SAVING LIVES CHANGING LIVES







School Meals in India – Tracking State Government Response to COVID-19 April- June 2021



Note: The report has been generated based on phone calls to respective state government officials, published newspaper articles, official media reports etc. The information for Phase V was collected between the 3 rd and 4 th week of July 2021
T WEEK Of July 2021
Photo Credits: Received from Mr. Bishewashwar, State Nodal Officer MDM, Manipur

Background

The Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) is a flagship programme of the Government of India wherein hot cooked meals are provided to school children in Classes I to VIII (aged 6-14 years) across all government and government-aided schools with the aims of enhancing enrolment, retention, attendance and simultaneously improving nutrition status of school children. In terms of numbers of children, India's Mid-Day Meal (MDM) scheme is considered to be the world's largest school meals programme.

In response to the COVID 19 pandemic, all the schools across India were closed in March 2020 as a precautionary measure to protect the children from the virus. As a result, provision of hot cooked meals in the school for the children was also stopped. However, the National Food Security Act (NFSA) 2013 mandates that if, for any reason MDM is not provided on any school day for any reason, the State Government shall pay a Food Security Allowance (FSA) to students by the 15th of the following month, consisting of:

- In-kind food grains (kgs) as per the entitlement of each child
- Cash equalling the prevailing Cooking cost in the State.

WFP has been monitoring the COVID-MDM response through tracking and documenting the response across States since March, 2020 and this is the fifth report in the series. The objectives of these monitoring reports are two-fold:

- To map how the MDM was adapted and implemented at the State level across the country in response to COVID 19 Pandemic and school closures.
- To identify and share best practices in the responses amongst States/UTs in order to learn from each other and accordingly adapt their programmes.

Given that the report only explores actions taken at State level and is based on engagements with Stakeholders at the State level, it may be limited in portraying the actual picture on the ground and in the districts of a given State.

Summary of response at the National level during the period April-June 2021

The Ministry of Education, Government of India has issued various guidance documents to States/UTs on how to continue the nutritional support to school children during the pandemic. On June 15, 2021 as a complement to the provision of free food grains provided under the Government's Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) COVID response scheme, the Ministry of Education decided to provide monetary assistance through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) for Cooking cost, to all eligible children as per MDM norms, for the summer vacation period (May-June) as a one-time special welfare measure.

It may be noted that most schools are closed during this reporting period.

Current State and UT level analysis of MDM implementation in response to COVID-19

The following are some of the major findings of the April-June 2021 COVID-MDM response tracking exercise.

- Elementary classes were closed in all States and UTs in April 2021. The schools remained closed during May and June, mostly due to summer vacation.
- MDM was functional in one form or another in 35 of 36 States and UTs. Telangana is the only State where MDM was not functional.
- 19 States and UTs are providing dry rations and other food items, whereas 16 others are providing dry rations with Cooking cost as FSA, up to the period of summer vacation.
- In line with the National guidance, 30 States and UTs have acted or are in the process of providing support to children during the summer vacation period.
- Most of the States and UTs have not taken any decision regarding reopening of elementary classes.

Summary of State and UT responses during April- June 2021

Below is an update of actions of all States and UTs regarding MDM implementation in the 2nd Quarter of 2021.

School opening status

Schools in India gradually started re-opening in December 2020. The upper secondary (class 11-12) and secondary classes (class 9-10) in many States and UTs opened first. As of March 2021, elementary classes (primary and upper primary classes, target group for MDM) were also opening fully or partially across several States. But because of 2nd Wave of COVID-19, all schools were again closed in the last week of March 2021.

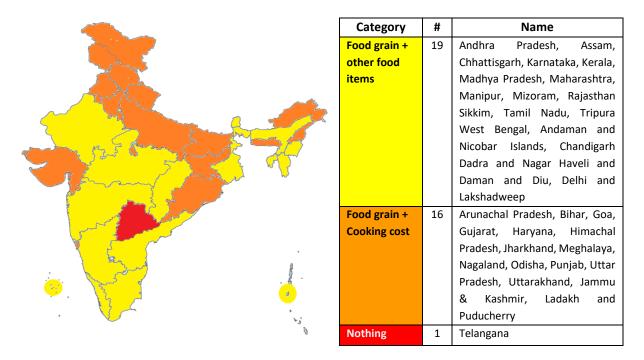
For the April-June 2021 update, it was found that all primary and upper primary classes were closed in all states and UTs, which also coincided with the summer break in most, except some of the hilly States as the timing and duration of summer break varies from place to place.

Functionality of Mid-Day Meal in schools

Since the first phase of lockdown (March 2020), many States and UTs have taken initiatives to keep MDM functional. During the tracking period (April-June 2021), MDM was found to be functional in nearly all States and UTs and since the elementary classes were closed, MDM was provided as Food Security Allowance (FSA), consisting of dry ration only or a combination of dry ration plus Cooking cost.

During the reporting period, it has been found that only 1 state (Telangana) is not providing MDM in any form. In 16 of the remaining 35 States and UTs, both food grains and Cooking cost are being provided while in 19, only food items are being provided - mostly grains complemented with other foods including items such as pulses, oil, potatoes and eggs plus salt and condiments, which vary from place to place. In most places, MDM entitlements were provided up to the school break while in a few States and UTs the distribution of benefits was under process at the time of data collection.

Figure 1: Modality of Food Security Allowance



Modality of Distributing Food Security Allowances (FSA)

- **Schools**: 20 States and UTs are distributing through schools (following the COVID 19 protocols) to parents/children.
- **Home:** 5 States/UTs are delivering the dry rations to the homes of the children.
- **Mixed:** 10 States have adopted a mixed model of distribution through schools, Fair Price Shops or homes.

The frequency of distribution varies from State to State, ranging from monthly to quarterly, based on the local conditions.

MDM entitlements during summer vacation

In conjunction with decision taken by GoI, as of July 2021, most of the States and UTs decided to provide support to children during the summer vacation, but not all at the same time:

- 9 States and UTs were providing FSA during summer vacations.
- 21 States and UTs the governments were still deciding
- Only 3 States and UTs had not yet decided due to various reasons.

Reopening of schools

As a consequence of the 2nd wave of COVID 19 Pandemic, schools in all the States and UTs have remained closed since late March/early April of this year. Regarding re-opening of schools:

- 30 States and UTs have not yet taken any decision about reopening of elementary classes.
- The remaining 6 had either taken the decision or were waiting for approval to re-open, mainly for secondary and higher secondary classes from August 2021 onwards.

State specific information

Name	Schools open?	MDM functional?	Modality of MDM	MDM food basket	Modality and frequency of distributing MDM	Summer vacation and MDM	Action taken/ Plan for school reopening	Remarks/ Other updates
Andhra Pradesh	No	Yes	Dry Ration	Food grains + pulses + eggs	Distribution from schools; home delivery for difficult to reach areas Monthly / Bimonthly	 May and few days of June. DBT transfer for Cooking cost in process. 	 Not yet decided as awaiting approval from Govt. SoP is ready 	Dry ration distributed for the month of April.
Arunachal Pradesh	No	Yes	Dry ration + Cooking cost	Food grains	 Distribution from schools by teachers and CCHs Quarterly 	 Last week of March to mid-May. No action taken due to lack of fund 	Not yet decided SOP prepared earlier as per MoE's SOP	 Food grain distribution completed till June (except summer vacation). Cooking cost not yet transferred due to lack of funds
Assam	No	Yes	Dry ration	Food grains + pulses + oil + salt + condiments + egg (once in a week)	Home delivery by teacher, CCHs, School Management Committee Weekly/ Biweekly/ monthly - based on local conditions.	 Summer vacation from 14th May-15th June. Approval not yet received for transfer of the Cooking cost 	Not yet decided	Distribution of dry ration completed up to 14 th May (before summer vacation)
Bihar	No	Yes	Dry ration + Cooking cost	Food grains	 Distribution from schools Bimonthly Cooking cost through DBT 	 Summer vacation for 21 days in June. Will provide Cooking cost but process not yet started. 	Not yet decided May open in August, depending on the situation.	 Food grain distribution completed to March and Cooking cost till January. In the process of providing FSA for this period
Chhattisgarh	No	Yes	Dry ration	Food grain + pulses + soya chunks + oil + salt + pickles.	Distribution from school or doorstep delivery (based on size of school premises) Bimonthly	Received Gol Letter regarding provision of Cooking cost, waiting for clarification regarding number of days	Not yet decided	 Food grains as per entitlement. Distribution of dry ration completed to April.

Name	Schools open?	MDM functional?	Modality of MDM	MDM food basket	Modality and frequency of distributing MDM	Summer vacation and MDM	Action taken/ Plan for school reopening	Remarks/ Other updates
Goa	No	Yes	Dry ration + Cooking cost	Food grains	 Distribution from schools with home delivery in special cases. Cooking cost through DBT Bimonthly 	 Summer vacation from 1st May-3rd June. DBT of Cooking cost is in process of distribution 	Not yet decided	FSA provided through April
Gujarat	No	Yes	Dry ration + Cooking cost	Food grains	 Distribution from school Monthly 	 Summer vacation from 3rd May to 6th June. Cooking cost through DBT – distribution in process 	Not Yet Decided	Dry ration provided up to the closure of schools for Summer break.
Haryana	No	Yes	Dry ration + Cooking cost	Food grains	Distribution from school and home delivery in special cases Monthly	 Summer vacation from last week of April to end of May Cooking cost through DBT – in process 	 Not yet decided SoP for opening schools is prepared 	Food grain distribution completed till the start of Summer vacation.
Himachal Pradesh	No	Yes	Dry ration + Cooking cost	Food grains	Distribution from schools Cooking cost - through DBT Monthly/ Bimonthly/ Quarterly	Summer vacation during July Proposal sent to Gol for Cooking cost	Not yet decided SOP prepared as per MoE's SOP	Distribution of food grains and Cooking cost completed through June
Jharkhand	No	Yes	Dry ration + Cooking cost	Food grains	Home delivery Cooking cost through DBT & cash (in case of no bank account)	Approval of budget for provision of Cooking cost is under process	Not yet decided	Distribution of food grains by Saraswati Bahini (Women's Group in charge of MDMS)
Karnataka	No	Yes	Dry ration	Food grains + Pulses	 Distribution from schools Monthly/ Bimonthly/ Quarterly 	 Summer vacation from 1st May to 14th June. Provision of DBT for Cooking cost in process 	 Not Yet Decided Awaiting approval from Government SOP prepared 	

Name	Schools open?	MDM functional?	Modality of MDM	MDM food basket	Modality and frequency of distributing MDM	Summer vacation and MDM	Action taken/ Plan for school reopening	Remarks/ Other updates
Kerala	No	Yes	Dry Ration	Food grains + oil + pulses + masala kits	Distribution from schoolMonthly /Bimonthly	Summer Vacation April- May Awaiting Gol Guidelines on DBT for Cooking cost.	Not yet decidedSOP prepared	No distribution of food kits during Summer vacation DBT for Cooking cost under process.
Madhya Pradesh	No	Yes	Dry Ration	Food grains	Distribution from schools, as well as home delivery Monthly / Bimonthly	Summer vacation from 15 th April to 13 th June. Under planning process to provide Cooking cost as DBT	 Schools may reopen after 15th August Awaiting government approval 	Under planning process to provide Cooking cost as DBT for Summer vacation
Maharashtra	No (Class 8 opened in few places)	Yes	Dry ration	Food grains + pulses + cereals	Distribution from school and home delivery as well Bimonthly	Summer vacation during May part of June Only Cooking cost to be provided	Not yet decided	Distribution completed through July (except summer vacation period)
Manipur	No	Yes	Dry ration	Food grains + cooking oil + pulses. Fermented fish + vegetables (occasionally) +local condiments	Distribution from school or home delivery based on local condition Quarterly	Summer vacation in May Decision taken for giving FSA as per Gol order. Waiting for sanction from Gol.	 Not yet decided SOP prepared as per MoE's SOP 	Distribution completed through June (except summer vacation)
Meghalaya	No	Yes	Dry ration + Cooking cost	Food grains	 Distribution from school Cooking cost as cash to parents by teachers/ SMC Weekly 	No summer vacation	 Not yet decided Guidelines prepared in combination with MoE's SOP 	Distribution of food grain and Cooking cost distribution completed through June
Mizoram	No	Yes	Dry ration	Food grains	Distribution from school Weekly/ monthly/ bimonthly/ quarterly, based on local condition	Summer vacation only for 8 days. Food grain provided for these days as well	SOP prepared by Education Department.	Dry ration distribution completed through June. Cooking cost could not be provided due to lack of funds.

Name	Schools open?	MDM functional?	Modality of MDM	MDM food basket	Modality and frequency of distributing MDM	Summer vacation and MDM	Action taken/ Plan for school reopening	Remarks/ Other updates
Nagaland	No	Yes	Dry ration + Cooking cost	Food grains	 Distribution from school Cooking cost as cash to parents Quarterly 	 Summer vacation for 22 days FG provided during summer vacation 	Not yet decided	Distribution of dry ration completed through June and Cooking cost through March.
Odisha	No	Yes	Dry ration + Cooking cost	Food grains	Distribution from schools Cooking cost through DBT/ cash Quarterly	 Summer vacation from 7th May to 17th June Dry ration and Cooking cost provided 	Not yet decidedSOP prepared	
Punjab	No	Yes	Dry ration + Cooking cost	Food grains	 Home delivery Cooking cost through DBT Monthly 	 Summer vacation from 23rd May to 24th June. Not yet received the approval 	Not yet decided	Distribution completed for the quarter, except summer vacation
Rajasthan	No	Yes	Dry Ration	Food grains and combo kit of pulses, oil, salt and condiment	 Distribution through <i>Kray Vikray Sahkari Samiti</i> Monthly 	Dry ration provided	Not yet decided	Distribution completed till June
Sikkim	No	Yes	Dry ration	Food grains + pulses + oil + potato, onion, cabbage, tomato + soya chunks	Distribution from school Frequency varies based on local condition	 For 10-12 days starting from last week of June Proposal for providing benefits under submission 	Not yet decided Government issued guidelines regarding social distancing and other COVID protocols	 Cooking cost converted as per entitlement for other items. Dry ration distributed through June, except summer vacation
Tamil Nadu	No	Yes	Dry ration	Food grains + pulses + eggs	 Distribution through schools. Monthly, Bimonthly and Quarterly 	Summer vacation 1 st May to 3 rd June Dry ration provided	Awaiting government clearance SOP prepared	Dry ration distributed till June
Telangana	No	No support p	rovided through MD	MS. State has prov	ded support to poor families.		Not yet decided	
Tripura	No	Yes	Dry Ration	Food grain + pulses	 Distribution through schools Quarterly 	 Summer vacation from 3rd May to 6th June Only Cooking cost given during this period 	Not yet decided	

Name	Schools open?	MDM functional?	Modality of MDM	MDM food basket	Modality and frequency of distributing MDM	Summer vacation and MDM	Action taken/ Plan for school reopening	Remarks/ Other updates
Uttar Pradesh	No	Yes	Dry ration + Cooking cost	Food Grains	 Food grains through FPS and vouchers and Cooking cost through DBT Quarterly 	Summer vacation is 36 days	Not yet decided	The state has not issued guidelines for distribution of food grains & Cooking cost for this quarter They are expected soon.
Uttarakhand	No	Yes	Dry ration + Cooking cost	Food grains	 Food grains from schools and Cooking cost through DBT If no bank account (new enrolment), through cash Monthly 	 Summer vacation during June Cooking cost will be provided for this period. 	Not yet decidedSOP prepared earlier	Distribution completed till May
West Bengal	No	Yes	Dry ration	Food grains+ pulses +potato (additional - pulses+ +sugar)	Distribution from school Monthly	Summer vacation during MayDry ration provided	Not yet decided	Distribution completed till June
					Union Territories			
Andaman and Nicobar	No	Yes	Dry ration	Food Grains + pulses	 Distribution from school Monthly 	Summer vacation from 1st May to 29th June Dry ration provided Cooking cost as DBT under process	Schools likely to open from 13 th August Awaiting approval from Gol	Distribution completed through June
Chandigarh	No	Yes	Dry ration	Food grains + oil	Distribution from schoolMonthly	Action taken for DBT of Cooking cost	Not yet decided	In the process of distributing Cooking cost as DBT for summer vacation
Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu	No	Yes	Dry Ration	Food grains + oil + pulses	 Distribution from school Monthly/ Bimonthly 	Summer vacation from 1st May to 12th June Except food grains, all other items provided during summer vacation	Not yet decided	Distribution completed through July

Name	Schools open?	MDM functional?	Modality of MDM	MDM food basket	Modality and frequency of distributing MDM	Summer vacation and MDM	Action taken/ Plan for school reopening	Remarks/ Other updates
Delhi	No	Yes	Dry ration	Food grains + Pulses + oil	NGO prepares packet and distributed from schools by CCH in the presence of teachers Monthly, Bimonthly, Quarterly	Summer vacation from 6 th May to early June Proposal submitted to provide Cooking costs	 Not yet decided DDMA prepared guidelines 	Distribution completed through March. Distribution for April is under process.
Jammu & Kashmir	No	Yes	Dry ration + Cooking cost	Food grains	 Dry ration home delivery by teachers Cooking cost through DBT Monthly 	Summer vacation based on zones, Proposal for providing Cooking cost under process	May open 2 nd half of August, based on conditions	Cooking cost not yet distributed for this period.
Ladakh	No	Yes	Dry ration + Cooking cost	Food grains	 Home delivery of dry ration Cooking cost through DBT or cash (if no account) Quarterly 	 10 days of summer vacation during July- No decision taken yet regarding summer break provisions 	Not yet decided	Food grain distribution completed through June but Cooking cost is pending for this quarter
Lakshadweep	No	Yes	Dry ration	Food grains - rice masala kits, salt & egg	Distribution through schools or home delivery Monthly or Bimonthly	Dry ration provided	Not yet decided. SOP Developed	Food distribution and Cooking cost as DBT completed through June
Puducherry	No	Yes	Dry ration + Cooking cost	Food grains	Distribution from schools Bimonthly	Dry ration and Cooking cost as DBT	Planned for 15 th August but awaiting Government approval	Food grains and Cooking cost as DBT provided for summer vacation.