Aanganwadi centers</b>
1975-Nov 2001	24228
Jan 02-Dec 02	30158
Jan 03-Dec 03	32420
Jan 04-Dec 04	56166
March end 2005	60587

**Coverage: Beneficiaries**

According to the state officials, the coverage of 0-3 years, 3-6 years and pregnant and lactating mothers, confirms to the norm of 40 per cent (BPL percentage, as considered by ICDS in Bihar). Out of 12153752 lakh eligible children in the age group of 0-6 years in the state, 48.4 lakh children are currently being benefited. Coverage of pregnant and lactating mothers is reported as 969392. The ICDS directorate could not provide the number of children in the age group of 6 months to 3 years and also number of malnourished children, but we were told that their coverage conforms to the norms. Presently adolescent girls are not being covered under ICDS in Bihar.

FY: 2004-05

<b>Beneficiary</b>	<b>Total population (in ICDS Projects)</b>	<b>Total beneficiaries (in lakhs)</b>	<b>Percentage covered</b>
Children (0-6 years)	12153752	4846960	39.9
Pregnant women and Lactating mothers	2423480	969392	40
Children (3-6 years) <sup>5</sup>	Not available	1296800	NA
Severely Malnourished children	Not available	727044	NA

Upon inquiry, we realised that there is no difference between the beneficiaries covered under ICDS and eligible population under all the three categories. Thus, the state does not have any specific figures of the real beneficiaries of the programme. In other words, the figures do not hold any difference in attendance and enrolment of the beneficiaries per center.

#### **Coverage: Services**

The table below provides number of beneficiaries according to services provided by the aanganwadi center. Since the denominator regarding each service is not available with the Department, it is not possible to determine the percentage of coverage of each service. There are some anomalies in the data provided to us which could not be sorted out. For instance, all beneficiary children in the age group 0-6 years (48.46 lakhs) are supposed to be receiving supplementary nutrition. However, the coverage shown below, mentions the number as 23.42 lakhs only (48.3%).

Upto May 2004

<b>Services</b>	<b>Children</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Total Beneficiaries</b>
Supplementary feeding	2342959	420104	2763063
Immunization	1034235	265440	1299675
Health check-ups	106704	65968	172672
Referral services	8613	5277	13890
Pre-school education	1296800	-	1296800
Health and nutrition services <sup>6</sup>	-	95515	95515

#### **Allocation and utilization of funds**

The total allocation for the year 2004-'05 was 332.47 crores. Utilisation upto March 31, 2005 was Rs. 246.92 crores which is 74.27 per cent. Utilisation of funds available under the head of ICDS (General) was low (46.9%). However, expenditure in the year 2003-2004 was Rs. 170.22 crores, showing an increase by 45.05%.

<sup>5</sup> This is based on the assumption that all the children attending pre-schools are equivalent to the total number of beneficiaries in the age group of 3-6 years.

<sup>6</sup> This pertains to training of women on preventive and promotive health aspects.

FY: 2004-05 (Upto March 2005)

<b>Budget Head</b>	<b>Allocation (in Lakhs)</b>	<b>Actual expenditure (in Lakhs)</b>	<b>Percentage of Utilisation</b>
ICDS (General)	1185473000	556030278	46.9
ICDS (World Bank)	839354204	694142396	82.69
SNP (Pradhan Mantri Grameen Yojana)	362595000	357000164	98.45
SNP (Govt . of Bihar)	937280019	862113553	91.98
Total	3324702223	2469286391	74.27

There has been delay in disbursement of funds by the centre. For instance, the amount released under ICDS (General) was:

24.05.2004	Rs. 204361000
23.07.2004	Rs. 136486000
09.11.2004	Rs. 400000000
24.03.2005	Rs. 200000000
Total	Rs. 940847000

The amount released under ICDS (World Bank) was:

24.06.2004	Rs. 155100000
30.09.2004	Rs. 155200000
30.12.2004	Rs. 100000000
Total	Rs. 410300000

[The Centre did not release the last instalment till March 2005.]

Delays have been noted in releasing of salaries of the Aanganwadi staff. The field survey in Bikram block of Patna district revealed that the honorarium of aanganwadi sevika had been due for six months. When inquired from the state officials, we were told that the lag existed in the World Bank assisted projects, as there was a delay in the release of funds. Reportedly, salaries have been paid uptill March 31.

During 2004-05, one time grant of Rs. 1200 per aanganwadi center for purchase of utensils was provided to 331 projects (37875 centers). The number of centers remaining are 10600 from 62 projects.

**Difference between the actual market price and allotted prices:**

The amount for provision of Supplementary Nutrition (SNP) provided to the centers falls short of the required amount due to the difference between the prices at which the amount of SNP is provided to the centers, and the actual prices in the market. This is elaborated in the table below:

<b>Foodgrain</b>	<b>Allotted Price</b>	<b>Actual market price</b>
Rice	8	9-10
Dal	18	25-30

Thus, there is a clear need to increase the amount under SNP in accordance with the prices at which the foodgrains are available in the market. The commissioner's recommendation to increase the allotted price to match the actual market price has not been considered.

### **Cramped aanganwadi centers**

Lack of adequate space is inflicting the aanganwadi centers. The centers are generally operational in houses, *dalans*, small rooms which are cramped without proper sunlight and ventilation. The main reason behind this is meagre rent provisioned which is Rs. 50 per month in rural areas and Rs. 300 per month in urban areas. State government owns a meagre five per cent of the total ICDS centers running in the state.

Centers on rent: 52928

Centers owned by the state: 3238

Despite recommendation by the Commissioner to increase the rent, no steps have been taken in this direction.

### **Shortage of staff**

It is hampering the effective implementation of the scheme. In the current year appointment of staff was put on hold due to the elections in the state. The 189 CDPOs working have been given additional charge in order to meet the target of number of centers in operation.

The current staff strength of ICDS is as under:

<b>Positions</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Filled</b>	<b>Vacant</b>	<b>% vacant</b>
CDPO	393	189	204	51.9
Supervisor	2489	361	2128	85.5
Aanganwari Sevika	60587	59484	1103	1.82
Aanganwadi Helper	60587	58890	1697	2.80

The shortage of staff was critical in the case of supervisors. The impact of their shortage was clear with on-ground. During the field survey in Bikram block of Patna district, it was observed that the supervisor is currently monitoring 202 aanganwadi centers as against the norm of 20.

We have been informed that the state government is considering "to appoint lady supervisors on contract basis under a completely decentralised system whereby the Zilla Parishad will select the suitable candidate" locally. The department has mooted a proposal. Personnel and finance departments have approved the proposal.

As per the officials of the department, Bihar Public Service Commission has been requested to start recruitment process of CDPOs.

### ***Procedural problems***

#### 1. Allotment of funds

There is no fixed time period or amount for the release of funds under ICDS. The instalments-time period and amount vary from year to year, leading to lack in regularity of funds allotted. Since the funds from the two heads are not allotted together, they are, further, not released together to the block and then to the AWC. This contributes to the variation in the funds received by the Sevika.

### **Funds disbursement process**

The department seeks sanction of funds from the Yojna Adhikrit Samiti (Empowered committee) headed by the Development commissioner. After sanction by the Empowered Committee, approval from the Cabinet is sought. Based on the approval of the Cabinet, the department sanctions the amount which serves as the basis for allotment to the projects.

The letter of allotment is sent to the CDPO who puts up the bill to the Treasury in a prescribed format. The treasury officer clears the bill and sends advice to the bank for release of money. Further, the money is deposited in CDPO's account. CDPO, in turn, transfers the money to aanganwadi center's account.

Every aanganwadi center is supposed to have a *Poshahar Vitaran, Karyanvayan Samiti* (nutrition distribution implementation committee). The committee comprises four members from beneficiaries' mothers, one of whom is the chairperson of the committee, and the aanganwadi sevika who is member-secretary of the committee. The bank account is jointly operated by the sevika and the chairperson of the committee. The committee has the responsibility of the entire process of procurement, cooking and distribution of nutritional food.

#### 2. Linkage of the mukhiya/panchayat and the AWC sevika

As per the ICDS guidelines, the AWC sevika has to get her attendance and utilization certificate signed by the village mukhiya monthly. In many centers it has been noticed that the mukhiya delays the process which leads to lag in the release of funds to the center. A common complaint received by the district office is that the mukhiya does not take any interest in the activities of the center (on a general basis), and misuses his powers of validation.



### 3. Paper work

Despite concerns raised time and again by the commissioner, no steps have been taken to reduce the enormous paper work undertaken by the aanganwadi staff.

### 4. Training of sevika and helper

In view of the large number of untrained sevikas and helpers, a 4-days induction course has been introduced.

### 5. Inspection

According to the order dated March 30, 2001, the CDPOs are required to inspect at least 50 per cent of the centers every month. The Commissioner had suggested that the CDPOs and the supervisors be asked to learn riding motor-bikes and mopeds and there should be a government scheme for sanction of interest-free loans to them for buying mopeds. There is no initiative in this regard. However, the state government reportedly provides 500/- per day for those CDPOs who do not have a vehicle.

#### **Inspection?**

The CDPO in charge of two blocks-Naubatpur and Bikram was interviewed as a part of the survey. A total of 222 centers are under her charge. Her office is 40 kms from her residence and she visits her office thrice a week. In this kind of a situation, there is little possibility of the CDPO inspecting the centers in her jurisdiction.

### 6. Service rules for supervisors

According to the department officials, the service rules for supervisors has been finalised and approved by the cabinet. However, with the President's rule in the state, all the one month old decisions are under review, with this decision also pending with the state Governor.

### 7. Adolescent girls

With effect with effect from 2005-06, the state plans to expand the scheme to adolescent girls, giving nutrition to three girls per center.

#### **Recommendations**

The government must commit to universalise the scheme within a specified time period. The budget must be raised to meet the actual cost of running the scheme efficiently.

The Centre should release funds to the district on a monthly or bi-monthly basis automatically. Funds disbursement process within the state should be made simpler in order to ensure timely release of money.

Filling up vacancies, particularly of ICDS supervisors must be taken up on an urgent basis.

## Targeted Public Distribution Scheme (TPDS)

Launched on June 1, 1997, TPDS aims to ensure availability of food to the poor households. Special cards are issued to families living Below the Poverty Line (BPL), and foodgrains are sold to them at subsidized prices through the PDS shops.

### Orders of the Supreme Court

#### July 23, 2001

Court directed the States to see that all the PDS shops, if closed, are re-opened and start functioning within one week and regular supplies be made.

#### November 28, 2001

The States were directed to complete the identification of BPL families, issuing of cards and commencement of distribution of 25 kgs. grain per family per month, latest by January 1, 2002.

The Delhi Govt. was directed to ensure that TPDS application forms are freely available and are given and received free of charge and there is an effective mechanism in place to ensure speedy and effective redressal of grievances

#### May 8, 2002

The central and state governments were directed to form clear guidelines for proper identification of BPL families.

Rations shops are to remain open throughout the months during fixed hours the details of which will be displayed on the notice board.

#### May 2, 2003

The court directed that it is necessary to evolve a system whereby eligible BPL families, which may not be on the list, are so included as also the ration shops and other outlets remaining open and giving deliveries of foodgrains to those, who are on the list and hold the requisite cards.

Licencees who (i) do not keep their shops open throughout the month during the stipulated time, (ii) fail to provide grain to BPL families at strictly BPL rates, and no higher, (iii) keep the cards of BPL households with them and (iv) make false entries in the BPL cards, (v) engage in black marketing and siphoning away of grains to the open market and hand over such ration shops to such other person/organisation, shall make themselves liable for cancellation of their licenses.

The concerned authorities shall (i) permit BPL households to buy grain in installments and (ii) wide publicity shall be given so as to make BPL families aware of their entitlements of foodgrains.

According to the data provided to us by the state government, 73,94,486 families have been identified as falling under the category of BPL (for the financial year 2004-05) and the number of families currently receiving foodgrains under the scheme is 61,63,518. With these calculations, the quantity of foodgrains allotted by the Centre is adequate to meet the requirements of the state.

<b>Year</b>	2004-05 (Upto October, 2004)
<b>Total no. of beneficiaries</b>	73,94,486
<b>Total Allotment ('000 tonnes)</b>	3513
<b>Required Allotment ('000 tonnes)</b>	3105

### **Low offtake of BPL grain**

Percentage of offtake by the state is particularly poor. For the year 2004-05 (upto October 2004), offtake of wheat stands at 47.8%, while that of rice is 8.8%. Allocation has remained constant for the past three years.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Allocation (tonnes)</b>	<b>Offtake</b>	<b>% age of offtake</b>
<b>Wheat</b>			
2001-02	1331472	310558.4	23.3
2002-03	1331472	401637.1	30.1
2003-04	1331472	603458.0	45.3
2004-05 (Upto Oct, 2004)	2108164	1008813.0	47.8
<b>Rice</b>			
2001-02	887712	66156.6	7.5
2002-03	887712	45112.4	5.1
2003-04	887712	59636.7	6.7
2004-05 (Upto Oct, 2004)	1405744	123130.1	8.8

Offtake of wheat has shown some improvement in recent years, however, it seems that the Supreme Court orders have not made any impact on offtake of rice. Further, the field survey will throw light on the probable reasons behind the poor offtake which remains the main concern.

### **Improved offtake: does it matter to the poor?**

Our field experience, cited below, shows that improvement in offtake figures for wheat does not necessarily mean that it reaches the final beneficiary. In Lalganj Sehara village of Paliganj block in Patna district, we found that the dealer had procured 21 quintal of BPL wheat from the SFC godown but sold the entire stock in the market. According to the dealer, none of the BPL beneficiary was interested in buying from him. As long as there are buyers in the market, the dealer retains her/his interest in lifting the grain, as this allows the dealer to realise the margin money. In most of the cases, buyers purchase the grain from the dealer at the SFC godown itself, further allowing him to save on transportation cost.

The price at which the PDS shopkeeper sells BPL wheat and rice is Rs. 4.85 and Rs. 6.35 per kg. respectively. In case of APL wheat and rice, the prices are Rs. 5.75 and Rs. 8.17 per kg. respectively. The table below explains how the retail prices are arrived at, and the margin paid to the SFC and the PDS dealer.

<b>Sub-heads</b>	<b>BPL Wheat (Rs./per quintal)</b>	<b>BPL Rice (Rs./per quintal)</b>	<b>APL Wheat (Rs./per quintal)</b>	<b>APL Rice (Rs./per quintal)</b>
<b>Central Issue Price</b>	415.00	565.00	510.00	730.00
<b>SFC</b>				
a) Sales tax	16.60 (@4%)	11.30 (@2%)	20.40 (@4%)	29.20 (@4%)
b) Surcharge thereon @ 1%	NA	1.13	NA	NA
c) Agricultural market tax @ 1%	4.15	5.65	5.10	7.30
d) Transportation, handling, administrative, margin, etc.	35.00	35.00	21.00	22.60
<b>Issue price from SFC</b>	470.75	618.08	556.50	789.10
<b>PDS</b>				
a) Margin to PDS shop owner	10.25	12.92	14.80	24.30
b) Transportation cost from 0 –15 km <sup>7</sup>	4.00	4.00	3.50	3.50
<b>Retail price from PDS shop</b>	485.00	635.00	574.80	816.90

The SFC lifts grain from the FCI godown and the PDS dealer receives grain from the SFC. The state government pays Rs. 55.75 per quintal to the SFC towards sales tax, surcharge, agricultural market tax, transportation, handling and margin to lift grain from FCI godown. The PDS dealer gets a margin of Rs. 10.25 per quintal in case of BPL wheat and Rs. 12.92 per quintal in case of BPL rice. In both the cases, the dealer gets Rs. 4 as transportation cost. The respective figures for APL wheat and rice are Rs. 14.80 and Rs. 24.30. In case of APL grain, Rs. 3.50 is paid towards transportation charges.

<sup>7</sup> As per the directions of the state government, the PDS shop should be within the range of 15 kms from the SFC godown.

### **Procedural details provided by the SFC**

The process of physical allotment of foodgrain from the FCI to the PDS dealer: In order to obtain the allotment of foodgrain, the dealer submits a bank draft as per his requirement (in favour of the SFC) to the Block Supply Officer (BSO), a month in advance. The BSO further submits the draft to the District officer of SFC. Thereafter, the SFC provides a Store Issue Order (SIO) for every dealer individually.

With the bank drafts so obtained, the amount is credited to the account of SFC. Further, bank draft in favour of FCI is prepared, and FCI gives 'release order'. It is this release order which enables the purchase of foodgrain by the SFC from the FCI godown. The assistant godown manager at the SFC godown, further allots foodgrain to the PDS dealer.

### ***Observations from the field***

#### **Causes of poor offtake**

**Rice:** The probable factors leading to persistently low offtake of BPL rice are – firstly, low demand because of minor difference in market and BPL prices. During our survey in Paliganj, we found that the price of rice (equivalent to BPL rice in terms of quality) in the local market varies from Rs. 5 to Rs. 7 per kg. This shows that BPL prices are often higher than the market prices making BPL rice non-preferable. Secondly, poor quality is another contributing factor to poor offtake. The price of medium quality of rice available in the market is often closer to BPL price making it further unattractive.

We personally checked one dealer's stock in paliganj, along with the Marketing Officer, and found that the rice was indeed of poor quality to the extent that beneficiaries were refusing to purchase it.

During interview, SFC officials confirmed that one of the major reasons for poor lifting of rice from the FCI godowns was bad quality. SFC has been frequently refusing to lift rice owing to "rotten" stock.

**Wheat:** Offtake is better in case of wheat. Quality is not the main influencing factor. So, the possible factor which affects the offtake of wheat is the price. Market prices, in Paliganj, vary from Rs. 3 to Rs. 5 in case of poor quality wheat and Rs. 3.5 to Rs. 5.5 in case of medium quality. At times, market price is lower than the BPL price.

#### **Recommendations:**

The prices of BPL rice and wheat should be further lowered so that they become accessible to the poor households.

There is a need to revive the monitoring system, particularly of quality of grain, as laid down in the Citizens Charter.

SFC should have a revolving fund so that it does not need to depend on solely on advance payments by the PDS dealers.

## Antyodaya Anna Yojana

Antyodaya Anna Yojana was launched with the objective of making TPDS more focused and targeted. The implementation of the scheme began on October 2, 2001, and the state was given a target of 10 lakh families. Cards are issued to the beneficiaries who receive grain from the PDS shop, at highly subsidized prices – wheat at Rs. 2 per kg and rice at Rs. 3 per kg.

### Orders of the Supreme Court

**November 28, 2001**

The court directed the States and the Union Territories to complete identification of beneficiaries, issuing of cards and distribution of grain under this scheme latest by January 1, 2002. In cases where Antyodaya beneficiaries may be unable to lift grain because of penury, the centre, the states and the Union Territories are requested to consider giving the quota free after satisfying itself in this behalf.

**May 2, 2003**

The following groups to be given Antyodaya cards:

- (1) Aged, infirm, disabled, destitute men and women, pregnant and lactating destitute women;
- (2) widows and other single women with no regular support;
- (3) old persons (aged 60 or above) with no regular support and no assured means of subsistence;
- (4) households with a disabled adult and no assured means of subsistence;
- (5) households where due to old age, lack of physical or mental fitness, social customs, need to care for a disabled, or other reasons, no adult member is available to engage in gainful employment outside the house;
- (6) primitive tribes.

**April 20, 2004**

BPL criterion should not be used in selection of Antyodaya beneficiaries. States have been directed to issue AAY cards to all primitive tribes immediately.

### **Coverage of beneficiaries**

The table below depicts the targeted number of beneficiaries from the time of inception, till recent extensions.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Target no. of beneficiaries</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Status</b>
October 2, 2001 (Launched)	10,00,000	50.49	Antodaya grain is being distributed
September 2003 (First extension)	500300	25.26	Families have been identified and cards are being distributed, but distribution of grain has not yet started.
September 2004 (Second extension)	480200	24.26	Families have not been identified.
Total	19,80,500	100.00	-

In totality 9,80,500 families are being devoid of the Antyodaya grain in Bihar, i.e., 49.5 per cent of the beneficiaries are not being covered.

**No revision in the list of beneficiaries**

During a survey conducted in Bikram and Paliganj blocks of Patna district (March 13 –18, 2005), we were informed by the block authorities that the list of Antyodaya beneficiaries has not been revised since the inception of the scheme.

**Inadequate allocation by the centre**

Every Antyodaya family is to be provided with 21kg of wheat and 14 kg of rice. Official figures show that the allocation of wheat falls short by 20.4 per cent and allocation for rice falls short by 23 per cent (see table below).

<b>Year</b>	<b>2004-05 (upto October, 2004)</b>
<b>Wheat</b>	
Targeted no. of beneficiaries	1980500
Total Allotment ('000 tonnes)	397
Required Allotment ('000 tonnes)	499
% Shortfall as a proportion of required allotment	20.4
<b>Rice</b>	
Targeted no. of beneficiaries	1980500
Total Allotment ('000 tonnes)	254
Required Allotment ('000 tonnes)	332
% Shortfall as a proportion of required allotment	23

**Offtake of foodgrain**

Offtake as a percentage of allotment is almost cent per cent in financial year 2004-05. The percentage of offtake has improved over the years (see table below),

<b>Year</b>	<b>Allocation (mt)</b>	<b>Offtake (mt)</b>	<b>%age of offtake</b>
2001-02	149996	115323	76.8
2002-03	419992	250692.84	59
2003-04	419992	400085.7	95
2004-05 (upto Oct, 2004)	664387	622107	93

## **Observations from the field:**

### ***The process***

#### ***(a) Issuing Antyodaya cards***

The beneficiaries of the Antyodaya and Annapurna schemes should be selected through the gram sabha. The gram sabha has to prepare the list and give it to the Block Development Officer (BDO). The BDO, further, hands over the names to the Marketing Officer (MO) for preparing the Antyodaya cards. The cards, later, are signed by the BDO and the MO, and distributed to the beneficiaries through the gram sevak.

#### ***(b) Lifting of foodgrains***

For lifting and distribution of grains, the dealer has to obtain verification by the mukhiya or the ward member. The dealer, thereafter, submits the bank draft to the Block Supply Officer a month in advance. The MO prepares a list of requirement of foodgrain, per dealer and sends it to the SFC.

#### ***(c) Biased selection process of the dealer***

During interaction with the Marketing Officer, Paliganj block, the team was informed that in a panchayat only one PDS dealer was allotted the foodgrain for the Antyodaya and Annapurna schemes. The area of concern, however, is the discretionary selection process of the dealer. The Marketing Officer admitted that the block administration was forced to select the dealer who is recommended by the mukhiya. The selection process is ad-hoc and biased in nature

### ***Problems faced:***

#### ***(a) By the beneficiary***

The beneficiary (generally illiterate) is unaware of the price and the quantity of foodgrain entered on his card. The Marketing Officer told the team that in most of the villages in Paliganj block the dealers are not giving the total quantity (35 kg), rather only 30 kg. The MO further told us that out of the 25 panchayats in the block, only three are receiving the total quantity.

#### ***(b) By the dealers***

The dealers from Bikram block complained that the godown manager cuts 2-3 kg per lifting, per dealer. In addition, the dealers feel that the amount they receive as transportation (out of the total commission) is inadequate.

#### ***Amount of commission insufficient***

For Rajnandan Prasad, the PDS dealer from Hawaspur village of Bikram block, the amount of commission of Rs.13 per quintal as the commission is quite insufficient. The nearest SFC godown for the dealer is 17 kms away, and he lifts a total of 35 quintals of foodgrains. The expenditure incurred on transportation is Rs. 350 (Rs. 10 per quintal), while the total amount of commission received by him is Rs. 455. Thus, his net earnings is merely Rs. 105 per month.



**Recommendations:**

BPL criteria should not be used as a basis for inclusion in the Antyodaya list.

Poorest communities like Musahars, Dhangars etc. should be given universal coverage under Antyodaya.

Antyodaya is the most lucrative scheme as far as black marketing of grains is concerned. We came across cases when the entire grain was sold off in the market before even reaching the shops. A stringent inspection system should be put in place, laying onus of proper functioning of the scheme on officials as prescribed in the Citizen's Charter.

## Annapurna Scheme

The scheme was initiated in the state in April 2001, and provides 10 kgs of foodgrain to the beneficiaries free of cost. Annapurna is targeted at those destitute that are above 65 years of age and not covered in state or central social security pension scheme.

By order of the Supreme Court, dated November 28, 2001, the States/ Union Territories are directed to identify the beneficiaries and distribute the grain latest by 1st January, 2002.

### Coverage of beneficiaries

The number of beneficiaries under the scheme has fallen for the year 2004-05. The table below shows the total number of beneficiaries covered under the scheme for the past three years.

Year	No. of beneficiaries
2002-03	158849
2003-04	158849
2004-05	151403

Every beneficiary under Annapurna is provided 6 kg wheat and 4 kg rice on a monthly basis. Thus, the total requirement of wheat for the state is 11437.28 quintal, and for rice is 76247.52 quintal. The government purchases wheat at the rate of Rs. 415 per quintal and rice for Rs. 565 per quintal. Thus, the total financial requirement of the state for wheat and rice is Rs. 4.74 crores and 4.30 crores. This is also expressed in the table below:

Year	No. of beneficiaries	Foodgrains	Quantity (in Kgs)	Total requirement (in Quintal)	Cost (in Rs.)	Total cost (in crores)
2003-04	158849	Wheat	6	11437	415	4.74
		Rice	4	76247	565	4.30

The total funds available with the state, for the year 2003-04 is Rs. 11.21 crores. Thus, the amount is adequate to meet the requirements of the scheme. According to officials, government of Bihar, the state pays two taxes under Annapurna (i) 10 per cent sales tax, which the state pays to the FCI, on the total cost of foodgrains purchased from the FCI (ii) 4 per cent contingency tax, out of which 3 per cent is paid to the districts and one per cent is retained by the state government.

The grain under Annapurna is to be provided under the supervision of the Block Development Officer, through the PDS dealer

### **Procedural details**

The target number of beneficiaries is allotted by the centre to the state. The state, thus, estimates the total cost for the state under the scheme. After estimating the total cost, the state provides a draft to the FCI. The FCI then supplies the foodgrains to the SFC, for further delivery to the districts. The beneficiaries are identified through the Gram Sabha in rural areas and Ward Sabha in the urban areas.

### **Observations from the field**

Survey in Palliganj block, revealed that there has been a persistent lag of 2-3 months in the allotment of grain by the SFC to the PDS dealer. On questioning the Marketing Officer, we were informed that the lag is due to delay in foodgrain allotment by the state government.

People argued that either they should get old aged pension or the entitlement under Annapurna should be raised so as to match the quantity of grain which can be purchased from pension money (approx. 16 kg of rice).

### **Recommendations**

The government must raise the quantity of grain under the scheme. Timely allocation of grain is crucial keeping in view the population which is benefiting from the scheme, i.e., destitutes.

## National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS)

National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) came into effect as a component of National Social Assistance programme (NSAP) on 15th August, 1995. It was initially visualized as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme under which 100 per cent Central assistance is extended to the States/UTs. The nodal Agency for this scheme was Ministry of Rural Development.

Initially there were three components of NSAP:

1. National Old Age Pension Scheme
2. National Maternity Benefit Scheme
3. National Family Benefit Scheme

Subsequently, National Maternity Benefit Scheme was transferred to Ministry of Health and family welfare in the year 2001. NFBS along with NOAPS was transferred to the State Plan w.e.f. 1-4-2002. At present the funds for these schemes are released by the Ministry of Finance as Additional Central Assistance, which can be utilized by States/UTs for Welfare Schemes of Old Age Pension, Family Benefit or Annapurna scheme by taking up one or two or all of the three or in any other combination in accordance with their own priorities and needs.

As discussed above, the Finance Ministry releases the funds through Additional Central Assistance (ACA), which can be used by the state according to its own needs in all or either of the three schemes, viz., NFBS, NOAPS and Annapurna Scheme.

In its order dated November 28, 2001, the SC directed the State Govts./ Union Territories to implement the National Family Benefit Scheme and pay a BPL family Rs. 10,000/- within four weeks through a local Sarpanch, whenever the primary bread winner of the family dies.

In Bihar, the scheme was launched in November 1995.

### **Inadequate coverage of beneficiaries**

The actual number of beneficiaries under NFBS is 6470 (2003-04), which is much below the number 74,460 calculated through centre's formula of estimation<sup>8</sup>. Thus, the coverage in the state stands at an insufficient 8 per cent<sup>9</sup>. After the SC order of Nov. 2001, the number of beneficiaries has fallen rather than increased. Number of beneficiaries covered under the scheme in the preceding years is given in the table below:

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<sup>8</sup> Total Population of the state x poverty ratio of the state x ratio of the total population of the state falling in the age group of 18-65 years x death rate of the state in the age group of 18-65 years x 0.5. Replacing the above enumerated formula with statistics, we get  
 $8,28,78,796 \times 0.550 \times 0.495 \times 0.0066 \times 0.5 = 74,460$ .  
(as per 2001 census)

<sup>9</sup> For the estimation, the state government takes the poverty ratio as the BPL ratio. The two ratios being different, might lead to incorrect estimates.

S.N.	Year	No. of Beneficiaries
1	2001-02	10206
2	2002-03	6116
3	2003-04	6470

### **Inadequate financial allocation**

In tandem with the physical target, there are anomalies in financial allocations. Presently, the funds allocated by the central government under NFBS is Rs.500 lakhs for the year 2003-04. This will be sufficient to serve less than 5000 families. However, as per the formula laid down by the central government, the financial allocation to the state should be 7818.3 lakhs<sup>10</sup>. In addition, the allocation over the past three years has been falling steadily, as the table depicts:

### **Allocation and Utilization of funds**

Year	Allocation (in Lakhs)	Utilization (in Lakhs)
2001-02	1013.94	1024.02
2002-03	888	725.71
2003-04	500	648.20
2004-05 (Till Jan'05)	633	375

For year 2003-04, the state utilized unspent funds carried over from the preceding year, leading to higher expenditure as compared to allocation by the centre.

The state government complains that the Centre is not providing sufficient funds to cover all intended beneficiaries<sup>11</sup>. Until the Centre releases adequate funds, as mentioned above (Rs. 7818.3 lakh), the state government cannot comply with the orders of the Supreme Court.

### **Observations from the field in Patna district:**

#### **Procedural complexities**

The beneficiaries are required to fill the applications, which are forwarded to the Block Development Officer or the Circle Officer by the village *mukhiya*. After verification by these officers, the application is forwarded to the SDO. On signature by the SDO the form is sent to the district office.

#### **NFBS form costs Rs. 100**

The field survey conducted in Hawaspur and Azadnagar villagers revealed that the villagers paid a sum of Rs. 100 to the panchayat sevak in order to obtain the form. The panchayat sevak, on the other hand, gets these forms from the block office free of cost.

<sup>10</sup> The financial allocation of NFBS= Physical target x Rs.10,000 + 4% of (Physical target x Rs.10,000) as administrative expenditure of the district + 1% of (Physical target x Rs.10,000) as administrative expenditure for the nodal department of the state.

<sup>11</sup> Letter No :- 2/NCAP-4110/2003 dated 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 2003

The officials at the district level verify the form i.e. information such as income level, age of deceased, and other particulars of the form. This is further sent to the DM for sanction, and thereafter, sent to the Director, DRDA. DRDA withdraws funds from the treasury and a crossed cheque is drawn in favour of the beneficiary. Further, it is the responsibility of the BDO to deposit the cheque in the applicant's bank account. In case, the applicant does not have an account in the bank, it is responsibility of the BDO to get his/her account opened.

In case of an accident, FIR is to be lodged in the local police station and copy of the chargesheet is to be obtained which is largely at the discretion of the local police officer. The family is required to furnish the death certificate of the individual along with the questionnaire, which in totality, forms the basis of which funds are released.

Consequently, this creates a time-lag in release of funds. Currently (year 2004-05), the district office is releasing the amount to applicants who had filled in the forms in the year 2000-01. This leads to loss of hope amongst the beneficiaries.

On a general level it was noticed that the villagers were completely unaware about this scheme.

#### **Problems at the district level**

According to district officials, Patna, two major impediments to the implementation of the scheme are inadequate funds and irregular instalments.

#### ***Inadequate funds***

For the year 2004-05, the funds allocated for NFBS is Rs. 26 lakhs. In other words, this would enable the government to provide money to only 260 applicants. According to the district administration, the applications received in the year 2004-05 was 600 (approx.). Thus, the amount can fulfil the requirements of less than 50 per cent of the total applicants.

#### **Not a single beneficiary**

During a survey conducted in Bikram block of Patna district, the block officials confirmed that not a single applicant had received the amount in the past four years. In the words of Shaym Dev Singh, *Prakhand Pramukh*, Bikram block, "in my four year long tenure in the block, we have not given the amount to a single beneficiary."

The district administration fixes the physical target of each block through the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total allotment received till date} \times \text{total population of the block}}{\text{Total population of the district}}$$

### ***Irregular instalments***

This can be elaborated from the example of financial process in Patna district of Bihar. According to the information provided to the advisor, by the district office, the amount allotted for the year 2004-05 is 26 lakhs. However, as of March 28, 2005, Rs. 6.5 lakhs was remaining to be released. The break-up of release of funds for the year 2004-05, is as follows:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Amount (in Lakhs)</b>
21.8.04	10.83
22.9.04	2.17
27.11.04	2.17
23.12.04	2.17
01.02.05	2.17
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.51</b>

The table above also shows that there was no release of funds from April to late August 2004.

### **Recommendations**

Death certificate should be treated as sufficient criteria for eligibility of the scheme. A local bank/post office may be designated for releasing the amount directly to the beneficiary upon producing the death certificate.

The state government should release funds to the district on a monthly or bi-monthly basis automatically.

Opening balance of the year should serve as the benchmark for release of the first instalment. The centre should allocate the entire amount necessary to cover all intended beneficiaries.

The state government should fix accountability on the officials for effective implementation of the scheme and should call for strict penal action/disincentive in case of failures.

Publicity of the scheme is still required.

## National Maternity Benefit Scheme

A centrally sponsored scheme, NMBS was launched in the year 1995, the objective being to extend financial assistance to pregnant women, living below the poverty line (BPL).

In its order dated November 28, 2001, the Supreme Court directed the State governments/ Union Territories to implement the National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS) by paying all BPL pregnant women Rs. 500/- through the Sarpanch 8-12 weeks prior to delivery for each of the first two births.

### Coverage of beneficiaries

According to the data provided to us by the state government, the target number of beneficiaries for the year 2004-05 is 502611 (5.02 lakhs approx). However, the number of beneficiaries covered under the scheme in the year (from August 04 to Jan 05) is only 1984, i.e. 0.39 per cent of the target<sup>12</sup>. The number of beneficiaries of preceding years is given in the table below:

S.N.	Year	No. of Beneficiaries
1	2000-01	136,085
2	2001-02	108,232
3	2002-03	54,916
4	2003-04	44,646
5	2004-05	1,984

*Hence, after the SC order of Nov. 2001, the number of beneficiaries has fallen rather than increased.*

### Allocation of funds

The central government directly releases funds to the DRDAs, which are further disbursed to the BDO. After verification, the BDO is supposed to distribute the amount to the beneficiaries through camps in the presence of *Panchayat Mukhiya / Pramukh*.

The centre has not released any funds for the year 2004-05 till January 2005. If the requirement of funds is calculated on the basis of target beneficiaries, the amount stands at 2513 lakhs. The figures for allocation and expenditure are provided in the table below:

Year	Allocation (in lakhs)	Expenditure (in lakhs)
2000-01	398.93	733.00
2001-02	301.74	475.28
2002-03	269.61	274.58
2003-04	155.10	223.23

<sup>12</sup> We were told by the concerned official of the department that there were no official records available at the state headquarter of beneficiaries from April to July 2004. In addition, out of 38, only six districts have provided the data of beneficiaries to the state.



## **Observation from the field:**

### **Procedural problems**

In order to avail the benefit of the scheme, a form has to be filled. The form is to be obtained from the block office. The form is to be first signed by the aanganwadi sevika, and thereafter it is to be signed by the ward member. The mukhiya of the village then signs the form. The lady then has to visit the health center for a check-up, where the ANM has to conduct the following tests (i) To check whether the woman is pregnant or not, (ii) To determine the month of pregnancy and (iii) To check whether the woman has more than two children. Thereafter, the ANM provides a certificate which is to be attached with the form.

But the process does not end here. The form, then, has to be verified by the medical officer, and later by the circle officer to determine whether the woman belongs to the same area. Then, it is signed by the BDO.

The process in itself is evidence of the fact that the scheme demands excessive follow up at each level. The procedure is time consuming and frustrating.

During the field survey it was realised that lack of awareness is a major problem inflicting the scheme.

### **Recommendations**

As per the National Family Health Survey 1998-99, only 36.3% of pregnant women received at least one ante-natal check up. Dysfunctional maternal health services is by and large the primary problem. Ideally, ante-natal check up card should be considered a sufficient document of pregnancy, birth order and residence. In order to avoid any kind of duplication, a separate proof of residence can be asked for. A local bank/post office may be designated for releasing the amount directly to the beneficiary upon producing the ante-natal card (and a proof of residence, if required).

The Centre should allocate the entire amount necessary to cover all intended beneficiaries. The Centre should release funds to the DRDA on a monthly or bi-monthly basis automatically. Opening balance of the year should serve as the benchmark for release of the first instalment. The DRDA should evolve a system of reimbursement to the bank (either directly or through the block). The Centre should consider paying administrative charges to the bank for their services.

The ANM should be made accountable for implementation of the scheme and should call for strict penal action/disincentive in case of failures or misinformation.

The scheme should be widely publicised through mass media.

## National Old Age Pension Scheme

The scheme was launched in the year 1995 and aims at providing social security to the old age population living below the poverty line. It targets, “old persons (above the age of 65) who are destitutes, in the sense of having no regular means of subsistence from their own sources of income or through financial support from family members or other sources.”

Apart from the central scheme, the government of Bihar has a state social security scheme, the monthly entitlement of the beneficiaries being Rs. 100. The state scheme includes (i) widows (irrespective of age); (ii) disabled (irrespective of age), and (iii) individuals living in urban areas and earning less than Rs. 5500 per annum and those living in rural areas with earnings less than Rs. 5000 per annum fall in the category of destitutes.

Order of the Supreme Court dated November 28, 2001, directs the state to identify the beneficiaries and to start making payments latest by 1st January, 2002. Further, the court directed the State Governments/ Union Territories to make payments promptly by the 7th of each month.

### Centre-run scheme

#### Coverage of beneficiaries

The targeted number of beneficiaries (by the centre) for the year 2003-04 is 4.93 lakhs, equivalent to the actual number of beneficiaries covered by the state. In accordance with the formula fixed by the central government, the number of beneficiaries of the scheme for Bihar should be 9.12 lakhs<sup>13</sup>. Thus, 54 per cent eligible individuals are uncovered.

The figure given in table below shows that no revision has taken place in the list since the year 2001 leaving the number constant over the three-year period of 2001-04.

S.N.	Year	No. of Beneficiaries
1	2001-02	493,696
2	2002-03	493,696
3	2003-04	493,696

#### Allocation and utilization of funds

As per the estimation through the centre's formula<sup>14</sup>, the funds allocated to the state should stand at Rs. 86.15crores. But the actual amount of allocation, which is a mere Rs.

<sup>13</sup> The formula for physical target is State population x poverty ratio x ratio of population above the age of 65 x 0.5. On substitution (8,28,78,796 x 0.550 x 0.4 x 0.5) =911,666. The state considers poverty ratio as the BPL ratio. For the estimation, the state government takes the poverty ratio as the BPL ratio. The two ratios being different, might lead to incorrect estimates.

<sup>14</sup> The financial allocation of NOAPS= Physical target of the scheme x Rs.75 x 12 months + 4% of (Physical target of the scheme x Rs.75 x 12 months) as administrative expenditure of the district + 1% of (Physical target of the scheme x Rs.75 x 12 months) as administrative expenditure for the nodal department

46.05 crores (2003-04), is far from the funds required. The table below shows the allocation of funds by the central government.

Funds utilization exceed allocation in the two-year time period of 2001-02 and 2003-04. The table below shows that the amount received by the beneficiaries in the past three years as against the entitlement of Rs. 1200 per beneficiary.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Funds Allocated (in crores)</b>	<b>Funds Utilized (in crores)</b>	<b>Amount released, per beneficiary, per annum</b>
2001-02	48.01	48.04	974
2002-03	42.24	41.35	838
2003-04	46.05	52.66	1068
2004-05	48.05	34.53 (Till January, 2005)	

Unspent funds carried over from the preceding year, has resulted in higher expenditure of the state than the total amount of funds allocated by the centre, in the year 2003-04.

#### **State-run scheme**

According to the official sources, the state government hiked its targeted number of beneficiaries from 3,82,463 to 4,20,709 with effect from 1.9.2004. The amount allocated under the state scheme is Rs. 45.89 crores for the year 2004-05.

#### **Procedural details**

##### ***Identification of beneficiaries***

The beneficiaries are required to fill the applications, which are forwarded to the Block Development Officer or the Circle Officer by the village *mukhiya*. After enquiry and verification by these officers, the applications are submitted to the Assistant Director/Sub Divisional Officer (SDO). Thereafter, the SDO issues the sanction order, and the funds are distributed to the beneficiaries.

##### ***Sanction of funds***

Funds are earmarked for the scheme in the state budget, which is further sanctioned by an empowered committee. The committee comprises of Director (labour department) of the state, Secretary of state for labour, the Finance commissioner, the Development commissioner and the Planning secretary. Thereafter, state cabinet sanctions the funds,

and government order is issued (after inspection from the finance department). The state then issues allotment order, and money is withdrawn by the treasury at the districts, and distributed to the final beneficiaries.

### *Disbursement of funds to the final beneficiary*

Till the year 2003, funds were released directly by the centre to the districts. As per the information provided by the district officials, funds were received by the DRDA and further allotted to the respective blocks and villages. However, since 2003, the scheme has been transferred to the state plan and there has been a change in the process of implementation. As of now, the state government receives funds from the Additional Central Assistance through the Finance Ministry, Government of India. Further, the state divides the funds between the National State Pension Scheme and Annapurna. The funds are then allotted to the districts, which are drawn by treasury, and distributed to the beneficiaries through distribution camps. The district officials, responsible for disbursing funds to the blocks feel that the current process goes through greater channels, making the procedure more complicated.

### **Report from the field**

During a survey conducted in Bikram and Palliganj blocks of Patna district (March 14-19, 2005), we found that the amount is distributed to the beneficiaries on six-monthly basis as against the monthly norm. One of the beneficiaries, Keshwar Ram, informed us that money is given before the festival of *Holi* (March) and *Dussehra* (October). This was later confirmed by the block officials as well.

### **Causes of delay in disbursements**

On questioning the block officials, we were informed that there is a delay of six months in the funds released under the state social security scheme. On the other hand, amount under NOAPS was released every month. The distribution of entitlement, however, took place simultaneously for both the schemes. This was later confirmed with the district-level officials who revealed that funds under the state social security scheme are released every six months, while funds of NOAPS were released every month.

The team witnessed the distribution process of old age pension in Bikram block, as the survey took place a few days before holi. Some of the suggestions that came from the beneficiaries were (i) money should be deposited in the nearest post office as the block office is far for some of them and (ii) the village *mukhiya* should not be given the responsibility of distribution as the villagers did not have faith in them.

Some of the on-ground problems which were noticed during the distribution process were (i) Old and sick people had to travel long distances to obtain the amount from the block office (ii) In cases where a beneficiary was unable to collect his previous instalment, he was not given the missed allotment unless he got a letter of application signed by the SDO.

### **Recommendations**

A local bank/post office may be designated for releasing the amount directly to the beneficiary, upon producing the beneficiary card issued by the block.

The state government should release funds to the district on a monthly or bi-monthly basis automatically.

Opening balance of the year should serve as the benchmark for release of the first instalment. The centre should allocate the entire amount necessary to cover all intended beneficiaries.

The state government should fix accountability on the BDO/concerned officials for implementation of the scheme and should call for strict penal action/disincentive in case of failures.

## **Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY)**

The scheme was launched in the state on September 25, 2001. The primary objective of SGRY is to provide additional wage employment in all rural areas and thereby provide food security and improve nutritional levels. The secondary objective is the creation of durable community, social, and economic assets and infrastructural development in rural areas.

### **Orders of the Supreme Court**

#### **Sept 17, 2001**

The Food for Work Programme in the scarcity areas should also be implemented by the various States to the extent possible.

#### **May 8, 2002**

The gram panchayats shall frame employment generation proposals in accordance with the SGRY guidelines. These proposals shall be approved and sanctioned by the Gram Panchayats and the work started expeditiously.

The respondents shall focus the SGRY programme towards agricultural wage earners, non-agricultural unskilled wage earners, marginal farmers and in particular, SC and ST persons whose wage income constitutes a reasonable proportion of their household income and to give priority to them in employment, and within this section shall give priority to women.

Gol shall release money entitlements under the different employment generation schemes to each State on schedule, provided that utilisation certificates have been provided by the states certifying that the funds have been used for the specified purpose.

The gram sabhas are entitled to conduct Social Audits into all Food/ Employment schemes.

Gram Sabhas are entitled to monitor the implementation of the various schemes and have access to relevant information.

#### **May 2, 2003**

SGRY scheme to be doubled for an interim period of three months (May - July)

#### **April 20, 2004**

Allocation for SGRY to stand doubled. All documents pertaining to employment programmes shall be available for public scrutiny, and the price of these documents shall be no greater than cost of providing copies.

Minimum wages should be paid in the works and use of labour-displacing machinery to **be stopped**.

In case of financial difficulty the states can approach the centre for permission to pay 100 % wages in grain

According to the data provided to us by the Department of Rural Development, Government of Bihar, in the year, 2004-05 (till January '05), the state has generated 393

lakh mandays under the scheme. Out of these, 48 per cent was provided to the SC population and 3 per cent to the ST population. The bifurcation is elaborated in the table below:

Employment generated (Lakh Mandays)  
FY: 2004-05 (Till January, 2005)

Category	Number (in lakhs)
SC	190
ST	12
Other	191
Total	393

Further, from the total number of mandays generated, the scheme provided employment to 22 per cent women and 70 per cent landless labourers.

#### **Status of works**

Construction of roads, bridges, community halls, school buildings etc are some of the activities reportedly undertaken by the state. However, only half the number of activities initiated by the state have been completed in the year 2004-05 (till Jan, 2005).

Works Undertaken	96735
Works Completed	51107
Percentage	52

As per the state guidelines on the scheme, 50 per cent of the total number of works have to be carried out for the income generation of the SC/ST population, in general. While, 22.5 per cent of the works have to be created for asset formation of individual SC/ST beneficiaries. The official data, are however, nowhere near the norms, as the table below shows:

FY: 2004-05 (Works in numbers)

Category	Works undertaken	Total works undertaken	Percentage
Individual SC/ST beneficiaries	17614	96735	18.2
General SC/ST population	19402	96735	20
Disabled	86	96735	0.8
General	56155	96735	58

The statistics clearly show that no steps are being taken to generate assets for the disabled. On the other hand, 58 per cent of the total works undertaken by the state are 'general' in nature.

## Financial Status

The total money available upto January 2005 was 591.19 crores. Delay in the release of funds was noted in the information provided by the state officials. An amount of Rs. 3728 lakhs was received after a considerable lag to the state, as shown in the table below.

FY: 2004-05 (Upto January, 2005)

S.N.	Details	Amount (in lakh)
1	<b>Opening Balance as on 1.4.2004</b>	14510
2	<b>Central release of 03-04, but released during 04-05</b>	3728
3	<b>Released by the Centre</b>	35794
4	<b>Released by the State</b>	5048
5	<b>Miscellaneous receipt</b>	38
6	<b>Total available money</b>	59119

The table above shows that uptill January, the state government has released a very small amount. In addition, 14 districts (out of 37), have not received any matching share from the state government as of January 2005.

## Expenditure

Of the total available money of Rs. 591.19 crores, the state has reportedly spent Rs. 405.22 crores till January 2005, i.e., 68.54 per cent. General works comprised a major part of the expenditure of the state, with a minor 16 per cent spent on individual beneficiaries falling in the SC/ST category.

S.N.	Heads of expenditure	Amount (in Lakh)
1	General works	26279
2	SC/ST individual beneficiaries	6534
3	SC/ST habitation	7471
4	Maintenance	2154
5	Others	432
6	Total expenditure	42870

Category	Expenditure	Total Expenditure	Percentage
General Works	26279	40522	64
Individual Benf. (SC/ST)	26279	6534	16



Habitation (SC/ST)	26279	7471	18
Maintenance	26279	2154	5.3

The state government has spent 16 per cent on SC/ST beneficiaries (individual), as against the norm of 22.5. Also, the amount spent on general SC/ST habitation falls much below provisioned 50 per cent. Data also showed that out of 37, 10 districts did not spend any amount on habitation.

### Trends in Allocation and Expenditure

S.N.	Details	Amount
<b>A.</b>	<b>2002-03</b>	
<b>1</b>	<b>Total Allocation</b>	<b>48436.62</b>
	a) Allocation by the Centre	36327.47
	b) Allocation by the State	12109.15
<b>2</b>	<b>Total amount released</b>	<b>34290.33</b>
	a) Released by the Centre	26352.16
	b) Released by the State	7938.17
<b>3</b>	<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>44312.74</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Total Allocation</b>	<b>55783.65</b>
	a) Allocation by the Centre	41837.71
	b) Allocation by the State	13945.94
<b>5</b>	<b>Total amount released</b>	<b>35926.25</b>
	a) Released by the Centre	26850.83
	b) Released by the State	9075.42
<b>6</b>	<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>48593.41</b>

The above table shows that figures under all the three heads – allocation, released amount and expenditure – have gone up between 2002-2004. The shares of both the Centre and the State have also gone up. The State's share in the released amount went up to 25 per cent in the year 2003-04, conforming to the norms, as against 23 per cent during 2002-03.

### Foodgrains: Allotment, offtake and utilisation

The total amount of available grain for the current year is 869197 metric tonnes. This includes authorised quantity for the current year and unlifted grain of the previous year. Total offtake is poor at 35.43 per cent against total authorisation of grain.

FY: 2004-05 (Till January, 2005)

Amount authorized (in mt)	Unutilised balance of last year	Total authorisation	Offtake current year (mt)	Offtake last year	Total offtake	Percentage
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596317	272880	869197	205304	102726	308030	35.43
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Utilization of foodgrain has been abysmally low at 26.89 per cent in comparison to quantity authorized for 2004-2005.

Total Authorisation	Total Utilisation	Percentage
869197	233777	26.89

#### Observations from the field:

**Wages and other facilities:** Work was undertaken under SGRY in Nerakhpur village of Palliganj block in Patna district. A total of about 150 people were involved in digging of land in order to form a water channel (*nahar*) for irrigational purposes. The work continued for ten days and people from five villages were employed. It has been a year since the work got completed, but a part of the wage is due. Sanjay Kumar Manjhi, one of the villagers involved in the work informed the team that he earned Rs. 200 for 10 ten days of work.

#### Field observations

- \* Full payment of wages not made
- \* Grain not provided as part of wages
- \* Muster roll not maintained
- \* People not aware about their entitlement
- \* Facilities like drinking water, shed for children did not exist
- \* No inspection by the authorities

Wages by way of foodgrain were not provided, and the workers have yet not received full payment of cash wages. There was no system of attendance and muster roll was not used. People do not know how much wages they were entitled to. The nearest handpump was 2 kms away and other facilities like shed for children did not exist. A contractor used to oversee the work and nobody from the block office ever visited the work site.

In another village, Khapura, of Palliganj block, work was undertaken for brickmaking, and continued for a week. About eight people were employed in the work who received payment of Rs. 50 per day. In this case also, there was no involvement of the block administration and the work was managed by a contractor. The workers were paid only in cash, foodgrains were not provided.

**Process of sanction of work under SGRY:** The gram sevak identifies people for work from the village at his own discretion. Further, the gram sabha is supposed to identify the work and prepares a plan (limit is Rs.1,00,000), which is proposed to the Panchayat Samiti. The Samiti sanctions and passes it to the SDO for approval. In case the amount exceeds Rs. 1,00,000 it is sent to the deputy development commissioner for approval.

One of the drawbacks of the scheme is that due to the single discretionary power of the gram sevak, there is a possibility that the needy people from the village are excluded from the selection process. Most importantly, the Mukhiyas are not inclined to call gram sabha meeting for selection of the work.

The block officials (Bikram block) pointed out that amount under SGRY is released in four installments, which brings about disruption in work. In addition, amount allocated is insufficient to meet the development needs of the village like construction of community halls, schools etc.

### **Recommendations**

The success of the scheme requires both awareness and assertion of the people as well as strict monitoring by the administration. Non-adherence to the norms should attract strict penal action.

In particular, attention must be paid to ensure that muster roll is maintained and wages are paid on time and in full. On site facilities like shed for children, drinking water, etc. must be created. Part payment of wages in the form of grain must be ensured.

The selection of schemes should be planned in a way that hunger periods are covered.

## *Appendix*

### **Methodology of Report Preparation**

For the preparation of the report, scheme-wise questionnaires were drafted. Questions relating to the number of beneficiaries, financial allotment and utilization, physical (foodgrain) allotment and offtake etc. formed part of the questionnaire. In addition, the state officials were requested to provide official circulars and orders to the adviser.

After the collection of basic information based on the questionnaires, supplementary questions were asked through interviews and in some cases in the written form. Emphasis was laid on conducting interviews with the state-level officials in order to understand the procedural details and problems affecting the implementation of the respective scheme.

Thereafter, field surveys were conducted to check the status of implementation and unfold the problems on ground. Two specific surveys were conducted for the Midday meal scheme. In the first survey East Champaran and Supaul districts (Dec 10-24, 2004) were covered, and the second survey was conducted across 13 districts (Feb 7-15) in the state covering 51 schools on a random basis.

Apart from Midday meal scheme, a general survey was also conducted in two blocks – Bikram and Palliganj in Patna district. The objective of the survey was to understand the procedural difficulties rooted in the system of implementation of these schemes. The team collected the information at various levels – the beneficiary, the implementing agency (e.g., PDS dealer for food-based schemes, aanganwadi sevika for ICDS), the village mukhiya and the block-level administration. For the food-based schemes, the team also interviewed officials from the State Food Corporation and members of a dealer association (Fair Price Dealer's Association) in Patna.

Further, the team interviewed district level officials to determine the causes behind the status of implementation at the block and the village level. Attempts were also made to understand the hassles faced at the district level.

At every level of the survey, stress was laid on noting recommendations for ensuring successful implementation of the scheme.