

stipulate that only double fortified salt should be used for cooking of the meal. These guidelines have been reiterated by the Central Government from time to time. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has also instructed all the District Education Officer to use double fortified salt for the MDMS.

**Caste and gender discrimination in serving mid-day-meals**

2440. SHRI H.K. DUA:

DR. BHALCHANDRA MUNGEKAR:

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

(a) whether Government is aware of the reports that caste and gender discrimination is prevailing in serving the mid-day-meals in a large number of schools in different parts of the country;

(b) if so, in how many such schools discrimination of the kind of caste and gender is in practice, State-wise; and

(c) the steps Government is going to take to ensure that every child gets equal measure of mid-day-meal without a trace of discrimination?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. SHASHI THAROOR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Independent Monitoring Institutes have been engaged to monitor the Mid Day Meal Scheme and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan as per the defined Terms of Reference. The Monitoring Institutions have reported about caste discrimination in some districts in the States of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha, Gujarat and Karnataka. Central teams were deputed in the 2nd week of August, 2012 to these States to investigate into the matter. The teams did not come across any discrimination except in one school in district Boudh in Odisha. The matter was taken up by this Ministry with the Government of Odisha for taking immediate remedial action. The State Government have placed the Headmaster of the school under suspension and initiated disciplinary action against the Sub-Inspector of Schools. The District Administration has been instructed by the State Government to ensure social equity in all the schools.

(c) The Government has made it clear that discrimination in the MDMS is unacceptable and has issued guidelines to the States to take preventive and corrective measures to ensure that discrimination does not occur, and is firmly dealt with if it does. The States/UTs have formed Committees/Samities with members from the

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to inspect preparation and distribution of food. Similarly, priority is given to these communities in the recruitment of cook-cum-helpers. About 45% of the engaged cook-cum-helpers are from SC and ST communities.

The MDM guidelines lay down that on an average 25% of schools should be inspected every quarter by the State Government officers belonging to different departments at the District, Sub-Division, Tehsil/Taluka, block and other suitable levels. In addition, the Review Missions consisting of representatives of the Central Government, the respective State Government, the UNICEF and the office of the Supreme Court Commissioner are also monitoring the Scheme. Similarly, 41 independent Monitoring Institutions such as the IIT Chennai and the Visva-Bharati University etc. also monitor this aspect.

**Decline in admissions in engineering and polytechnic institutions**

†2441. DR. RAM PRAKASH : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that there has been a decline in the admissions in polytechnic and engineering institutions in some States;
- (b) if so, the names of such States alongwith the reasons therefor; and
- (c) whether any scheme is under consideration of Government to prevent such decline in admissions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. SHASHI THAROOR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The decline in admissions to polytechnic and engineering institutes is applicable to almost all the States/UTs throughout the Country. The number of admissions has declined due to the lack of adequate infrastructural facilities and the shortage of faculty in some institutes.

- (c) The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has requested all the State Governments to provide a perspective plan for the development of Technical Education in their respective States. The AICTE has not yet received such perspective plans from any of the State Governments.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.