Society & Social Justice · GS - II

How does the adequacy of financial allocations influence the effectiveness of school nutrition programmes in India? Discuss with reference to the PM POSHAN scheme.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 26/11/2026	GS - II	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

PM POSHAN, child nutrition, inflation, unit cost, nutritional security, Centre-State coordination, implementation gaps, educational equity

Model Answer

School nutrition programmes are important instruments of human development because they address classroom hunger, support child nutrition and encourage school participation. However, their effectiveness depends significantly on adequate and predictable financial allocations.

Why Adequate Funding Matters

1. **Inflation and purchasing power:** Rising prices of cereals, pulses, vegetables, cooking fuel and transportation reduce the real value of fixed per-child allocations. Schools may struggle to provide meals meeting prescribed nutritional standards.
2. **Nutritional quality:** Insufficient funding can encourage dependence on inexpensive ingredients, affecting dietary diversity and the provision of adequate proteins and micronutrients.
3. **Implementation capacity:** Schools require resources not only for food ingredients but also for cooking, storage, hygiene, transportation and maintenance.
4. **Equity:** Underfunded schools in economically disadvantaged regions may face greater difficulty mobilising additional resources, widening differences in service delivery.

Institutional Framework

The PM POSHAN scheme, implemented through Centre-State cooperation, provides one hot cooked meal to eligible children in government and government-aided schools. Its objectives include improving nutritional status, school attendance and retention.

Improving Financial Sustainability

1. Periodically revise per-child cooking costs to reflect inflation and regional price variations.
2. Ensure timely fund transfers and transparent expenditure monitoring.
3. Strengthen local procurement through self-help groups, farmers' organisations and community institutions.
4. Improve kitchen infrastructure, food safety and nutritional monitoring.
5. Encourage community participation without making essential meal provision dependent on donations or sponsorships.

Adequate funding is therefore not merely an administrative requirement; it is essential to translating the constitutional commitment to education and child welfare into meaningful outcomes.

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