

Midday meal workers demand better facilities, increase in wages

- [Staff Correspondent](#)

Cooks and helpers of the Akshara Dasoha (midday meal) scheme took out a procession and staged a dharna outside the zilla panchayat office here on Saturday to protest against what they called the negligent attitude of the authorities concerned in solving their problems and fulfilling their demands, including increasing their wages.

They were protesting under the banner of the All India Trade Union Congress. The agitators took out a procession from Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Circle that culminated outside the ZP office. They raised slogans against the elected representatives and the State government for not fulfilling their demands even after repeated appeals.

The agitators said that lakhs of students across the State are benefited from the midday meal scheme. They said that the scheme was implemented successfully in the State owing to the dedication of the cooks and helpers involved in it. The State ranks number one in the implementation of the scheme in the country, they said, adding that the workers are completely neglected by the elected representatives and the State government.

“Whenever we launch an agitation, the authorities give us false assurances and send us back,” they alleged.

The agitators demanded that the government initiate steps to increase the wages to a minimum of Rs. 18,000 per month to cooks from the next financial year, declare a minimum of Rs. 3,000 pension per month to retired employees, extend other facilities like PF, gratuity and medical facilities, including maternity leave of 26 weeks with full wages. They submitted a memorandum to ZP CEO Nitesh Patil.

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