



## Fortified milk in MDM for Govt school students

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In a novel initiative which would benefit more than 7.5 lakh students, the Uttarakhand government would provide fortified skimmed milk to the students of classes I to VIII under the Mid Day Meal (MDM) scheme. Under the scheme, 100 ml of milk would be provided to every student of classes I to V once a week. Similarly, the students of classes VI to VIII would be given 150 ml of fortified milk. The proposal of the scheme is likely to be presented in the meeting of state cabinet scheduled at Almora on October 23.

In the fortified milk, extra vitamins and minerals are added which normally are not found in normal milk. Typically vitamin D and A, folic acid, Zinc and Iron are added in the milk.

The weekly dose of the fortified skimmed milk would be provided to the students under the Chief Minister's Anchal Amrit scheme.

The supply of this milk would be given the Uttarakhand Cooperative Dairy Federation. The decision to provide milk under the MDM scheme assumes significance as effort to provide nutritious diet to the students have not yielded desired results so far.

As per the norms, a student of primary class should get a daily nutrition that provides 450 calories and 12 grams of protein. Similarly, a student of middle class should get nutrition that provides 700 calories and 20 gram of protein in a day.

It is learnt that the Hans Foundation which has been roped in by the State Government to provide hot nutritious MDM to the students of Government schools under the Akshay Patra Yojana (APY) in the plain districts has also showed enthusiasm to provide milk to the students. The foundation is learnt to have shown reluctance to provide eggs to the students.

The mid-day meals scheme is a crucial intervention in the education system which ensures that children are retained in school and that they are able to make better use of the benefits afforded by the government schools for furthering their education.

The Union Government and state government bear the cost of MDM in the ratio of 75: 25.

The schools are provided food grains (rice and wheat) while they had to manage other food items on their own from the budget provided. The teachers are given responsibility for managing MDM in their schools. Bhojan Matas are employed in the schools to prepare the meal for the students.