

Milestone Volume

BUDGET BRIEFS

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Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman
(PM POSHAN) Scheme Gol, 2023-24

The National Programme of PM POSHAN, previously known as the National Scheme for Mid-Day Meals in schools (MDM), is a scheme to provide one hot cooked meal in government and government-aided schools, with an aim to improve the nutritional status of students.

This brief reports on trends for PM POSHAN performance along the following parameters:

- Past trends in allocations, releases, and utilisation;
- Coverage and provision of meals to students; and
- Management Information System (MIS) and Automated Monitoring System (AMS).

Cost share and implementation:

Funds are shared between Gol and the state governments in a 60:40 ratio for cooking costs and honorarium for Cooks-cum-Helpers (CCH). For other recurring components, Gol bears the entire cost. For Himalayan and North Eastern Region (NER) states, the sharing ratio is 90:10. Union Territories (UTs) without legislature are fully funded by Gol.

HIGHLIGHTS

₹ 1,12,899 cr

Gol allocations for Ministry of Education (MoE) for FY 2023-24

₹ 11,600 cr

Gol allocations for PM POSHAN in FY 2023-24

SUMMARY & ANALYSIS

- For Financial Year (FY) 2023-24, Gol has allocated ₹11,600 crore for PM POSHAN, 13 per cent higher than the Budget Estimates (BEs) but 9 per cent lower than the Revised Estimates (REs) for FY 2022-23. However, it is important to note that REs for the scheme in FY 2022-23 saw a 25 per cent increase over BEs.
- Accounting for inflation, allocations for the scheme have been declining over the years. For FY 2023-24, using inflation numbers for FY 2022-23, real term allocations are 10 per cent lower than those in FY 2017-18.
- Release of funds to the states marginally improved in FY 2022-23. On average, 52 per cent of the funds approved were released till December 2022. The figure for the corresponding period in FY 2021-22 was 48 per cent.
- Year-on-year pace of fund release, however, has been slow. In FY 2021-22, 35 per cent of funds were released by Gol in the last quarter, up from 27 per cent in FY 2020-21. Fund release was fastest in FY 2019-20 when only 10 per cent of the funds were released by Gol in the last quarter.
- On 1 October 2022, Gol increased allocations for materials used for cooking i.e. cooking costs by 10 per cent compared to the previous unit costs as on April 2020. These revised costs, however, do not fully account for inflation, which increased by 24 per cent during the same period.

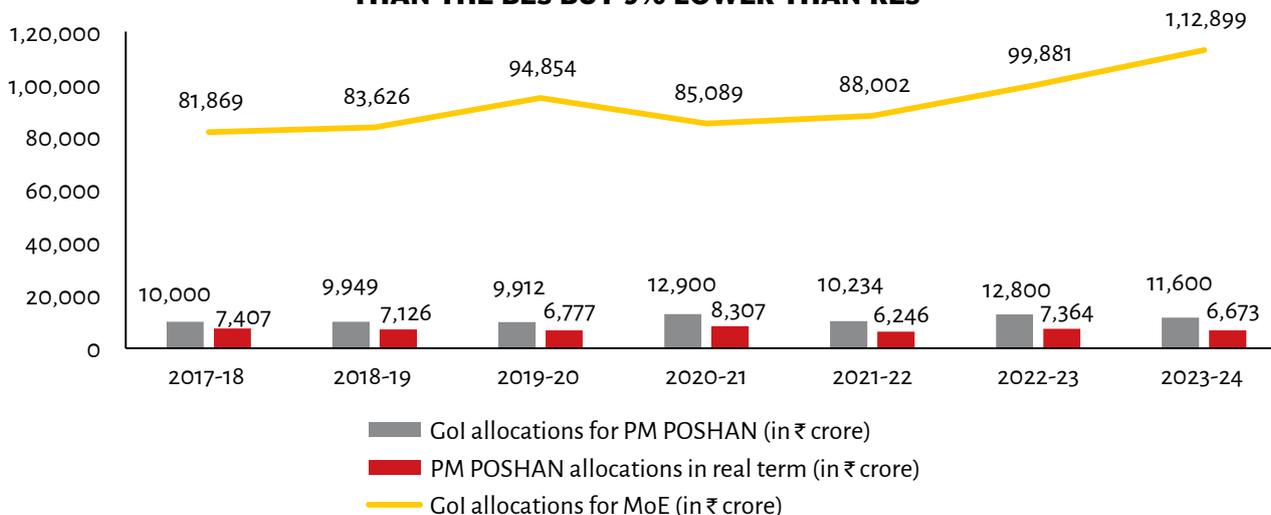
- On 29 September 2021, the Government of India (GoI) launched the Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman Scheme (PM POSHAN), previously known as the National Programme of Mid-Day Meals in School (MDM), for providing one hot cooked meal to students in government and government-aided schools from FY 2021-22 to FY 2025-26. In addition to 11.8 crore children studying from Grade 1 to Grade 8 in elementary schools, the scheme now also provides hot cooked meals to students studying in pre-primary or Bal Vatikas.
- The scheme has the dual objective of addressing hunger and improving the nutritional status of eligible children in government and government-aided schools as well as encouraging poor children belonging to disadvantaged sections to attend school more regularly and help them concentrate on classroom activities.
- The revamped scheme has some new features. First, an emphasis on efficiency and timeliness by transferring cooking costs directly to a school's bank account through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) as well as the payment of honorarium to Cook-cum-Helpers (CCH) via DBT, directly from the state. Second, the promotion of Tithi Bhojan - a community participation programme. Third, encouraging diet diversity by promoting the development of nutrition gardens in schools and ethnic cuisines through cooking competitions. Fourth, special provision for supplementary nutrition items to children in aspirational districts and districts with high prevalence of anaemia. Finally, a social audit of the scheme has also been instructed for each school to study the execution of the scheme.

TRENDS IN GOI ALLOCATIONS AND UTILISATIONS

GoI Allocations

- PM POSHAN is the second largest scheme of the Ministry of Education (MoE), accounting for 10 per cent of the Ministry's allocations in FY 2023-24. For FY 2023-24, Budget Estimates (BEs) for the Ministry stand at ₹1,12,899 crore. This is a 13 per cent increase from the previous year's Revised Estimates (REs) and an 8 per cent increase from the BEs.
- Allocations for PM POSHAN have remained relatively stagnant over the last five years and have in fact declined in the latest budget, when compared to last year's REs. For FY 2023-24, GoI has allocated ₹11,600 crore for the scheme, 9 per cent lower than the REs for FY 2022-23. It is, however, important to note that the REs for FY 2022-23 were 25 per cent higher than the BEs for the year.

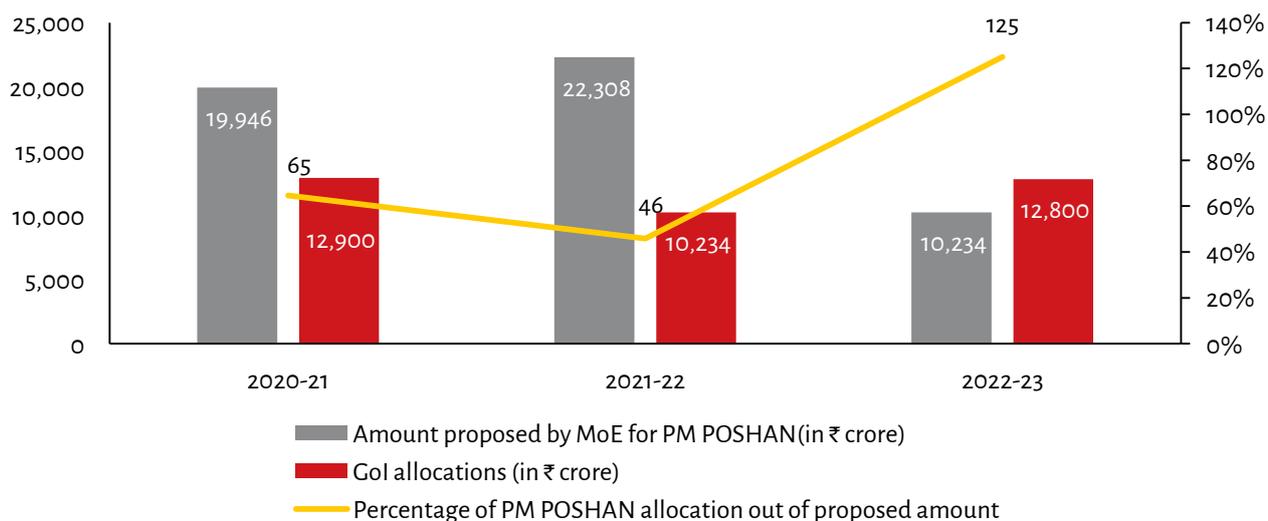
₹11,600 CRORE ALLOCATED FOR PM POSHAN IN 2023-24, 13% HIGHER THAN THE BES BUT 9% LOWER THAN RES



Source: (1) Union Expenditure Budget, MoE, FY 2018-19 to FY 2023-24. Available online at: <https://www.indiabudget.gov.in>. (2) Consumer Price Index, General Index, FY 2017-18 to FY 2022-23. Available online at: <https://www.mospi.gov.in/home/>. Last accessed on 1 February 2023.
Note: Figures are in crores of Rupees and are Revised Estimates (REs), except for FY 2023-24, which are Budget Estimates (BEs).

- Further, if inflation for FY 2022-23 is considered, PM POSHAN allocations for FY 2023-24 are 10 per cent lower in real terms than the allocations made five years prior in FY 2017-18.
- There have been significant differences between the funds requested by the Ministry and those allocated. In FY 2020-21, the Ministry requested ₹19,946 crore with the aim to expand the scope of the programme to include both pre-primary and Grades 9-12, provide one additional meal in the form of breakfast, and provide higher honoraria to the CCH cadre. The request was not accepted, and even after considering the additional allocations due to the pandemic, allocations were 35 per cent lower than the demand.
- In FY 2021-22, MoE once again sought an expansion of PM POSHAN to include pre-primary and the provision of breakfast, keeping in mind the National Education Policy, 2020 (NEP, 2020) and requested ₹22,308 crore for the scheme. While the pre-primary extension was approved for tasks that the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) was not currently performing, the inclusion of breakfast was not accepted. Consequently, REs were 54 per cent less than those requested.
- The proposal from the Ministry was low in FY 2022-23 at ₹10,234 crore – despite the expansion of the scheme to include pre-primary. This was 54 per cent less from the previous year’s proposed amount. REs for FY 2022-23 were thus 25 per cent more than proposed amount.

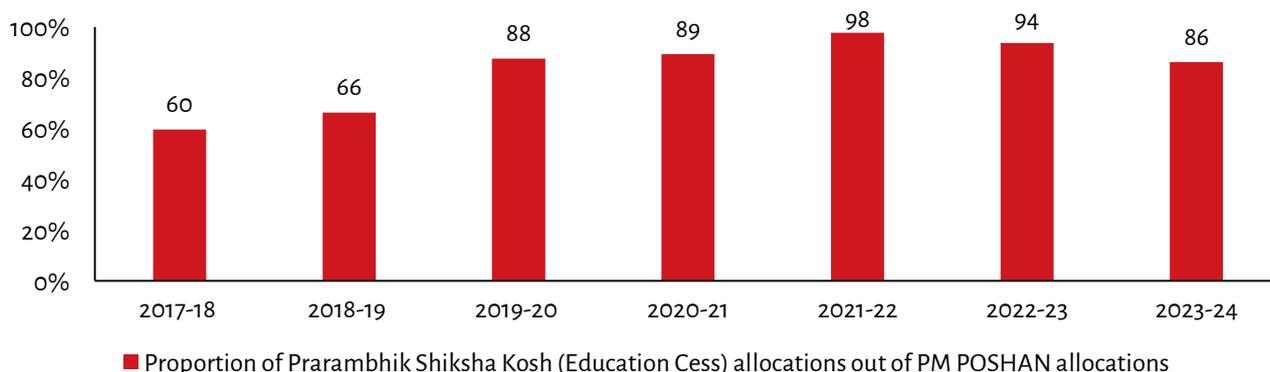
PROPOSED AMOUNT FOR PM POSHAN DECLINED BY 54% BETWEEN 2021-22 AND 2022-23



Source: (1) Projected demand from 312th Rajya Sabha committee report: Demand for Grants FY 2020-21 (Demand no.58) of DoSEL, dated 5 March 2020. Available online at: https://rajyasabha.nic.in/rsnew/Committee_site/Committee_File/ReportFile/16/123/312_2020_3_12.pdf. (2) Projected demand from 323rd Rajya Sabha committee report: Demand for Grants FY 2021-22 of DoSEL, dated 9 March 2021. Available online at: https://rajyasabha.nic.in/rsnew/Committee_site/Committee_File/ReportFile/16/144/323_2021_7_15.pdf. (3) Projected demand from 336th Rajya Sabha committee report: Demand for Grants FY 2022-23 of DoSEL, dated 16 March 2022. Available online at: https://rajyasabha.nic.in/rsnew/Committee_site/Committee_File/ReportFile/16/162/336_2022_3_15.pdf. (4) Union Expenditure Budget, MoE, FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24. Available online at: <https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/>. Last accessed on 1 February 2023.

- There are two main sources of funding for PM POSHAN. First, Gross Budgetary Support provided by the Ministry. Second, Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh (PSK) or the 2 per cent education cess, which is a tax-on-tax paid by the public towards elementary education through a non-lapsable fund.
- The share of PM POSHAN funding through PSK has increased drastically. In FY 2021-22, the cess contributed 98 per cent of the total Gol allocations for PM POSHAN, up from 60 per cent in FY 2017-18. In FY 2023-24, 86 per cent of the total funding is to come from PSK.

86% OF GOI FUNDING FOR PM POSHAN IS SUPPOSED TO COME FROM THE EDUCATION CESS IN 2023-24



Source: Union Expenditure Budget, MoE, Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL), FY 2019-20 to FY 2023-24. Available online at: <https://www.indiabudget.gov.in>. Last accessed on 1 February 2023.

Note: Figures are Revised Estimates (REs), except for FY 2023-24, which are Budget Estimates (BEs).

Expenditures

- Expenditure under the scheme was slow in FY 2021-22. Till January 2022, only ₹6,661 crore or 58 per cent of allocations had been spent. There is no publicly available expenditure data for FY 2022-23.

TRENDS IN STATE-WISE RELEASES AND EXPENDITURES

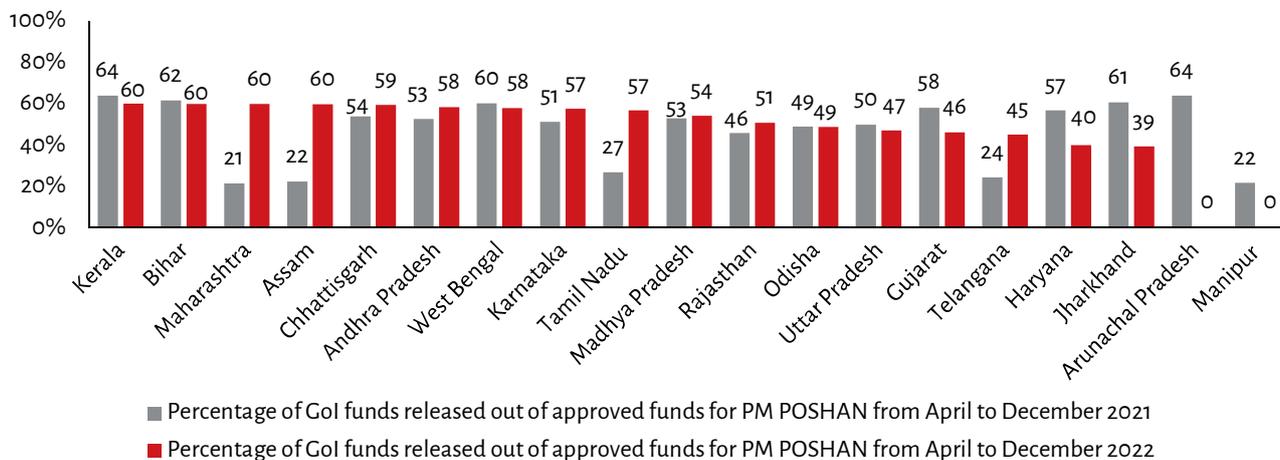
- Release of funds for PM POSHAN are based on plans submitted by states estimating the number of children likely to avail the scheme and approved cost norms. Budgets proposed by states are approved by the Programme Approval Board (PAB) under MoE after discussions and negotiations with individual state governments.
- Total approved budgets for a state include both state and GoI shares for the specific financial year, as well as the unutilised amount from the previous year. Once approved, funds are released by both GoI and states as per their fund sharing ratio.

Releases

- As per the scheme guidelines, funds are meant to be released by GoI in two instalments. To allow states and Union Territories (UTs) to continue implementing schemes, the first instalment is split into two parts: an ad hoc grant release of 25 per cent at the start of the fiscal year, and another 35 per cent upon receipt of information on the unspent balance from previous year releases as well as foodgrains. The remaining 40 per cent is provided as a second instalment.
- Release of funds under the scheme has been slow. In FY 2021-22, 48 per cent of the PM POSHAN approved budgets had been released by GoI till December 2021 (three quarters into the fiscal year).
- In FY 2022-23, due to some technical reason, the ad hoc grant was not released and thus no funds were released in the first quarter. It was then decided that 60 per cent of the admissible fund would be released in one go as the first instalment. However, as of December 2022, only 52 per cent of the funds had been released.
- There are state variations in receipt and most states have not received this first instalment. Out of 36 states and UTs, only five states received 60 per cent of their funds by December 2022. Similarly, in FY 2021-22, during the same period, only six states had received 60 per cent or more of their GoI allocations.
- Release of funds was lower than the national average for 20 states and UTs, including Rajasthan (51 per cent), Odisha (49 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (47 per cent), Gujarat (46 per cent), Telangana (45 per cent), Haryana (40 per cent), and Jharkhand (39 per cent).

- For seven out of 20 states and UTs, including Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur, no funds were released in the first three quarters of FY 2022-23.

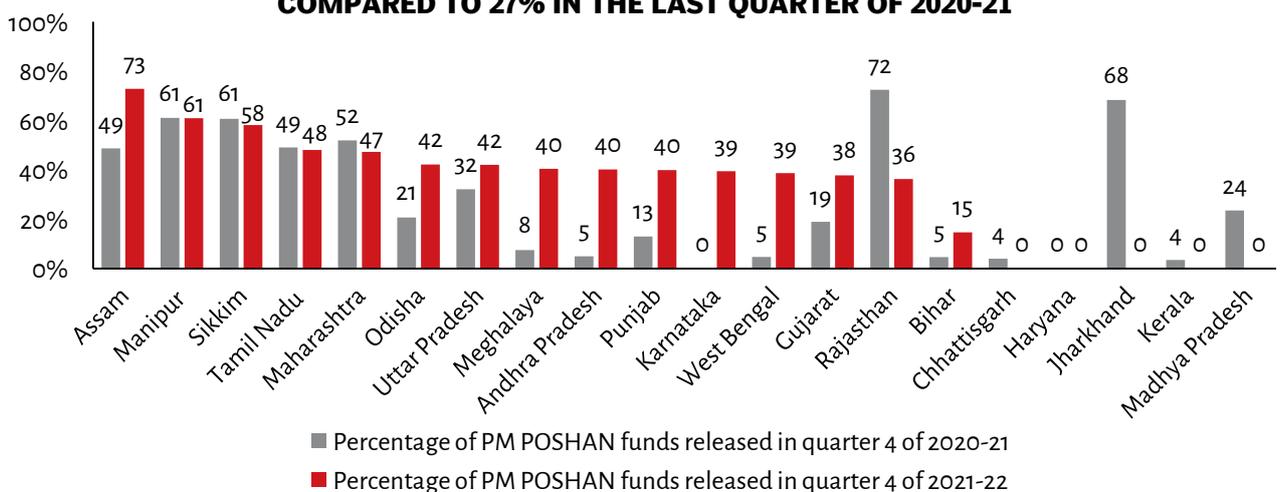
IN 2022-23, ONLY 52% GOI APPROVALS HAD BEEN RELEASED TILL DECEMBER, COMPARED TO 48% DURING THE SAME PERIOD IN 2021-22



Source: (1) PAB Minutes, PAB Meeting for PM POSHAN, FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23. (2) Central Assistance Released, FY 2021-22, and FY 2022-23. Available online at: <https://pmposhan.education.gov.in/>. Last accessed on 3 January 2023.

- To understand the pattern of fund release, quarter-wise sanction orders have been analysed. The analysis suggests an increasing delay in the release of funds. For instance, in FY 2019-20, only 10 per cent of the funds were released in the last quarter. This increased to 27 per cent in FY 2020-21 and further to 35 per cent in FY 2021-22.
- There are state variations. For some states such as Assam, Manipur, and Sikkim, more than 50 per cent funds were released in the last quarter of FY 2021-22. In contrast, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Kerala, and Madhya Pradesh had received all their funds before the last quarter.

35% OF THE TOTAL FUNDS WERE RELEASED IN THE LAST QUARTER OF 2021-22 COMPARED TO 27% IN THE LAST QUARTER OF 2020-21



Source: Central Assistance Released, FY 2020-21 and FY 2021-22. Available online at: http://mdm.nic.in/mdm_website/. Last accessed on 20 December 2022.

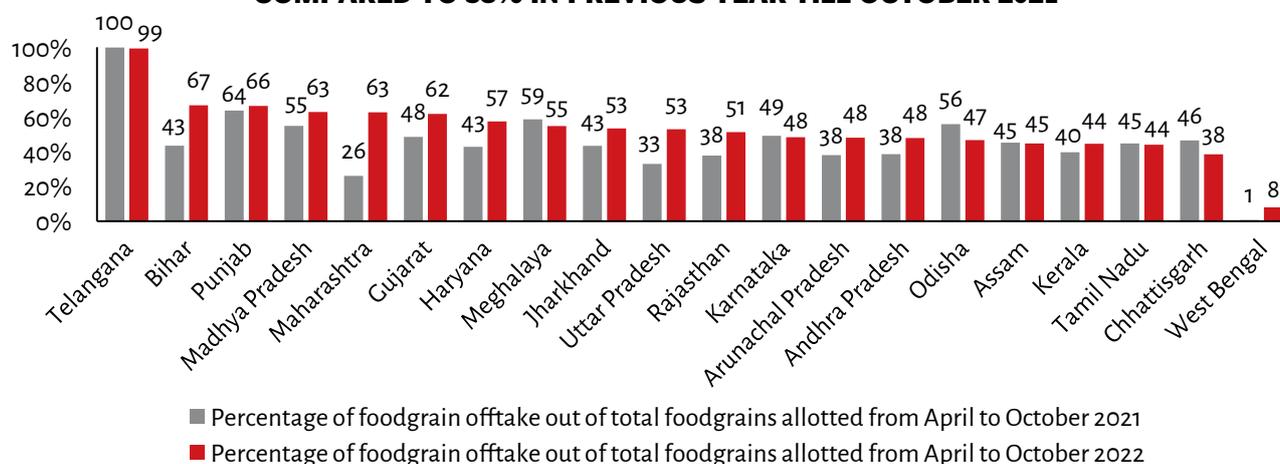
COMPONENT-WISE TRENDS

- Under PM POSHAN, funds for recurring components are provided for the following activities:
 - **Foodgrains** – GoI norms specify that every child should be allotted 100 grams of rice or wheat for primary school (Grades 1-5) and 150 grams for upper primary school (Grades 6-8). GoI provides foodgrains free of cost through the Food Corporation of India (FCI).
 - **Cooking Costs** – Costs of ingredients such as pulses, vegetables, cooking oil, salt, and condiments are provided on a per child, per day basis.
 - **Honorarium to Cook-cum-Helper (CCH)** – A monthly honorarium of ₹1,000 is given to CCH for 10 months in a year, based on a norm of one CCH per 25 students in a school. Some states provide additional honorarium from their own resources.
 - **Transportation Assistance (TA)** – TA is given for carrying foodgrains from FCI depots to schools in all states and UTs at Public Distribution System (PDS) rates.
 - **Monitoring, Management, and Evaluation (MME)** – MME accounts for 2.7 per cent of the recurring central assistance for cost of foodgrains, cooking cost, transportation charges, and honorarium to CCH.

Foodgrains

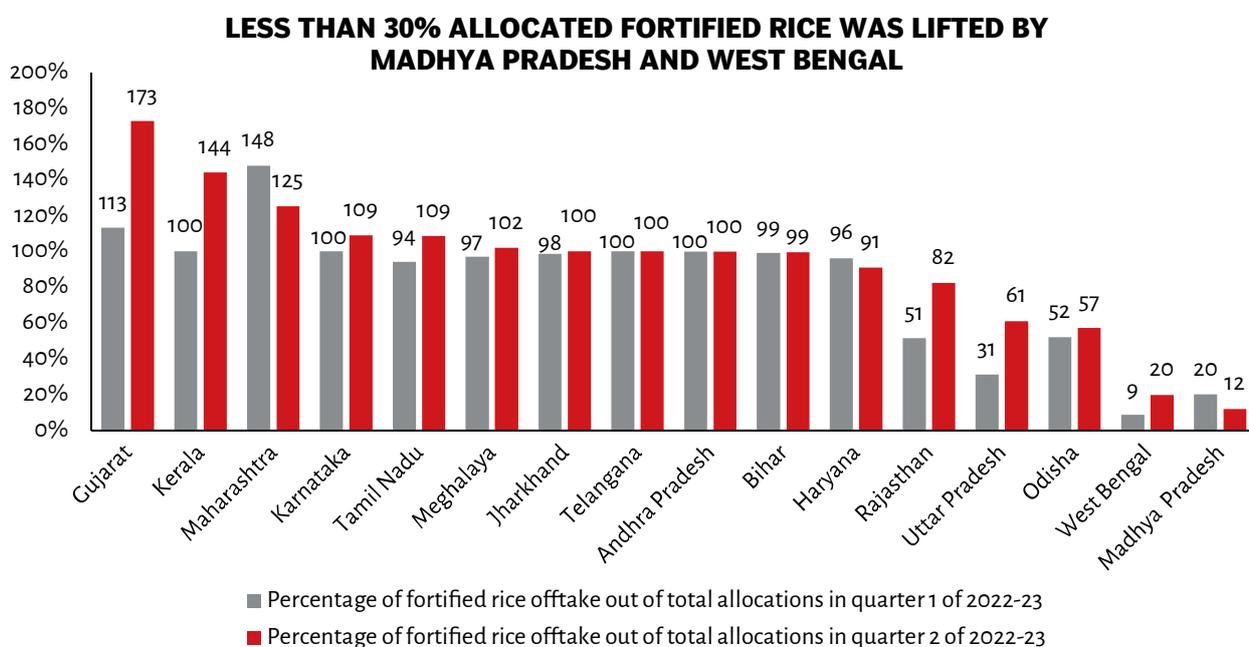
- Wheat, rice, and fortified rice grains are bought centrally by the FCI and sent to states. States and UTs further allocate the foodgrains to their districts as per requirement. After obtaining foodgrain allocations, the district administration schedules lifting from the local FCI depot. These may be lifted monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly. The cost of foodgrains provided by the FCI is made available to district-level authorities in states and UTs directly by GoI as per the approved plan.
- Supply of foodgrains to primary (including Bal Vatikas) and upper primary schools happen at National Food Security Act (NFSA) rates which is ₹1 per kg for coarse grain, ₹2 per kg for wheat, and ₹3 per kg for rice.
- Release of funds for foodgrain procurement follows the same trend as overall releases. In FY 2022-23, till 31 December, GoI released 52 per cent of its funds approved by the PAB. The figure for the same period in FY 2021-22 stood at 47 per cent.
- Despite lower releases, lifting by states also remained slow, although this has seen marginal improvement in recent times. Till October 2022, only 49 per cent of the grains allotted to states were lifted. This was higher than the pace of offtake during the same period for FY 2021-22, which stood at 38 per cent.

49% OF FOODGRAINS ALLOCATED TO STATES WERE LIFTED TILL OCTOBER 2022 COMPARED TO 38% IN PREVIOUS YEAR TILL OCTOBER 2021



Source: (1) Foodgrains allotted in FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23. Available online at: <https://fci.gov.in/sales.php?view=36>. (2) Foodgrains offtake for FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23. Available online at: <https://dfpd.gov.in/food-grain-bulletin.htm>. Last accessed on 20 December 2022.

- For instance, Bihar and Maharashtra lifted more than 60 per cent of their allotted grains by October 2022, as compared to 43 per cent and 26 per cent by October 2021, respectively. In contrast, Odisha (9 percentage points) and Chhattisgarh (8 percentage points) lifted much lower amounts of foodgrains till October 2022, compared to the same period in the previous year. West Bengal stands out as it had lifted less than 10 per cent allocated foodgrains till October in both the years.
- The GoI approved a sponsored pilot programme on "fortification of rice and its distribution under the Public Distribution System" for a period of three years, commencing from FY 2019–20, in order to ensure nutritional security and address anaemia and micronutrient deficiencies in the country.
- Based on an RTI response dated 21 December 2022, offtake of fortified rice has been high compared to normal foodgrains. In the first quarter of 2022, 71 per cent of the fortified rice allocations had been lifted, and 18 states and UTs had lifted 100 per cent of their allocations of fortified rice. In the second quarter, 84 per cent of the allocated fortified rice had been lifted, but only 16 states and UTs lifted 100 per cent of their allocations for the quarter.
- On the contrary, for states such as Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal, less than 30 per cent of the allocated fortified rice was lifted in the first two quarters.



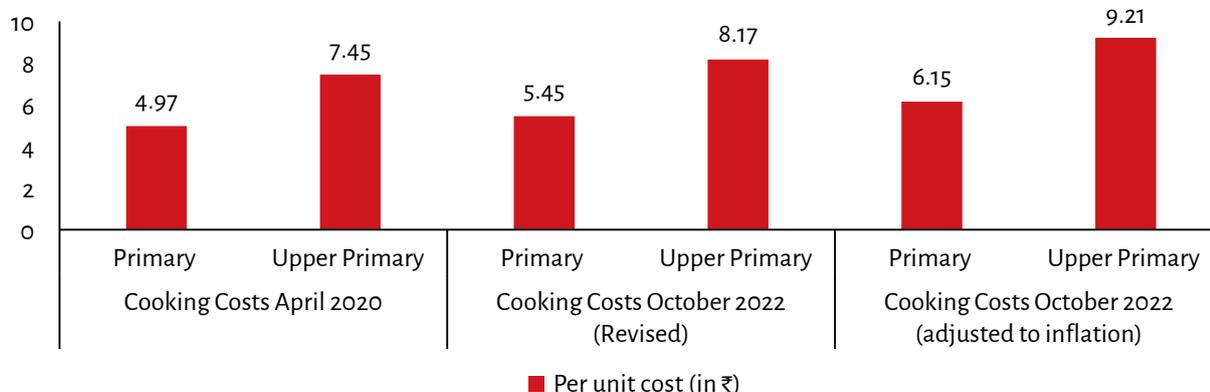
Source: Fortified rice allocation and off-take from RTI response from DoSEL dated 21 December 2022.

Cooking Costs

- Costs for ingredients such as pulses, vegetables, cooking oil, other condiments, and fuel constitute the largest share of the PM POSHAN budget.
- After over two years, cooking costs were revised in October 2022. Thus, cooking cost per child, per day for primary school students increased from ₹4.97 in FY 2020-21 to ₹5.45 for FY 2022-23, and for upper primary school students, they increased from ₹7.45 per child to ₹8.17 per child. These revised cooking costs came into effect from 1 October 2022.
- A comparison between food inflation and the increase in cooking costs, however, indicate a significant difference. Between April 2020 and October 2022, India saw a 23.7 per cent increase in food inflation (considering only ingredients covered under cooking costs i.e. pulses and products, oils and fats, vegetables and spices). Cooking costs during the same period, however, increased only by 9.6 per cent.

- Accounting for food inflation during the same period, we estimate that the cooking costs should have been increased to ₹6.15 for pre-primary and primary section and ₹9.21 for upper primary section.

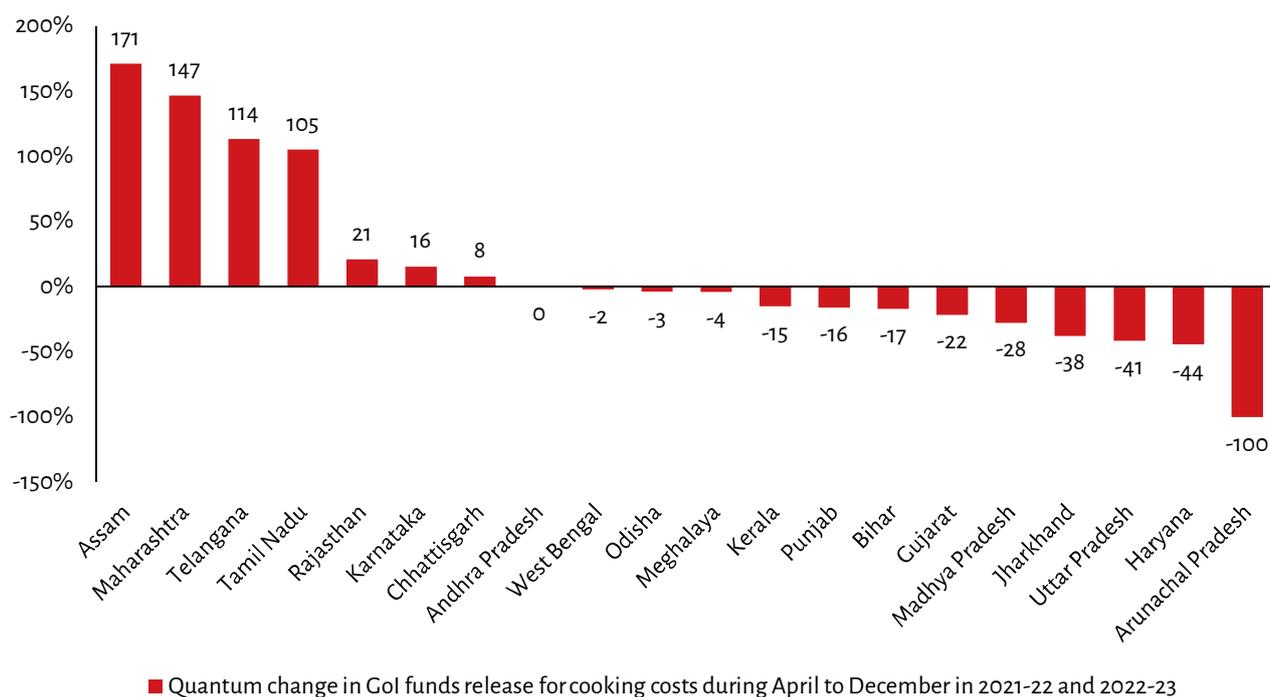
FOOD INFLATION INCREASED BY 23.7% WHEREAS COOKING COSTS INCREASED BY 9.6%



Source: (1) Revised Cooking Costs, FY 2020-21. Available online at: https://pmposhan.education.gov.in/Files/Cooking_Cost_Revision/Revision%20of%20Cooking%20Cost_14April2020.pdf. (2) Revised Cooking Costs, FY 2022-23. Available online at: https://pmposhan.education.gov.in/Files/Cooking_Cost_Revision/Revision%20of%20Material%20Cost_letter%20dt%2007.10.2022.pdf. (3) Annual inflation rate, food and beverages, MoSPI, Gol, April 2021. Available online at: <https://www.mospi.gov.in/home/>. (4) Consumer price index numbers, food and beverages, October 2022. Available online at: <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1875824#:~:text=During%20the%20month%20of%20October,rural%20and%2091.8%25%20for%20urban>. Last accessed on 26 December 2022.

- Since cooking costs were increased halfway through the fiscal year, additional funds would be needed to provide for these revised allocations. Multiplying the total PAB approved students and the additional cost as given by Gol, it is estimated that an additional ₹446 crore would be required for the scheme.
- Further, accounting for inflation, we estimate the requirement should be ₹1,092 crore. However, as per the supplementary budget announced on 9 December 2022, an additional amount of ₹80 crore has been sought and allocated for the scheme.
- Apart from low allocations for cooking costs, the total quantum of funds released in FY 2022-23 till December have also been low. On average, till December 2022, cooking costs released were 3 per cent lower than in the same period in the previous year.
- In FY 2022-23, till December, 23 states and UTs had received less funds compared to the same period in the previous year. The decline was more than 40 per cent for states such as Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.
- On the other hand, states like Assam, Maharashtra, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu received more funds this year when compared to the same period last year.
- However, as a proportion of approvals, the release of funds has improved marginally. Between April 2022 to December 2022, 54 per cent of approved funds for cooking costs had been released, compared to 48 per cent in the same time period in FY 2021-22.
- As of December 2022, less than half of the approved funds were released in Uttar Pradesh (49 per cent), Gujarat (47 per cent), Jharkhand (41 per cent), and Haryana (34 per cent). Funds were not released for seven states and UTs, including Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur.

RELEASES FOR COOKING COST DECREASED BY 3% IN 2022-23 TILL DECEMBER 2022

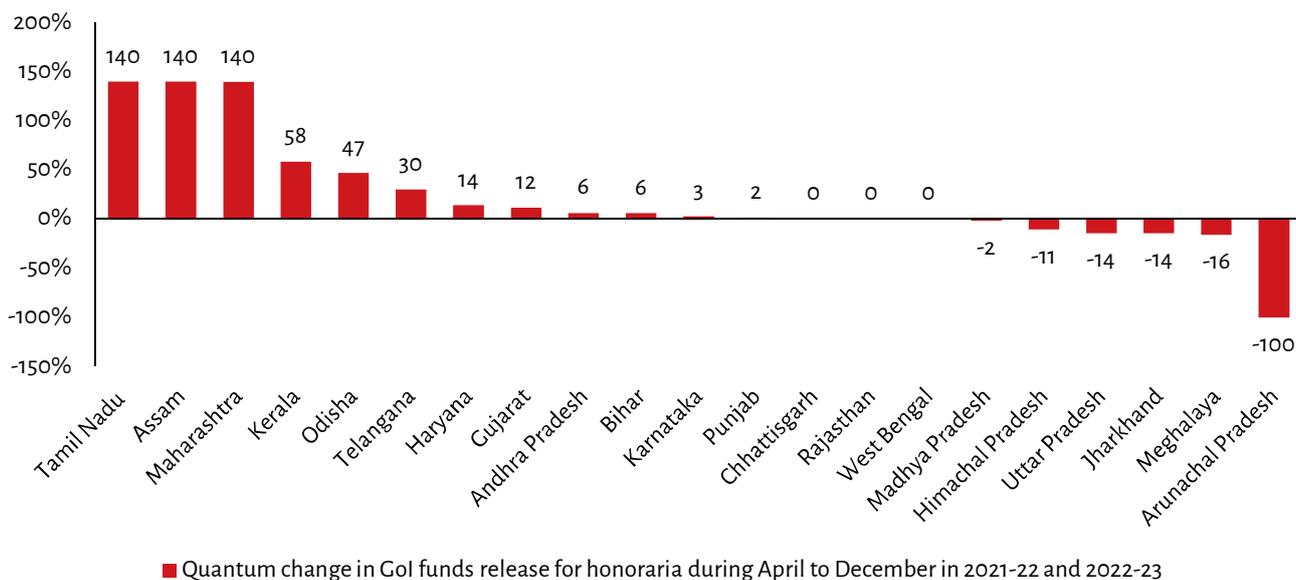


Source: Central Assistance Released, Cooking Costs for FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23. Available online at: <https://pmposhan.education.gov.in/>. Last accessed on 3 January 2023.

Cooks-cum-Helpers (CCH)

- According to the norm, one CCH must be engaged in a school having up to 25 students, two CCHs for schools having 26 to 100 students, and one CCH for every additional 100 students. CCH are to be provided an honorarium of ₹1,000 per month for 10 months. This cost is shared between the Union and states and UTs in a 60:40 ratio.
- Many states, however, provide additional funds as honorarium to CCH. In FY 2022-23, as many as 24 states and UTs provided additional honorarium to CCH out of their own resources.
- There have been improvements in the total quantum of funds released by Gol for CCH honoraria. In FY 2022-23 till December, ₹866 crore was released – 11 per cent higher than the ₹778 crore for the previous year. States such as Assam, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu received more funds this year when compared to the same period last year.
- On the other hand, 13 states and UTs received less funds compared to the same period in the previous year. This list includes Madhya Pradesh (-2 per cent), Himachal Pradesh (-11 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (-14 per cent), Jharkhand (-14 per cent), and Meghalaya (-16 per cent).
- During PAB meetings, states and UTs were advised to organise training programmes for all the Cook-cum-Helpers. In FY 2021-22, only eight states and UTs had conducted any training for all CCHs.

HONORARIUM RELEASES INCREASED BY 11% IN 2022-23 TILL DECEMBER

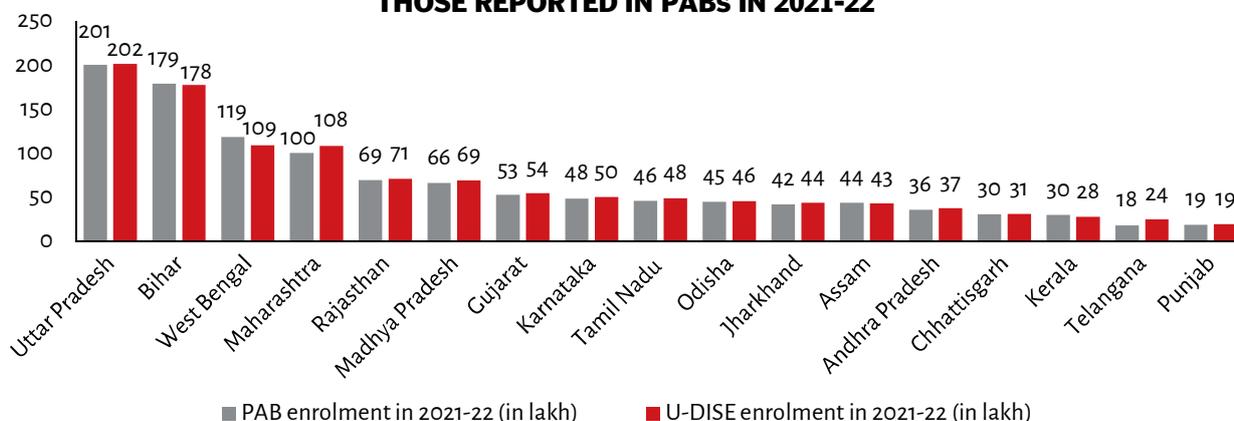


Source: Central Assistance Released, Honorarium to Cooks-cum-Helpers for FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23. Available online at: <https://pmposhan.education.gov.in/>. Last accessed on 3 January 2023.

Coverage

- PAB advised the states to ensure data parity on enrolment of students with Unified District Information System for Education (U-DISE) data, given the large differences between enrolment figures as per U-DISE and PAB.
- On average, enrolment as per U-DISE were 19 lakh more than those reported in PAB minutes for academic year 2021- 22. For example, enrolment in Maharashtra as per U-DISE stood at 108 lakh for academic year 2021-22 but 100 lakh as per the PAB, highlighting a difference of 8 lakh enrolments.
- On the contrary, for West Bengal, enrolment as per PAB was 9.5 lakh higher than the enrolment figures as per U-DISE. Similarly, there was a difference of more than 2 lakh in Kerala and more than 1 lakh in Bihar.

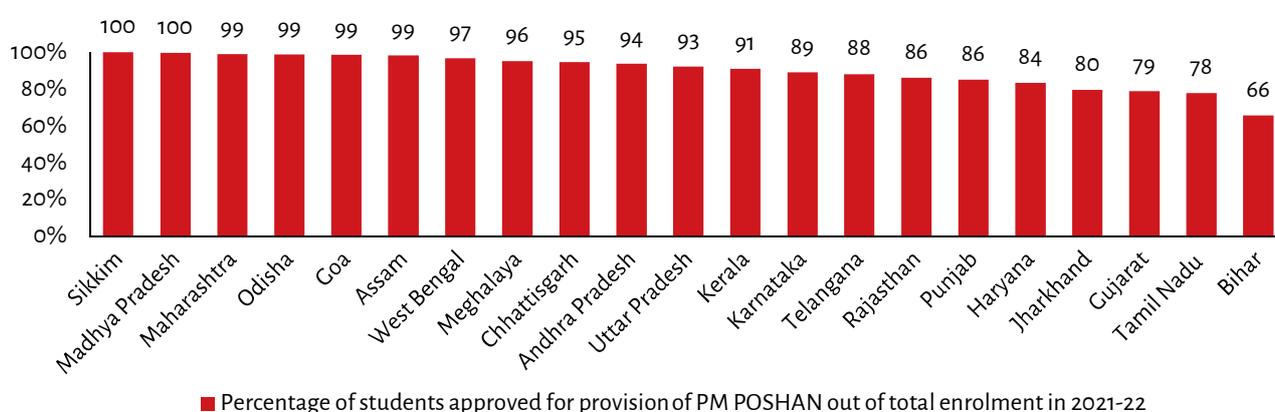
ON AVERAGE, ENROLMENT IN THE U-DISE WAS HIGHER THAN THOSE REPORTED IN PABs IN 2021-22



Source: (1) Minutes of the meeting, PAB PM POSHAN, FY 2022-23. Available online at: <https://pmposhan.education.gov.in/>. (2) U-DISE+ report, FY 2021-22. Available online at: https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics-new/udise_21_22.pdf. Last accessed on 26 December 2022.

- There are also differences in the proportion of students approved for the provision of PM POSHAN out of total enrolment as per the PAB. In FY 2021-22, only 88 per cent of total enrolled students were approved for provision of PM POSHAN in India, but there are state variations. For seven states and UTs, including Sikkim and Madhya Pradesh, all enrolled students were approved.
- On the other hand, for eight states and UTs, the coverage was lower than the national average. These include Rajasthan (86 per cent), Punjab (86 per cent), Haryana (84 per cent), Jharkhand (80 per cent), Gujarat (79 per cent), Tamil Nadu (78 per cent), and Bihar (66 per cent).
- PAB has also expressed concern about the non-coverage of all enrolled states, advising states where the gap is particularly large to make efforts to identify causes and implement corrective measures in order to cover all enrolled children.

88% STUDENTS WERE APPROVED OUT OF TOTAL ENROLMENT FOR PM POSHAN IN 2021-22



Source: (1) Minutes of the meeting, PAB PM POSHAN, FY 2022-23. Available online at: <https://pmposhan.education.gov.in/>. (2) Foodgrain allocation for MDM, FY 2021-22. Available online at: <https://pmposhan.education.gov.in/Files/Food%20Grain%20Allocation/2021-22/Allocation%20of%20food%20grains%20to%20States%20and%20UTs-1-10-2021.pdf>. Last accessed on 26 December 2022.

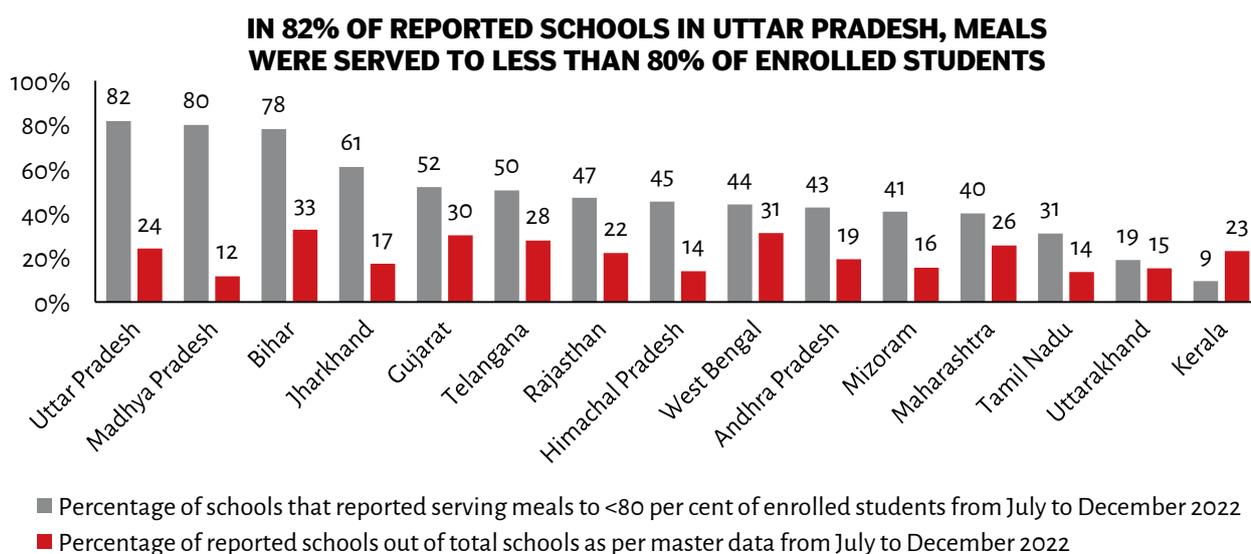
Management Information System (MIS)

- PM POSHAN Management Information System (MIS) has been established by the Ministry for online monitoring of the scheme across the country. The annual data entry module captures master data on the availability of kitchen-cum-stores, kitchen devices, the number of CCH engaged, the mode of cooking, etc. The monthly data entry module collects information such as the number of days a meal was served, the number of meals served, the honoraria paid to cooks and other helpers, and children's health check-ups.
- As per a D.O. letter (No.7-112022-PM POSHAN 2-1), the annual data entry for 8 lakh schools out of 10.95 lakh schools (73 per cent) has been completed as on 27 September 2022, for FY 2022-23. For 10 states and UTs, 100 per cent annual entries were completed, including Jharkhand, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand, and Goa. Whereas for states such as Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, and Tamil Nadu, it was less than 50 per cent. Despite this, nationally, only 50 per cent of the average monthly data entry were completed during the same period.

Automated Monitoring System (AMS)

- The Automated Monitoring System (AMS) is created for real-time monitoring of the scheme, through which every school headmaster and teacher-in-charge of PM POSHAN sends an SMS via their mobile phone on a daily basis. The secretary's letter stated that the project's target date for implementation was 1 July 2016, but states and UTs had assured GoI that it would be completed by 30 April 2017. Currently, 17 states and UTs have adopted the AMS application developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC), while other states and UTs have developed their own applications.

- Based on data collected, critical and nuanced reports can be generated, such as schools where meals are not served, schools where meals served are less than a certain percentage of enrolment, and so on. These reports help to monitor the scheme at the state level, district level, and even block level.
- Post school reopening after the COVID-19 pandemic, the PAB advised the states and UTs to ensure 100 per cent information submission on all working days under AMS.
- Despite this, the level of daily reporting under AMS in many states remained low. For instance, between July to December 2022, only 18 per cent of schools across 36 states and UTs reported entries under AMS. For states such as Bihar, West Bengal, and Gujarat, 30 per cent or more of the schools furnished entries under the AMS. No data was available in the AMS for Karnataka and Odisha.
- As a proxy for attendance or children actually availing meals out of enrolled children, the AMS gives daily data on the number of schools which reported less than 80 per cent of enrolled children receiving meals. Collating data from July to December 2022 across all states and UTs that had reported this indicator, on average 57 per cent of schools reported serving meals to less than 80 per cent of enrolled children.
- In Uttar Pradesh, despite only 24 per cent of schools reporting this data online, 82 per cent of the reporting schools were serving meals to less than 80 per cent of enrolled students. In contrast, Maharashtra, which had 26 per cent of schools reporting data, had only 40 per cent of reported schools serving less than 80 per cent of enrolled children.



Source: PM POSHAN AMS Portal, MIS, FY 2022-23. Available online at: <http://pmposhan-ams.education.gov.in/>. Last accessed on 3 January 2023.

Tithi Bhojan

- Tithi Bhojan is a community participation programme in which people provide special food to children on festivals and occasions. PAB has advised states and UTs to make more efforts to involve communities in this unique scheme under PM POSHAN. Tithi Bhojan is a positive way to transform the community involvement and community ownership of the scheme into a Jan Andolan. In FY 2021-22, 18 states and UTs have initiated the Tithi Bhojan programme.