

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION AND LITERACY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No: 2309
ANSWERED ON- 04/08/2025

Facial Recognition of Beneficiaries under Mid-Day Meal Scheme

2309. Shri Gaurav Gogoi:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has made facial recognition mandatory for verification of beneficiaries under the Mid-Day Meal Schemes in the country, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether school staff has reported an increased administrative burden and difficulties due to the system, including frequent technical glitches, network issues and delays in service delivery;
- (c) whether the Government has conducted any assessments or consultations with frontline workers before implementing this mandate;
- (d) the steps being taken to ensure that genuine beneficiaries are not excluded due to technological failures or lack of access to compatible devices;
- (e) whether the Government is considering any alternative or parallel methods of verification to ensure inclusivity and reduce the burden on ground-level staff; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

(SHRI JAYANT CHAUDHARY)

(a) to (f): Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) Scheme, earlier known as Mid-Day Meal Scheme is one of the foremost rights based Centrally Sponsored Scheme implemented in partnership with the States and UTs for providing one hot cooked and nutritious meal to all children studying in Bal Vatika (just before class-I) and classes I to VIII of Government and Government-aided schools. The Scheme covers about 11 crore children in more than 10.35 lakh schools in all the States/ UTs.

The beneficiaries under the Scheme are all children studying in Bal Vatika and classes I to VIII of Government and Government-aided schools. All the eligible children are entitled to one hot cooked nutritious meal on all school days. Ministry of Education has not issued any direction to make facial recognition mandatory for availing meals. However, the overall responsibility for implementation of the Scheme lies with State Governments and UT Administrations. A robust platform called Automated Monitoring System has been developed to monitor daily coverage of the Scheme.
