



## Midday Meal Scheme

**For Prelims:** Midday Meal Scheme (MDMS, PM Poshan Shakti Nirman or PM Poshan, National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013.

**For Mains:** Issues Related to Children, Midday Meal Scheme and Related Issues.

### Why in News?

**Karnataka** is set to provide eggs under the [Midday Meal Scheme \(MDMS\)](#) for school children. MDMS is amongst the largest initiatives in the world to enhance nutrition levels of school-going children through hot cooked meals.

- However, the **inclusion of eggs has often been controversial.**

### What is the Mid Day Meal scheme?

- **About:** It is the **largest school feeding programme** of its kind in the world, covering students enrolled in government schools from **Classes 1 to 8.**
  - The basic objective of this **scheme is to enhance enrolment in schools.**
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Education.
- **Background:** The programme was **first introduced in 1925 for disadvantaged children in Madras Municipal Corporation.**
  - The union government launched as a [centrally sponsored scheme](#) on a pilot basis in **1995 for children in Classes 1 to 5.**
  - By October 2007, **MDMS had been scaled up to Class 8.**
- **Current Status:** The current version of the programme, renamed [PM Poshan Shakti Nirman or PM Poshan in 2021.](#)
- **Scale of Coverage:** The scheme covers 11.80 crore children across Classes 1 to 8 (age group 6 to 14).
- **Legal Entitlement:** It is not just a scheme, but a legal entitlement of all school-going children in primary and upper primary classes, through the [National Food Security Act \(NFSA\), 2013.](#)
  - This was also reaffirmed by the [Supreme Court's](#) ruling in *People's Union of Civil Liberties vs Union of India and Others (2001).*
- **Federal Setup:** Under the rules, the allocation of **Rs 4.97 per child per day (primary classes) and Rs 7.45 (upper primary)** are shared in **60:40 ratio** with states and UTs with a legislature, and **90:10 with the Northeastern states, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand,** while the Centre bears **100% of the costs in UTs without legislature.**

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# FOOD NORMS UNDER MID-DAY MEAL

(PER CHILD PER DAY IN GRAMS)

For Primary Classes		For Upper Primary Classes
Foodgrains <b>100gms</b>		Foodgrains <b>150gms</b>
Pulses <b>20gms</b>		Pulses <b>30gms</b>
Vegetables <b>50gms</b>		Vegetables <b>75gms</b>
Oil and fats <b>5gms</b>		Oil and fats <b>7.5gms</b>

## What is the Issue Regarding Egg?

- In India, dietary choices are an intensely contested area in India **due to caste rigidities, religious conservatism and regional differences.**
- As a result, despite successive scientific studies, including those commissioned by state governments, showing the **benefits of giving children eggs, many states have been reluctant about adding eggs to the school lunch menu.**

## What are Associated Issues and Challenges?

- **Corrupt Practices:** There have been instances of plain chapatis being served with salt, mixing of water in milk, food poisoning etc.
- **Caste Bias and Discrimination:** Food is central to the caste system, so in many schools, children are made to sit separately according to their caste status.
- **Menace of Malnutrition:** According to the [National Family Health Survey-5](#), several states across the country have reversed course and recorded worsening levels of child malnutrition.
  - India is home to about 30% of the world's stunted children and nearly 50% of severely wasted children under the age of five.
- **Global Nutrition Report-2021:** According to the recently released [Global Nutrition Report](#) (GNR, 2021), India has made no progress on anaemia and childhood wasting.
  - Over half of Indian women in the age group 15-49 years are anaemic.

- **Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2021:** India has slipped to 101st position in the [Global Hunger Index \(GHI\) 2021](#) of 116 countries, from its 2020 position of 94th.

## Way Forward

- **Early Detection & Care:** Interventions to improve maternal height and education must be implemented years before those girls and young women become mothers.
- **Holistic Perspective of Health:** The fight against stunting has often focussed on boosting nutrition for young children, but nutritionists have long argued that maternal health and well-being is the key to reduce stunting in their offspring.
- **Improving Menu in MDMS:** Expansion and improvement of school meals is needed for inter-generational pay-offs. As girls in India finish school, get married and have children all in just a few years — so school-based interventions can really help.

[Source: IE](#)

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