





The impact of the national school nutritional programme in the selected rural and urban primary schools in Mahwelereng circuit

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ABSTRACT

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This study evaluated the impact of the national school nutrition program IN the selected primary schools Mahwelereng circuit, Limpopo Province. To date, the (NSNP) reaches almost all schools in the poorest areas and quintiles nationwide. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the demand on the National School Nutrition Program (NSNP) in schools far beyond expectation, even in schools outside quintile 1, 2, and 3. The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of the NSNP in the primary schools in Mahwereleng Circuit, Limpopo Province. A qualitative phenomenological study within the interpretive research paradigm was used to explore the impact of the National School Nutrition Programme in primary schools. The researcher, through non-probability convenience sampling, selected a total of 12 primary school teachers from four primary schools in Mahwereleng Circuit. Data from semi-structured interviews was thematically analysed and interpreted to draw findings that answered the research questions. Findings indicated that the NSNP has a positive impact to learners' welfare and academic performance in schools. The study appreciates the prescribed measures of food to each learner by the Department of Education (DoE). Primary school teachers in the selected schools around Mahwelereng circuit were interviewed individually for 20-30 minutes each in schools on the impact of the National School Nutrition Programme using semi-structured interviews to collect data. The implementation of the national school nutrition programme has a positive impact and established advantageous learning climate and decreased hunger and absenteeism in schools, while increasing enrolment, participation and scholarly execution among the schoolchildren.

Contribution/Originality: I began a vegetable nursery and empowered a few guardians for students to do as such too. It did well so much I was giving 6 students those vegetables for some time, despite the fact that water for flooding was a test, as it was during lockdown some of the time, I couldn't go out to purchase power to pump water.

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2019 an overall infection was found, and the world went through a worldwide debacle. An infection known as Coronavirus killed our friends and family and made it challenging for food to be moved, and impacted our wellbeing offices. South Africa is known as one of the nations that have supportable, adequate food in any case, because of the public condition of calamity, food security declined in 2020. Because of the statement of a public condition of calamity, measures were executed to take out and limit the infection's spread, for example, continuously wearing covers, social

separating, public lockdown rules, and different measures. The schools shut for a more extended period because of a lack of an adequate number of study halls, and combatting the virus was troublesome. Most students depended on the Public-School Sustenance Program (NSNP) for their everyday food utilization. It was troublesome, and most students were defenseless on the grounds that they couldn't get to protected and nutritious food (Kruger, Legodi, Tsolekileiii, Browneiv, & van Rensburg, 2020). The NSNP is an administration drive, which means to apportion sustaining dinners to impeded essential and optional schools. The point is to cover every one of the nine regions in South Africa to kill hunger and heighten the learning extents of students. In any case, given the aggravations in the students' taking care of timetables during 2019 because of the Coronavirus pandemic, it became crucial to grasp the impact of NSNP in schools. The NSNP is a cooperation project controlled by the Branch of Fundamental Training (BFT) and financed by Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and other government divisions in South Africa. Students would have exited school because of the powerlessness to focus during the illustrations (Eluya, 2019). This studies the encounters and impression of the instructors about the NSNP. The review was directed by the Public-School Nourishment Strategy, which give understanding on how the schools can further develop utilizes new procedures to make the NSNP fruitful and further develop the prosperity of all recognized quintile 1, 2, and 3 schools.

2. METHODOLOGY

The exploration plans to investigate the effect of the NSNP in the elementary Both subjective and quantitative strategies were utilized where 3 teachers who are answerable for the administration of the public-school nourishment program from every one of the 4 chose schools were posed inquiries as meetings.

Schools in Mahwereleng Circuit, Mogalakwena District in the Limpopo Province. The analyst chose interpretivism as the worldview. In-person meets were directed during this exploration.

The qualitative data were collected through informant interviews held among teachers in March 2021. Interviews were held until a state of data was obtained from a total of four randomly selected schools in the Mahwelereng circuit. saturation was reached.

The interviews were conducted using semi-structured interview guides, which included the educational benefits of the National School Nutrition Programme to learners as well as the challenges and opportunities.

Each key informant was interviewed separately for about 30 minutes. The researcher began with introductory interviews and probes with follow up questions to gain more information on the issues raised or any other new information that might be raised by the interviewees. Interviewees were also recorded, along with notes taken. Recordings and notes were then transcribed in only one language, which is English.

The ideas were organized into themes and sub-themes, and statements of the respondents raised under the themes were quoted, and conclusions derived from them were highlighted.

On-going examinations show various discoveries about the commitment of National School Nutrition Programme with respect to results of energy consumption, micronutrient status, enrolment and participation and scholastic achievement (Reference Bundy, Burbano and Grosh2-Reference Devereux, Hochfeld and Karriem5).

Regardless of those blended discoveries, the National School Nutrition Programme was started to keep away from hunger in schools, particularly, for the quantity of those from unfortunate families. Subsequently, it tends normal that the dietary status of the learners would improve, and thus, moving in classes lessens non-attendance that may be related with appetite and wellbeing matters because of hunger and accomplish great instructive execution.

The target of this review was, hence, to assess the impact of the National School Nutrition Programme in primary schools on instructive results of learners. It analysed scholarly exhibitions, enrolment and participation paces of essential learners.

2.1. Population and Sampling

As per the populace hypothetically indicated total of review components were the instructors and SGB individuals from the schools where the NSNP is executed. Among the 4 grade schools in Mahwelereng circuit purposive examining was utilized where 4 schools were tested 1 level 4 and 1 level 2 from country and 1 level 4 from and 1 level 2 from Metropolitan regions. Furthermore, in each school 4 teachers were evaluated. There are 253 educators inside this circuit. Six grade schools are from big league salary foundations, and eight are from a low-pay foundation. In this review, the specialist purposively wandered the schools into two bunches, Group A the scientist embraced a relative and observational method for the concentrate in which the explores accumulated data face to face by connecting with members in their current circumstance. This study's information assortment was through semi-organized interviews. The cross-sectoral method was utilized to investigate the information that radiated from the gathered information. Nowell, Norris, White, and Moules (2017) show that cross-sectoral research is utilized to classify, inspect, arrange, illustrate, and foster subjects. During the course of information examination, the specialist took every one of the information gathered from the meeting records and field notes to frame a clearer comprehension of the data. Topical investigation was utilized during the information examination. This was finished to address the examination question. The broke down information was then checked whether it tended to the examination questions and points, which framed piece of the discoveries of the review.

3. FINDINGS

Evidence on the nutritional and educational impact of national school nutrition program on educational outcomes showed that the national school nutrition programme had a positive impact on school enrolment as it increased, decreased dropout encouraged better attendance, and academic performance. This may be associated with the improvement of the national school nutrition programme through time. In addition, the national school nutrition programme reduced a number of absences in Mogalakwena district. As per the school chiefs and educators partook in this review, National School Nutrition Programme has decreased truancy and no understudy has been missing from school regarding the powerlessness to get a lunch pack from home or take breakfast at home. An educator shared his involvement with this as follows: Some of the time, learners didn't come to school. We asked their folks. They told us schoolchildren didn't go to class since guardians couldn't pack lunch for their youngsters. In any case, presently guardians send their youngsters easily (Educator).

The main findings of this study are summarized below in sub-theme 1, 2, and 3. The research outlined how each of the sub-themes was answered.

3.1. Sub-Theme 1: The Impact of National School Nutrition Program

The National School Nutrition Programme has achieved its goal as its aims was to improve learners' concentration and keep them in school; it has shown to improve regular school attendance, concentration and the general wellbeing of participating learners as such it has shown a great success as the aim of its implementation was to eliminate poverty, reduce absenteeism and banking of classes as well as improving the results and increasing enrolment even though the school and the SGB have the responsibility for the annual appointment of food handlers who oversee the process of food delivery to a school by appointed contractors. The nutrition coordinator, who is a full-time teacher, supports the role of the principal. School B Teacher 2 explained that,

"We have a council that is liable for dealing with the Public-School Sustenance Program and inside that board of trustees each is given an undertaking to perform for a model, there's somebody who is answerable for weak students and afterward she's dealing with those students, particularly when a few food sources are left they use to give those students, particularly those that are helpless so they can have something to eat at home. For us to decide if the student is powerless or not, we evaluate them to find their family foundation with respect to whether the student has guardians, weak students are students who don't have the two guardians might be on the grounds that they are perished. We actually look at their experience and more often than not we find

that is just the grandma who is dealing with them, and you could observe that the stupendous mother is relying upon the social award for living so such student needs additional associate.

The National School Nutrition Programme has reduced absenteeism, with teachers reporting improved attendance due to parents' ability to pack lunches for their children.

This discovering some degree upholds the statement of the WFP (2020) that other than their part in making sure youngsters remain enrolled and being an immediate nourishment and wellbeing mediation, school taking care of projects are a section point for acquainting other security nets with address constant weaknesses in underserved or in danger populaces.

3.2. Sub-Theme 2: The Impact of the National School Nutrition Programme to Learners' Welfare and Performance

As students are being given nutritious dinners, they are additionally instructed to lay out and keep up with great eating and way of life propensities forever. The program likewise gives teachers asset materials to help educational plan and to make each school a solid school.

The expansion in the quantity of schools and students profiting from the NSNP in South Africa over the course of the past 10 years, even previously and during the Coronavirus pandemic, mirrors the progress of the NSNP execution in South African schools. Be that as it may, challenges have been repeated and made sense of in the writing audit. The postpones in the conveyance of food supply to schools are part of the way a consequence of late instalment of contracted providers and late providers' agreement accommodation. Albeit all the specialist organizations marked agreements to tie them to give food consistently, quality assistance couldn't be ensured in view of instalment delays. Educators are once in a while viewed as uncooperative on the grounds that they are over-burden with work, and they battle to adjust between instructing, taking care of and instructor the board liabilities. Educators feel that dealing with a school sustenance program sets weighty expectations for their instructing and learning time, and compromises the students and their homework. School BL Educator 3 referenced,

"Certain teachers are lethargic to stamp the registers for students who are eating and for the individuals who are not eating. In this way, it becomes hard for us to gather the rundown".

This finding to some extent aligns with the findings of Mawela and Van den Berg (2020) that teachers feel that managing a school nutrition programme makes heavy calls on their teaching and learning time. Even in Ghana, teachers are given the mandate to compile meal registers and file them, as well as assisting in feeding the children. The NSNP menu is prescribed and handed down from the provincial DoE; the menu does not specialize in specific diets linked to health conditions and allergies of learners, hence meeting the needs and taste preferences of learners in daily meals is a challenge. School BL Teacher 2 said,

"Implementation of the National Schools Nutrition Programme is successful at my school as learners manage to have food on time that is agreed upon by the school, and the menu is strictly followed even though sometimes we run short of food especially during the re-opening of schools"

In spite of those blended discoveries, learners started to stay away from hunger in schools, particularly, the quantity of those from unfortunate families. Thus, it very well may be normal that the nourishing status of the schoolchildren would improve, and subsequently, amassing in classes lessens non-appearance that may be related with appetite and wellbeing matters because of lack of healthy sustenance and accomplish great instructive execution. The appreciation of the programme as successful is there, but some challenges were also found in the study of Eluya (2019) who echoes that (SFPs) School Feeding Program have been successful, however the challenge lies in maintaining them so that they can reach as many learners and their families as possible. A product which may be good for one school might not be liked by another. Literature confirmed that the shutting down of schools and reduced number of learners in attendance because of social distancing to manage the Covid-19 pandemic, resulted in the starving of learners in many countries, as not all countries responded by reaching out to learners at home, with nearly

370 million children not receiving a school meal in 150 countries (UNESCO, 2020). School B Teacher 1 indicated that,

“Due to Covid-19 regulations where we forced to follow 1.5-meter distance whereby which the rotational schooling was introduced as to avoid being infected as such our learners were rotating weekly and as such foods were measured accordingly”.

WFP (2020) elaborated that children globally are estimated to have missed an average of 4 out of 10 in-school meals they would have regularly received, with children in some countries missing 9 out of 10 in-school meals. However, in developed countries such as the USA, measures were taken for outreach provisions to be available to fund food for learners at home. Related problems associated with hunger that affect academic performance include cognitive function, capacity to attend school, and ability to concentrate in classroom lessons. Almost half of the participants indicated an improvement in the participation of the learners in schools' activities. The learners are said to be increasingly taking part in school activities and participates in class activities. School BH Teacher 2 aired that,

“Very much useful to the learner welfare because the learner who comes to school with an empty stomach will be unable to cope with the situation in the school or will not hear anything because of hunger so the more the department decided to come up with this programme.

3.3. Sub-Theme 3: Strategies Used to Improve the National School Nutrition Programme in Schools

This finding agrees with the findings of Kruger et al. (2020) that where the National School Nutrition Programme is implemented, it has shown to improvement in general well-being of participating learners. The goal of this review was, consequently, to assess the impact of the National School Nutrition Programme on instructive performance of learners. It inspected scholarly exhibitions, enrolment and participation paces of essential learners when the National School Nutrition Programme has been implemented and investigated relationship between nourishing status and scholastic execution of the recipient learners.

Nutrition education in schools is regarded as a strategic pillar of the NSNP, as it focuses on promoting a nutritious lifestyle and developing a comprehensive eating plan among learners and school communities. Awareness, through formal education such as nutrition education, goes a long way to change learners' and teachers' attitude towards the NSNP, improve the commitment of teachers to the program, and increase the uptake of school meals by learners. The quality of diet in childhood has been shown to impact on future development, educational achievement, health and well-being outcomes, and influences adult diet and the risk of noncommunicable disease. School BH Teacher 3 aired that,

” I am responsible for monitoring the kitchen so as to check whether the utensils are clean before serving the learners.

Mawela and Van den Berg (2020) revealed that the nutrition coordinator, who is a full-time teacher, supports the role of the principal. Managing the NSNP requires urgent attention when it comes to promoting sustainable food production in schools. The objectives of the NSNP include creating food gardens that improve production and environmental knowledge in learners. Some schools are taking the initiative to start school gardens so that learners can have fresh vegetables instead of cabbages that are often supplied to schools in rotten states. School AH Teacher 2 said,

“We have started with that, as now we replace cabbage with spinach grown from our school garden, so sometimes instead of cooking cabbage, we are cooking spinach.”

Vinueza et al. (2016) showed that school gardens are valuable instructive devices as they can be utilized to impact the dietary patterns and practices of students. The South African Food-Based Dietary Rules urge schools to establish food gardens. School BH Educator 2 showed that, “Learners will come to school, and it also helps as learners are getting a meal that is more balanced than at home because sometimes you find that at home, they are unable to buy rice, but learners get it at the school. It also helped decrease of absenteeism.”.

His finding confirms the assertion of Berejena (2020) that the South African government introduced the NSNP as an anti-poverty policy intervention, which declared that all primary school children should get fed a nutritional meal every day. The NSNP has led to increased access to school, reduced absenteeism, etc., which should be evidence of the impact of the NSNP. Sanousi (2019) echoes that the NSNP enhances learning capacity and improves access to education through the provision of nutritious meals to learners residing in low socio-economic communities. However, the attendance rates had improved over time as absenteeism declined during each semester between January 2019 and January 2020. Thus, better nutritional status might have reduced the frequency of absenteeism, showing that a reduction in absenteeism was associated with the implementation of NSNP. The findings supported the empirical evidence that teachers noticed a dramatic fall in absenteeism. In South Africa, provinces use different procurement models of food supply to schools, with some, such as the Gauteng centralized model, where schools are given grants to buy and manage their own school nutrition programme according to the provincial menu. This has improved the quality of school meals, particularly the availability and increase of fruits and vegetables.

4. CONCLUSION

This investigation discovered that the NSNP further develop school participation nonetheless, this investigation discovered that a few students come to school for food just though the other two examinations added that it likewise further develops reliability. As the specialist I prescribe that the approaching to school at break time for food and leaving school after the break shows that there's no severe management at schools by the educators. Because of this kind of conduct for students I suggest that the DoE present breakfast for of empowering students to come to school in the first part of the day and on time. They should likewise present meat at schools as the majority of the students don't get even a little harmony at home. The schools need to exploit expanded participation to uphold dependability and discipline so students go to examples.

5. RECOMMENDATION

This investigation discovered that the NSNP further develop school participation in any case, and also discovered that a few students come to school for food just while the other two examinations added that it likewise further develops dependability. As the specialist I prescribe that the approaching to school at break time for food and leaving school after the break shows that there's no severe oversight at schools by the educators. Because of this sort of conduct for students I suggest that the DoE present breakfast for of empowering students to come to school in the first part of the day and on time. They should likewise present meat at schools as a large portion of the students don't get even a little harmony at home. The schools need to exploit expanded participation to uphold reliability and discipline so students go to illustrations. • For now, the DoE employs food handlers on a one-year contract, in future the department should allow schools retain key food handler(s) for continuity to improve food handling in schools.

- The DoE must consider the number of food handlers per schools per as even though the number of learners is small 1 or 2 per school is not enough to can prepare food especially during pap days.
- Remunerations for food handlers at least be considered as they are earning a little.
- The DoE in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture should enforce the establishment of school gardens in schools for the provision of fresh vegetables and fruit in schools.
- Besides the NSNP Policy from the provincial DoE, schools should have a feeding policy that will assist so that all school stakeholders are well-informed and positioned in the implementation of the NSNP.
- Schools must also have a plan of substitutions in case some of the learners are not taking what is prepared for that particular day.
- Let there be permanent food monitors per school to assist educators in filling of monthly forms for submissions to the circuit.

- Infrastructures must also be taken into consideration as during rainy season it's difficult to prepare food as some of the schools are preparing food in leaky shacks.
- A decentralized procurement model should be used to mobilize local resources for school feeding to improve the NSNP implementation.
- The DoE must also come up with a plan to reduce load shedding in schools as during winter is not safe for the food handlers to walk in the dark in the early hours of the morning to go to school to be on time for the preparation of breakfast.
- Effective monitoring and supervision by the DoE on the NSNP be done through training of the SMT and teachers in NSNP management, so that expectations are clearly established and agreed on.

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Transparency: The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

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