

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION AND LITERACY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No: 22
ANSWERED ON- 03/02/2025

Audit of Funds Allocated to PM POSHAN

22. Dr. Bhola Singh:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION

be pleased to state:

- (a) the rationale behind increasing the material cost under the PM POSHAN scheme and its impact on quality of meal;
- (b) whether third-party audits are being conducted to ensure the proper utilization of funds allocated for improving the quality of meals;
- (c) the number of students benefitting from the scheme including data on increased nutritional intake; and
- (d) the key challenges faced/being faced in implementing the scheme across the country and the remedial measures taken by the Government?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

(SHRI JAYANT CHAUDHARY)

(a) : 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 rationale behind increasing the material cost under PM POSHAN Scheme is to factor in inflation in the cost of ingredients e.g. pulses, vegetables, cooking oil, other condiments and fuel. The existing rates of material cost have been revised based on Consumer Price Index- Rural Laborers (CPI-RL) index by 13.70% to Rs. 6.19 per child per day for Bal Vatika & Primary Classes and Rs. 9.29 per child per day for Upper Primary Classes w.e.f. 1st December, 2024. It will help the schools to provide all the nutrients as prescribed to students and improve quality of food.

(b): Section 28 of National Food Security Act, 2013 inter alia envisages that every local authority, or any other authority or body, as may be authorised by the State Government, shall conduct or cause to be conducted, periodic social audits on the functioning of the

scheme and cause to publicise 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 compliances on the Social Audit findings rests with the State/UT Nodal Department implementing the PM POSHAN Scheme.

(c) : About 11.20 crore children studying in Balvatika (just before class I) and classes I to VIII of Government and Government-aided schools are benefitting under the Scheme during current financial year 2024-25. For nutritional intake, the following nutrition and food norms under the scheme are as under:

S. No.	Items	Primary & Balvatika	Upper Primary
A) Nutrition norm per child per day			
1.	Calorie	450	700
2.	Protein	12 gms	20 gms
B) Food norms per child per day			
1.	Food grains	100 gms	150 gms
2.	Pulses	20 gms	30 gms
3.	Vegetables	50 gms	75 gms
4.	Oil & fat	5 gms	7.5 gms
5.	Salt & condiments	As per need	As per need

To ensure nutritional intake, the meal is prepared of fortified rice (Iron, folic acid and Vitamin), double fortified salt (Iron & Iodine) and fortified oil (Vitamin A & D). Many States and UTs are also providing additional food items viz., eggs, fruits, milk, ragi malt and chikki etc. The States and UTs fix their menu as per their local needs, in order to meet the prescribed nutritional content. Shree Anna (Millets) are super grains are a great source of several vitamins and minerals, including phosphorus, magnesium which enhances nutrient delivery. Advisories have been issued to States and UTs for inclusion of Shree Anna at least once a week in the menu.

(d): The key challenges noticed in implementation of the Scheme are as under:

- (i) Delay in release of funds to the implementing agencies by the States,
- (ii) Inadequate convergence with other Schemes,
- (iii) Maintaining the quality of meals every day.

The Government has taken the following initiatives to address the above problems.

Now, Public Financial Management System (PFMS) system has been introduced by the Government under which State Government needs to open State Nodal Agency (SNA) account. The funds released by Central Government are transferred to SNA account which ensures comprehensive monitoring and efficient usage.

States have been repeatedly requested to strengthen convergence with Health Department with special emphasis for timely conduct of health checkups of students and distribution of Iron & Folic Acid (weekly) and De-worming tablets (Bi-annually).

States and UTs have been advised for mandatory tasting of meals by members of School Management Committee (SMC), teachers, parents etc., before serving the meals to students. Further, training of Cook-cum-Helpers through various Institutes viz., Hotel Management, FSSAI and UNICEF are being carried out for cooking fresh and nutritious meals with minimal loss of vitamins. Organising of Cooking Competitions among Cook cum Helpers is also made, to encourage them to cook variety meal. Quality of meal is also checked/ verified through the visit of Social Audit teams.

States have been also advised to converge with the other Departments/Ministries viz., Ministry of Health and Family Welfares, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Ministry of Rural Development at the State Level for better coordination/implementation of the Scheme.
