

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:475  
ANSWERED ON:03.08.2011  
DISCRIMINATION IN MID DAY MEAL SCHEME  
Singh Shri Sukhdev

**Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether instances of students not availing the mid day meals at some places because of caste factor have come to the notice of the Government;
- (b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the other complaints received by the Government regarding Mid Day Meal Scheme;and
- (c) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (Dr. D. PURANDESWARI)

(a) & (b): Six complaints (two each from Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh and one each from Andhra Pradesh and Orissa) have been received by this Department since 01.01.2010. They were referred to the concerned States for enquiring into the matter and taking necessary action. The States of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh have informed that no discrimination due to caste factor was found. In Orissa, however, it was found that the guardians of the school students had stopped their children from taking mid-day-meal prepared by a Cook belonging to the scheduled caste. After an enquiry, the State Government booked a case against one of the guardians, who was arrested and produced before the Court. The Mid Day Meal programme in that school has been going on smoothly thereafter.

The other complaints pertain to not serving mid day meals regularly, false enrollment of students, involvement of teachers in the scheme (11), corruption/misappropriation of funds (7), serving poor quality meals (8), non-coverage of schools (2), and non-payment of cooking cost (1). These complaints were referred to the State Governments for necessary action; who have taken action on 16/29 of these complaints. Out of these, 4 complaints of irregularities and 4 cases of poor quality were found baseless; on other cases, the State Governments have taken necessary action which includes recovery from Gram Pradhan, suspension of the School Principal and compensating children as per the directions of the Court.

(c): Many studies have shown mid day meal fosters social equality, spreads egalitarian values, and breaks barriers of caste and class in school. Similarly, appointment of cooks from SC/ST communities teaches children to overcome caste prejudices. In addition, many States/UTs have formed Committees/Samities with members from Scheduled Caste & Scheduled Tribes to inspect preparation and distribution of food and give priority to these groups in recruitment of cook- cum-helpers.

In order to ensure effective implementation of the scheme, there is an extensive monitoring mechanism at the school, block, district, State and the National levels. The scheme is constantly reviewed through Quarterly Progress Reports; in the National level steering cum Monitoring Committee meetings and during Programme Approval Board meetings as well as through the Central Review Missions. In addition independent monitoring institutes evaluate the Scheme at regular intervals.