

(a) whether it is a fact that large number of students did not opt for IITs and a considerable number of seats including general category seats fell vacant in many IITs in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to attract best talents to premier institutions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. SHASHI THAROOR): (a) and (b) No, Sir. There were three rounds of course allocation for the under-graduate programmes at the 16 Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and the Indian School of Mines (ISM), Dhanbad. A total 9716 seats were allotted in the first round, out of which 760 allottees preferred not to join. These seats were then allotted to the other lower ranked candidates in the subsequent second and third rounds. The number of seats that were not allotted, *i.e.*, remained vacant after the third round, are as follows:

General	:	NIL
OBC	:	8
SC	:	NIL
ST	:	7 (A total of 48 seats were allotted to Preparatory Courses programme on 24.07.2013).

The only perceivable reason for candidates not accepting these seats are that these seats are in courses which are not so popular with the students.

(c) The pattern of the examination ensures that the premier institutes attract the best talents. Admissions to the IITs and ISM, Dhanbad are done based on the rank of a candidate in the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) (Advanced) 2013, subject to the condition that such candidates are in the top 20 percentile of successful candidates of their boards in applicable categories.

Death of children after consuming mid day meal

42. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether several school children died and many fell sick after consuming mid day meal in a school in Saran district of Bihar recently;

(b) if so, whether the Central Government has sought a detailed report from the State Government on the incident;

(c) if so, the findings of the report and whether adulteration in mid-day meals has been reported from other parts of the country; and

(d) if so, the steps Government proposes to take to revamp its functioning across the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. SHASHI THAROOR): (a) to (c) Yes Sir. According to the detailed report received from the State Government, the Forensic Science Laboratory reports have confirmed the contamination of food with organo-phosphorous, which caused the deaths. There is no other similar report from any other State.

(d) The Central Government has recently reissued detailed guidelines to ensure quality, safety and hygiene under the Mid Day Meal Scheme. The States/ UTs have been requested to take immediate action on following points:

- (i) Setting up of an effective Management Structure for MDM at various levels.
- (ii) Mandatory tasting of the meal by at least one teacher before it is served to the children.
- (iii) Safe storage and supply of ingredients to schools.
- (iv) Capacity building of stakeholders.
- (v) Procurement of pulses and ingredients of branded and Agmark quality and supply to schools on the lines of Maharashtra.
- (vi) Awareness about entitlements under the Mid Day Meal Scheme.
- (vii) Convening of the District level Vigilance and Monitoring Committee meeting under the Chairmanship of the senior most Member of Parliament from the district.
- (viii) Convening of regular review meeting at District level under the chairpersonship of the DC/ Deputy Commissioner/CEO, Zila Parishad.

- (ix) Social Audit of the Scheme on the pattern of Andhra Pradesh.
- (x) Testing of food samples by CSIR/NABL accredited lab.
- (xi) Prompt action on the reports of the Monitoring Institutes, Joint Review Mission etc.
- (xii) Contingency Medical Plans.

Status of cooks under Mid Day Meal Scheme

43. SHRI M.P. ACHUTHAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the cooks who prepare the food in schools under Mid Day Meal Scheme are not permanent Government employees and they are paid meagre wages;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government has any proposal to appoint permanent staff with enhanced wages for the purpose; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof, and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. SHASHI THAROOR): (a) and (b) The cook-cum-helpers are part time workers and they are paid a honorarium of Rs. 1000/- per month. The cost under this component is shared between the Centre and the States/UTs in the ratio of 75:25 respectively for all States/UTs except the North-Eastern States where the ratio is 90:10. The criteria for the number of cook-cum-helpers to be engaged in a school has also been prescribed by the Central Government; one for a school having upto 25 students, two for schools having 26 to 100 students, and one additional cook-cum-helper for every additional 100 students.

- (c) and (d) No, Sir. There is not such proposal as it is part-time work.

Investigation into death of children due to mid day meal

†44. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.