

Proposed Total budget outlay of the 'SevaBhojYojna' scheme for the financial year 2018-19 and 2019-20 is Rs. 150.00 crores and Rs. 175.00 crores, respectively: Dr. Mahesh Sharma

Ministry of Culture

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The 'SevaBhojYojna' is a Central Sector Scheme under which Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) and Central Government's share of Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) paid by Charitable Religious Institutions like Temples, Gurudwara, Dharmik Ashram, Mosques, Dargah, Church, Matth, Monastries etc. on purchase of specific raw food items shall be reimbursed to them as financial assistance by the Government of India.

The specific raw food items covered under the Scheme are (i) Ghee (ii) Edible Oil (iii) Sugar/Burra/Jaggery (iv) Rice (v) Atta/Maida/Rava/Flour and (vi) Pulses.

These Charitable Religious Institutions should have been distributing free food in the form of 'prasad', 'langar'/bhandara (community kitchen) to at least 5000 persons in a calendar month for at least past 3 years.

The proposed total budget outlay of the scheme for the financial year 2018-19 and 2019-20 is Rs. 150.00 crores and Rs. 175.00 crores respectively.

As per the scheme guidelines, the Charitable Religious Institutions applying for financial assistance under the scheme are required to produce alongwith other relevant documents, a certificate from District Magistrate indicating that the institution is involved in charitable religious activities and is distributing free food to public/devotees etc. since last 3 years on daily/monthly basis. In addition to this, they are also required to produce Chartered Accountant's Certificate certifying (i) the quantity, price and CGST, SGST/UGST and IGST paid on purchase of specified items during the claim period (ii) that the religious institution is involved in religious activities and specific items have been used only for distributing free food to public/devotees etc. during the claim period and (iii) the religious institution is using the specified raw food items only for distributing free food to public/devotees etc. during the claim period.

The scheme guidelines also provided for inspection and monitoring by the Ministry Officials, District Collector/Deputy Commissioner and State (GST) Authorities. The Institutions/Organisations are required to maintain separate account for assistance received under the scheme and this account can be inspected/audited by the officers of the Ministry or any other agency designated by the Ministry. Further, in case of mis-use of funds, the scheme guidelines provide for penalties such as black listing the organisations, recovering the assistance provided by Ministry of Culture with penal interest apart from taking criminal action as per law.

The above details was given by Dr. Mahesh Sharma, Minister of State (Independent charge) for culture in reply to an Unstarred Question in the Lok Sabha, today.

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