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Title: Regarding making Aadhaar compulsory for mid-day meal scheme.

SHRI SULTAN AHMED (ULUBERIA): In a February 28, 2017 notification, the Human Resource Development Ministry has stated that students must have AADHAAR card by June 30, 2017 in order to continue to be eligible for the Mid Day Meal scheme. The MDM is the world's largest school feeding programme and provides cooked meal to every student in primary and upper primary schools in India. Surely the Scheme improved enrolment especially for those from disadvantaged groups, reduced drop-out rates, improved child nutrition and ensured better child academic performance. Currently, the mid-day meal programme covers more than 100 million children across 1.15 million schools. More than 2.5 million women, mainly from underprivileged section, are employed as cooks and helpers.

Around 30 per cent of beneficiaries are reportedly facing authentication issues due to internet, electricity supply. Without strengthening the infrastructure and technology, authentication process cannot be carried out on every child on a daily basis before providing the mid-day meal. On the other hand, some children will be denied food because of the failure of technology.

Such kind of Government notification will prevent more students from getting the benefit of Mid Day Meal. I urge upon the Government to withdraw the notification making AADHAAR compulsory for Mid Day Meal.