

A Report on **Breakfast Scheme**



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"Breakfast" Programme

A Field Research Report by People's Pulse Research Organisation

Fieldwork Period	1 – 7 August 2026
Study Area	Hyderabad
Institutions Covered	Five Government Schools and One Government Junior College
Field Research Window	Approximately 6:30 AM to 10:30 AM, daily







Breakfast Scheme for Better Learning...

Government Schools in Telangana

A Field Research Report by People's Pulse Research Organisation

The Telangana Government's decision to provide breakfast along with milk to students in government educational institutions marks an important intervention in child nutrition, school attendance, student welfare and the strengthening of public education. The programme was launched on 15 June 2026 at Raj Bhavan Government School, Hyderabad, as part of a broader state initiative covering students up to Class XII. Government budget documents allocate ₹720 crore for "Breakfast & Milk to School Students" for 2026–27, reflecting the scale and priority attached to the programme.

The People's Pulse Research Organisation conducted a focused field assessment in Hyderabad from 1 to 7 August 2026, covering five government schools and one government junior college. The objective was to assess whether the programme was functioning as intended on the ground, and whether implementation problems observed immediately after the launch had since been resolved.

The assessment examined timeliness of food delivery, compliance with the prescribed menu, quality and freshness of food, adequacy of portions, quality and safety of milk, hygiene and sanitation, availability of plates and drinking water, food distribution practices, teacher and staff supervision, the functioning of the food-monitoring application, student satisfaction, feedback from teachers and parents, government monitoring, transport and supply issues, and implementation at the junior-college level.

The programme has significant public value and is being used by a large number of students, but important gaps remain between its intended design and its implementation at the institutional level. The most serious concerns relate to milk quality, menu compliance, food quality, portion size, delayed delivery, inadequate monitoring, hygiene, infrastructure and weak implementation systems for junior colleges.

At the same time, the study found clear positive outcomes. Teachers and parents reported that students are regularly consuming the breakfast provided, and school staff observed that attendance has improved since the programme began. Parents welcomed the initiative as it offers a morning meal that may not always be possible to prepare at home every day. Students also showed clear preferences for particular menu items, offering useful evidence for future, evidence-based menu planning.



People's Pulse research organization concludes that the programme itself is well-conceived and potentially transformative, but its long-term success will depend on strengthening quality control, accountability, food safety, logistics, monitoring and institutional infrastructure.

Background and Rationale

The programme was introduced with the broader objective of ensuring that children do not begin their school day on an empty stomach and are able to participate in classroom activities with better energy and concentration. The Government has also linked it to improving enrolment and reducing dropout rates in government schools.

Public reporting at the time of launch stated that the breakfast-and-milk initiative was being rolled out in phases, initially covering 1,269 government schools and 33 government junior colleges, benefiting approximately 1.3 lakh school students and more than 14,000 junior-college students. The Telangana Government's 2026–27 Budget provides ₹720 crore for the programme — underlining that this is a major public expenditure requiring strong systems of monitoring and accountability.

The programme therefore needs to be evaluated not merely on whether food reaches schools, but on whether students actually receive the right food, in the right quantity, at the right time, in safe and hygienic condition, and according to the prescribed menu.

Purpose of the People's Pulse research organization Field Assessment

People's Pulse research organization undertook this field assessment after observing implementation problems immediately following the programme's launch. The team visited Raj Bhavan Government School the day after its launch on 15 June 2026 and observed serious concerns regarding the quality of the puris being served, which were found to be unusually hard and poorly prepared. The issue subsequently received public attention and was followed by immediate official intervention.

People's Pulse research organization therefore undertook a second, more systematic field assessment after a gap, to determine whether the initial corrective measures had resulted in sustained improvement, or whether the early problems were merely temporary. This assessment was designed to move beyond a single-day observation and examine the programme across multiple institutions over a full week.

Methodology

The People's Pulse research organization field team visited the selected institutions every morning between approximately 6:30 AM and 10:30 AM — the window during which food was expected to be delivered, distributed and consumed. The research team undertook the following:

- Directly observed food delivery and distribution.
- Examined the appearance, taste and quality of food.
- Observed the timing of food arrival.
- Interacted with students regarding taste, quantity and acceptability.
- Spoke with teachers and school staff, and collected feedback from parents wherever available.
- Examined menu implementation and compared it against actual supply.
- Observed the availability of plates, glasses and drinking water.
- Examined cleanliness of eating areas and related facilities.
- Recorded concerns regarding milk quality.
- Studied the functioning and limitations of the food-monitoring application.
- Examined the role of teachers and food in-charges in supervision.
- Assessed transportation-related delays.
- Examined monitoring and inspection mechanisms at the institutional level.

The assessment is based primarily on direct field observation and interaction with stakeholders, supplemented by documentary and publicly available information about the programme.

Major Field Findings

Programme Reach and Regular Consumption

A positive finding is that a substantial number of students are actually consuming the breakfast provided at school. School staff reported that breakfast is being consumed regularly by many students, and that the quantity supplied is generally sufficient for the number of students recorded in the system. Teachers are also supervising distribution as instructed by the Government. The assessment therefore does not indicate a fundamental problem of non-utilisation — the principal challenge is the quality and consistency of implementation.

Delayed Delivery of Breakfast

Timely delivery is critical, since the programme is intended to serve students at the beginning of the school day. Students generally arrive around 8:00 AM, and food is expected to reach schools before that time. Among the five schools visited, timely delivery was observed at Raj Bhavan, Erramanzil and Ameerpet; at Sriram Nagar, food reportedly arrived after 8:00 AM; and at Shaikpet, it arrived even later, after 9:00 AM.

The delay at Shaikpet directly affected students: since classroom activities had already begun, students started their day without breakfast and consumed it later, during a short interval. This defeats an essential operational purpose of the programme — the meal must be available before or at the start of the instructional day, not several hours into it. Field and delivery staff cited operational reasons for such delays, including bottlenecks at the food preparation unit, shortage of transport personnel, and cases where a single person was reportedly handling loading, unloading and driving.

Menu Compliance

The assessment identified a significant gap between the prescribed menu and the food actually supplied. School staff reported that the menu displayed in the monitoring application is not necessarily followed in practice, and in several institutions, staff said they do not know which item is being supplied until the containers are opened. This is an important governance concern: a menu is meaningful only when it is prescribed, communicated, supplied, verified and recorded. The field team also found that the approved menu was not consistently displayed at institutions.

People's Pulse research organization recommends that the approved menu be prominently displayed at every participating school and college, and that the food supplied each day be recorded against it.



Food Quality and Student Preferences

The field team found considerable variation in the quality and acceptability of different food items. Students generally showed a strong preference for upma, bonda and puri, though preferences varied by age group: primary students favoured bonda and puri; high-school students favoured bonda, puri and idli; and junior-college students preferred idli and dosa. This provides useful evidence for future menu refinement, alongside several quality concerns detailed below.

Puris

Teachers reported that puris were often thick and insufficiently cooked, in some cases appearing raw internally. Although students tend to like puri as an oil-based preparation, the quality of preparation requires attention.

Bonda

Bonda was popular among students, but the field team observed concerns regarding excessive oil content.

Idli

There were relatively few complaints about the taste of idli; however, teachers and students reported concerns about portion size.

Millet Idli

Teachers in several schools reported that millet/ragi idli had been supplied only a limited number of times in the initial period, with regular idlis reportedly supplied alongside millet idlis on some occasions.

Chutney

Chutney emerged as a recurring quality concern, perceived in several schools as excessively sour. At Shaikpet, tomato chutney was supplied instead of the expected peanut chutney, and students found it insufficiently palatable; teachers noted that tomato chutney was being supplied more often when tomato prices were lower.

Sambar

Sambar was generally consumable, but teachers observed that it often contained very few or no visible vegetable pieces — a concern not merely of taste, but of whether the meal delivers the intended nutritional diversity.





Portion Size

The Government has prescribed different quantities for younger and older students — for example, specific individual weights for dosas, idlis, bondas and puris across the two age groups, and separate quantities for upma. However, school staff reported that in practice, primary and high-school students often receive broadly similar portions, a gap that is particularly problematic for older students. Several staff stated that two idlis are insufficient for high-school students, and suggested pongal as a more acceptable alternative to coarse-rava upma. This points to the need for a weight-based, age-appropriate distribution system rather than a purely "number of items" approach.

Milk: The Most Serious Quality Concern

Among all observations made during the field assessment, the quality and handling of milk requires the most immediate attention. Students and teachers in multiple schools reported that the milk did not always taste or appear normal, and the People's Pulse research organization team itself observed milk with an unusual taste at one or two locations.

Specific concerns recorded during the field visit included:

- Milk with a bitter taste, and students consuming it reluctantly.
- Yellowish-looking milk at Raj Bhavan Government School.
- Reports of spoiled milk at Erramanzil and Ameerpet.
- Concerns regarding the cleanliness of milk containers, including instances of milk reportedly transported in containers associated with other food items.
- Complaints that repeated reporting of poor milk quality had not resulted in sustained improvement, with such complaints recorded through July and August.

The field report further records claims that the supplier described the milk as having a long shelf life, while some staff questioned whether the product received matched that description, and some raised doubts about whether milk powder was being used.

These claims should not be treated as established facts without laboratory verification. They should instead trigger an independent quality-control investigation.

FSSAI guidance places importance on the hygienic receipt, handling, storage and transportation of milk and milk products, and safe-food-handling principles require attention to hygiene at every stage from receipt to serving. People's Pulse research organization therefore considers scientific testing of milk samples one of the highest-priority corrective measures for the programme.

Food Safety and Hygiene

Concerns extended beyond the food itself to the systems through which it reaches students. Raj Bhavan school staff reported earlier incidents involving foreign objects in food, including a worm reportedly found in rice and a fly reportedly noticed in idli. These reports require independent verification, but they underline the need for a formal complaint-and-response mechanism.

The field team also observed, or was informed of, the following:

- Unclean food transportation containers.
- Lack of adequate eating infrastructure and dining areas.
- Hygiene issues around drinking-water facilities, and scope for improved washroom cleanliness.
- Difficulties during rainy weather.
- Lack of proper plates and glasses in several schools, with students required to bring utensils from home.

FSSAI's food-safety guidance treats personal hygiene, safe handling, transportation, serving, cleaning and sanitation as interconnected components of food safety. Quality control should therefore not stop at the central kitchen or preparation unit — it must extend through the entire food supply chain, up to the student's plate.

Plates, Glasses, Drinking Water and Dining Infrastructure

Adequate plates and milk glasses have not been provided to several schools covered in the study, with students reportedly bringing utensils from home. Nampally Junior College was an exception, where plates were available. This is a basic but important implementation gap: if the Government intends the programme to be a standardised public nutrition scheme, the associated infrastructure — plates, milk glasses, drinking water, dining space, rain protection and washroom cleanliness — should also be standardised. A child receiving food but with no clean, convenient place or utensils to consume it cannot be considered a complete implementation of a nutrition programme.



Monitoring and Inspection

A significant institutional finding is the apparent weakness in independent quality monitoring. Teachers supervise distribution, and supplier representatives reportedly visit schools mainly to record how many students consumed the food — with school staff reporting that such visits focus on attendance and consumption numbers rather than food quality. Several schools reported that Education Department or other government officials had not conducted regular physical inspections of food quality.

A programme of this financial and social scale requires at least three distinct forms of monitoring:

1. Quantity monitoring — how many students received food.
2. Quality monitoring — whether the food was safe, fresh and properly prepared.
3. Outcome monitoring — whether attendance, satisfaction and nutritional outcomes are improving.

At present, quantity monitoring appears considerably stronger than quality and outcome monitoring.

Food Monitoring Application

The digital monitoring system is useful but has notable operational limitations. School staff reported server problems, menu options not appearing correctly, difficulty entering the required milk quantity, occasional reliance on WhatsApp instead of the application, and gaps between the digital menu and the actual supply. Digital monitoring can meaningfully improve transparency, but only if the data system reflects actual ground conditions.

The application should be strengthened to capture: planned menu, actual menu supplied, time of delivery, quantity supplied, and number of students served, milk quantity, quality complaints, photographic evidence where necessary, complaint escalation, corrective action and closure of complaints. In short, it should function as an end-to-end accountability mechanism, not merely a consumption log.



Teacher Supervision

Teachers are generally participating in food distribution and supervision as directed, and attempt to give students time to eat even when food arrives late — demonstrating institutional cooperation. However, the system should avoid placing the burden of food-quality assurance primarily on teachers, whose core responsibility is teaching. Teachers can verify basic compliance, but specialised food-quality inspections should be conducted by designated officials or trained food-safety personnel.

Junior College Implementation

The field study identified a particularly important gap at the junior-college level. Breakfast arrangements here are not as systematised as in schools: while schools receive food through a structured supply and monitoring arrangement, the same level of menu and application-based monitoring was not evident for colleges. Field notes also record a concern that breakfast was not being served at the girls' junior college at the time of observation, with only lunch provided, and that the same vehicle carrying breakfast was reportedly also used for lunch — creating a possibility of quality deterioration by lunchtime.

The broader issue is clear: junior colleges require a dedicated operational protocol, rather than being treated simply as an extension of the school system.

Positive Outcomes Identified

The People's Pulse research organization assessment does not view the programme only through the lens of its deficiencies. Several positive outcomes deserve recognition.

Improved Attendance

School staff reported that student attendance has improved since the programme was introduced.

High Student Participation

Many students are regularly consuming the breakfast provided at school.



Parent Support

Parents generally welcomed the programme, particularly because preparing a comparable breakfast at home every day is not feasible for every family.

Teacher Support

Teachers are cooperating with the programme and supervising food distribution despite logistical challenges.

Student Acceptance

Students show clear preferences for several breakfast items, indicating the programme's potential to become a well-accepted part of the school day if quality is maintained.

Strong Policy Rationale

The programme directly addresses the intersection of nutrition and education; national school-meal experience similarly recognises the link between nutrition, attendance, retention and classroom concentration.

Overall Assessment

The field evidence suggests that the core concept of Breakfast with Milk is strong, socially relevant and potentially capable of producing meaningful educational and nutritional benefits. The principal concern is not the objective of the programme, but the consistency of its delivery — a gap that runs from policy intent, through operational design and the supply chain, to school-level delivery and student experience.

Having made a substantial financial commitment, the Government's next priority should be strengthening quality assurance and accountability, rather than merely expanding coverage. The programme should ultimately be evaluated on one simple question: is every child receiving the prescribed breakfast, in the prescribed quantity, at the prescribed time, in safe and hygienic condition? People's Pulse research organization believes this should become the programme's central performance indicator.



Immediate Priority Actions

Based on the seven-day field assessment, People's Pulse research organization recommends that the Government consider the following measures.

1. Establish a "Zero Compromise on Milk Quality" Protocol

Milk should receive separate, more stringent monitoring as a highly perishable item. The Government should test random samples through accredited laboratories, maintain batch-wise records with dispatch and receipt timings, ensure hygienic and appropriate containers, define clear storage and transport protocols, enable immediate replacement of suspect or spoiled milk, and maintain a documented complaint-response system. Whenever school reports spoiled, bitter or discoloured milk, the batch should be isolated and tested rather than simply replaced.

2. Introduce Third-Party Food Quality Audits

Routine supervision by school staff is necessary but insufficient. Independent inspections by designated food-safety or quality-assurance teams should periodically assess taste, freshness, handling, portion size, cooking quality, oil usage, ingredient quality, hygiene, transportation containers, drinking water and serving practices, with findings recorded digitally.

3. Create a Three-Level Monitoring System

A robust structure should operate at three levels: School Level (Headmaster/Principal, designated teacher and food in-charge); Mandal/District Level (education officials and nutrition/food-safety personnel); and an Independent Quality Assurance level (periodic third-party or external inspection) — ensuring the supplying agency is not also the sole evaluator of its own performance.

4. Make the Menu Public

Every participating school and college should prominently display the weekly menu, portion size, milk/ragi schedule, expected delivery time, complaint contact and the name of the supplying agency, enabling students, parents and teachers to identify deviations immediately. Any menu change for operational reasons should be recorded.



5. Introduce "Actual Menu Supplied" Recording

The monitoring application should include a mandatory field asking whether the prescribed menu was supplied that day. If not, the institution should record the item actually supplied, the reason for deviation, the supplier, the date and the corrective action — converting menu deviation from an informal observation into an auditable record.

6. Standardise Portion Measurement

With age/grade-specific quantities already prescribed, implementation should move to a measured serving system, with standard vessels, weighing scales where required, standard ladles and portion charts — distributing food by prescribed weight rather than by counting items. This is especially important for older students, whose current portions were reported as insufficient.

7. Address Delivery Delays through GPS and Time-Stamping

Every delivery vehicle should carry GPS tracking with digital departure time, arrival time and school receipt confirmation, with repeated delays automatically generating a district-level alert. The objective is simple: breakfast must reach the school before the instructional day begins.

8. Strengthen Transport Staffing

Delays linked to staff shortages, and cases where one person handles driving, loading and unloading, should be reviewed. A driver should not be expected to perform multiple operational roles where this compromises delivery timelines or food handling.

9. Upgrade the Food Monitoring Application

The application should reliably capture the complete delivery chain — demand, production, dispatch, delivery, quantity, menu, milk, consumption, complaint, inspection and corrective action — with server failures resolved urgently and a simple offline mode provided so schools can record data during connectivity issues and sync later. WhatsApp should not substitute for the official monitoring system.

10. Introduce a School-Level Complaint Register

Each school should maintain a simple grievance register allowing students, teachers and parents to report poor taste, spoiled food, poor milk quality, insufficient quantity, late delivery, menu deviation or hygiene problems — with every complaint tracked from date and description through responsible agency, action taken and closure.



11. Strengthen Food Safety from Kitchen to Classroom

A "kitchen-to-classroom" food-safety approach should monitor procurement, preparation, packaging, loading, transportation, receipt, storage, serving and consumption, in line with FSSAI's emphasis on safe handling, transportation, serving, sanitation and personal hygiene — including appropriate protective practices such as clean gloves and hair coverings for serving staff.

12. Improve Dining Infrastructure

A minimum infrastructure package — stainless-steel plates, milk glasses, safe drinking water, handwashing facilities, a covered eating area, waste bins and a clean serving area — should be provided to every institution, with dedicated dining halls developed where student numbers justify it, so that rain does not prevent comfortable consumption of breakfast.

13. Improve Water and Sanitation

Regular, documented cleaning schedules should be maintained for drinking-water points, washrooms, handwashing areas, dining areas, food containers, serving utensils and waste-disposal points, since food quality cannot be separated from environmental hygiene.

14. Introduce Student Feedback as a Formal Indicator

A simple monthly five-point assessment covering taste, quantity, freshness, milk quality, menu preference and overall satisfaction should be aggregated at school, district and state levels, helping identify menu items or suppliers that consistently generate dissatisfaction.

15. Use Student Preferences to Improve Menu Design

Given clear age-based preference patterns — primary students favouring bonda and puri, high-school students favouring bonda, puri and idli, and junior-college students favouring idli and dosa — the Government should consider a structured acceptability study before major menu changes, while ensuring the final menu balances nutrition, taste, affordability, local preference and food safety, since popular food is not automatically nutritionally superior food.

16. Strengthen Nutritional Monitoring

The programme should be assessed not only by whether breakfast is distributed, but by its contribution to nutritional requirements. As national guidelines such as PM POSHAN specify calorie, protein and food-group norms by age group, Telangana could periodically commission a nutritional assessment of representative meals to verify that intended nutrition objectives are being met.



17. Give Special Attention to Junior Colleges

A separate operational framework for junior colleges should define breakfast timing, menu, portion size, supplier, transport arrangements, digital reporting, inspection, milk/ragi provision, student feedback and complaint mechanisms, since the field assessment indicates this level currently needs strengthening.

18. Integrate Parent Committees into Monitoring

Rather than being merely informed about the programme, parents should become stakeholders in quality assurance, with a small school-level parent monitoring group periodically reviewing food quality, milk quality, hygiene, timeliness, quantity and student feedback.

19. Run an Awareness Campaign for Parents and Teachers

Since many teachers and parents lack complete awareness of the programme's objectives and structure, the Government should run a simple awareness programme covering the rationale, nutritional benefits, menu, portion size, milk/ragi provision, timings and complaint channels, while encouraging parents to ensure children arrive on time to eat breakfast before classes begin.

20. Address Rumours through Transparency, Not Suppression

Government food programmes often face rumour and public distrust. The appropriate response is a transparent mechanism that takes every genuine complaint — particularly on spoiled milk or poor food quality — through reporting, sampling, testing, investigation, resolution and, where appropriate, public documentation, encouraging parents to use official channels rather than unverified social-media claims.

21. Develop a Supplier Performance Scorecard

Every supplier should be evaluated monthly on measurable parameters — on-time delivery, menu compliance, portion compliance, food-quality and milk complaints, hygiene violations, application compliance, corrective-action response time, student satisfaction and repeat violations — with repeated failures triggering corrective action, financial penalties or contractual review as permitted under the relevant agreement.

22. Build a District-Level Dashboard

A district-wise dashboard tracking schools covered, students served, daily demand versus actual supply, on-time delivery, menu compliance, milk and food complaints, inspection frequency, student satisfaction and attendance trends would help senior officials identify problem locations quickly.



Raj Bhavan School: A Special Case

The Raj Bhavan Government School deserves particular attention, as the programme's launch location and its symbolic representative. People's Pulse research organization observed quality concerns immediately after launch, and the later field visit found that several implementation issues continued to persist. This suggests that short-term corrective action taken immediately after public criticism did not necessarily translate into sustained institutional correction.

A programme should not improve only when senior officials visit or when an issue becomes publicly visible. Quality must become routine.

Raj Bhavan school could therefore serve as a pilot location for a strengthened monitoring model.

Key Issues Requiring Immediate Government Attention

Based on the field assessment, People's Pulse places research organization the following issues in order of priority.

Very High Priority

- Milk quality and scientific testing.
- Food safety and hygiene.
- Timely delivery.
- Menu compliance.
- Portion-size compliance.
- Independent quality inspections.



High Priority

- Digital monitoring application.
- Transport and logistics.
- Plates, glasses and drinking water.
- Dining and sanitation infrastructure.
- Junior-college implementation.

Medium-Term Priority

- Student feedback system.
- Parent monitoring committees.
- Nutritional assessment.
- Supplier performance scorecards.
- District/state dashboard.
- Awareness programme for parents and teachers.



Suggested 30-Day Corrective Action Plan

The Government could consider a time-bound, 30-day corrective programme structured as follows.

Within 7 Days

- Verify milk quality through laboratory testing.
- Inspect all food transport containers.
- Verify the current menu and display it at all institutions.
- Resolve major application issues.
- Identify schools experiencing repeated delivery delays.

Within 15 Days

- Conduct surprise food-quality inspections.
- Standardise serving quantities.
- Provide plates and milk glasses where absent.
- Review transport staffing.
- Establish complaint registers.
- Begin parent and stakeholder feedback collection.

Within 30 Days

- Publish district-level compliance indicators.
- Introduce supplier scorecards.
- Conduct a student satisfaction assessment.
- Review junior-college implementation separately.
- Conduct a nutritional assessment of representative meals.
- Submit a consolidated compliance report to the State Education Department.

Conclusion

The People's Pulse research organization field assessment concludes that the Breakfast with Milk programme has a strong and legitimate public-policy objective, and has already generated positive acceptance among students, teachers and parents. It has the potential to become an important intervention linking nutrition, attendance, educational participation and the attractiveness of government schools.

The Government's substantial financial commitment — a ₹720 crore allocation for 2026–27 — demonstrates the seriousness with which the programme has been undertaken, and makes effective monitoring especially important. The field study, however, shows that programme expenditure and programme delivery are not the same thing. A student receiving breakfast late, an item outside the prescribed menu, an inadequate portion, or poor-quality milk cannot be considered a successful implementation merely because the meal has been recorded as "distributed."

The next phase of the programme should therefore focus on quality assurance, food safety, standardisation, technology-enabled monitoring and accountability — building a system in which every participating institution can answer "yes" to five basic questions each morning:

Was the prescribed food supplied? Was it supplied on time? Was the prescribed quantity supplied? Was it safe and hygienic? Did students actually receive and consume it?

People's Pulse research organization believes the programme should be judged not by isolated incidents — positive or negative — but by the consistency of its implementation across every school and college. The field evidence indicates that the foundation is strong; what is now required is a stronger system of monitoring and accountability, so the programme does not lose momentum after its initial launch. The objective should be simple: no child should begin the school day hungry, and every child should receive a safe, nutritious and dignified breakfast.









PEOPLES PULSE

an ear to the ground

Hyderabad
peoplespulse.hyd@gmail.com
Contact : +91 8179115784