

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2390  
ANSWERED ON:05.02.2014  
QUALITY OF MID DAY MEALS  
Dubey Shri Nishikant ;Jeyadural Shri S. R.

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

- (a) whether the quality of mid-day meals and the number of days the meals are being served to the children under the Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) are reportedly not as per the norms laid down in this regard;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government in this regard;
- (c) the mechanism put in place to monitor the scheme and ensure its effective implementation;
- (d) whether any suggestions have been received by the Government from various quarters including States for grant of cash in lieu of mid-day meals to the children;and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon?

**Answer**

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

(a) & (b): Yes Madam. Some States are not adhering fully to the norms laid down in this regard. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 provides for 200 working days for primary and 220 working days annually for upper primary schools. The Mid Day Meal (MDM) is to be provided on all working days; the State plans are approved accordingly. During the year 2012-13, five States, namely Assam, Bihar, Kerala, Meghalaya and Mizoram served MDM for a lower number of days, both at the primary and upper primary levels. Eight States and UTs, namely Arunachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu and Delhi, served MDM for a lower number of days at the upper primary level. The issue of coverage of an inadequate number of working days is taken up with the States/UTs during the State visits and Programme Approval Board meetings.

During the year 2013, a total of 20 complaints were received regarding the poor quality of the MDM, which were referred to the concerned States / UTs for taking corrective measures and the submission of Action Taken Notes to this Ministry. In these 20 cases, Departmental action was undertaken (including warning, transfer, suspension) in respect of 3 complaints; general corrective action, including issue of instructions to the concerned officials has been initiated in respect of 10 complaints; replies are awaited in 4 cases of complaints while State level enquiry/investigations are underway in respect of 3 complaints.

(c): This Ministry has issued detailed guidelines for the strengthening of the MDMS and strict compliance with quality, safety and hygiene norms under MDMS through the setting up of management structures at various levels viz. State, District, Block etc with clear roles and responsibilities. The States/UTs have been asked to ensure the procurement of pulses and ingredients of branded and Agmark quality and their safe storage as well as the mandatory tasting of meals by at least one teacher before it is served to the children. To strengthen monitoring, social audit of the MDM scheme has been introduced and the States have been asked to convene District level Vigilance and Monitoring Committee meetings under the Chairpersonship of the Member of Parliament from the district. The capacity of the cook-cum-helpers, as well as district and block resource persons for managing safety and quality of food-grains and hygienic cooking is being enhanced in collaboration with Ministry of Tourism, schools of home science in selected universities as well as NGOs. The States/UTs have also been asked to ensure the testing of food samples by 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/UTs at regular intervals.

In addition to this, the State Governments also visit 25% of the schools in each quarter; Independent Monitoring Institutes engaged by the Ministry of HRD also carry out field visits in all the districts, in the States allocated to them, within a period of 2 years and submit their findings to the States / UTs for taking corrective measures. Surprise visits are also carried out from time to time; four such visits have been carried out in the current year in Maharashtra, J&K, Assam and Odisha.

(d) & (e): There is no proposal for granting cash in lieu of Mid Day Meals to the children. As per the orders of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, only hot cooked meals are to be served under the Mid Day Meal Scheme.