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Soon, Chennai's budget canteen in Chandigarh

CHANDIGARH: If all goes well, Amma Unvagam, a budget canteen run by the Tamil Nadu government in Chennai, will soon come to city. With that, delicious idlis and a plate of sambhar will be available for just Rs 6 as against the price of Rs 30 to Rs 90.

The team of 20 municipal councillors, which recently went on a study tour to Chennai, was so fascinated with the food subsidization concept that they listed it on top of agenda to be produced in the upcoming House meeting.

"We are not comparing Amma Unvagam (literally meaning Mother's Canteen) with the night food street. It is a different concept and can be introduced at several places throughout the city. We observed that the prime purpose behind these canteens in Chennai was only to provide food to common people at cheap rates. Such a concept is missing in Chandigarh," said a councillor, who wished not to be named.

Mayor Harphool Chand Kalyan, who headed the tour, said, "We decided to introduce it in the House meeting as the

concept is in public interest. Though in Chennai only South Indian dishes are served in Amma canteens, we are proposing to change the food items here."

Interestingly, the councillors also observed that Amma Unvagam has caused losses to the state exchequer in the last few years. A senior councillor, who was the part of tour, said, "If it works in public interest, losses can be fulfilled from somewhere else."

Pocket-friendly

Amma Unavagam is a food subsidization programme run by the government of Tamil Nadu. Under the scheme, municipal corporations of the state-run canteens serve subsidized food at low prices. The losses incurred by the corporations for offering food at cheap rates are often talked about. Coimbatore municipal corporation suffered a loss of about Rs 2.64 on an idli, Rs 9.73 on a unit of sambhar-rice and Rs 4.44 on a unit of curd rice, thereby incurring a total loss of about Rs 2.70 crore.