

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION & LITERACY
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-3081
ANSWERED ON-20.08.2025

AI-based mechanism for checking food quality in schools

3081 Shri S Niranjana Reddy:

Will the Minister of *Education* be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government intends to introduce any AI-based mechanism to check the food quality and the nutritional levels of meals being provided to children in Government schools;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Ministry plans to expand the use of the AI machine developed in Gadchiroli, Maharashtra, under Project Bhamragad, to ensure food quality across the country; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

(SHRI JAYANT CHAUDHARY)

(a) to (d): Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) Scheme is one of the foremost rights based Centrally Sponsored Scheme implemented in partnership with 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 States/UTs. The overall responsibility for providing hot cooked and nutritious meal to the eligible children including the use of technology in the implementation of the Scheme 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. 9,000 crore. Thus, the 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 the Government of India.

The Government of India has issued detailed guidelines on quality, safety and hygiene to ensure serving of good quality nutritious meals under the Scheme. All States/ UTs were advised to adhere to these Guidelines. These guidelines are available on official

website <https://pmposhan.education.gov.in>. These guidelines, inter-alia, provide for quality of hot meal through School Management Committee (SMC) and also teachers, procurement mechanism, preparation of meals, training of Cook-cum-Helpers, mandatory testing of food samples, Social Audits in at least 20 schools or 2% of the schools (whichever is higher) in all districts etc. The Food Corporation of India (FCI) is given responsibility for making available foodgrains of the best available quality, meeting the parameters of Fair Average Quality (FAQ). District Magistrate of each district has to check the quality of foodgrains. Further, States/UTs, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism (through Institutes of Hotel Management and Food Craft Institutes), FSSAI, State Agricultural Universities, provide training to CCHs. States/ UTs are directed to conduct Cooking Competitions among Cook-cum-Helpers to encourage them to cook varied and nutritious meals. Many States/ UTs conduct the Cooking Competitions and award cash prizes to the winners.

The Education Department, State Government of Maharashtra, has informed that an AI-based mechanism to monitor quality and nutritional levels of meals under the PM Poshan Scheme has been implemented on pilot basis for an Ashram School located at Todsa village, Bhamragad (Gadchiroli) under the Ministry of Tribal Welfare and monitored by the Integrated Tribal Development Project, Bhamragad. However, the State of Maharashtra has informed that at present, there is no proposal to extend this AI-based mechanism for PM POSHAN in the State. It may be noted that the State of Andhra Pradesh has integrated AI into PM POSHAN Scheme to ensure quality, hygiene and proper monitoring of food preparation, distribution and the overall cleanliness of schools. The Government of India encourages all States/UTs to use innovative methodology and utilising latest technology, including AI, for an effective and successful implementation of the PM POSHAN Scheme.
