

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION & LITERACY**

**LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 359
TO BE ANSWERED ON 28.03.2022**

PM Poshan Shakti Nirman Scheme

***359. SHRI SELVAM G.:
SHRI GAJANAN KIRTIKAR:**

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has been able to achieve the objectives for which Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) scheme was launched, if so, the details thereof and if not, the corrective steps taken by the Government in this regard;
- (b) the challenges faced by the Government while implementing the said scheme;
- (c) whether this scheme has not been expanded to all primary classes or the students studying in Bal Vatikas, if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor along with the corrective steps taken in this regard;
- (d) whether any step is being taken to make the country self-reliant through vocal for local under this scheme and if so, details thereof;
- (e) the number of girl students particularly of SC/ST category benefitted out of this scheme since its inception in all the States including the states of Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra; and
- (f) the other steps taken by the Government to improve the nutrition standards of school children?

**ANSWER
MINISTER OF EDUCATION
(SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN)**

(a) to (f): A statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to parts (a) to (f) of Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 359 for 28.03.2022 raised by Shri Selvam G. and Shri Gajanan Kirtikar, Hon'ble MPs regarding PM Poshan Shakti Nirman Scheme.

(a)&(b): The main objectives of the PM POSHAN Scheme (earlier known as Mid-Day Meal Scheme) are to address two of the pressing problems for majority of children in India, viz. hunger and education by improving the nutritional status of eligible children in Government and Government aided schools as well as encouraging poor children, belonging to disadvantaged sections, to attend school more regularly and help them concentrate on classroom activities.

NITI AAYOG has conducted an evaluation of the Scheme through independent third-party agency in 2019-20. An evaluation under the leadership of National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) was also conducted in 2017-18. The major findings of both the studies are as under:

- Nutritional level among students availing mid-day meal in schools is reported to have improved as attributed by Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (2016-2018).
- 92% of the students attending schools were availing mid-day meal.
- More than 80% parents stated mid day meal increased the enrolment & attendance, improved nutritional and health status of their children.
- 96% teachers mentioned that mid day meal improved the nutritional status of the school children.
- 92% teachers stated that mid day meal increased enrolment & improved attendance.

During the current pandemic Covid-19, since schools were closed, the main problem faced by the Government is to provide cooked meal to eligible children. Therefore, all enrolled children are given Food Security Allowance(FSA) comprising of food grains and cooking cost under National Food Security Act, 2013 by States and UTs under the Scheme.

(c)&(d): The Government has approved the Centrally Sponsored Scheme 'Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN)' for providing one hot cooked meal in Government and Government – aided Schools from 2021-22 to 2025-26. The Government has approved provision of hot cooked meal to children of pre-schools or Balvatika (before class I) in primary schools also, in addition to the 11.80 crore children of classes I to VIII studying in 11.20 lakh schools.

In order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the scheme, Government approved several initiatives including 'Vocal for local' under which 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. from Farmers' Producers Organizations, Federation of Women's Self-Help Groups etc. so as to promote local employment generation and economic development while simultaneously improving the nutrition standards.

(e): The Scheme is implemented across the country covering all the eligible children without any discrimination of gender and social class. 11.80 crore children (both boys and girls) are enrolled under the Scheme in all States including Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra during the year 2021-22.

(f): As per the provisions of National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013, children studying in classes I-VIII or within the age group of 6-14 years are entitled to one mid day meal free of charge, every day except on school holidays, in all schools run by local bodies, Government and Government aided schools so as to meet nutritional standards specified in the Act. Accordingly, one hot cooked meal is provided to eligible children on all working school days under PM POSHAN Scheme (earlier known as Mid-Day Meal Scheme). The following nutritional content is prescribed in the Scheme:

| Components | Primary | Upper Primary |
|------------|---------|---------------|
| Calories | 450 Cal | 700 Cal |
| Protein | 12 gms. | 20 gms. |

The following interventions are also being made to improve the nutrition standards of eligible children:

- Tithi Bhojan: The concept of Tithi Bhojan is being encouraged extensively. Tithi Bhojan is a community participation programme in which people provide special food to children on special occasions/festivals in addition to regular meals.
- School Nutrition Gardens: Efforts are being made to promote development of School Nutrition Gardens in schools to give children first hand experience with nature and gardening.
- Supplementary Nutrition: Appropriate provision is being made under flexibility component for supplementary nutrition in districts with identified high cases of malnutrition etc.
- Some States and UTs provide additional items such as milk, egg, fruits etc. to students from their own resources.
