

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION AND LITERACY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-10
ANSWERED ON- 01/12/2025

Contaminated Food under Mid-Day Meal Scheme

†10. Shri Rakesh Rathor:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that several incidents of contaminated food being served in schools under the Mid-Day Meal Scheme have been reported in recent years across the country which have seriously impacted the health of children and staff;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the number of children affected as a result of such contaminated food, State/UT-wise;
- (c) the details of effective steps taken by the Government to monitor the storage, preparation and distribution of food across the country during the last three years;
- (d) whether there is any proposal to implement new guidelines to ensure food hygiene and quality as well as transparency in budget utilization; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof along with the measures taken by the Government for better implementation in the regard and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

(SHRI JAYANT CHAUDHARY)

(a) to (e): Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) Scheme is one of the foremost rights based Centrally Sponsored Scheme implemented in partnership with the States and Union Territories (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 overall responsibility for providing hot cooked and nutritious meal to the eligible children lies with the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations. For FY 2025-26, budget allocation for the PM Poshan Scheme is Rs. 12,500 crore by Government of India and the State/ UT share as per the sharing pattern is around Rs. 8,500 crore including additional funds for Honorarium to Cook-cum-Helpers and

Supplementary Nutrition items. The foodgrain allocation by Government of India is 24.15 lakh MTs which costs around Rs. 9000 crore. Thus overall allocation for the PM Poshan Scheme for FY 2025-26 is more than Rs. 30,000 crore including more than Rs. 21,500 crore made by Government of India.

The Government of India has issued detailed guidelines on quality, safety and hygiene to ensure serving of good quality nutritious meal under the Scheme. All the States/ UTs are advised to adhere to these Guidelines. These guidelines are available on official website <https://pmposhan.education.gov.in>. These guidelines, inter-alia, provides for instructions to schools to procure Agmark quality and branded items for preparation of meals, training to Cook-cum-Helpers, tasting of meals by members of School Management Committee including at least one teacher before serving the hot meal to children. Further, it provides for testing of food samples by Government Food Research Laboratory or any laboratory accredited or recognized by law to ensure that the meals meet nutritional standards and quality. The Food Corporation of India (FCI) is given responsibility for making available food grains of best available quality, meeting the parameters of Fair Average Quality (FAQ). The Guidelines, inter-alia, provides for training of Cook-cum-Helpers on nutrition, cooking processes, health and hygiene, preparation of raw grains and vegetables, recipes, serving skills etc. States/ UTs provide training to CCHs in collaboration with Institutes of Hotel Management, Food Craft Institutes, FSSAI, State Universities etc. Many States/ UTs conduct Cooking Competitions and also give cash prizes to the winners to encourage them to cook varied and nutritious meals. The States and UTs are encouraged to decide menu suitable to the local conditions within the prescribed nutrition and food norms and to procure locally grown food items like millets, vegetables, condiments etc. The guidelines also envisage for all children in the school to wash their hands with soap.

POSHAN Maah/ POSHAN Pakhwada is celebrated by States and UTs facilitating community mobilisation and ensuring schools undertake meaningful activities such as special School Management Committee (SMC) meetings, awareness campaigns on nutrition and hygiene. Various other activities such as quiz, painting competition, rally, nukkad natak for disseminating the information on use of millets, handwash, balance diet and importance of green leafy vegetables etc. are also organized at school level.

The Scheme guidelines provide for construction and repair of Kitchen-cum-Stores (KCS). Funds for construction and repair of KCS are released to States/ UTs based on the proposal received from the State Governments and UTs. There is a provision of 5% of total recurring budget as the flexi component to be used by the States/UTs for setting up of School Nutrition Gardens (SNGs) and provision of Supplementary Nutrition interventions in identified districts. Many States/UTs provide additional supplementary nutrition interventions like egg, milk, chikki, fresh fruits, chicken, ragi malt etc.

As per the extant guidelines of the PM Poshan Scheme States/UTs are required to conduct Social Audit in all districts in at least 20 schools or 2% of the schools, whichever is higher for each district. The responsibility for taking action and ensuring compliance on the Social Audit findings rests with the State/ UTs. States/ UTs have conducted social audits in

32,664 schools across the country. Further, the States/ UTs through their designated officials have conducted inspections in 9.78 lakh schools. The State/ UTs have conducted 25,389 testing of meals across the country.

The scheme also provides elaborate monitoring mechanism i.e. Empowered Committee under the Chairpersonship of Hon'ble Union Education Minister, Programme Approval Board (PAB) under the Chairpersonship of Secretary (DoSE&L), State Steering-cum-Monitoring Committee under the Chairpersonship of Chief Secretary, District level Steering-cum-Monitoring Committee under the Chairpersonship of District Collector. The PM Poshan Guidelines provides a District Level Committee under the Chairmanship of senior most Member of Parliament (MP) of the district to monitor the scheme on quarterly basis.

During the last 5 years a total of eleven (11) incidents of contaminated food have been reported under PM POSHAN Scheme including 3 in Bihar (2024), 2 in Delhi (2023), 2 in Odisha (2022, 2024), 2 in Rajasthan (2025), 1 in Uttar Pradesh (2021) and 1 in West Bengal (2023). 674 children were reported ill during these incidents and all the students were treated and discharged from hospital.
