

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION AND LITERACY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-1759
ANSWERED ON- 10.03.2025

Contaminated Food Served under PM POSHAN Scheme

1759. Dr. Bachhav Shobha Dinesh:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken cognisance of the fact that numerous children across the State of Maharashtra have fallen sick due to contaminated food served under Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) Scheme (erstwhile Mid-day Meal Scheme) during the last six months, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether the Government has taken any action to investigate the issue, if so, the details thereof including findings of the investigation;

(c) the details of the tender allotment process for the food which was contaminated and harmed health of children;

(d) whether any inspections is conducted to assess the quality of food, if so, details thereof, including timeline and frequency;

(e) the number of children that fell ill and died due to supply of contaminated food under PM POSHAN Scheme during the last five years in the State; and

(f) the steps taken by the Government to prevent such incidents?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

(SHRI JAYANT CHAUDHARY)

(a) & (b): Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) Scheme is implemented in partnership with States/ UTs for providing one hot cooked and nutritious meal to children studying in Balvatika (just before class I) and the classes I to VIII of Government and Government-aided schools on all school working days. The overall responsibility for smooth functioning of the scheme including providing hot cooked and nutritious meal to the eligible

children and day-to-day administration lies with the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations.

The State Government of Maharashtra reported 5 incidents in last 6 months affecting 387 students. The State has reported that an inquiry committee was formed in each incident, show cause notices were issued to concerned head masters, services of self help group was terminated, in one school the Principal has been suspended and cook-cum-helpers (CCHs) were removed from service. The details are attached at **Annexure**.

(c): State has further reported that there is e-tendering process in the State for supplying the foodgrains, oil, and spices through selected supplier organization. The tenders for the transportation of rice and supply of food grains to the concerned districts, where the incidents took place were finalized in February 2023.

(d) to (f): 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 were advised to adhere to these Guidelines. These guidelines are available on official website <https://pmposhan.education.gov.in>. The guidelines of the PM POSHAN Scheme, 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. In addition, the States and UTs are advised to do testing of meals through NABL accredited laboratories. Section 28 of National Food Security Act, 2013 inter-alia envisages that every local authority, or any other authority or body, as may be authorized by the State Government, shall conduct or cause to be conducted, periodic social audits on the functioning of the scheme and cause to publicize its findings and take necessary action, in such manner as may be prescribed by the State Government. The 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 complaisance on the Social Audit findings rests with the State/UT Nodal Department implementing the PM POSHAN Scheme. The Food Corporation of India (FCI) is given responsibility for issue of food grains of best available quality, which will in any case be at least of Fair Average Quality (FAQ). The FCI appoints a Nodal Officer for each State to take care of various problems in supply of food grains under the PM POSHAN Scheme. The District Collector/CEO of Zila Panchayat ensures that food grains of at least FAQ are lifted after joint inspection by a team consisting of FCI and the nominee of the Collector and/or Chief Executive Officer, District Panchayat, and confirmation by them that the grain conforms to at least FAQ norms. Training of Cook-cum-Helpers are done on nutrition, cooking processes, health and hygiene, preparation of raw grains and vegetables, recipes, serving skills etc. in collaboration with Ministry of Tourism, Government of India through their Institutes of Hotel Management and Food Craft Institutes, FSSAI, State Agricultural Universities etc. In order to improve performance and extent of implementation, the scheme inter-alia provides elaborate monitoring mechanism inter-alia State Steering-cum-Monitoring Committee under the Chairpersonship of Chief Secretary, District level Committee under the Chairpersonship of senior-most MP of Lok Sabha, District level Steering-cum-Monitoring Committee under the Chairpersonship of District Collector. The State Government of Maharashtra has reported that 2832 inspections were conducted in last 6 months.

Due to increase in such incidents, the State Government has issued detailed instructions regarding the errors found after the investigation of the said incidents and the precautions to be taken at the school level. State Government of Maharashtra has decided to test samples of cooked foods from two schools per month from each block and under this, an empanelment of NABL certified labs has been prepared. Also, they have issued instructions to all education officers and all their subordinate officers to inspect the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman Yojana while visiting the schools.

State Government of Maharashtra has also reported that in last five years a total of 7 incidents took place and 414 students were affected due to this. All the students were treated and discharged from hospital and no casualty was reported.

Annexure

Annexure referred to in reply to parts (a) to (f) of Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 1759 for 10.03.2025 asked by Hon'ble MP Dr. Bachhav Shobha Dinesh regarding Contaminated Food Served under PM POSHAN Scheme.

Details of incidents where students fell sick under PM Poshan Scheme in Maharashtra in last six months

S. No.	District	School	Date	Affected Children	Action taken on involved and found guilty
1	Thane	Secondary School Kalwa	17.10.2024	47	The incident occurred due to the negligence of the self-help group providing the meals, the services of the self-help group has been terminated.
2	Chandrapur	Zilha Parishad Central Pri. School Paradi Saoli	05.12.2024	126	The incident occurred because students were forced to eat half cooked rice and grains as sufficient care was not taken while preparing the food. The principal has been suspended.
3	Wardha	Zilha Parishad Central Pri. School Paradi Hinganghat	10.12.2024	38	The incident occurred due to the negligence of the head master and the use of spoiled food, suspension proceedings have been taken against head master.
4	Amravati	Zilha Parishad Pri. School Adgaon Morshi	28.12.2024	54	The incident occurred due to the school not storing rice and other grains in a clean place and the use of expired goods. Suspension proceedings have been taken against the head master and the cook-cum-helpers have also been removed from work.
5	Beed	Ramkrishna Vidyalaya Vida Kaij	17.01.2025	122	The incident occurred when the head master and teacher cooked food in the open space despite the availability of a kitchen shed, and something fell into food and contaminated the food. Disciplinary action has been done against the head master and the teacher concerned.

