

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:971
ANSWERED ON:11.12.2013
QUALITY OF MID DAY MEAL
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Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether, keeping in view the increasing instances of unhygienic conditions of mid-day meal in different States of the country, Government has decided to follow guidelines of Food Safety Standard Authority of India (FSSAI) to enhance the quality of MDM;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether there is also a need to take the help of health activists under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) ;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken or being taken by the Government to serve the good quality of food under mid-day meal scheme?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. SHASHI THAROOR)

(a) & (b): The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has issued directions to all Food Safety Commissioners in the States/UTs to ensure the following for the effective implementation of the Mid Day Meal (MDM) Scheme:

- i) Provision of nutritionally balanced diet.
 - ii) Moderating /restricting the sale and consumption of unhealthy food.
 - iii) Schools to maintain a clear rejection policy to ensure safety of food.
 - iv) Safe location of storage area.
 - v) Utensils for storage and preparation of food to be designed in a way that are easily cleanable and safe and covered at all times.
 - vi) School to ensure personnel hygiene of food handlers.
- The States have also been directed to put in place both active and passive surveillance systems to ensure the provision of safe and wholesome food under the MDMS.
- The FSSAI is also a member of the National level Steering-cum-Monitoring Committee for the Mid Day Meal Scheme. It is also represented on the Expert Committee setup under the Chairpersonship of Union Human Resource Development Minister for effective implementation of the Scheme.

(c) & (d): The ASHAs counsel the community on diseases due to nutritional deficiencies and poor hygiene and their prevention through:

- i) Healthy food habits.
- ii) Hygienic and correct cooking practices.
- iii) Checking for anaemia, especially in adolescent girls and pregnant women;
- iv) Weighing of children.
- v) Importance of iron supplements, vitamins, and micronutrients
- vi) Foods that can be grown locally.

(e): The Government has reissued detailed Guidelines for the strengthening of the MDMS and to ensure strict compliance with quality, safety and hygiene norms under the Mid Day Meal Scheme through setting up of Management Structure at various levels viz. State, District, Block etc with clear roles and responsibilities. The States have been asked to ensure procurement of pulses and ingredients of branded and Agmark quality and their safe storage as well as mandatory tasting of meal by at least one teacher before it is served to the children. To strengthen monitoring, social audit of the Scheme has been introduced, and the States have been asked to convene District level Vigilance and Monitoring Committee meeting under the Chairmanship of Member of Parliament from the district. The web enabled MIS portal for MDM has been launched and States / UTs have fed annual data for about 12.12 lakh schools. The capacity of the cook-cum-helpers, as well as district and block resource persons for managing the safety of food-grains and hygienic cooking is being enhanced in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Schools of home science in selected universities as well as NGOs. The States have also been asked to ensure testing of food samples by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) / CSIR institutes / National Accreditation Board for Laboratories approved Laboratories.

The compliance with these guidelines is assessed through the Joint Review Missions (JRMs), which visit the States at regular intervals. In the current year 16 JRMs have been carried out in collaboration with the leading nutrition experts. In addition, surprise visits are carried out from time to time; four such visits have been carried out in the current year in Maharashtra; J&K; Assam and

Odisha.