



NATIONAL PROGRAMME

of

Mid Day Meal in Schools

[MDMS]



Annual Work Plan & Budget
2021-22

Write-up

STATE OF KERALA

MID DAY MEAL PROGRAMME

1. Introduction

The National Programme of Mid Day Meal in schools, popularly called the Mid Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) is one of the key flagship programmes designed to improve the nutritional status of children in the age group of 6 to 14 years and studying in primary and upper primary classes. The Programme encourages children to come to school and take part in the learning process without worrying for their meal. The Programme was conceived on the basis of the philosophy that “when children have to sit in class with empty stomachs, they cannot focus on learning”. The programme in its holistic manner helps to enhance enrolment, attendance and retention of school children while simultaneously contribute to their physical and mental development.

Mid Day Meal Scheme is a centrally sponsored programme. Central Government provides food grains for the scheme and funds for meeting the cost of food grains, transportation charges and expenses related to the management, monitoring and evaluation of the Scheme. Cooking cost, honorarium to cook cum helpers, cost of construction and repair of kitchen cum stores and procurement/replacement of kitchen utensils are shared between Central and State/UTs on a **60:40** or a **75:25** pattern.

Main objectives of the Scheme

- (i) To improve the nutritional status of children in primary and upper primary classes in Government, Local Body and Government Aided schools, and EGS and AIE centres.
- (ii) To encourage poor children, belonging to disadvantaged sections, to attend school more regularly and help them concentrate on classroom activities.
- (iii) To provide nutritional support to children of primary and upper primary classes in drought affected areas during summer vacation.

Mid Day Meal Scheme as a Centrally Sponsored Programme

Mid Day Meal scheme was launched as a Centrally Sponsored Programme on the 15th of August 1995 by Government of India. The scheme originally covered the children of primary schools (studying in class I to V) in Government, Local Body controlled and Government Aided Schools. In October 2002, the scheme was further extended to the children studying in Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative Innovative Education centers. Central Assistance under the scheme consisted of free supply of food grains @ 100 grams per child per school day and subsidy for transportation of food grains up to a maximum of Rs.50/- per quintal. The Scheme, since then had undergone several

revisions such as the revisions in September 2004, July 2006, October 2007, July 2009 and February 2019. Food norms have undergone drastic revisions to ensure balanced and nutritious diet to children. With effect from 1.4.2018, upper primary children have been brought under the ambit of the Scheme, Today, the Scheme ensures a nutritional norm of 450 calories and 12 grams of protein per meal per day for primary children and 700 calories and 20 grams of protein for upper primary children. Food norms have been revised accordingly by fixing 100 grams of food grains and 20 grams of pulses to primary children and 150 grams of food grains and 30 grams of pulses to upper primary children. Cooking Cost, as per the latest revision, stands enhanced to Rupees 4.98 and 7.45 respectively for Primary and Upper Primary, with effect from 01.4.2020.

Mid Day Meal is the legal entitlement of all school going children who study in primary and upper primary classes. Legal backing to the Scheme is provided by the landmark Judgement of Hon'ble Supreme Court proclaimed on 28.11.2001 (Public Interest Litigation (Civil) No.196/2001, People's Union of Civil Liberties Vs Union of India & Others).

Mid day Meal Scheme is covered by the National Food Security Act, 2013.

1.1 Brief History (Mid Day Meal Scheme in Kerala)

Mid Day Meal Scheme in the State of Kerala has had a pretty long history to boast of. In fact, the roots of the Programme can be traced back to pre-independence era when a School Lunch Programme was introduced in the erstwhile princely state of Travancore in the year 1941 by the then Maharaja of Travancore, His Highness Sree Chithira Thirunal Balarama Varma. The idea of starting a School Lunch Programme was the brainchild of the then Diwan of Travancore, Shri. C P Ramaswamy Iyer. In order to finance the Programme, a separate Fund named "Vanchi Poor Fund" was constituted under the patronage of the Maharaja of Travancore. The Programme was fully aided and funded from this Fund. The objective behind this Programme was to encourage children from the disadvantaged sections of the society to attend schools. The Programme turned out to be so successful that enrolment and attendance in schools in the erstwhile princely state of Travancore recorded a sharp increase over the years that followed since the introduction of the Programme.

During the period from 1961-1986, a school lunch programme called "CARE Noon Feeding Programme" existed in almost all the districts of Kerala which was funded by the humanitarian agency, CARE (Corporate Assistance for Relief Everywhere). CARE Noon Feeding Programme started during the year **1961-62 as per Government Order (Rt) No.2013/61/G.Edn dated 31.08.1961.**

Government of Kerala launched Mid Day Meal Scheme officially on 1st December 1984 consequent to the withdrawal of CARE from the Programme in some districts. As per **Government Order (MS) No.247/84/G.Edn dated 14-11-84**, a noon meal programme (rice porridge and green gram) was officially introduced in all the Lower Primary Schools (Classes I to IV) of 222 villages in tribal and coastal areas of the State. Kerala, thus, became the second State in the Union after Tamil Nadu to officially launch a school lunch programme. With effect from 31st October,1985 and as per **Government Order (MS) No.211/85/G.Edn dated 31-10-85**, the Programme was introduced in one primary school each in the remote rural areas of all educational districts. With effect from 2nd December,1985, the Programme was extended to all primary schools in 8 districts, viz Kottayam, Idukki, Ernakulum, Thrissur, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode and Wayanad. Later, vide **Government Order (MS) No. 28/87/G.Edn dated 2-2-1987**, Government issued sanction for introducing mid day meal programme in all Lower Primary schools in the remaining districts, viz, Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, Kannur and Kasargode with immediate effect to fill the gap in the supply of food materials caused by the withdrawal of the CARE Feeding Programme.

During the year 1987-88, the Scheme was extended to all Upper Primary Schools (Std. V to VII). As per **Government Order (P) No.160/87/G.Edn dated 28-7-87**, Government accorded sanction to extend the mid day meal programme to upper primary classes in all Government and Government Aided schools with effect from **15th August 1987**. It was ordered that the extension of the programme to the upper primary classes should be organized as a people's programme with full participation of and substantial contribution from the public, parents and teachers. A separate fund named "Chief Minister's Noon Meal Fund" was created with an initial budgetary allocation of rupees one crore with an intention to receive contributions from the public. The revenue collected by way of two State Lottery Tickets during the Onam Season of 1987-88 was also contributed to the "Chief Minister's Noon Meal Fund". As per **Government Order (P) No. 33/89/G.Edn dated 17-4-1989**, Government ordered the constitution of Mid Day Meal Committees in schools to monitor, supervise and implement the Scheme. The Scheme was later revised in 2007-08 in order to bring the students of Class VIII under its ambit.

Ever since Union Government introduced Mid Day Meal Scheme at the national level, it is being run as a centrally sponsored programme in the State. The Scheme has been running with the support and financial assistance of Union and State Government.

State Government of Kerala puts additional funds in components such as Cooking Cost and CCH Honorarium over and above the stipulated state mandatory shares. The rate of cooking cost is Rs.8/- per child per day (both in primary and upper primary) whereas CCHs are provided with a minimum monthly honorarium of Rs.11, 000/- to a maximum of Rs.12, 500/-.

Today, the mid day meal given to a child in the State consists of hot cooked rice along with three side dishes prepared from pulses, legumes, tuber crops, vegetables, leafy vegetables, coconut, etc. The dishes are prepared with coconut, salt, cooking oil, condiments, spices and masala curry powders. **In addition to this, all the children registered under MDMS are given 150 ml boiled milk twice a week and one boiled egg once in a week. Those who do not consume eggs are given bananas instead.**

The scheme for the supply of egg was started in October 2005 whereas supply of milk began with effect from 2010-11, both being State specific initiatives.

Mid Day Meal Scheme in Kerala, today caters to all the students from the Primary to Upper Primary Divisions in Government, Government Aided and Special Schools. As a State specific initiative, pre-primary children are also being provided with mid day meal.

Number of Educational Institutions providing MDM

12325 schools/institutions in the State are currently registered under the Mid Day Meal Scheme. The details are given below:-

(i) Primary

Total Number of Schools: - **6739**

Number of Government Schools - **2636**

Number of Government Aided Schools -**3877**

Number of Special Schools – **226**

(ii) Upper Primary

Total Number of Schools: - **5586**

Number of Government & Local Body controlled Schools -**2045**

Number of Government Aided Schools-**3274**

Number of Special Schools -**267**

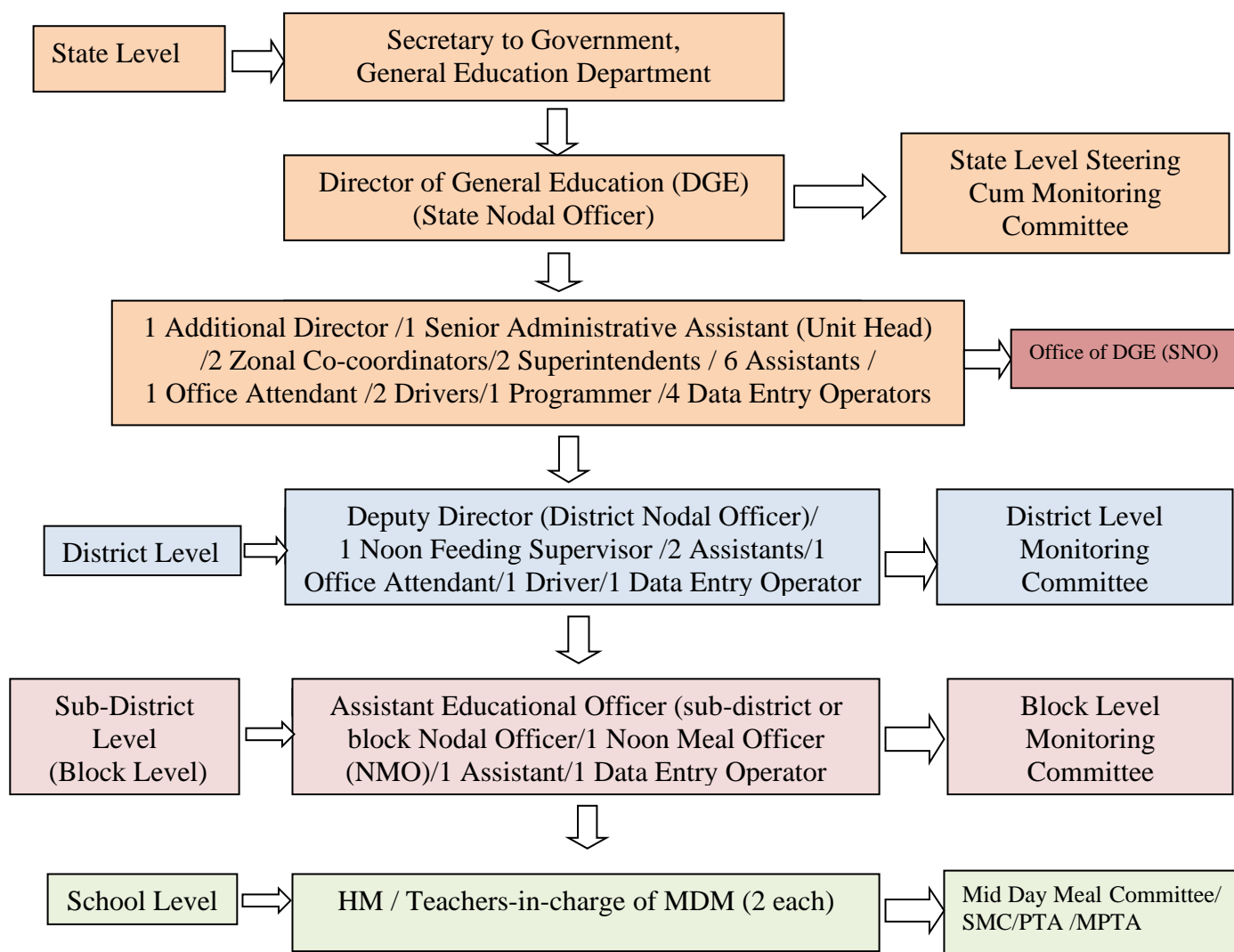
Coverage under MDMS against Enrolment – 2021-22

Year	Enrolment			Coverage (Average)			Percentage of coverage against Enrolment
	Primary	Upper Primary	Total	Primary	Upper Primary	Total	
2020-21	1706461	1097554	2804015	1683597	1048189	2731786	97.42

Coverage in Primary (against enrolment) :- 98.66 %

Coverage in Upper Primary (against enrolment) :- 95.50 %

1.2 Management Structure



All the temporary staff (Computer Programmer, data entry operators, drivers and office attendants) engaged at the State, District and Block levels are appointed on daily wage basis, the wages being paid from MME Fund.

1.3 Process of Plan Formulation at State and District Level

AWP&B for the State is evolved after detailed discussions at the State and District levels. District Plans are prepared by the Deputy Directors of the 14 districts on the basis of the data from block and school levels. Once the District Plans are prepared, they are sent to the Director of General Education (DGE) for preparing the State Level Plan and Budget. After examining and verifying the district plans, the MDM Unit functioning in the Office of the Director of General Education prepares State AWP&B. The Director of General Education (DGE) supervises and manages the entire process leading to the preparation of AWP&B. The other officials involved in the implementation of the MDM Scheme also participate in the process of discussions that lead to the preparation of AWP&B. Once the State Annual Work Plan and Budget is approved by the State Level Steering cum Monitoring Committee, it is submitted to the Ministry of Education.

2. Description and assessment of the programme implemented in the Current year (2020-21) and proposal for the next year (2021-22)

2.1 Regularity and wholesomeness of mid - day meals served to children; interruptions if any and the reasons therefore problem areas for regular serving of meals and action taken to avoid Interruptions in future:-

Mid Day Meal is normally served on all school working days to all the children in the primary and upper primary divisions. Since schools could not function during the year 2020-21 due to COVID-19 pandemic, food security allowance as mandated in National Food Security Act, 2013 and stipulated in MDM Rules, 2015 was provided to all the eligible children. Interruptions in the provision of FSA were not reported from anywhere across the state during the academic year 2020-21.

Budgetary provision for meeting Cooking cost and Honorarium to Cook cum Helpers are allotted to schools and to Assistant Educational Offices (sub-district level office/block level) via district nodal offices through treasury allotment system at the beginning of the academic year in one or two tranches. This helps Headmasters to draw the eligible amount of cooking cost from treasury on monthly basis without waiting for the release of funds from the State Level. Similarly, Assistant Educational Offices disburse honorarium to the cook-cum-helpers under their jurisdiction before the 5th day of every succeeding month through treasury allotment system and through DBT mode of payment. Irrespective of all

these measures, if there occurs any contingency arising due to shortage of funds or shortage of food grains, the school PTAs, SMCs and Mid Day Meal Committees will promptly intervene and take appropriate steps to ensure that mid day meal programme continues uninterrupted. Supplyco, the lifting agency will also step in to address the shortage of food grains, if any.

During the year 2020-21, since schools remained closed, food security allowance was provided to children in the form of food kits. The food kits were prepared and supplied to schools by Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation Limited. Payment due to Supplyco was made from the state Level. Hence, during the year 2020-21, there did not arise any need to transfer cooking cost to schools. Only the due portion of MME fund was transferred directly to schools.

2.2. System for cooking, serving and supervising mid- day meals in the school

Mid Day Meal Scheme is run in a decentralized manner in Kerala. Every school has a separate kitchen (permanent or temporary) situated well inside its premises where the meal is cooked. A store room is also there to store the food grains and other essential food commodities. All schools are equipped with safe drinking water facilities. Provision for uninterrupted water supply for cooking, cleaning the utensils and washing hands before and after the meal is also provided. Multi water tap facilities are available in all the 12325 schools that serve MDM.

Cook-cum-helpers are appointed in schools for cooking the meal. Mother PTA members and some willing mothers residing nearby regularly visit schools and assist the cooks in preparing and serving the meal. For this, a parent's roaster is maintained at every school. Teachers also come forward to help the cook and the mothers in serving the meal to children. PTA and SMC members actively participate in the serving of the meal. A sizable number of schools have separate dining halls for serving the meal. In schools that lack dining halls, the prepared meal is taken to the class rooms and served hot.

The and Mid-Day Meal Scheme is managed, monitored and supervised at school level by an exclusive Committee called "School Mid day Meal Committee" which consists of PTA President, SMC Chairman, members of Mother PTA, representatives of Parents of children belonging to SC/ST category and minority communities, Ward Member, Head of the institution, Teachers' representatives, student representative and a representative of the cook cum helpers. School Management Committees also supervise the conduct of the Scheme and ensure safety, hygiene and cleanliness in the preparation and serving of the meal. SMCs, PTAs and MPTAs make necessary arrangements for the effective disposal and management of food waste.

Members of Mother PTA, SMC and teachers ensure the quality of food served to children. Representatives of teachers, mother PTA and SMC taste the food and ensure its quality before it is served to the children. A separate Register named ‘Tasting Register’ is maintained at schools to record the remarks/opinions of the members of SMC and parents who taste the quality of food. The Register is regularly inspected by the Noon Meal Officer at the block level and during inspections carried out by higher officers.

The School Mid day Meal Committee appoints cook cum helpers. It also decides the menu. The Committee is authorized to verify and admit bills and vouchers related to the spending of MDM Funds at school before submitting the same to the Block Level Officer for approval.

2.3 Details about Weekly Menu

2.3.1. Weekly Menu-Day wise

The menu is planned and decided at the school level and it is done by the School Mid Day Meal Committee. The weekly menu for a particular month will be subjected to review and change, if necessary, in the succeeding month when the MDM Committee meets. The MDM Menu consists of cooked rice and two to three nutritive side dishes. The side dishes are prepared from pulses, tuber crops, vegetables, green leafy vegetables, coconut, etc. Adequate quantities of cooking oil, salt, various spices, masala curry powders, etc are added to make the dishes palatable and spicy. A sample menu is detailed below.

Monday	- Cooked rice + “Parippu” (Green gram/ dal curry +) + ‘Thoran’ (dry vegetable mix with onion & coconut)
Tuesday	- Cooked Rice + Curry made from curd & vegetables+ Dish prepared from leafy vegetables such as Amaranthus, Spinach, Drumstick leaves, etc
Wednesday	-Cooked Rice + Sambar (prepared by using tur dal, vegetables, coconut, etc) + “Avial” (thick mixture of 13 vegetables, curd, coconut, etc) + Egg curry (contains one boiled egg)
Thursday	-Cooked Rice + “Kadala Curry” (Black Gram Curry)/ “Parippu” (Green gram/ dal curry) + ‘Thoran’ (dry vegetable mix prepared from Beetroot/Radish/Cabbage/Carrot/Ladies finger/Beans, etc with coconut, onion, etc)
Friday	- Cooked Rice + Sambar (prepared by using tur dal, vegetables, coconut, etc) + “Avial” (thick mixture of 13 vegetables, curd, coconut, etc)

2.3.2 Additional Food items provided (fruits/milk/any other items), if any from State/UT resources. Frequency of their serving along with per unit cost per day

Two food items are provided to children in addition to mid day meal. These are Egg/Banana and milk. One boiled Egg each is provided to children once in every week. Egg is given in the form of egg curry along with the meal on a specific day in a week. The provision of supply of egg started in the year 2005 (October, 2005). 150 ml of boiled milk is provided to children twice in every week. The Scheme for the supply of milk began in the year 2010-11.

Provision of Egg/Banana and Milk are State Specific Schemes and as such the entire expenses in this regard are borne from the State Exchequer. As schools remained closed, State could not provide milk and egg to children during the year, 2020-21. However, State will continue with these provisions during the academic year, 2021-22.

2.3.3. Usage of Double Fortified Salt

Since Double Fortified Salt is not available in the open market or in the outlets of Government agencies (such as shops/super markets run by Supplyco and Consumerfed), iodised salt is used. However Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation (Supplyco), the Nodal Government Agency entrusted to lift food grains from FCI has already taken steps to procure DFS from its suppliers in Tamil Nadu. Supplyco authorities have informed that DFS will be made available in outlets of the agency during the year 2021-22 so that schools can directly procure the same from these outlets and use it to prepare the meal.

2.3.4. At what level menu is being decided/fixed

Mid day Meal menu is planned and decided/fixed at the school level. School Mid Day Meal Committee is decides the menu. The committee is constituted in all the schools that serve MDM. School PTA President is the Chairman of the Committee whereas school Headmaster is its Member Secretary/Convener. The Committee also comprises of SMC Chairman, MPTA President/Member, Local Ward Member, representatives of teachers, representatives of parents of children belonging to SC/ST and minority communities and one representation each from students and the cook-cum-helpers. MDM Committees often invite local educational experts, farmers, nutrition experts, doctors from PHC/CHC to attend its meetings as special invitees. The MDM Committee has to be mandatorily convened at least once in every month. One of the agenda of the monthly meetings is related to mid day meal menu. During the monthly meetings, the Committee reviews the existing Menu and makes changes, if necessary, taking into account the advice of nutrition experts and suggestions from students. The Committee gives special consideration to include locally available ingredients/items in the menu.

2.3.5. Provision of local variation in the menu, inclusion of locally available Ingredients/items in the menu as per the liking/taste of the children.

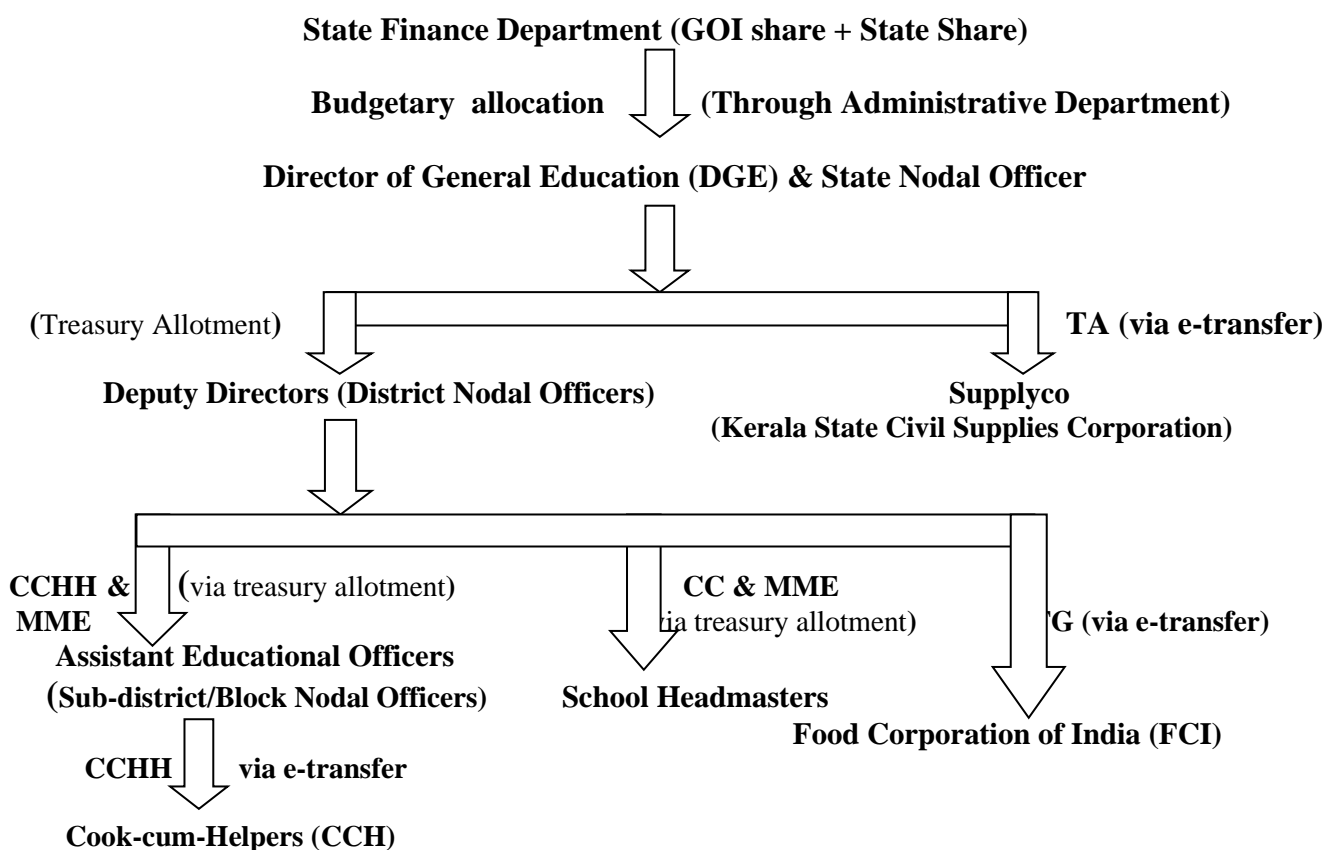
School Mid day Meal Committee is responsible for deciding the menu. The MDM Committee has to be mandatorily convened at least once in every month. During the monthly meetings, the Committee reviews the existing Menu and makes changes, if necessary, taking into account the advice of nutrition experts and suggestions from students. The Committee ensures that locally available ingredients/items are included in the menu. Locally available and grown items such as papaya fruit and its leaves, jackfruit, drumstick, spinach, amaranthus, curry leaves etc are included in the menu. Many local varieties fruits and vegetables are grown in school premises as part of SNG initiatives and Government’s Bio-diversity campaign. Jack fruit trees, plants such as amaranthus, papaya, and drumstick are normally grown in most of the schools, particularly in rural areas.

2.3.6. Time of serving the meal

The serving timings are slightly different for schools in rural and urban areas. Schools in urban areas open at 9.30 am every day serve mid day meal from 12.30 pm to 1.15 pm. Schools in rural areas start functioning from 10 am every day and serve the meal from 1 pm to 1.45 pm.

2.4 Fund Flow Mechanism

2.4.1 Existing mechanism for release of funds up to school/implementing agency levels



2.4.2 Mode of release of funds at different levels

State Budget, normally passed in the month of February every year, will have sufficient provision for MDMS for the succeeding year. The State budgetary provision is inclusive of the expected centre share for the year. Central assistance as and when received will be recouped by State Finance Department. State Finance Department provides the funds under various Plan Head of Accounts to General Education Department which is the administrative department. General Education Department, then issues administrative sanction to Director of General Education to utilize the funds provided under various Plan Heads of Accounts. The funds are allotted under three distinct heads of accounts; one for centre share, one for state share and the other for state additional assistance.

Director of General Education (DGE) sub-allocates the funds to 14 Deputy Directors of Education (District Nodal Officers) through treasury allotment system (via treasury online portal called BAMS). However, payment of transportation assistance to Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation (Supplyco) is made directly via e-transfer from the Directorate. Deputy Directors of Education will further sub-allocate the funds to 163 sub-district level (block level) offices (Offices of Assistant Educational Officers) and to 12324 schools. Honorarium to CCH is disbursed through the sub-district level offices. Honorarium is disbursed to cook-cum-helpers before the 5th working day of the succeeding month. Honorarium is credited directly into the bank accounts of cook-cum-helpers. As for cooking cost, Headmasters draw their entitled funds from treasuries, either as advance or re-imburement. If they draw advance, it has to be settled before the 15th of the succeeding month.

2.4.3. Dates when the fund released to State Authority / Directorate / District / Block /Gram Panchayat and finally to the Cooking Agency / School

State General Education Department issues administrative sanction to the Director, General Education (SNO) for utilizing the entire budgetary provision allocated for MDMS. The said sanction is normally issued in the last week of May or in the first week of June every year. Within a week, Director, General Education places the funds via treasury allotment to the Deputy Directors of 14 districts. The deputy directors will in turn allot the funds to 163 sub-district offices and to schools. If funds are not adequate, further allocation will be made through supplementary demand for grants or through additional authorization.

However, as schools remained closed in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic during the year 2020-21, cooking cost was not allotted to schools. Instead, it was paid to Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation Limited for supplying the food kits as part of the provision of food security allowance. Only the due portion of MME was transferred to schools. Funds for the

payment of cost of food grains was allotted to districts whereas that for the payment of honorarium was allotted to 163 sub-district offices in two stages. The dates on which allotments are made available to SNO, district & sub-district authorities and to schools (only MME fund) are given below. The details are given in Table AT-2A of the State Format of AWP&B.

Allotment of funds to SNO (implementing authority) – 06-05-2020 & 14-07-2020

Allotment of funds to District Authorities – 11-05-2020 & 07-02-2021

Allotment to sub-district offices - 19-05-2020

Allotment to schools (MME Funds) - 20-09-2020

2.4.4. Reasons for delay in release of funds at different levels

Schools in Kerala normally reopen in the first week of June after the mid summer vacations in April and May. Funds are allotted to schools in the third week of June itself. There occurs no delay in the release of funds to schools and also to the district & sub-district offices.

In almost all the schools, the procurement of all essential commodities such as vegetables, grocery, milk, egg, banana, etc is made by way of credit system wherein Schools pay off the amounts due to the vendors in the first or second week of the succeeding month. To ensure the uninterrupted supply of the items on credit basis, School Mid Day Meal Committees enter into agreements with the vendors before the reopening of schools.

2.4.5 In case of delay in release of funds from State/ Districts, how the scheme has been implemented by schools/ implementing agencies

Schools in Kerala reopen in the first week of June after the mid summer vacations. Funds are allotted to schools in the third week of June itself. There occurs no delay in the release of funds to schools and also to the implementing agencies.

2.4.6 Initiatives taken by the state for pre-positioning of funds with the Implementing agencies in the beginning of the year for the smooth and uninterrupted implementation of the Scheme.

State Budget, normally passed in the month of February every year, will have sufficient provision for MDMS for the succeeding year. The State budgetary provision is inclusive of the expected centre share for the year. Central assistance as and when received will be recouped by State Finance Department. State Finance Department provides the funds under various Plan Head of Accounts to General Education Department which is the administrative department. General Education Department, then issues administrative sanction to Director of General Education to utilize the funds provided under various Plan Heads of Accounts. The funds are allotted under three distinct heads of accounts; one for centre share, one for state share and the other for state additional assistance. The said sanction is normally issued in the last week of May or in the first week of June every year.

Within a week, Director, General Education places the funds via treasury allotment to the district nodal offices of all the 14 districts through treasury allotment system (via treasury online portal called BAMS). However, payment of transportation assistance to Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation (Supplyco) is made directly via e-transfer from the SNO level. Deputy Directors of Education will further sub-allocate the funds to 163 sub-district level (block level) offices (Offices of Assistant Educational Officers) and to 12325 schools. Honorarium to CCH is disbursed through the sub-district level offices. Honorarium is disbursed to cook-cum-helpers before the 5th working day of the succeeding month. Honorarium is credited directly into the bank accounts of cook-cum-helpers. As for cooking cost, Headmasters draw their entitled funds from treasuries, either as advance or re-imburement. If they draw advance, it has to be settled before the 15th of the succeeding month. If funds are not adequate, further allocation will be made through supplementary demand for grants or through additional authorization.

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Allotment of funds to District Authorities	– 11-05-2020 & 07-02-2021
Allotment to sub-district offices	- 19-05-2020
Allotment to schools (MME Funds)	- 20-09-2020

2.5. Food grain Management

2.5.1. Time lines for lifting of food grains from FCI Depot- District wise lifting calendar of food grains

District Administration accords sanction for lifting the allocated food grains on monthly basis starting from the 1st day of the month preceding the allocation quarter. The lifting for a particular quarter has to be completed before the last day of the second month of the quarter. These time lines are strictly adhered to. In some unusual circumstances, extension of time up to 15 days is sought for the completion of lifting of the grains for a particular quarter.

2.5.2. System for ensuring lifting of FAQ food grains (Joint inspections at the time of lifting etc)

The Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation (Supplyco) is the nodal agency for lifting the food grains from FCI. Supplyco has a QC&A Wing that conducts quality assessment of the FAQ food grains in a joint inspection with the team of FCI before proceeding for the lifting of the grains. Three samples of the grains that are to be lifted will be collected and kept in the safe custody of FCI, Deputy Director of Education (district nodal officer of MDM) and Supplyco.

2.5.3. Is there any incident when FAQ food grain was not provided by FCI. If so, the action taken .by the State/District to get such food grain replaced with FAQ food grain. How the food grain of FAQ was provided to implementing agencies till replacement of inferior quality of food grain from FCI was arranged

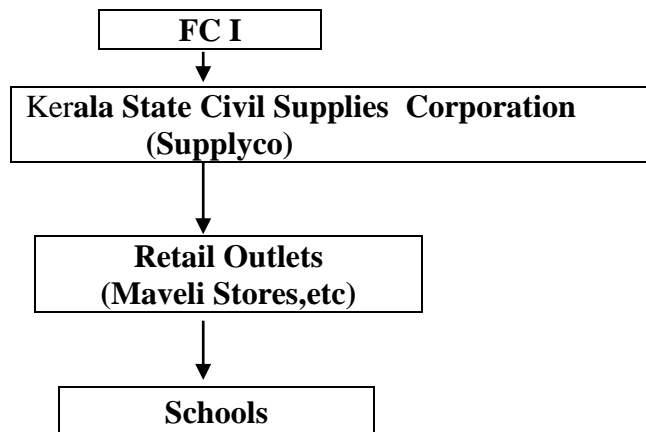
There had not been any such incident in which FAQ food grain was not provided by FCI for Mid Day Meal Scheme. However, there are instances when the State received inferior quality of food grains. In fact, the quality of the grains, even though it is graded as FAQ, is below par when compared to the food grains available in the open market. School authorities and even parents of children are always complaining about the quality of grains supplied through FCI. A few cases were reported during the year 2020-21 wherein complaints were raised regarding the inferior quality of the grains received at the schools. Supplyco authorities were quick to act and in no time supplied alternate good quality food grains to schools. The issue was taken up with FCI authorities.

An effective communication channel exists in the State that ensures better coordination among the Directorate of General Education, FCI and Supplyco due to which certain issues can be resolved in quick time. However, the issue of the quality of grains, in general, received for MDMS needs to be addressed by GOI.

2.5.4 System of transportation and distribution of food grains

State Government has entrusted Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation (Supplyco) to lift the grains allotted for MDMS from FCI and deliver the same to schools. Supplyco is a State Government owned company founded in 1974 that serves the purpose of governmental intervention in the retail market to control prices of essential commodities. Supplyco has more than 1500 retail outlets (Maveli Stores, Supplyco Super Markets, Supplyco Hyper Markets and Peoples' Bazaar) in the State through which it delivers food grains to schools. School Mid Day Meal Committees arrange for the procurement of food materials (rice, pulses etc) from the outlets of Civil Supplies Corporation.

Food Grain Flow Chart



2.5.5. Whether unspent balance of food grains with the schools is adjusted from the allocation of the respective implementing agencies (Schools/SHGs/ Centralized Kitchens) Number of implementing agencies receiving food grains at doorstep level

Yes. The unspent balance is adjusted from the subsequent allocations.

2.5.6. Storage facility at different levels in the State/District/Blocks/Implementing agencies after lifting of food grains from FCI depot

The Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation lifts the food grains from FCI Depots, stores it in its own taluk sub-depots and then re-distributes the same to schools through its commercial and retail outlets (“Maveli Stores”, Supplyco Super Markets, etc). The depots and retail outlets have adequate storage facilities. School Mid day Meal Committees arrange for the procurement of food materials (rice, pulses etc) from the outlets of Civil Supplies Corporation and keep it safe in the store rooms of schools.

2.5.7. Challenges faced and plan to overcome them

Though School Mid day Meal Committees arrange for the procurement of food materials (rice, pulses etc) from the outlets of Civil Supplies Corporation without causing any financial burden to the State Government, discussions are being held with Supplyco to deliver the food grains as well as other essential commodities directly at the door steps of schools without a third party intervention. The feasibility of such an initiative is being discussed with Supplyco and district authorities.

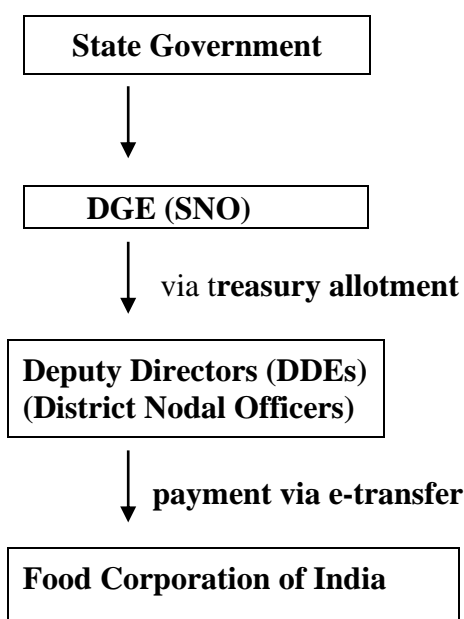
2.6 Payment of cost of food grains to FCI

2.6.1. System for payment of cost of food grains to FCI; whether payments made at district level or State level

Payment of cost of food grains to FCI is made at the district level. The Deputy Directors of Education of all the fourteen districts who are the district nodal officers of MDMS are entrusted to make the payments to FCI. Funds for paying off the cost of grains for the entire year are allotted to the deputy directors in the first quarter itself. Directions were given to the District Authorities to make payment to FCI without any delay, as and when bills from FCI are received.

The flow chart given below clearly elucidates how funds are allocated to the district level to pay off the cost of food grains.

Payment of Cost to FCI- Flow Chart



2.6.2. Status of pending bills of FCI of the previous year(s) and the reasons for pendency

No amount remains outstanding/pending against the payment of cost of food grains for the previous year.

2.6.3 Timelines for liquidating the pending bills of previous year(s)

No amount remains outstanding/pending against the payment of cost of food grains for the previous year.

2.6.4 Whether meetings are held regularly in the last week of the month by the District Nodal Officers with FCI as per guidelines dated 10.02.2010 to resolve the issues relating to lifting, quality of food grains and payment of bills.

Yes. There occurs regular and periodic meetings and consultations between the representatives of District Nodal Officers of MDM and FCI authorities. Issues, if any, are being sorted out during these consultative meetings.

2.6.5. Whether the District Nodal Officers are submitting the report of such meeting to State Head quarter by 7th of next month

Yes. The State Nodal Officer (DGE) receives the reports from the District Nodal Officers of MDM regarding the meetings conducted as mentioned in 2.6.4.

2.6.6 Status of monthly meetings by the District Nodal Officer with the FCI

District Nodal Officers or District Noon Feeding Supervisors hold regular meetings with FCI Area Managers or their representatives. During the year 2020-21, altogether 28 such meetings took place. Though instructions were given for holding such meetings once in every quarter, considering the situation posed by COVID-19 pandemic, District Nodal Officers could organize only two meetings each during the year 2020-21.

2.6.7 The process of reconciliation of payment with the concerned offices of FCI

Reconciliation of payment is regularly done by district authorities under intimation to State Nodal Officer. The report of such reconciliation is cross checked with the data of FCI Regional Offices.

2.6.8 Relevant issues regarding payment to FCI

No relevant issues prevail. Director of General Education (DGE) (Director, General Education, Kerala) periodically monitors the situation and ensures the timely payment to FCI.

2.6.8 Whether there is any delay in payment of cost of food grains to FCI and steps taken to rectify the same

Payment of cost of food grains to FCI is made at the district level. The Deputy Directors of Education of all the fourteen districts who are the District Nodal Officers of MDMS are entrusted to make the payments to FCI. Funds for paying off the cost of grains for the entire year are allotted to the deputy directors in the first quarter itself. Strict directions were given to the District Authorities to make the payment to FCI without any undue delay. There occurred some delay in making the payment during the second and third quarters due to State Treasury restrictions/curbs. However the issue was resolved later and payment made.

2.7 Cook-cum-helpers

2.7.1 Whether the State follows the norms prescribed by MHRD for the engagement of cook-cum-helpers or it has its own norms

State is following its own norms in the matter of the number of cook-cum-helpers engaged under MDMS.

2.7.2. In case, the State follows different norms, the details of norms followed may be indicated

As per the prevailing State Norms, one cook is engaged up to a feeding strength of 500 students. If feeding strength exceeds 500, one more cook is employed. In majority of the schools, mother PTA members assist the cook-cum-helper to prepare the meal. A proposal from the Director of General Education to revise the state norms and engage a cook for every 250 students is under the consideration of State Government.

2.7.3 Is there any difference in the number of cook-cum-helpers eligible for engagement as per norms and the CCH actually engaged

Going by the State Norms, there is no such difference in the number. But, when Central Norms is considered, there is difference. Ministry of Education, GOI, during the MDM-PAB for the year 2020-21, sanctioned 17673 cook-cum-helpers for the State. However, only 13767 persons could be engaged during the year 2020-21.

2.7.4 System and mode of payment, of honorarium to cook-cum-helpers and Implementing agencies viz. NGOs / SHGs / Trust / Centralized kitchens etc

Honorarium to cook-cum-helpers is e-transferred directly to their bank accounts from sub-district level offices (block level offices). The funds for the disbursement of honorarium are allotted to the sub-district level officers via treasury allotment system. Sub-district officers, after verifying the monthly attendance sheet submitted by schools, disburse the honorarium via e-transfer under DBT scheme before the 5th working day of the succeeding month.

2.7.5 Whether the CCH were paid on monthly basis

Yes, they are paid on monthly basis. But the honorarium is calculated on daily basis.

2.7.6 Whether there was any instance regarding irregular payment of honorarium to Cook-cum-helpers and reason thereof. Measures taken to rectify the problem.

A few instances were reported during the year 2020-21 and they were quickly resolved. The payment is regulated through a Software Application.

2.7.7 Rate of honorarium to cook-cum-helpers

Rate of Honorarium is decided on daily basis. Cook-cum-helpers are paid a minimum honorarium of Rs.550/- per day to a maximum honorarium of Rs.625/- per day.

For a feeding strength up to 150, a cook-cum-helper is entitled to get honorarium at the rate of Rs.550/-per day whereas if feeding strength exceeds 150, 25 paise per child is additionally paid over and above Rs.500/-, limited to a maximum honorarium of Rs.625/-.

If we consider twenty working days in a month, a cook-cum-helper in Kerala will get a minimum monthly honorarium of Rs.11, 000/- to a maximum of Rs. 12,500/-.

However, during the year 2020-21 as school remained shut, CCHs were paid a monthly honorarium of Rs.1600/- each. Of this, Rs.600/- was centre share.

2.7.8 Number of cook-cum-helpers having bank accounts

All the 13767 cooks currently working in the State have bank accounts and have got enrolled under Aadhar.

2.7.9. Number of cook-cum-helpers receiving honorarium through their bank accounts

All the 13767 cooks engaged in the Scheme receive their honorarium through bank accounts.

2.7.10. Provisions for health check-ups of Cook-cum-Helpers

Cook-cum-helpers undergo regular health check-ups of cook-cum-helpers once in every six months. The health card is mandatorily verified during school inspections and department Audit.

2.7.11. Whether cook-cum-helpers are wearing head gears and gloves at the time of cooking of meals

Yes. All the cook cum-helpers wear apron, head gears and gloves at the time of cooking the meals. Wearing apron, head gears and gloves have been made mandatory.

2.7.12. Modalities for apportionment of cook-cum-helpers engaged at school level and working at centralized kitchens, in case of schools being served through centralized kitchens

The power to appoint cook-cum-helpers is vested with school Mid day Meal Committees. The State of Kerala has adopted the decentralized model of on-site cooking of meal where the meal is cooked by cooks in separate kitchens in school premises. Persons with sound health and knowledge/skill in cooking are selected from the local public and appointed as cooks on honorarium basis with a view to generate employment locally. Women belonging to SC/ST categories, widows and who hail from the most financially backward families are given preferences in the appointment of cooks. As per the revised norms, sub-district

level officer (block level educational officer) or his representative shall be present when the matter of appointment is finalized by the school Mid day Meal Committee. The appointment shall also be approved by the sub-district level officer.

2.7.13. Mechanisms adopted for the training of cook cum helpers. Total number of trained cook cum helpers engaged in the cooking of MDMs. Details of the training modules; Number of Master Trainers available in the State; Number of trainings organized by the Master Trainers for training cook-cum-helpers

State Government has evolved a systematic mechanism for the regular training of cook cum helpers employed under Mid day Meal Scheme. Under the mechanism, certain number of cook cum helpers are selected from every district and trained at State Food Craft Institutes. A hands-on training on scientific cooking methods and skills are imparted to them. The Course module covers topics on how to prepare palatable dishes/cuisines with special emphasis on personal/general hygiene and nutrition. Awareness on the operational guidelines of mid day meal scheme is also included in the training module.

During the year 2019-20, 30 cook cum helpers each from all the 14 districts were selected and trained at the 12 food craft institutes functioning in the State. The one day training involved hands-on practical training on cooking and aspects of nutrition and hygiene. The training was scheduled on holidays. These trained cook cum helpers were designated as master trainers. The service of these master trainers was then utilized to train the remaining cook cum helpers at the sub district level. In this way, all the cooks were trained during the year 2019-20. A total of 163 trainings were organized with the help of the master trainers under the supervision of sub district level educational officers.

However, in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic, training could not be imparted to cook-cum-helpers during the year 2020-21.

2.7.14 Whether any steps have been taken to enroll cook-cum-helpers under any social security schemes i.e Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana etc. and number of cooks benefitted through the same

It is understood that a sizable number of cook-cum-helpers, by their own initiative, have already enrolled under some kind of social security schemes. However, State Government have brought all the mid day meal cook cum helpers under the Minimum Wages Act as per a Notification issued by State Labour Department. In continuation with this, Government is considering a comprehensive proposal submitted by Director of General Education (DGE) to extend benefits such as PF and ESI to all cook cum helpers in the State.

2.8. Procurement and storage of cooking ingredients and condiments

2.8.1. System for procuring good quality (pulses, vegetables including leafy ones, salt, condiments, oil etc. and other commodities

School Mid day Meal Committees are vested with the responsibility to arrange for the procurement of food materials (vegetables, pulses, cooking oil etc) either from the outlets of Government agencies such as Supplyco, Consumerfed and HortiCorp or from open market. School Mid day Meal Committees enter into an agreement with the local vendors for the door delivery of the commodities directly at the door steps of schools, on credit basis. The payment is made in the first or second week of the succeeding month.

It may be pertinent to note that Kitchen gardens have been set up in more than 50% of schools. The produce from these gardens are also used in the preparation of mid day meal.

2.8.2. Whether pulses are being procured from NAFED or otherwise

Supplyco, the state nodal agency, procured pulses from NAFED during the year 2018-19 and delivered it to almost one third of the total number of schools who regularly purchase essential commodities from Supplyco. However, no such procurement took place during the years 2019-20 and 2020-21.

2.8.4. Whether First In and First Out (FIFO) method has been adopted for using MDM ingredients such as pulses, oil/fats, condiments salt etc. or not.

Yes. FIFO is being adopted in the usage of non-perishable food articles.

2.8.5. Arrangements for safe storage of ingredients and condiments in kitchens

Every school has a separate store room for the safe storage of ingredients and condiments.

2.8.6 Steps taken to ensure implementation of guidelines dated 13.02.2015 on food safety and hygiene in school level kitchens under Mid Day Meal Scheme

Every year before the reopening of schools, Director of General Education issues a Circular that incorporates the important guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education such as the one issued on 13.02.2015. For the year 2020-21, a 27 page Circular was issued for the compliance of implementing agencies, schools, CCHs, etc. The said Circular contained detailed guidelines on aspects such as procurement, handling and safe storage of food articles including food grains, maintenance of general and personal hygiene, deciding the menu, waste management, ensuring the quality of the meal, improving basic infrastructure by way of contributions from public and with the help of LSG, CSR funds, setting up of school nutrition gardens, maintaining the records, inspection, training of CCH, etc.

Two zonal co-coordinators were also appointed to carry out regular inspections regarding the safety and hygiene of school kitchens and to oversee the food sample testing process.

School MDM Committee has been entrusted with the responsibility of procuring good quality food items for the preparation of the meal. Members of mother PTA assist the cook-cum-helpers in the preparation of the meal. Teachers and members of SMC supervise the serving of meal and taste the meal before it is served to children. A separate Register is maintained at all schools to record the remarks/opinions of SMC members who taste the meal.

Safe drinking water facility is provided in all schools. Kitchen gardens have been set up in more than 50% of schools. The produce from these gardens are also used to prepare the meal.

2.9 Fuel used for cooking Mid Day Meal

Fuel used for cooking the mid-day meal is Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG).

2.9.1 Number of schools using LPG for cooking MDM

The coverage is 100%. All the 12325 schools in the state which come under Mid day Meal Scheme use LPG for cooking the mid day meal.

2.9.2 Steps taken by State to increase the use of LPG as mode of Fuel in MDM

All the 12325 schools in the state that come under Mid day Meal Scheme use LPG for cooking the mid day meal. The coverage is 100%. The achievement was made possible by the concerted efforts of Education Department, LSG Institutions and Samagra Shiksha. The State Government had given strict directions in 2017-18 to all concerned to completely switch over to LPG based cooking system instead of using firewood as fuel. State Government disbursed an amount of Rs. 5000/- each to all schools in the year 2017-18 as a financial assistance to procure LPG Stoves and LPG connection.

2.9.3 Expected date by which LPG would be provided in all schools

All the 12325 schools in the state which come under Mid day Meal Scheme use LPG for cooking mid day meal. The coverage is 100%.

2.10. Kitchen-cum-stores

2.10.1. Procedure for construction of kitchen-cum-store

In Kerala, the mid day meal scheme was officially launched in the year 1984. Since 1985, permanent or semi permanent kitchen sheds had been put up in each and every school. In most of the Government Aided schools, kitchen sheds were constructed by school

managers. In Government schools, kitchen sheds were constructed either with the financial assistance provided by State Government through LSG institutions or by school PTA. Later when the scheme was extended to cover upper primary children also, the existing storage facility and kitchen sheds were found to be inadequate and need to be upgraded. Today, kitchen-cum stores are being constructed with the joint financial assistance of Central and State Governments in the ratio 60:40. The fund sanctioned by GOI through State Finance Department is released to District Authorities (Deputy Directors of Education). 4460 kitchen-cum-store units out of the 5481 sanctioned up by the Central Government have been completely constructed.

Central assistance for the construction of 3031 kitchen-cum-store units was received in December 2017. Of this, 2010 kitchen-cum-store units have already been constructed. Construction of the remaining 1021 kitchen-cum-store units is currently underway and will be completed before 31.05.2021.

2.10.2. Whether any standardized model of kitchen cum stores is used for construction

Yes. The model available in the website, www.mdm.nic.in is accepted with minor modifications as a standardized model.

2.10.3 Details of the construction agency and role of community in this work

Headmasters are the implementing officers who execute the work through school PTA. A separate Construction Committee from PTA is formed in schools. Head master of the school is the convener of the committee. Assistant Executive Engineer of the PWD section of the LSGD concerned, local ward councilor, school PTA president, SMC Chairman, representatives of parents, etc form members of the Committee. The Plan and Estimate for the construction of kitchen-cum-store room will be discussed in detail in the Construction Committee Meeting and as well as in PTA meetings. Once PTA approves the Plan, the Construction Committee can proceed with the plan. The plan will then be submitted to the PWD Wing of the Local Self Government Institution. The PWD Division of the LSG institution concerned will issue the Permit for the construction and will closely monitor the work in all the stages and issue necessary directions to the Construction Committee and to the school PTA as and when required. The construction work is carried out by local contractors engaged by the School Construction Committee.

2.10.4 Kitchen cum stores constructed through convergence, if any

A total of 6328 kitchen-cum-store units were constructed through convergence, the details of which are given in **Table AT-11A**.

2.10.5 Progress of construction of kitchen-cum-stores and target for the next year

Central assistance for the construction of 3031 kitchen cum store units was received in December 2017. However due to financial constraints, State could not release its mandatory share before the close of the year 2017-18. An amount of 21097.09 lakh rupees was allocated in the State Budget 2018-19. However due to technical reasons, the funds could not be released and utilized before 31.03.2019.

State Government released 7330.40 lakh rupees to the Director, General Education as the first tranche of funds to take up the construction of kitchen-cum-stores during the year 2019-20. The remaining 13766.69 lakh rupees were released to Director of general education during the year 2020-21 by way of supplementary demand of grants (SDG) Utilizing the centre and state funds, 2010 kitchen-cum-store units have already been constructed. Construction of the remaining 1021 kitchen-cum-store units is currently underway and will be completed before 31.5.2021.

2.10.6 The reasons for slow pace of construction of kitchen cum stores, if applicable

Central assistance for the construction of 3031 kitchen cum store units was received in December 2017. However due to financial constraints, State could not release its mandatory share before the close of the year 2017-18. An amount of 21097.09 lakh rupees was allocated in the State Budget 2018-19. However due to technical reasons, the funds could not be released and utilized before 31.03.2019.

State Government released 7330.40 lakh rupees to the Director, General Education as the first tranche of funds to take up the construction of kitchen-cum-stores during the year 2019-20. Due to technical reasons for getting the required permit from LSG institutions and other procedural issues coupled with the severe floods that ravaged almost all the districts in the State during August-September, 2019, construction work for all the 3031 kitchen sheds was delayed. The work was expected to be completed before 31.3.2020, but was temporarily stopped in the first week of March due to COVID-19 pandemic. The pending funds that include central share of 12658.26 lakh rupees were released during the latter part of 2020-21. Utilizing the centre and state funds, 2010 kitchen-cum-store units have already been constructed. Construction of the remaining 1021 kitchen-cum-store units is currently underway and will be completed before 31.05.2021.

2.10.7. How much interest has been earned on the unutilized central assistance lying in the bank account of the State/implementing agencies

Since the unutilized amount of central assistance is not parked in any bank accounts by the State/District implementing agencies, no interest has been earned so far.

2.10.8. Details of the kitchen cum stores constructed in convergence. Details of the agency engaged for the construction of these kitchen cum stores.

Headmasters are the implementing officers who execute the work through school PTA. A separate Construction Committee is formed from PTA in schools. Head master of the school is the convener of the committee. Assistant Executive Engineer of the PWD section of the LSGD concerned, local ward councilor, school PTA president, SMC Chairman, representatives of parents, etc form members of the Committee. The Plan and Estimate for the construction of kitchen-cum-store room will be discussed in detail in the Construction Committee Meeting and as well as in PTA meetings. Once PTA approves the Plan, the Construction Committee can proceed with the plan. The plan will then be submitted to the PWD Wing of the Local Self Government Institution. The PWD Division of the LSG institution concerned will issue the Permit for the construction and will closely monitor the work in all the stages and issue necessary directions to the Construction Committee and to the school PTA as and when required. The construction work is carried out by local contractors engaged by the Construction Committee.

2.11. Kitchen Devices

2.11.1 Procedure of procurement of kitchen devices from funds released under the Mid Day Meal Programme

The funds released by GOI are allotted to school authorities for procuring Kitchen devices so as to select the item of their need.

2.11.2. Status of procurement of kitchen devices

All the Funds for the procurement of Kitchen devices sanctioned up to 2016-17 were utilized completely. Funds sanctioned by Ministry of Education, GOI during 2016-17 were released to schools in April 2016 as per the assurance given in the PAB-MDM held on 19-02-2016. Funds received in 2016-17 for the procurement of kitchen devices in 8279 schools and replacement of kitchen devices in 1473 schools were also utilized completely during 2017-18.

2.11.3. Procurement of kitchen devices through convergence or Community/CSR

Local community, charitable societies, commercial establishments/banks, alumni associations and Local Self Government Institutions contribute kitchen utensils to schools.

2.11.4 Availability of eating plates in the schools. Source of procurement of eating plates

Eating plates are available in all schools. In some schools eating plates and glasses for drinking water are provided by the PTAs/NGOs/ Alumni Associations/Rotary

Clubs/Individuals. Adequate funds from MME are also provided for procuring plates and glasses.

2.12. Measures taken to rectify

2.12.1. Inter-district low and uneven utilization of food grains and cooking cost

Cases of low and uneven utilization of food grains and cooking cost are minimal.

2.12.2. Intra-district mismatch in utilization of food grains and cooking cost

No mismatch in utilization of food grains and cooking cost found during the year 2020-21

2.12.3 Mismatch of data reported through various sources (QPR, AWP&B, MIS etc)

State has developed a comprehensive website cum software to gather real time data from school, sub-district and district levels. The software has been operational since 1st June 2019. Data for the preparation of QPRs and AWP&B are provided by the Software. No mismatch of data was reported through QPRs and AWP&B. However slight variation is seen in the data obtained through MIS which will be duly rectified.

2.13. Quality of food

2.13.1. System of Tasting of food by teachers/community. Maintenance of tasting register at school level

Members of Mother PTA, SMC members and teachers ensure the quality of food served. Representatives of teachers, mother PTA and SMC taste the food and ensure its quality before it is served to children. A separate Register named 'tasting register' is maintained at schools to record the remarks/opinions of the members of SMC and parents who taste the quality of food. The Register is regularly inspected by the Officers at the block level and during inspections by higher officers.

2.13.2 Maintenance of roster of parents, community for the presence of at least two parents in the school on each day at the time of serving and tasting of mid day meal

Representatives of teachers, mother PTA and SMC voluntarily come forward to taste and examine the quality of meal served. An official roster is maintained where details of parents who are willing to visit school is properly recorded.

2.13.3. Testing of food sample by any recognized labs for prescribed nutrition and presence of contaminants such as microbes, e-coli

State Government in February 2018 (on 20.2.2018) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a reputed Laboratory named CEPCI (Cashew Export Council of India) Laboratory and Research Institute for the testing of food and water samples. Food samples are subjected to microbiological and chemical testing. The laboratory is an NABL and FSSAI accredited one. The laboratory has a capacity to test 10000 samples per month. Testing of food and water samples were started with effect from 21st February 2018.

2.13.4. Engagement of / recognized labs for the testing of Meals

State Government in February 2018 (on 20.2.2018 to be exact) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a Laboratory named CEPCI (Cashew Export Council of India) Laboratory and Research Institute for the microbiological and chemical testing of food and water samples. Testing of food and water samples were started with effect from 21.02.2018.

CEPCI Laboratory & Research Institute is an initiative of Cashew Export Promotion Council of India, an agency established and funded by Government of India. It functions under the administrative jurisdiction of the Department of Commerce, GOI. CEPCI Laboratory & Research Institute started functioning in the year 1997 and is headquartered at Cashew Bhavan, Mundakkal in Kollam District. It is an NABL and FSSAI accredited laboratory. The laboratory is an ISO/IEC 17025:2005 certified institution. It is recognized by Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) for the testing of packaged drinking water as per IS 14543:2004 certification. The laboratory has a capacity to test 10000 samples per month. Testing of food and water samples under MDMS was started with effect from 21.02.2018.

2.13.5. Details of protocol for testing of Meals, frequency of lifting and testing of samples

Food samples are subjected to microbiological and chemical testing as per the guidelines prescribed by FSSAI. As per the MOU signed between State Government and the CEPCI Laboratory, the Laboratory collects one sample each of water and cooked food from all the schools and test the samples for microbiological and chemical parameters. As per the agreement, the laboratory has to cover all schools listed under MDMS in a year.

2.13.6. Details of samples taken for testing and the results thereof

Since schools did not function during the year 2020-21, no food or water samples could be tested.

During the previous year of 2019-20, food samples were collected from 7186 schools (out of the total 12324 schools) and tested for microbiological and chemical parameters at CEPCI Laboratory & Research Institute. Same number of water samples was also collected for testing along with the food samples. Seven food samples out of the 7186 samples tested did not meet the stipulated microbiological norms. The water samples from these schools when tested contained the presence of the bacteria, E.Coli. The water system in these schools was found to be contaminated. The wells were cleaned under the supervision of school PTAs as per the guidelines given by CEPCI Laboratory.

2.13.7 Steps taken to ensure implementation of guidelines issued with regard to quality of food

Detailed guidelines were issued to all schools in the form of Circulars. A hands-on training on food safety standards with special emphasis on hygiene and nutrition is regularly given to all Headmasters, teachers in charge of MDMS in schools, cook-cum-helpers and sub-district/district level officers during the months of August and September.

2.14. Involvement of NGOs/Trusts.

2.14.1. Modalities for engagement of NGOs/ Trusts for serving of MDM through centralized kitchen

No NGOs/Trusts are involved/engaged in the implementation of Mid day Meal Scheme in the State.

2.14.2. Whether NGOs/ Trusts are serving meal in rural areas

NA

2.14.3. Maximum distance and time taken for delivery of food from centralized Kitchen to schools

NA

2.14.4. Measures taken to ensure delivery of hot cooked meals to schools

NA.

2.14.5. Responsibility of receiving cooked meals at the schools from the centralized Kitchen

NA

2.14.6. Whether sealed containers are used for supply of meals to schools

NA

2.14.7. Tentative time of delivery of meals at schools from centralized kitchen

NA

2.14.8. Availability of weighing machines for weighing the cooked MDM at school level prepared at centralized kitchen

NA

2.14.9 Testing of food samples at centralized kitchens

NA

2.14.10 Whether NGO is receiving grant from other organizations for the mid day meal. If so, the details thereof

NA

2.15 System to ensure transparency, accountability and openness in all aspects of programme implementation

2.15.1. Display of logo, entitlement of children and other information at a prominent visible place in school

Mid Day Meal Logo, entitlement of children and other information of MDM are displayed at a prominent visible place in all the schools.

2.15.2. Dissemination of information through MDM website

Information has been posted on the web portal of State General Education Department as per the directions of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. Efforts are on to launch a State Website for Mid day Meal Scheme. All the requisite information will be posted on that website.

2.15.3. Provisions for community monitoring at school level i.e. Mother Roaster, Inspection register

For the effective implementation and management of the scheme at school level, a separate committee is constituted in every school. The committee is called "School Mid day Meal Committee" which comprises of school PTA President, SMC Chairman, Headmaster, members of Mother PTA, representatives of parents of children belonging to SC/ST category and minority communities, one cook-cum-helper, local ward member, teachers' representatives and a representative of the students . The Mid Day Meal Committee, in its monthly meetings, verifies the bills and vouchers related to the expenses incurred in connection with the conduct of the Scheme in the school. A separate Register is maintained for recording the minutes of the monthly meetings of the School Mid day Meal Committee which is subjected to inspection by the Noon Meal Officer at the block level. Another register is maintained for the members of SMC and PTA/mother PTA/teachers to record their remarks/opinions regarding the quality of meal served to children.

At the State level, the Director of General Education issues detailed guidelines every year before the reopening of schools that elucidates the duties and responsibilities of Committees constituted at various levels, the role of implementing officers, general instructions regarding the supply of nutrient rich meal to children, maintaining the safety & hygiene of kitchens, setting up of school nutrition gardens, waste management, maintenance of records, ensuring wider community participation, improving basic infrastructure with the help of contributions from community/public/individuals/alumni associations, setting up of grievance redressal cells at various levels ,etc.

For the effective monitoring of the Scheme at the sub-district level, a Noon Meal Officer is posted at the sub-district office (block level educational office). The Noon Meal Officer has to mandatorily visit a at least 10 schools during every month and ensure that the Mid-day Meal Scheme is being conducted and implemented as per the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education and the State Government. Noon meal Officers and Noon Feeding Supervisors (posted at the district level) periodically conduct audit of accounts at schools and report to the Directorate with their remarks and recommendations. To deal with the matters related to these audited accounts and to receive complaints/grievances, a separate section is constituted in the Sate MDM wing. Based on the findings and recommendations in the audited account statements submitted by Noon Meal Officers and Noon Feeding Supervisors, the State Nodal Officer (DGE) takes appropriate decisions and corrective measures for the effective conduct of the MDM scheme.

2.15.4. Tasting of meals by community members

Mother PTAs actively participate in the preparation and serving of meals. They along with members of SMC ensure the quality of meal served to children. Members of SMC and teachers voluntarily come forward to taste the food and ensure that quality food is given to the children. A separate register named ‘tasting register’ is maintained at every school for the members of SMC and PTA/mother PTA/teachers to record their remarks/opinions regarding the quality of meal served to children. This register is inspected regularly by the officers at the bock and district levels and by higher officers during inspection.

2.15.5 Conducting Social Audit

2.15.5.1 Whether Social Audit has been carried out or not

Not yet. But preparatory works for conducting social audit in two districts have already been started by the designated agency.

2.15.5.2 If no, reasons thereof

Since the MDM guidelines issued by MHRD have included “social audit” as an integral part of the 12th Five Year Plan, steps were taken to carry out a social audit of the mid-day meal scheme in two districts during the year 2019-20. Discussions were held with SIRD (State Institute of Rural Development), the agency that carried out social audit for MGNREGS. SIRD had expressed its willingness to undertake social audit of MDMS in two districts as a pilot initiative but demanded a whopping amount of 29 lakh rupees for conducting the audit. As the quoted amount was too high, SIRD was requested to reduce the amount. Meanwhile SIRD was merged with KILA (Kerala Institute of Local Administration), a State agency constituted for providing training & capacity building for LSG institutions. Fresh quotations were invited and IRTC (Integrated Rural Technology Centre), a division of Kerala Shastra Sahithya Parishad (a premier non-governmental agency working to promote scientific consciousness among the public) that quoted the least amount was selected. An agreement was signed with IRTC for carrying out social audit of MDM in Alappuzha and Wayanad districts. Though IRTC had started the preparatory works, it has to be temporarily stopped due to COVID-19 outbreak. The audit will be conducted in these two districts when schools reopen for the academic year, 2021-22.

Social audit of the remaining 12 districts will also be conducted during the year 2021-22 with the help of the State Social Audit Unit set up under MNREGS

2.15.5.3 Details of action taken by the State on the findings of Social Audit

Not Applicable

2.15.5.4 Impact of social audit in schools

Not Applicable

2.15.5.5 Action Plan for Social Audit 2021-22

IRTC (Integrated Rural Technology Centre), a division of Kerala Shastra Sahithya Parishad (a premier non-governmental agency working to promote scientific consciousness among the public) was selected to carry out social audit of MDM in two districts, viz. Alappuzha and Wayanad. An agreement was signed with IRTC for carrying out the audit. Though IRTC had started the preparatory works, it has to be temporarily stopped due to COVID-19 outbreak. The audit will be conducted in these two districts when schools reopen for the academic year, 2021-22. Further, social audit of the

remaining 12 districts will also be conducted during the year 2021-22 with the help of the State Social Audit Unit set up under MNREGs

2.16 Capacity building and training for different stakeholders

2.16.1. Details of the training programme conducted for cook-cum-helpers, State

Level officials, SMC members, school teachers and others stakeholders

A hands-on training on food safety standards with special emphasis on hygiene and nutrition was given to all Headmasters, teachers in charge of MDMS in schools and sub-district/district level officers during the months of July 2019.

State Government has evolved a systematic mechanism for the regular training of cook cum helpers employed under Mid day Meal Scheme. Under the mechanism, certain number of cook cum helpers are selected from every district and trained at State Food Craft Institutes. Practical training on scientific cooking methods and skills are imparted to them. The Course module covers aspects such as planning and preparation of different nutritive and palatable dishes/cuisines with special emphasis on safety, hygiene and nutrition. Awareness on the operational guidelines of mid day meal scheme is also a part of the training.

During the year 2019-20, 30 cook cum helpers each from all the 14 districts were selected and trained at the 12 food craft institutes functioning in the State. The training was scheduled on holidays. These trained cook cum helpers were then designated as master trainers. The service of these master trainers was then utilized to train cook cum helpers at the sub district level. In this way, all the cook-cum-helpers were trained during the year 2019-20. A total of 163 trainings were organized by the master trainers under the supervision of sub district level educational officers.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, no such trainings could be conducted during the year 2020-21.

2.16.2. Details about Modules used for training, Master Trainers, Venues etc

Officials from the State MDM Cell were deputed to take classes for District/sub- district officers and headmasters during the month of July 2019. The training covered all the aspects of MDMS with special emphasis on safety, hygiene and nutrition.

State Government has evolved a systematic mechanism for the regular training of cook cum helpers employed under Mid day Meal Scheme. Under the mechanism, certain number of cook cum helpers are selected from every district and trained at State Food Craft Institutes. Practical training on scientific cooking methods and skills are imparted to them. The Course module covers aspects such as planning and preparation of different nutritive and palatable dishes/cuisines with special emphasis on safety, hygiene and

nutrition. Awareness on the operational guidelines of mid day meal scheme is also a part of the training.

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Due to COVID-19 pandemic, no such trainings could be conducted during the year 2020-21.

2.16.3. Targets for the next year

It has been decided to provide training to cook cum helpers, HMs and teachers in charge during the year 2021-22. Orientation will also be given to all the officers (including those at the field level) who are involved in the implementation and monitoring of the Mid Day Meal Scheme at the State/District/Block levels.

2.17 Management Information System

2.17.1. Procedure followed for data entry into MDM-MIS Web portal

The details of utilization of food grains, cooking cost, honorarium to cooks and stock position are submitted via online to the Block Level Office concerned every month by the school Headmasters. The Noon Meal Officers at the block level offices verify these details and then enter it into the MDM-MIS Web portal.

2.17.2. Level (State/ District/ Block/ School) at which data entry is made

State- Setting MDM Norms, Annual Data replication, Inspection entry, Unfreezing monthly data, preparation of calendar for AWPB, AWPB State Plan Proposal & its submission, proposal for Kitchen cum store and Kitchen devices, fund allotment & management, data on transportation assistance and DBT entry

District-Updating the school master, uploading the data on CFG & payment to FCI, preparation of district plan for AWPB, details of Kitchen cum store, Kitchen devices, food grain management, etc

Block:-Opening balance entry, Annual data, Monthly data, School Health data, data on CCHH honorarium & cooking cost utilization, Food grain release, etc.

School:- maintaining all the mandatory Registers of the MDM Scheme, submitting details to the block office for MIS data entry.

2.17.3. Availability of manpower for web based MIS

A total of 177 Data entry operators are engaged on daily wage basis at the block and district level offices for the data entry in MIS. One computer programmer and 4 data entry operators are posted at the State MDM Unit.

2.17.4. Mechanism for ensuring timely data entry and quality of data

Directorate of General Education (State Nodal Office) closely monitors the progress of monthly and annual data entries in MIS. All AEOs (Block level) and District level offices in the state are connected via online and data from the Sub levels can be accessed by the Directorate at any time.

2.17.5. Whether MIS data is being used for monitoring purpose and details

thereof.

Definitely. The MIS data obtained from central website and from the state software are analyzed and discussed in the periodic consultative meetings that the Director of General Education holds with district nodal officers. .

2.18 Automated Monitoring System

2.18.1. Status of implementation of AMS

With the technical support of State IT School Project, a web based Monitoring System (MDM MS) has been rolled out in the State for daily data collection and for monitoring the Scheme. The System is purely web based. All the schools in the State do have internet connectivity. During the year 2019-20, 90% schools, on an average basis, were uploading data onto central server daily. Schools regularly upload the daily data before 1PM every school working day.

However, as schools did not function during the year 2020-21, data could not be uploaded onto AMS Portal. The details are furnished in table AT-23 A of the State Plan for 2021-22.

2.18.2. Mode of collection of data under AMS (SMS/IVRS/Mobile App/Web enabled)

In the current web based Monitoring System, Headmasters have been provided with a user id and password for logging onto the State Portal daily at specified timings where they have to enter the number of students who avail mid-day meal on the day. The data thus entered by the headmasters will be consolidated at the State level in xml format and uploaded to the portal of Ministry of Education.

2.18.3. Tentative unit cost for collection of data

Nil

2.18.4. Mechanism for ensuring timely submission of information by schools

Though a provision for an SMS alert mechanism is incorporated in the existing web based monitoring system, purchase of SMS at bulk amounts for sending SMS alerts to Headmasters has not been done so far. Though it has been decided to adopt the SMS based automated monitoring system (AMS) designed and developed by the Himachal Pradesh NIC Team, further action in this regard is yet to be initiated.

2.18.5. Whether the information under AMS is got validated

Yes.

2.18.6 Whether AMS data is being used for monitoring purpose and details thereof

The available data is being used for monitoring the scheme. Based on the data, instructions are given to block level officers immediately to visit the school and address the issues in the conduct of the scheme, if any.

2.18.7 In case, AMS has not been rolled out, the reasons therefore may be indicated along with the time lines by which it would be rolled out

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However, as schools did not function during the year 2020-21, data could not be uploaded onto AMS Portal. The details are furnished in table AT-23 A of the State Plan for 2021-22.

2.19 Details of Evaluation studies conducted by State

No such evaluation studies were conducted during the year 2020-21. State Government will entrust a prominent institution/University to conduct evaluation on the progress of the implementation of MDMS in the State during the year 2021-22. Centre of Development Studies (CDS) will also be requested to carry out evaluation studies on MDMS.

2.20 Write up on best/innovative practices

The State can boast of several innovative practices in the implementation and successful conduct of the Mid Day Meal Scheme. Some of these are given below:-

- 1) **Pre-positioning of Funds:**--State Government provides the entire funds required for the conduct of the Scheme (State share and expected central share) for a year in its Annual State Budget. Administrative sanction to utilize the entire budgetary provision is issued in May or June every year. Hence, the State Government is able to release funds in advance for meeting cooking cost, honorarium to cook cum helpers, payment of CFG, etc
- 2) **DBT Scheme in Fund Transfer:** - All fund transfers are effected through DBT mode. Funds related to cooking cost, once it gets passed in treasuries, are e-transferred directly to HM's bank accounts. Honorarium to cook-cum-helpers is also e-transferred to their bank accounts. For making the payments related to cost of food grains and transportation assistance, the funds are directly credited into the accounts FCI and Supplyco respectively.
- 3) **Additional Food Items:**- Milk and Egg/Banana are supplied to children as additional food items. Every child is fed with 150 ml of milk twice a week and one egg/banana once in a week. The expenditure in this regard is exclusively borne by the State.
- 4) **Multi-tap water facilities in schools:**--All the 12325 schools in the State that are covered under MDMS are equipped with multi-tap water facilities for hand washing.
- 5) **Breakfast Scheme:** - Breakfast scheme is implemented in 3217 schools in the state. Local self Government Institutions, Non-Governmental Organizations, Charitable Trusts and in some cases school PTAs successfully run a scheme for providing breakfast to children in many schools. Several Local Self Government Institutions in the State have separate plan schemes for providing breakfast to children in schools under their jurisdiction. In the State Capital alone, the scheme of providing breakfast to children is going on in more than 200 schools with the financial assistance of the City Corporation.
- 6) **Kitchen Gardens:** - Around 6525 (53%) schools have set up kitchen gardens wherein different types of vegetables are cultivated using organic/indigenous farming techniques. In several schools, kitchen gardens are set up under a programme called "Comprehensive Vegetable Development Programme" conceived and implemented by Department of Agriculture and its agencies. Department of Agriculture provides a financial assistance of Rs.5000/- to each school for setting up kitchen gardens. The project is implemented in schools with the help of school nature/eco clubs. Local Agricultural Offices monitors the programme.

- 7) **Tasting the cooked food by teachers and members of SMC & Mother PTA:-** Teachers in charge of MDMS, members of SMC & Mother PTA taste the cooked food and ensure its quality and palatability before it is served to children. A separate register named 'tasting register' is maintained at all schools for recording the remarks of SMC/Mother PTA members.
- 8) **Special Rice distributed during Festive Occasions:-** all children up to class VIII who are covered under MDMS are provided with 5 kg rice each (one time in a year) during the ten day long Onam Festival during August/September every year and other festival occasions. The expenditure in this regard is met by the State from its own resources.
- 9) **Use of LPG-100% Coverage:-** All the 12325 schools covered under MDMS in the State have availed LPG connection and are using LPG as fuel for cooking the meal.
- 10) **Higher rate of Honorarium to Cook cum Helpers:** - Honorarium is disbursed at a higher rate than the State mandatory share. A minimum daily honorarium of Rs.550/- to a maximum honorarium of Rs.625/- is paid to a cook-cum-helper. Thus for a month having 20 working days, a cook-cum-helper will get a minimum monthly honorarium of Rs.11,000/- to a maximum of Rs.12,500/-. Annually, this will be in the range of Rs.1, 10,000 to Rs. 1, 25,000/-.
- 11) **Additional Assistance towards transportation assistance:-** State provides an additional financial assistance of Rs.650 per metric ton of rice towards transportation charges. Thus, together with the central assistance of Rs.1500/- per MT transportation charges at the rate of Rs.2150/-per MT is being paid to Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation for lifting rice from the depots of FCI.
- 12) **Enhanced State Share towards cooking cost:-** Cooking cost @ Rs.8/- is provided per child per day (Primary as well as Upper Primary). This is exclusive of the additional Funds provided for the supply of milk and egg/banana.
- 13) **Permanent Kitchen cum store Units:-** With the construction of 2010 kitchen-cum-stores and that of 1021 (in progress), 95% of the schools will be having permanent buildings for kitchen –cum-stores.
- 14) **Community Participation:** - Community participation is ensured at all levels of the implementation of the scheme. Parents of Children and LSG institutions have a larger say in the conduct and implementation of MDMS. Kerala has the lowest percentage of school dropout among the States in India. One of the main factors behind this stupendous achievement is Mid day Meal Scheme by which quality meal is provided to children under better hygienic conditions.

- 15) **Food & Water Sample Testing:-** food and water samples are collected on a regular basis from all the schools and tested for microbiological and chemical parameters in and NABL and FSSAI accredited laboratory.
- 16) **Programme similar to Thithi Bhojan:-** Sweets, fruits, home-made snacks, additional side dishes along with MDM are supplied to all the children on important occasions and festivals such as Onam, Bakrid, Ramdan, Christmas, Holy Vishu and on important days.

2.21 Untoward incidents

2.21.1 Instances of unhygienic food served, children falling ill

Involvement of mother PTA, members of SMC, ward members and teachers collectively ensure the quality of food served to children. Teachers and SMC members taste the food before being served. **There have been no instances of unhygienic food served or students fallen ill after having taken food reported so far.**

2.21.2 Sub-standard supplies

School Mid day Meal Committee arranges for the procurement of all essential food items such as pulses, vegetables, condiments, cooking oil, groceries, etc from the outlets of government agencies such as Supplyco, Consumerfed and HortiCorp or from open market. Agreement is signed with vendors for the supply of good, quality items to schools. Members of MDM Committee, SMC and mother PTA will inspect the items delivered to schools by the designated vendors before using to prepare the meal

2.21.3. Diversion/ misuse of resources

Involvement of School Noon Feeding Committee, mother PTA, SMC and LSG in the supervision, management and implementation of the Scheme at the school level has ensured that non diversion/misuse of resources will not take place under any circumstances.

2.21.4. Social discrimination

Kerala being a secular state where communal harmony exists among various religions, castes and sects, the issue of social discrimination does not arise.

2.21.5. Action taken and safety measures adopted to avoid recurrence of such incidents. Whether Emergency Plan exists to tackle any untoward incident

Mid-Day Meal Scheme is managed, monitored and supervised at school level by the “School Mid day Meal Committee“ which consists of PTA President, SMC Chairman,

members of Mother PTA, representatives of Parents of children belonging to SC/ST category and minority communities, local Ward Member, Head of the institution, Teachers' representatives, student representative and one cook. The committee is convened every month and discusses the progress of the conduct of MDM scheme and shortcomings, if any. SMC oversee the cleanliness, hygiene and safety observed in the kitchen during the preparation and serving of the meal. Officials from the health wing of LSG institution and Food Safety Department conduct surprise inspections. Mother PTA members assist the cook-cum-helper in his/her job.

Noon Meal Officer from the sub-district office periodically visit schools coming under their jurisdiction and verify the stock of food articles, their quality, hygiene and safety standards maintained in the preparation and serving of food and submit his findings to the Noon Feeding Supervisor of the District. Grave issues that require the intervention at the State level is reported to the Director, General Education

2.22. Status of Rastriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (School Health Programme)

2.22.1. Provision of micro- nutrients, de-worming medicine, Iron and Folic acid (WIFS).

The School Health Programme is being implemented in the state as a joint venture of Department of Health Services and Department of Education, aided by the National Rural Health Mission. The programme is implemented in all schools across the State. Weekly Iron Folic Acid Supplementation has been started in the state with effect from 3/2013.

2.22.2. Distribution of spectacles to children with refractive error

As schools remained shut during the year 2020-21, health check-ups could not be carried out. As such, no spectacles were distributed during the year 2020-21.

2.22.3. Recording of height, weight etc

As schools remained shut during the year 2020-21, health check-ups could not be carried out.

2.22.4. Number of visits made by the RBSK team for the health check- up of the children

As schools remained shut during the year 2020-21, health check-ups could not be carried out.

2.23 Present Monitoring Structure at various levels.

At the district level there is a Noon Feeding Supervisor in the cadre of Senior Superintendent attached to the Office of the Deputy Director of Education. The supervisor periodically visits the schools under his/her jurisdiction and examines the food served,

verifies the stock and other records and conducts audit of accounts. A copy of the audited accounts statement is submitted to the Directorate for taking further action.

A Noon Meal Officer in the cadre of Junior Superintendent is posted to each of the 163 block level offices (sub-district level office called office of the Assistant Educational Officer) in the state. It is mandatory for a Noon Meal Officer to visit a minimum 10 schools per month. As per rules, the bills and vouchers related to the expenditure incurred by schools for a month have to be submitted to the Noon Meal Officer before the 15th of the succeeding month. The Noon Meal Officer verifies the claims and approves it if they are in order.

Apart from the Noon Feeding Supervisors and Noon Meal Officers, the Assistant Educational Officers (Sub-district/Block Level Nodal Officers of MDM), District Educational Officers and Deputy Directors of Education (District Nodal Officers of MDM) visit the schools regularly and monitor the progress of the Scheme. Vehicle is provided to all Deputy Directors of Education (District Nodal Officers of MDM)) for their school visit.

At the State Level a MDM Unit is functioning in the Office of the Director of General Education (DGE). The Unit is headed by an officer in the cadre of Senior Administrative Assistant. The MDM Unit comprises of two superintendents, two zonal co-ordinators, six clerks, one office attendant, one computer programmer and four data entry operators. Director of General Education (DGE)/Director, General Education is the State Nodal Officer of MDM and is chief the implementing agency of the Scheme at the State level. The Zonal Co-ordinators (for North and South Zones) are appointed with an aim to ensure the safety, hygiene and cleanliness of school kitchens and to monitor the progress of food sample testing.

Monitoring Committees

For the effective management and monitoring of the Mid-day Meal Scheme, monitoring committees are constituted at the State, District Block and LSG institution levels.

State Government has adopted detailed norms for the implementation of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme in the State. As per Clause IV of the norms, a State Level Steering-cum-monitoring committee has been constituted vide Government Order (Rt) No.149/2006/G.Edn dated 09.1.2006. The Committee was later reconstituted vide Government Order (Rt) No.1413/2019/G.Edn dated 16.4.2019. The members of the reconstituted SSMC are as follows:-

01. Secretary to Government, General Education	-	Chairman
02. Director of General Education (DGE) (SNO)	-	Member Secretary & Convener
03. District Panchayath President, Thiruvananthapuram	-	Member
04. District Panchayath President, Ernakulam	-	-do-
05. District Panchayath President, Kozhikode	-	-do-
06. Representative of Union Government	-	-do-
07. Chairman & Managing Director, Supplyco	-	-do-
08. State Project Director, SSA	-	-do-
09. Director, Women & Child Development	-	-do-
10. Director, Health Services	-	-do-
11. Director, Panchayath	-	-do-
12. Director, Urban Affairs	-	-do-
13. Director, Agriculture	-	-do-
14. Director, NHM	-	-do-
15. General Manager, FCI Regional Office	-	-do-
16. Additional Secretary, General Education	-	-do-
17. Additional Secretary, Food & Civil Supplies	-	-do-
18. Additional Director of Public Instruction (General)	-	-do-
19. HOD, Pediatrics, SAT Hospital, Thiruvananthapuram	-	-do-
20. HOD, Nutrition, SAT Hospital, Thiruvananthapuram	-	-do-
21. Senior Administrative Assistant (Mid Day Meal) Directorate of Public Instruction	-	-do-
22. General Secretary, Kerala State Teachers' Association	-	-do-
23. General Secretary, Kerala Pradhesh School Teachers' Association (KPSTA)	-	-do-
24. Headmaster, Government Model Boys' High School Thycaud, Thiruvananthapuram	-	-do-
25. Headmaster, Government Lower Primary School, Nedumangad, Thiruvananthapuram	-	-do-
26. PTA President, Government Model High School, Varkala, Thiruvananthapuram	-	-do-

The Committee has to be convened once in every quarter. Due to COVID-19 outbreak, the Committee could meet only two times during the year, 2020-21.

As per the directions of MHRD, a Joint Review Mission is formed at the State Level to visit the schools in various districts and give suggestions for better implementation of the Scheme in the State. Additional Director of Public Instruction (General) is the Team Leader and Additional Secretary to Government, General Education is the Reviewing Officer. The Committee has 18 other members that include representatives of teachers' organizations, school PTA, District/Block Panchayath Presidents, HOD Pediatrics & HOD Nutrition, SAT Hospital, Additional Directors from Departments of WCD and Food & Civil Supplies.

The District Level Monitoring Committee is chaired by the senior most Member of Loksabha. District Collector is the Member Secretary/Convener of the Committee. Altogether 25 meetings took place during 2020-21.

A steering-cum-monitoring committee chaired by the District Collector also operates at the district level. Deputy Director of Education (District Nodal Officer of MDM) is the Member Secretary/Convener of the Committee. Even in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic, the Committees in all the 14 districts were able to meet two times during the year 2020-21.

The Block Level Monitoring Committee is chaired by Block Panchayath President. Assistant Educational Officer (Block Level Officer) is the Member Secretary/Convener of the Committee. Altogether, 326 meetings took place during 2020-21.

At school level a Committee known as 'Mid day Meal Committee' is constituted with school PTA President as Chairman and the Headmaster of the school as the Member Secretary. SMC Chairman, MPTA President/Member, Parents of SC/ST children, representatives of parents of children belonging to SC/S and minority communities, Teachers' representatives, Local Ward Member, a representative of the cook-cum-helper and a student representative are the other members. The committee is convened once in every month. The Committee appoints cook-cum-helpers and decides the menu for the Mid Day Meal. The Committee is vested with powers to monitor, manage and conduct the Mid-Day Meal Scheme at the School Level. It is reported that more than 30,000 meetings were held during the year 2020-21.

2.24. Meetings of Steering cum Monitoring Committees at the Block, District and State level

2.24.1. Number of meetings held at various level and gist of the issues discussed in the meeting

Directions have been given to all concerned to conduct the steering-cum-monitoring committees on a quarterly basis. The Committees at various levels are functioning properly. Two meetings were held at the state level, 53 at the District levels (25 meetings headed by senior most Member of Lok Sabha and 28 by District Collectors) and 326 at block levels.

2.24.2. Action taken on the decisions taken during these meetings

The nodal officers of MDM at the State, District and block levels implement the decisions taken during these meetings. An action taken report on the decisions of the previous meeting is being presented/ reported in the next meeting where it is examined and reviewed.

2.25 Frequency of meetings of District Level Monitoring Committee under the chairmanship of senior most MP of the District

Secretary to General Education Department of the State has given direction to all District Collectors to convene the meeting of the District Level Monitoring Committee on a quarterly basis under the Chairmanship of the senior most Member of Parliament of the District for review of the Mid Day Meal Scheme. The Director of General Education (DGE) (Director, General Education) has also requested the District Collectors concerned to take necessary steps for convening DLMCs. Deputy Directors of Education who are the conveners of DLMCs were also directed to take immediate steps in this regard in consultation with District Collectors. During this year altogether 25 DLMC meetings have been held under the Chairmanship of the senior most Member of Lok Sabha and 28 DLMC meetings under the Chairmanship of District Collectors.

The DLMC meetings discuss all the issues at the District, Block and Levels in the implementation of the Scheme. Some of the items that came up for discussion in the various such meetings are given below:-

01. Improving the basic infrastructural facilities (kitchen cum stores, procuring kitchen devices/equipments, dining halls,etc) at schools
02. Providing good quality food (rich in nutrients) to students
03. Ensuring hygiene in the preparation and serving of food.

04. Setting up vegetable gardens in schools.
05. Cook-cum-helpers and their problems, if any.

2.26. Arrangement for official inspections to MDM centers/schools and percentage of schools inspected and summary of findings and remedial measures taken

A Noon Feeding Supervisor in the cadre of Senior Superintendent and a Noon Meal Officer in the cadre of Junior Superintendent are posted at each district and block respectively to monitor the Scheme and to conduct regular inspections. These officers periodically visit the schools and examine the quality of food served to children and verify the stock and other records. Noon Meal Officers are instructed to visit a minimum of 10 schools in a month. The Assistant Educational Officers (block level nodal officers of MDM), District Educational Officers and Deputy Directors of Education (district nodal officers of MDM) also visit the schools and monitor the mid day meal scheme. Vehicle is provided to all the 14 Deputy Directors of Education for their school visit. Officers at the State Level also conduct surprise inspections at Schools and at the District/Block level offices to see how the programme is conducted and monitored.

The officials have found certain irregularities in the provision of food security allowance during their visits. Appropriate corrective and disciplinary actions were immediately taken and the matter promptly reported to the Director of General Education.

2.27 Details of the Contingency Plan to avoid any untoward incident. Printing of important phone numbers (eg. Primary health center, Hospital, Fire brigade etc) on the walls of school building

Phone numbers of the nearby PHC/CHC, Taluk Hospital, Private hospitals nearby, Office of the Fire & Rescue Services, Office of Food Safety Department, District Grievance Redressal Cell and MDM Division of the Office of the Director of General Education are permanently displayed on a special notice board outside the office room of the Headmaster.

In case if any untoward incident happens, the PHCs/CHCs will provide the first aid/preliminary treatment. Taluk, District and Medical College hospitals are equipped to provide more sophisticated medical care, if necessary.

Kerala's decentralized public health care system is one of the best in the country and is often compared to that of developed nations. It is always equipped to handle any contingencies.

2.28. Grievance Redressal Mechanism

2.28.1. Details regarding Grievance Redressal at all levels

A Grievance Redressal Cell has been constituted at the State Level under the supervision of the Director, General Education. **One dedicated landline number and an email id has been provided for lodging complaints/suggestions.**

Grievance Redressal Cells are constituted at district levels also. The phone numbers of the district grievance cells are displayed in notice boards in block level offices and schools.

The complaints received at the state level are analyzed and put up before the Additional Director of Public Instruction (General) who is also the Officer in charge of the Department Vigilance Unit. If the issue is grave, it will be brought to the attention of Director, General Education. Time limit has been fixed for the Redressal of all types of complaints related to the conduct of MDM.

At the district level, the complaints are attended by the district nodal officer or the Noon Feeding Supervisor. The complaints that can be resolved at the district level itself will be redressed within 3 to 4 days. Otherwise, they will be brought to the attention of State level. The status of complaints at the district and block levels and their Redressal are to be reported to Director, General Education in separate Format once in every month.

Altogether 111 complaints were received during the year 2020-21. All these cases were timely resolved.

2.28.2 Details of complaints received i.e. Nature of complaints etc

Nature and number of complaints received are given below:-

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 01. Food Grain related issues | – 34 cases |
| 02. Nonpayment of Honorarium to cook-cum-helpers | – 11 cases |
| 03. Inspection related (provision of FSA) | - 66 cases |

Altogether 11 complaints were received during the year 2019-20. All these cases were timely resolved.

2.28.3. Time schedule for disposal of complaints

Time limit to resolve the complaints received at the State level - 7 days (maximum)

Time limit to resolve the complaints received at the district level - 3-4 days

Time limit to resolve the complaints received at the block level - 3 days

Irrespective of the above time limit, if the complaints warrant expedite action, it will be attended to and resolved within 24 hours.

2.28.4. Details of action taken on the complaints

In the cases of the irregularities found in the provision of Food Security Allowance, appropriate corrective actions were taken at the ground level to ensure no eligible children was denied of his/her legitimate right in getting the provision. Departmental disciplinary actions have also been initiated against the guilty. On complaints regarding the non-payment/delayed payment of CCHH, reports were called from sub-district officers and the issues were addressed in no time. As for the complaints from parents and students regarding the quality of food grains provided as part of FSA, the matter was taken up with Supplyco and FCI. FCI authorities keep saying that FAQ rice is provided for MDMS and they cannot do much in this regard.

2.29 Details regarding Awareness Generation & Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities and Media Campaign carried out at State/District/Block/School Levels

Normally Hand books, flip books, brochures were printed and circulated to schools. However, in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic, no such activities could be undertaken during the year 2020-21.

Promotional videos on MDM prepared by SIET will be released during the academic year 2021-22.

2.30. Overall Assessment of the manner in which implementation of the programme is contributing to the programme objectives and an analysis of strengths and weakness of the programme implementation.

The Mid Day Meal Programme is being implemented in the state in a very efficient and satisfactory manner with the active participation and intervention of School PTAs, SMCs, teachers and elected members of LSG institutions. Wider Community participation has contributed to the success of the Scheme. Considering the fact that the coverage of upper primary school children under the MDM Scheme was found to be lower compared with that of Primary during the previous years, a slew of measures were taken at the school level with the active intervention of school PTAs and teachers to narrow the gap and thus enhance the coverage. These measures have yield a productive result as the percentage of coverage has gone up by 5% during the academic year 2020-21. Children in upper primary classes are the ones who constantly complain about the quality of the food grains. According to them, the food grains they consume at their homes are of much better quality than the FCI allotted FAQ food grains.

Constant efforts are taken to improve the quality and nutritive aspects of the meal served to children. Effort is to provide better infrastructural facilities with the financial assistance of LSG Institutions, CSR Funds and contributions from the community.

2.31. Action Plan for ensuring enrolment of all school children under Aadhar before the stipulated date

A small percentage of students (1.6%) is yet to enroll under Aadhar, as per the reports received from block level offices. Intensive efforts are on to filter these students and to get them enrolled under Aadhar before the reopening of schools in 2021-22. Majority of these students hail from the most backward/tribal community and residing in remote, hilly and tribal areas.

2.32. Contribution by community in the form of Tithi Bhojan or any other Similar practices in the State/UT etc.

Breakfast is provided to children in many schools in the urban and rural areas by the Local Self Government Institutions concerned, Charitable trusts, NGOs and by school PTA. During the year 2019-20, breakfast was served to children in 3217 schools in the State.

In the State Capital alone, the scheme of providing breakfast to children is going on in more than 200 schools with the financial assistance of the City Corporation.

Similar to the Thithi Bhojan programme, Sweets, fruits, home-made snacks, additional side dishes along with MDM are supplied to all the children on important occasions and festivals.

However, in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic and as schools remained closed, the breakfast programme was interrupted during the academic year 2020-21. State Government plans to scale up the LSG funded breakfast scheme to more than 50% schools during 2021-22.

2.33. Kitchen Gardens

2.33.1 Status of availability of kitchen gardens in the schools

Details furnished in AT-10 E of State Plan

2.33.2 Mapping of schools with the corresponding Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVK)

Mapping has been done, details furnished in AT-10 E of State Plan

2.33.3 Details of mechanisms adopted for the setting up and maintenance of kitchen gardens

Under the aegis of Department of Agriculture and Local Self Government Institutions, schools both in the rural areas and in cities in the State of Kerala have taken up vegetable cultivation in a big way and are setting up their own vegetable gardens at school premises

and encourage students to set up gardens at their homes also. Of the total 12325 schools in the State where Mid day Meal Scheme is going on, 6525 schools have set up kitchen gardens. Vegetables such as brinjal, okra, tomato, cucumber, pumpkin, carrot, radish, snake gourd, bitter gourd, peas, cauli flower, cabbage, amaranthus, spinach, etc are grown in kitchen gardens.

Apart from vegetables, fruits such as banana, guava, papaya, etc are also grown in school premises. Some schools have even taken up paddy cultivation with the help of local farmers. Adjacent paddy fields are taken on lease and paddy is cultivated with the help of local farmers and Agriculture Department.

How kitchen gardens are being set up in schools

Kitchen gardens are set up in schools primarily under a project named “Vegetable Development Programme” conceived by the Department of Agriculture and implemented through Vegetable & Fruit Promotion Council Kerala (VFPCCK). Department of Agriculture & Local Self Government Institutions provide funds to schools for setting up infrastructural facilities to implement this.

The Programme came into existence during the year 2012-13. Under this programme, seed kits containing high quality vegetable seeds (packet costing Rs.25/-) developed in Government Farms or procured from National Seeds Corporation are distributed to school children free of cost. Leaflets and brochures containing instructions on how to cultivate the vegetables and on organic farming are also given. Instructive DVDs are supplied to schools. Massive training programme was launched in each district for students, teachers, etc. The seed packets are distributed by Vegetable & Fruit Promotion Council Kerala (VFPCCK) and Kerala State Seed Development Authority. Ten percentage of the seed kits are distributed to SC/ST students. The quality of seeds/seedlings will be certified by the District level ‘Vegetable Development Programme’ Implementing Committee

The Programme is implemented in schools by student agricultural/nature/eco/Mathrubhumi SEED clubs. Local agriculture Officer is the implementing authority of the Programme at the Panchayath level. He visits schools and explains the Programme to children.

In schools, the distribution of seed kits is entrusted to a nodal teacher. LSG Institutions conduct periodical review of the Programme and take necessary follow up actions.

Mathrubhumi, a leading daily in Kerala launched a novel initiative in 2009 named “SEED” (Student Empowerment for Environmental Development) that aims to strengthen the students to ensure environment-friendly growth and development. Mathrubhumi SEED Clubs are formed in several schools that actively involve in vegetable cultivation.

Vegetable Development Programme is implemented in schools under the following guidelines:-

- Principal Agricultural Officers will instruct the Agricultural Officers to finalize the schools for the distribution of seed kits. Krishi Bhavan wise number of kits to be distributed will be intimated to the agencies concerned.
- Once the schools are selected, preliminary meetings are conducted to create awareness about the programme.
- District wise and Krishi Bhavan wise list of schools along with the name of teacher in charge are submitted to Director of Agriculture.
- Principal Agricultural Officers make arrangement for raising the crop at the appropriate season and ensure supply of all required inputs at the critical stages of the crop. The germination of the seeds supplied is ensured and at least 80% germination will be assured.
- Once the seeds are received, Agricultural Officers ensure the germination of the seeds before distribution. If the germination is less than 80%, the details can be reported to the agencies concerned and to the Director of Agriculture for replacement/proportionate price reduction/imposture of penalty to the supplying agencies.
- At schools, distribution of seeds is entrusted to a teacher. The details of distribution of seeds to children is registered by the teacher-in-charge of the programme and kept in the school for future verification by the Agricultural Officer. Seed distribution details through Krishi Bhavans will also be registered.
- The programme is given wide publicity and inaugural function is arranged by involving VIPs like Ministers, MPs, MLAs and representatives of LSGs.
- Students in each selected school will be briefed on the cultivation aspects by the Agricultural Officer/Agricultural Assistant concerned. Interactive DVDs are supplied to schools. Massive training programme is launched in each district for students and teachers. The program is discussed in the school assembly. Periodical field verification is done by Agricultural Assistant concerned with follow up action as and when needed as per the directions given by the Agricultural Officer.
- The review of field level follow up is conducted at Panchayath, Block and District level by the Officers of Education and Agriculture Departments concerned.
- Yield details are collected and recorded at Krishi Bhavan level.
- 10 % of the seed kits and seedlings are distributed to SC/ST students.
- The Programme aims to mobilize the student community into the field of agriculture, make them aware of safe to eat food production and to bring uncultivable lands in the government and private institutions under vegetable cultivation

- Financial assistance of ₹ 5000/- is given to each educational institution including the cost of seeds and towards the expense for taking up cultivation. Schools which are willing to participate in this programme, but do not have 10 cents of cultivable land, may be allowed to take up vegetable cultivation in the available land or in grow bags, and assistance provided as per norms. Institutions will be selected by the Agricultural Officer/Assistant Director of Agriculture taking into account the availability of space and the willingness to take up cultivation.
- Soil testing of educational institutions selected should be done prior to vegetable cultivation and necessary corrective methods should be followed if required.
- Krishi Bhavans may also prepare a calendar of activities for vegetable cultivation in institutions. Each institution should have a layout plan for the vegetable garden prepared well in advance. Record of cultural operations, plant protection measures and yield data should be maintained along with the Inspection Report/Field Visits. Integration of organic pest and disease control measures should be ensured in the plots.
- The Agricultural Assistant will conduct frequent field visits and record the observations in the Field Book maintained in the school. It will be his responsibility to report the pest/disease/nutrient deficiency to the Agricultural Officer for giving necessary guidance.
- Principal Agricultural Officers of concerned districts will make arrangements for the supply of seeds from Department Farms, KSSDA, VFPC, KAU or farmer's seed.

Financial assistance is provided for setting up of irrigation units in institutions (well/pump set or both) limited to a maximum amount of ₹ 10,000 per unit. The irrigation units are provided in a need based manner where water scarcity is severely felt. The head of the institution has to submit an undertaking to the effect that the irrigation unit would be exclusively utilized for the cultivation of vegetables and that the expenditure for the annual maintenance of the unit would be met by the institution.

Financial Assistance to Schools

Department of Agriculture provides an amount of Rs.3500/- to schools for setting up agricultural clubs. Department of Agriculture provides financial assistance at the rate of Rs.5000/- to those schools having 10 cents of land available for cultivation of vegetables. Functional assistance @ Rs. 10,000/- is also provided for setting up irrigation units in schools. Seed kits/Seedlings, potted seedlings etc, are distributed to schools free of cost.

Physical Achievement-2020-21

During the year 2020-21, around 37 metric ton vegetables/fruits were produced from SNGs. This includes 26,000 kilograms of vegetables and 11,000 kilograms of fruits. Further, 2,400 kilograms of paddy was also cultivated in schools.

Cash Awards for Best School Kitchen Garden

Department of Agriculture presents annual cash awards to the best performing schools, head of institutions, nodal teachers and students at the district and state levels.

First Prize for the Best student, best teacher, best head of institution and best educational institution at the district level will carry a cash prize of Rs.15,000 whereas second and third prize winners will be given Rs.7,500/- and 5,000/- each.

2.33.4 Whether the produce of these kitchen gardens are used in MDM

Normally, the produce is used in MDM. However, since schools did not function during the academic year 2020-21, the produce from the school nutrition gardens were low in quantity as compared to previous academic year. The produce was distributed to parents of the children.

2.33.5 Action Plan for setting up of kitchen gardens in all schools

A detailed action plan had been worked out to set up kitchen gardens in an additional 2500 schools during 2020-21 with the participation of the local community. However, this target could not be achieved as schools did not function during the year 2020-21.

An ambitious initiative to set up school nutrition gardens in the remaining 5800 schools will be taken up in the year 2021-22. It is a fact that some of these schools do not have adequate space for setting up conventional type of kitchen gardens. For such schools, grow bag/pot type cultivation and roof/terrace farming methods will be the option. Organic farming techniques will be adopted for all these new kitchen gardens. Nature/Eco clubs functioning in schools will be strengthened and a nodal teacher will be appointed in each of these schools to coordinate the activities. The continued support and guidance of State Agriculture Department and local farming community will be ensured for the setting up of kitchen gardens in 5800 schools. Focus will be to cultivate at least five different types of vegetables and two or three fruit plants. Many schools in rural and urban areas have drumstick plants and papaya plants grown in their premises. Different types of fruit bearing plants/trees such as papaya tree, custard apple tree, indian gooseberry tree, jackfruit tree, mango tree, etc and are grown in the premises of schools located in the rural areas. Steps will be taken to cultivate these plants/trees in urban schools depending upon the area available for the same.

2.34 Details of action taken to operationalize the MDM Rules, 2015

Copies of NFSA, 2013 and MDM Rules 2015 issued by MHRD vide notification No.G.S.R 743(E) dated 30.09.2015 had already been circulated to all schools for information and compliance. Director, General Education, in this regard, issued a 27 page Circular (incorporating all the important guidelines issued by GOI and State Government) to schools and implementing agencies. Further, the Rules and MHRD guidelines are explained to the participants during the training classes organized by the Directorate of General Education.

2.35. Details of payment of Food Security Allowances and its mechanism

Since schools did not function during the academic year 2020-21, Food Security Allowance as mandated in NFSA, 2013 and in MDM Rules, 2015 was paid to all eligible children during the closure of schools from June, 2020 to March, 2021 and during the Summer Vacations of 2020. Entitled quantities of food grains and essential food items such as pulses, dhal, cooking oil, salt, sugar, etc in lieu of cooking cost were provided as FSA. The provision was in the form of food kits. The kits are prepared and supplied at schools by Supplyco. Keeping the COVID-19 health protocols intact, the kits were distributed to the parents of all eligible children. The physical and financial details of the provision of FSA are given in tables 5C, 5D, 5E and 5 F of the AWP&B State Plan.

2.36. Cooking Competition

2.36.1 Whether cooking competitions have been organized at different levels in 2020-21

No. Though State General Education Department had formulated a plan to conduct cooking competitions at sub-district, district and State levels during the academic year 2020-21, it had to be put off in the wake of COVID-19 outbreak.

2.36.2 NA

2.36.3 Details of action plan for year 2021-22

District authorities will be instructed to conduct cooking competitions during the month of September/October 2021. An action Plan/road map with anticipated financial commitment has been worked out which is presented herewith.

A total of 13767 CCHs are engaged in 12325 schools functioning under 163 blocks and 14 districts in the State of Kerala. Number of CCH engaged in Primary and Upper Primary schools are given in the table below

School Category	CCH engaged
Primary	6909
Upper Primary	6858
Total	13767

On an average there are 84 CCHs working under a block.

Cooking contests can be organized at the block/district/state levels. Respective block/district/state monitoring committees can be entrusted to conduct the competitions. State Food Craft institutes will be roped in as the technical partner for conducting the competitions. The criteria for judging the recipes prepared by CCHs will be finalized in consultation with State Food Craft Institutes. Various aspects such as MDM nutrition

guideline requirements, cost of preparing the recipe, appearance, taste, hygiene and food safety standards observed while preparing and cooking the recipe will be taken into account while formulating the norms for judging the recipes. Student representatives can be included in the jury.

The cooking competition to be organized at block/district /state levels will have two stages, viz a preliminary round and a final round. At the block level, all the CCHs are allowed to participate in the preliminary round.

- (a) **Preliminary Round:-** In the preliminary round, CCHs will be asked to prepare a nutritive dish of their own choice within a time limit of 30 minutes. For this, they must bring the raw food materials required for preparing the dish (the school to which the CCH belongs must arrange for this). A jury may evaluate the prepared dish and announce those selected for the final round. A maximum of one fifth number of the total participants will be selected to appear in the final round.
- (b) **Final Round:-** In the second and final round CCHs will be asked to prepare a dish which is decided by the jury. The dish may be an item in the MDM menu for that particular block/district. 30 to 40 minute time limit will be given to prepare the dish. The ingredients for preparing the dish will be supplied by the organizers. Best five CCHs will be selected from each block who can participate in the district level competition.

The five CCHs selected from each block who are eligible to take part in the district competition will be given cash prizes and certificates. At the district level, there will be cash prizes for the CCHs coming in the first three places. However, only the winner of the district level competition is eligible to participate at the State level.

Cash awards and expected Financial Commitment

01. Block Level

The five best CCHs selected from each block will be given cash awards as detailed below:-

First Place	- Rs. 1500/-
Second Place	- Rs. 1000/-
Third Place	- Rs. 750/-
Fourth and Fifth Places	- Rs. 500/- each

An amount of Rs.14, 250/- will be sanctioned to each block for meeting the expenses regarding the conduct of the competition. A school under the block may be selected as the venue to hold the block level competition

Financial Commitment per block

- (a) Giving cash awards - Rs. 4250/-
- (b) Expenses for organizing the event - Rs. 10,000/-

Total for one block - **Rs. 14250/-**

Financial Commitment – for all 163 blocks

(c) Giving cash awards	- 6.93 lakhs (Rs.4250*163)
(d) Expenses for organizing the event	- 16.30 lakhs (Rs. 10000*163)
Total for all blocks	- 23.23 lakhs

02. District Level

On an average there will be 12 blocks in a district. So, a maximum of 60 CCHs will be participating in each district level competition. The district level winners will be given cash awards as detailed below:-

First Place	- Rs. 5000/-
Second Place	- Rs. 3500/-
Third Place	- Rs. 2500/-

An amount of Rs.15000/- will be sanctioned to each block for meeting the expenses regarding the conduct of the competition. All the 60 CCHs will be given Rs.200/- each for meeting their travelling expenses.

Financial Commitment per district

(e) Giving cash awards	- Rs. 11,000/-
(f) Expenses for organizing the even	- Rs. 15,000/-
(g) TA/DA for CCHs	- Rs. 12,000/- (Rs.200*60)
Total for one district	- Rs. 38,000/-

Financial Commitment – for all 14 districts

(h) Giving cash awards	- 1.54 lakhs (Rs.11, 000*14)
(i) Expenses for organizing the event	- 2.10 lakhs (Rs. 15000*14)
(j) TA/DA of CCHs	- 1.68 lakhs (Rs. 12000*14)
Total for all districts	- 5.32 lakhs

03. State Level

14 numbers of CCH will participate in the State Level Competition. Cash awards and certificates can be awarded to the winners. Cash awards can be given to the candidates who finish at the first three places as detailed below.

First Place	- Rs. 10,000/-
Second Place	- Rs. 7,500/-
Third Place	- Rs. 5,000/-

The remaining 11 participants will be awarded certificates. All the 14 CCHs will be given Rs.750/- each for meeting their boarding/lodging expenses.

Financial Commitment –at the State Level

(k) Giving cash awards	- Rs. 22,500/-
(l) Expenses for organizing the event	- Rs. 20,000/-
(m)TA/DA for CCHs	- Rs. 10,500/- (Rs.750*14)
Total	- Rs. 53,000/-

Total Financial Commitment for the initiative

(i) Block Level	- 23.23 lakhs
(ii) District Level	- 5.32 lakhs
(iii) State Level	- 0. 53 lakhs

GRAND TOTAL: - 29.08 lakh rupees

Item wise financial commitment is as follows

(i) Cash Awards	- 8.70 lakhs (rounded)
(ii) Organizing the events:	-18.60 lakhs
(iii) TA/DA to CCHs	- 1.79 lakhs (rounded)

The entire expenses for conducting cooking competition can be met from the MME fund.

2.37 Details of minor modifications from the existing guidelines carried out by District Level Committee chaired by the District Magistrate.

The letter F.No,1-4/2018-Desk (MDM) dated 14.3.2019 received from Department of SE&L, MHRD has been circulated among district authorities with instructions to convene district level monitoring committees and implement the new guidelines. Though district monitoring were convened two times during 2020-21, they are yet to formulate modifications, if any, in the existing guidelines related to menu finalization, health checkups for all cook cum helpers, etc. State Government will take adequate steps to ensure that the directions contained in GOI letter F.No,1-4/2018-Desk (MDM) dated 14.3.2019 are complied with.

2.38 Details of new interventions envisaged under 5% flexi funds

State of Kerala desires to present a new interventions envisaged under 5% Flexi Funds (under the Flexi Funds of 2081.29 lakh rupees) for the year 2021-22, the details are submitted herewith:-

Intervention - Supplementary Nutrition- providing 100 g peanut chikki twice a week to children enrolled under MDMS in Wayanad, the lone aspirational district in Kerala

2.38.1 Background Note

One of the primary objectives of Mid Day Meal Scheme is to improve the nutritional status of children through supplementary nutrition. However various studies have shown that malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies are rampant among school going children which are affecting their psycho-social well being and also their physical and mental development. There is a widening gap between the recommended micronutrient intake through diet and the actual daily dietary intake of children in the age group of 6 to 14 years. Micronutrient deficiency (such as that due to deficiency of Vitamin A, Iron, etc) is emerging as a major public health problem which needs to be addressed through various interventions such as supplementary nutrition and dietary diversification.

It is an incontrovertible fact that inclusion of vegetables, especially leafy vegetables and fruits in Mid Day Meal menu will help to address malnutrition and to meet micronutrient deficiencies in school going children. Thanks to the initiative of State Government, from 2016-17 academic year onwards, leafy vegetables have become an integral and regular part of school Mid Day Meal menu. State specific interventions like supply of milk and egg/banana, too, have contributed to the improvement of the nutritional well-being of school children.

To further boost the nutritional status of children in the aspirational district of Wayanad and thus to reduce the rate of malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies among them, State of Kerala, herewith proposes under the flexibility of fund scheme, a novel initiative under supplementary nutrition wherein two economical but nutritive food items such as peanut chikki and sesame balls are proposed for weekly provision to all the eligible students enrolled under MDMS in the district.

2.38.2 Objectives

The objective of the intervention is to provide 100 g peanut chikki to each and every child in the primary and upper primary category twice every week. 100g peanut chikki in a single packet containing 10 pieces of 10g each and costing around Rs.30/- will be

provided two days in a week to all the eligible children enrolled under MDM Scheme in Wayanad district.

State Kudumbashree Mission will be roped in to prepare/procure and deliver the food items to schools through its vast network of NHGs (Neighbourhood Groups).

2.38.3 Rationale for the Intervention

Micronutrient malnutrition continues to remain a serious health problem that demands coordinated and massive efforts to address it. Children in the age group of 6 to 14 years consume less than 50% of the recommended dietary allowance of micronutrients. Anaemia and malnutrition continue to be a stumbling block in the way towards the proper physical and mental development of a school going child. Besides causing serious health issues, learning and cognitive abilities of children are severely impacted by the absence of essential micronutrients in the food that the children are able to consume daily. As per Phase I report of NFHS-5, 39.3 percentage of children below the age group of five are anaemic in the State, a sharp 3.7 % increase from that reported in NFHS-4 survey findings. Other important indicators of malnutrition such as stunting, wasting and underweight, too, have shown marginal increase in their percentages as they stand respectively at 23.4, 15.8 & 19.7.

Wayanad, being one of the aspirational districts has the highest tribal population in Kerala (32%). The prevalence of anaemia and malnutrition among the tribal children aged 6-14 years in the district is substantially higher compared to similarly aged children of other districts. Introduction of supplementary nutritive food items like peanut chikki which has an impressive nutritional profile will go a long way in improving the nutritional standards of the tribal children of Wayanad. Peanut chikki, a candy made from peanuts and jiggery is rich in proteins, antioxidants, healthy fats and dietary fibre. It also contains 13 different vitamins including A, B.C and E types and is abundant with 26 essential minerals like iron, calcium, magnesium, phosphorous, potassium, etc.

100 grams of peanut chikki contains 16.13 g carbohydrate, 25.80g protein, 49.24 g fat, 8.5 g fibre, 93 mg calcium, 4.58 mg iron, 168 mg magnesium, 7.5 mg potassium, 18 mg sodium, 376 mg phosphorous, 3.27 mg zinc and 1.94 mg manganese in addition to several vitamins.

Consuming peanut chikki has the following benefits:

- (i) Peanut Chikki contains vital essential amino acids that are essential for the healthy growth and development which, in turn, enhances the child's cognitive and learning abilities.
- (ii) Vitamin B3 and Niacin present in peanut chikki improves the functioning of brain.
- (iii) Peanut Chikki is a good source of Vitamin C and minerals like Zinc that boost body's immunity against diseases.
- (iv) The high fibre content in peanut chikki can aid in the proper function of the digestive system and prevent constipation.
- (v) Vitamin E and minerals such as Zinc and Magnesium present in peanuts protect skin against various ailments.

2.38.4 Time Lines

The new intervention is proposed to be introduced from the date on which schools reopen for the academic year 2021-22, ie, from June, 2021 onwards. A packet of 100g peanut chikki containing 10 pieces of 10g each and costing around Rs.30/- will be provided two days in a week to all the eligible children enrolled under MDM Scheme in Wayanad district.

2.38.5 Coverage

2.38.5.1 Number of Districts: - One; Wayanad District

2.38.5.2 Number of Schools: - 321

2.38.5.3 Number of Children: - 86,690

The intervention will cover a total of 86,690 students studying in Primary and Upper Primary classes of 321 schools (Government, Aided and Special schools) in Wayanad district. The break-up details for primary and upper primary are as detailed below.

Category	Total number of schools	Children covered
Primary	169	54,027
Upper Primary	152	32,663
Total	321	86,690

2.38.5.4 Number of working days:- 40 weeks (or 40*2 days = 80 days)

2.38.6 Requirement of Funds

The intervention is proposed to be implemented with the financial assistance from the Union and State Governments under the flexibility of fund scheme envisaged for new interventions. The cost sharing will be on 60:40 basis between Union and State Governments. Financial commitment of the intervention for the year 2021-22 is as detailed hereunder.

Intervention	Unit cost (in rupees) -per day	Total number of beneficiaries	Total funds required for 2021-22 (in lakhs)	Centre share (in lakhs)	State share (in lakhs)
Supplementary Nutrition- Provision of 100g peanut chikki twice a week- total 80days (40 weeks)	30.00	86,690	2080.56 (86690 children*Rs.30*80 days)	1248.34	832.22

2.38.7 Monitoring

State Kudumbashree Mission will supply the requisite quantities of peanut chikki packets at schools as per the indent generated by schools. School Mid Day Meal Committees and SMCs will ensure the quality of the food item received at schools and will be entrusted with the responsibility of distribution of the food items to children.

Block level and district level monitoring committees will monitor the progress of implementation of the programme on a regular basis. To monitor the scheme, department officials at the block and district level will conduct frequent inspections at schools under their jurisdiction. Details regarding the number of peanut chikki packets received at schools and number of children receiving the provision will be captured online on real time basis. For this, separate provision will be made in the State MDM Software to gather the details. Login facilities will be given to Kudumbashree CDS (Community Development Society) units functioning at LSG levels to enter the details of chikki packets delivered to schools

under a block whereas schools have to enter the details of chikki packets received on the particular day and the number of beneficiaries who received the provision. With the help of the data captured through the State MDM Software, Director of General Education and his team at the State level can monitor and review the progress of the intervention effectively.

2.38.8 Outcome measurement

Details regarding the number of peanut chikki packets received at schools and number of children receiving the provision will be captured online on real time basis. For this, separate provision will be made in the State MDM Software to gather the details. Login facilities will be given to Kudumbashree CDS (Community Development Society) units functioning at LSG levels to enter the details of chikki packets delivered to schools under a particular block. Individual schools have to enter the details of chikki packets received on the particular day and the number of beneficiaries who received the provision. The data captured through the software will be analyzed and used to measure the outcome of the intervention on a daily basis and corrective actions, if needed, will be taken with immediate effect. Instructions will be given to block and district level functionaries to inspect schools periodically and review the progress of the outcome of the intervention. Detailed guidelines in this regard will be issued to all concerned in due time from the Directorate level.

2.38.9 Impact assessment

State Government will request institutions like CDC (Child Development Centre, Thiruvananthapuram) or CFTRI Mysore or National Institute of Nutrition to come forward and undertake a nutrition survey among the beneficiaries to study the outcome and impact of the intervention. The survey will be carried out after six to eight months after the inception of the initiative. The survey report will be officially published and shared with Ministry of Education, GOI.

2.39. Details about provision of Food Security Allowance during closure of schools on account COVID pandemic

2.39.1 Methodology adopted for distribution of Food Security Allowance

Union Government vide communication F.No.1-2/2020 Desk (MDM) dated 20.3.2020, advised States/UTs to provide hot cooked Mid Day Meal or Food Security Allowance, whichever is feasible, to all eligible children till such time their schools are closed due to Novel COVID-19 (Corona) Virus. It was further advised that the modalities for the

provision of cooked meal/food security allowance can be decided by the respective States and UTs, suitable to the prevailing circumstances. The decision of the Union Government to provide hot cooked meal or food security allowance during Summer Vacations,2020 (April and May,2020) was communicated vide letter F.No.1-2/2020 Desk(MDM) dated 29.4.2020. Later, vide letter F.No. 1-2/2020 Desk (MDM) dated 31.7.2020, Government of India asked States to continue with the provision of hot cooked meal/food security allowance till such time schools resume normal functioning.

In deference to the directions of the Union Government, food security allowance for 15 days during the closure of schools in the month of March, 2020, 39 days during Summer Vacations, 2020 and for the entire academic year of 2020-21 was provided to all the eligible children enrolled under Mid Day Meal Scheme. Food Security Allowance for 200 days was provided to children in primary classes during the academic year, 2020-21 whereas children in upper primary classes were given the provision for 220 days.

Food security Allowance comprises of the entitled quantity of food grains and the cooking cost due to the child. Cooking cost for a specific number of days, to be calculated at the existing rates, will always be a meager amount and crediting such a trifling sum into a child's bank account or his/her parent's account will not be beneficial to him/her. Realizing this, State government of Kerala considered various pragmatic methods for the provision of food security allowance under MDM Scheme. State MDM unit came up with a suggestion to provide FSA through a coupon system. As per this plan, parents of the children who are eligible for MDM will be distributed special coupons from schools. On production of these coupons at their nearest outlet of Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation (Supply Co), parents of the children will be able to collect the requisite quantity of food grains and can select and purchase essential commodities in lieu of the mandatory cooking cost. However, the above plan was eventually dropped due to certain technical issues foreseen in its implementation.

Then, it was decided to provide food security allowance in the form of food kits. It was also decided to provide certain essential grocery items such as pulses, dhal, cooking oil, curry powders, salt, sugar and wheat flour in lieu of the cooking cost. The food kits were prepared and supplied by Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation (Supplyco). The kits were delivered right at the door steps of schools from where it was distributed to parents of children under strict observance of COVID-19 health protocols. In order to avoid gathering and crowding, separate timings were allotted to each class/division for the collection of the food kits.

2.39.2 Mechanism followed for management and monitoring

Food security allowance in the form of food kits were distributed to parents of children under strict observance of COVID-19 health protocols, In order to avoid gathering and crowding, separate timings were allotted to each class/division for the collection of the food kits. The timings were notified to parents via SMS and through local press release.

School wise, sub-district wise and district wise requirements of food kits were assessed and indent generated with the help of the State MIS developed for MDM Scheme. The requirement was then handed over to the district office bearers and taluk depot managers of Supplyco.

One or two schools in each block (sub-district) were selected as packing centres where arrangements were made for the packing of the food kits and the subsequent distribution to other schools under the block. The packing and loading of the food kits for distribution were done with the support of local community and members of Kudumbashree Mission. Cook- cum-helpers, too, actively involved in the packing and distribution of food kits.

School Mid Day Meal Committee, in coordination with school PTA, Mother PTA and SMC, managed and oversaw the distribution of food kits to parents. A separate acquittance register for recording the name of the child, type of food kit given, name of the parent, dated signatures of the parent and class teacher were used and details captured through this at the time of distribution of kits. School MDM Committee and SMC verified the entries in the acquittance register and made necessary certifications in it. The register has been kept under the safe custody of school HM for future inspections and audits.

Food kits received at schools are properly accounted and details recorded in the State MDMS software. Receipt of kits at the school level and its subsequent distribution are monitored on real time basis at the State, District and Block levels with the help of the State MDM Software. Physical inspections were also conducted in all the 12325 schools by the respective block level officers. State and District level officers conducted surprise inspections in schools and verified the records related to the provision of food security allowance.

District wise data regarding the number of food kits supplied to schools was verified and cross checked with the details provided by Supplyco authorities before effecting the payment to Supplyco.

2.39.2 Items provided as Food Security Allowance

Food Security Allowance was distributed to children in the form of food kits. The foodkits contained the entitled quantity of foodgrains and certain essential grocery/food items in lieu of the mandatory cooking cost. Cooking cost for a specific number of days, to be calculated at the existing rates, will always be a meager amount and crediting such a trifling sum into a child's bank account or his/her parent's account will not be beneficial to him/her. This was the reason why grocery/food items were given in lieu of the cooking cost. The grocery/food items included different types of pulses, dhal, cooking oil (coconut oil & sunflower oil), curry powders salt, sugar, wheat flour, rice flour and ragi powder.

Cooking cost was sanctioned as per the mandatory rates stipulated by Union Government, ie, Rs.4.97 for primary and Rs.7.45 for upper primary. Though the cooking cost prevailing in the State is Rs.8/-, State was unable to sanction this rate as it had been reeling under acute financial and economic crisis due to COVID-19 recession. However, Supplyco, the State Government Agency which supplied the food kits contributed to the cause by providing 5-10% value addition to the cooking cost.

During the year 2020-21, provision of Food Security Allowance took place in four phases, as detailed under

Stage	Working days	Food grains supplied (per child per day)	Food items provided in lieu of the cooking cost
Phase I	39	3.9 kg (P) & 5.85 kg (UP)	green gram (whole), kala chana, toor dhal, 3 curry powders, salt, sugar and wheat flour
Phase II	62 (June-Aug,2020)	6.2 kg (P) & 9.3 kg (UP)	green gram(whole), kala chana, , toor dhal, urad dhal, 3 curry powders, cooking oil, salt and wheat flour
Phase III	58 (prim) & 64 (UP)- Sep-Nov,2020	5.8 kg (P) & 9.6 kg (UP)	green gram(whole), kala chana, toor dhal, 3 curry powders, cooking oil, salt and rice flour
Phase IV	80 (Prim) & 94 (UP)- Dec,2020- March,2021	8 kg (P) & 14.1 kg (UP)	green gram(whole), kala chana, toor dhal, urad dhal, 3 curry powders, cooking oil, salt, rice flour and ragi flour

2.40 Detailed MME Plan along with Annual Plan of activities to be undertaken thereunder

State Government of Kerala proposes to utilize its due share of MME Fund for the year 2021-22 for components detailed as under

Proposed MME allocation for 2021-22:- 660.81 lakh rupees

a) School level Plan & requirement of funds

SI No	Activities Planned	Requirement of Funds (in lakhs)
1	Form & Stationery	61.63
2	Training of CCHH	26.75
3	Replacement/repair of cooking utensils & procurement of eating plates & glasses	154.06
4	Hand wash, sanitizers, mops, brooms, dish wash & other cleaning equipments for school kitchens	77.86
5	IEC activities	10.00
Total		330.40

b) State level Plan for Management, Supervision, Training, Internal Monitoring and External Monitoring & requirement of funds

SI No	Activities Planned	Requirement of Funds (in lakhs)
1	Hiring of manpower at State, District & Sub-district levels	180.00
2	Setting up a Project Management Unit at State Level (One Consultant each for Nutrition, Planning & MIS)	20.00
3	Transport & Conveyance	45.00
4	Office Expenditure	10.00
5	Furniture, Hardware & Consumables	20.00
6	Capacity building of officials	30.00
7	IEC activities	15.41
8	External Monitoring & Evaluation	10.00
Total		330.41

2.41 Any other issues and suggestions

No major issues to present, but some humble suggestions/requests are hereby brought to the attention of the Ministry of Education, GOI.

- (i) Mid Day Meal Cook-cum-helpers are a neglected lot. While we keep saying that the work they have undertaken to feed the nation's future generation is a noble act, we forget to think and talk about their dismal living standards and the continuous struggle they are compelled to wage, day in and day out, to feed and sustain their family with such a paltry honorarium they get. CCH Honorarium was last revised in 2009. This implies that the rate of honorarium mandated by the Union Government has not undergone any revision/change for the last 12 years. Most of the mid day meal cooks are women who belong to the most socially and economically backward and vulnerable sections of the society. The nation owes to these hapless men and women and has a responsibility to ensure better living standards for these people.

Since 2012, State Government of Kerala has made several revisions in the honorarium of MDM cook-cum-helpers with a view to enhance their living standards. The direct consequence of these revisions is that the state share towards the honorarium of CCHs has gone up considerably. Thanks to these revisions, CCHs in Kerala are now getting a minimum monthly honorarium of Rs.11, 000/- to a maximum honorarium of Rs. 12,500/- As against a paltry annual income of Rs.10,000/- as mandated by the existing GOI norms, cook-cum-helpers in Kerala are now earning an annual income of Rs.1,10,000/- to Rs.1,25,000/-. However, at the same time, this has put State exchequer in dire straits as the Government has to bear an additional annual financial commitment of Rs. 1, 00,000/- to 1, 15,000/- per cook-cum-helper.

State Government requests Ministry of Education to take adequate steps to enhance the rate of honorarium of CCHs. The minimum monthly rate of honorarium may be fixed at Rs.5, 000/- inclusive of Central share and State mandatory share.

- (i) Another major issue is the quality of food grains allocated for MDMS. Though it is often told that FAQ rice is being provided for the Scheme, the fact is that the grains are of inferior quality and cannot in no way be compared with that available in open market. Teachers, students and parent community have time and again expressed strong reservations about the quality of the rice received at schools. There were instances when

school authorities were compelled to return the food grains complaining of obnoxious smell while cooking the same. The food grains carry a foul smell which persists even after the grains are cleaned and washed with water three or four times.

Since access to a quality and nutritive meal is the statutory right of a child as guaranteed by the National Food Security Act, 2013, I request Ministry of Education to take up the matter with the concerned Ministry so as to ensure food grains of sound merchantable condition, dry, clean, of good food value, uniform in colour and size and free from moulds, weevils, obnoxious smell and of impurities are distributed to schools under the Mid day Meal Scheme.

- (ii) Non-availability of dining halls in most schools is another issue that requires the attention of Union Government. Children have to sit on the floors of school verandas or are compelled to move around and find a comfortable place in school premises to sit safely and enjoy their meal. As per MPLAD and MLA LAD funds cannot be allocated/sanctioned to build dining halls in schools as the prevailing norms on spending such funds do not permit such allocation. Hence, to address this issue, State of Kerala hereby requests the Ministry of HRD to incorporate construction of dining halls as a new component under the non-recurring category of MDM fund allocation.

Sd/-

A P M Mohammad Hanish IAS
Principal Secretary to Government
General Education Department, GoK

12.5.2021