

Mid-Day Meal in schools

***285. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY:** Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are ensuring that the children are getting meal daily as per entitlement in the Mid-Day Meal Scheme in schools for children from primary to secondary;

(b) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken in this regard;

(c) whether it is possible to provide better quality meal within the same resources;

(d) if so, whether Government called for any meeting with States to discuss this issue;

(e) if so, the issues discussed in the meeting; and

(f) the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) to (f) The National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NPSE) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for provision of a hot cooked meal to children in classes I-V in Government and Government aided schools, and Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education Centres under the scheme the Central Government provides the following support:

1. Free foodgrains through the Food Corporation of India (FCI)
2. Assistance for cooking cost
3. Reimbursement of transport subsidy
4. Assistance for construction of kitchen sheds
5. Assistance for procurement of kitchen devices
6. Assistance for Management, Monitoring and Evaluation

The State Governments are responsible for:

1. Provision of the State share towards cooking costs
2. Making arrangements for lifting foodgrains supplied by FCI and transporting them to schools

3. Ensuring regular and timely flow of funds to schools to facilitate cooking
4. Making arrangements for cooking and serving of meal
5. Construction of kitchen sheds
6. Procurement of kitchen devices
7. Monitoring and supervision of the scheme.

The Central Government has laid down the following nutritional norms under the scheme: (i) 450 calories, (ii) 12 grams of proteins, (iii) adequate quantities of micro-nutrients like iron, folic acid and vitamin-A. These nutritional norms are required to be met by providing 100 grams of foodgrains, 20 grams of pulses, 50 grams of leafy and other vegetables, 5 grams of oil.

The prescribed nutritional norms are based on a child's daily recommended requirement, the requirement recommended for mid day meal, and the energy and protein content of the recommended quantity and are cost effective. The implementation of the scheme, including enhancement in the quality of the meal is continuously reviewed with the States and Union Territories.

Improvement in the primary education system

*286. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken to improve the primary education system in the country; and

(b) whether Government are going to increase the strength of teachers from First class to Eighth class, which is the base of the education?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) and (b) The Government of India is implementing a major national programme for universalizing elementary education in the country in a time bound manner, called the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in partnership with the State Governments/UT Administrations. Towards this end, the Central Government has been steadily increasing outlays for the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, which stands at Rs. 11000 crores for 2006-07. In order to improve school infrastructure, *inter alia* 2.40 lakh schools and 10.12 lakhs teachers have been sanctioned under the programme, so far.