



## Midday Meal Scheme

The Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry has received 35 complaints from 15 States and Union Territories (UTs) regarding substandard food quality in mid-day meals in the past three years.

- The Midday Meal Scheme comes under the HRD Ministry's Department of School Education and Literacy.
- Launched in the year 1995 as a **centrally sponsored scheme**, it provides that every child within the age group of six to fourteen years studying in **classes I to VIII** who enrolls and attends the school, shall be provided **hot cooked meal** having nutritional standards of 450 calories and 12 gm of protein for primary (I- V class) and 700 calories and 20 gm protein for upper primary (VI-VIII class), free of charge every day except on school holidays.
- The scheme covers all **government and government aided schools** and also Madarsa and Maqtabas supported under the **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan** (SSA).
- The last Mid Day Meal Rules were notified in the year 2015 under the **National Food Security Act, 2013** but amendments have been made from time to time.
- The rules provide that
  - The place of serving meals to the children shall be school only.
  - The meal shall be prepared in accordance with the Mid Day Meal guidelines issued by the Central Government from time to time.
  - The latest guidelines provide instructions on procuring **AGMARK** quality items for preparation of midday meals, tasting of meals by two or three adult members of the school management committee, including at least one teacher, before serving to children.
  - If the Mid-Day Meal is not provided in school on any school day due to non-availability of food grains or any other reason, the State Government shall pay **food security allowance** by 15<sup>th</sup> of the succeeding month.
  - The School Management Committee mandated under **Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009** shall also monitor implementation of the Mid-day meal Scheme.
  - The **State Steering-cum Monitoring Committee (SSMC)** shall oversee the implementation of the scheme including establishment of a mechanism for maintenance of nutritional standards and quality of meals.
- The government provides **financial support** to the eligible schools/implementing agencies in the form of free food grains and by bearing cooking related costs.