

(a) whether Central Government has taken over a major portion of 65 per cent grants allotted by the Thirteenth Finance Commission, for the purpose of implementation of the RTE Act, to satisfy requirements of primary education and to provide quality education to children between age group of 6 to 14 years and as a result thereof State Governments have to bear a major financial burden; and

(b) if so, whether Central Government is going to consider the Thirteenth Finance Commission grants as a 100 per cent State share to reduce financial burden on them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. SHASHI THAROOR): (a) and (b) The 13th Finance Commission award of Rs. 24,068 crore to 28 States for Elementary Education was approved on the proposal of the Ministry of Human Resource Development in order to offset the enhanced fund requirement of States after the enactment of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE), 2009. Under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), the main vehicle for meeting RTE objectives, the funding pattern was on a sliding scale culminating in a 50:50 sharing pattern by 2015 but the Central Government revised the sharing pattern of the SSA to a flat 65:35 up to 2015, to further support the States in their endeavours to meet objectives of the RTE.

#### **Serving of inferior quality of mid-day meals**

†2890. SHRI ISHWARLAL SHANKARLAL JAIN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that inferior quality of food is being served to children under Mid-Day-Meal Scheme being run in the primary schools in many States of the country;

(b) if so, whether Government has received any complaints from States in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government has taken any steps to stop this immediately; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. SHASHI THAROOR): (a) to (e) During the year 2012, 16 complaints relating to poor quality of the Mid-Day Meals (MDM) had been received in this Ministry. These complaints were referred to the concerned State Governments, who have taken necessary action in 14 out of the 16 cases. The allegations were not proved in five cases, while action has been taken by the State Governments in the remaining nine cases. The action taken included a warning to the concerned NGO and officers responsible, the initiation of departmental proceedings against the Principal/Headmaster and Inspector, the suspension of erring officials etc. The State Governments of West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh had also reported the supply of poor quality of foodgrains. This was taken up with the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and resolved.

The Mid-Day Meal (MDM) guidelines provide for the monitoring of the scheme by the officials of State Governments, nutrition experts, Monitoring Institutes, School Management Committee etc. for ensuring that children get nutritious Mid-Day Meals of satisfactory quality. These Officials/Institutes also inspect the Kitchens and Godowns with respect to cleanliness so the nutritious meals prepared under safe and hygienic conditions are served to the children. The cooked food has to be tasted by 2-3 adults, including one teacher, before it is served to the children. The ingredients used for cooking, food grains, pulses, vegetables, cooking oil and condiments, should be free from adulteration and infestation, and should be used only after proper cleaning and washing. The cooking and serving utensils should be properly cleaned and dried every day after use.

#### **Implementation of RTE Act**

2891. SHRIMATI VASANTHI STANLEY: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Ministry is showing signs of relenting to the pressure to amend the Right to Education (RTE) Act;

(b) whether it is a fact that the deadline to meet the infrastructure has been looming; and

(c) if so, the number of schools which did not comply with the Act?