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Community kitchens in Alappuzha feed the hungry

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ALAPPUZHA: If you need lunch, don't hesitate to call your local body office. The lunch packet will be delivered to your doorstep for Rs 25. If you don't have money, don't worry, the food will be free for you. The community kitchens set up by the local bodies in Alappuzha from Saturday has become a boon to the people, who face problems to prepare their lunch. Over 199 community kitchens are functioning in 72 grama panchayats in the district. Though one community kitchen can provide at least 500 meals, at present each kitchen is receiving orders for only around 100 to 120 lunch packets.

"In each grama panchayat, a five-member team of Kudumbashree is operating the kitchen. 600kg rice for the kitchen is being provided by Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation for Rs 10.90 per kg for a month. The price of the meal is Rs 20 at the community kitchen and if the people need home delivery, Rs 5 should be paid extra as delivery charge. If any person is not able to pay the amount due to financial constraints, food will be given to that person free of cost. The grama panchayat is preparing the list of people for delivering free food in their limit and such people's food amount will be handed over by the grama panchayat to the Kudumbashree members, who are operating the kitchen. The food is completely free to poor people and bedridden patients," said deputy director (DD) of panchayat P M Shafiq.

"We have given direction to each grama panchayat to start at least one community kitchen in their limits and some grama panchayats are operating more than one kitchen. The kitchens began its operation in the civic bodies on Saturday. On the first day, the lunch packets were delivered to 8,040 people and of it, 4,000 packets were supplied free of cost. On Sunday, a total of 11,416 lunch packets were given. Of it, 1,573 packets were distributed free of cost to migrant workers. Over 8,170 (out of 11,416 packets) packets were handed over free to the people," he said.

"At least 7,300 migrant workers are staying in Alappuzha and 3,182 such workers are depending on our kitchens. Others are getting food from their contractors," he added