

## Impact Of National Home-Grown School Feeding Programmes in Jega Local Government Area, Kebbi State

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### **Abstract**

*This study examines the impact of National Homegrown School Feeding Programme (HGSF) on students' participation in primary schools in Jega Local Government Area, Kebbi State. The research aims to examine how the programme encouraged pupils' enrolment and improved pupils' attendance. In this study descriptive survey design will be used. The population for this study comprised of the teachers and the head teachers in the 81 public primary schools in Jega Local Government Area of Kebbi State. Multistage sampling method was used to select teachers 260 out of the 939 in the local government. A validated questionnaire titled School Feeding Programme Questionnaire (SFPQ) with a reliability index of 0.73 was used for data collection. The study used frequency count, table and percentage to analyze the data. The study found that the HGSF programme led to an increase in pupils' enrolment by arousing learners' interest encouraging classroom participation, and motivating parents to send their children to school. It was also found that the programme improved pupil's attendance by promoting punctuality, reducing lateness and discouraging truancy. The study recommended based on its findings that there is need for Kebbi state Government to continue with the HGSFA programme. This would reduce the effect of poverty in the state and reduce the number of out-of-school children on the street. When reviewing the programme Kebbi state government should establish a broad based multi-sectorial monitoring and evaluation team to monitor the programme and arrest observed infraction at all levels.*

**Key Words:** *National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, Pupil Enrolment, Pupils' Attendance.*

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### **Introduction**

School feeding programme (sometimes referred to as school meal programme) are interventions that regularly provide nutritious foods to children and adolescents attending school (FAO, 2019). Benefits of school feeding on children and adolescents include alleviating hunger, reducing micronutrient deficiency and anemia, preventing overweight and obesity, improving

school enrollment and attendance, increasing cognitive and academic performance, and contributing to gender equity in access to education (Drake *et al.*, 2017). Most countries have some forms of school feeding programs in some way and at some scale (WFP, 2013). School feeding programs are widely available in high-income countries but generally have incomplete coverage in low and middle-income countries (LMICs), where the need is greatest in terms of hunger and poverty (Bundy *et al.*, 2009). Most countries in sub-Saharan Africa only have school feeding interventions that are targeted toward the most food-insecure regions instead of being universally available (Bundy *et al.*, 2009). It is imperative to expand the coverage of school feeding programs and to improve the quality of existing programs to maximize their benefits on children and adolescents.

According to Save the Children (2007), different countries have one or a combination of the two feeding modalities in place for various objectives. However, they can be grouped into two broad categories: in-school meals and take-home rations where families are given food if their children attend school (Wang and Fawzi, 2020). Historically, in-school meals have been the most popular modality of school feeding interventions. The school feeding can be in turn grouped into two common categories: programme that provides meals and program that provides high-energy biscuits or snacks to generate greater impacts on school enrolment, retention rates, and reduce gender or social gaps (Afridi, 2007; Wang and Fawzi, 2020). Afridi, (2007) contended that there are 'indications of a significant swing in thinking about school feeding and many elements of this new thinking are being promoted keenly under the rubric of "home grown school feeding".

School feeding programmes constitute critical interventions that have been introduced in many developed and developing countries of the world to address the issue of poverty, stimulate school enrolment and enhance pupils' performance. In developing countries, almost 60million children go to school hungry every day and about 40 percent of them are from Africa. Providing school meals is therefore vital in nourishing children (Wang and Fawzi, 2020). Parents are motivated to send their children to school instead of keeping them at home to work or care for siblings (Ahmed, 2004). The introduction of the school feeding is traced to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) initiative and several conferences held thereafter by African leaders which aimed to tackle issues, such as peace, security, good economic, political and corporate governance and to make the continent an attractive destination for foreign investment.

Nigeria happened to be one of twelve (12) pilot countries invited to implement the program. So far, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya and Mali commenced the implementation of the school feeding programme. As a result, the Federal Government came up with the Universal Basic Education Act in 2004, which provided the enabling legislative backing for the execution of the Home-Grown School Feeding and Health programme. Towards the realization of the objectives of the Universal Basic Education programme and the central role of nutrition, the Federal Ministry of Education launched the Home-Grown School Feeding and Health Programmes in 2005. The overall goal of the School Feeding programme in Nigeria is to reduce hunger and malnutrition among school children and enhance the achievement of Universal Basic Education (Wang and Fawzi, 2020). The National Home-Grown School Feeding Program (NHGSFP) was re-launched in Nigeria in 2016, eleven years after it was first introduced in the country, with Enugu as one of the beneficiary States. The objectives of the program are to improve the health of school children and aid in the realization of Universal Basic Education (UBE) goals (Agum *et al.*, 2023).

## **Statement of the Problem**

The National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) in Jega Local Government Area of Kebbi State, Nigeria, aims to improve students' nutrition, health, and education outcomes. However, despite significant investments in the programme, there is limited evidence on its impact on students' academic performance, attendance, and overall well-being. Moreover, concerns have been raised about the programme's sustainability, effectiveness, and equity in targeting the most vulnerable populations. This study seeks to investigate the impact of the NHGSFP on students' attendance, as well as the rate of pupils enrolment in Jega in Kebbi State.

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

This research project aims to following objectives:

1. To examine how home-grown feeding programme encourage pupil's enrolment in primary school in Jega Local Government.
2. To examine how home-grown school feeding programme improve pupil's attendance in primary school in Jega local Government.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

The following are research questions of the critical examination in primary school of national home-grown school feeding programme in Jega Local Government.

1. How does home-grown school feeding programme encourage pupil's enrolment in primary school in Jega Local Government?
2. How does home grown school feeding programme improve pupil's participation in primary school in Jega Local Government?

## **Literature Review**

According to the United Nations World Food Programmes, 66 million primary school age children go hungry every day, with 23 million hungry children in Africa alone. Furthermore, 80% of these 66 million children are concentrated within just 20 countries. Additionally, 75 million school-age children (55% of them girls) do not attend school, with 47% of them living in sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, the need to reduce hunger while increasing school enrollment in these children is evident, and school feeding programs have been developed to target this multifaceted problem.

Schools have become a natural and convenient setting for the implementation of education interventions. School feeding is just one facet of school health initiatives, as other programs may include de-worming, AIDS prevention and education, and life and health skills education. Overall, school feeding programme have been shown to directly increase the educational and nutritional status of recipient children, and indirectly impact the economic and social lives of themselves and their family. Additionally, school feeding directly addresses the Millennium Development Goals one-half, achieving universal primary education, and achieving gender parity in education by 2015.

## **School Feeding Programmes in Nigeria**

School feeding programs (sometimes referred to as school meal programs) are interventions that regularly provide nutritious foods to children and adolescents attending school (FAO, 2019). It also means the provision of food to children through schools. Benefits of school feeding on children and adolescents include alleviating hunger, reducing micronutrient deficiency and anemia, preventing overweight and obesity, improving school enrollment and attendance,

increasing cognitive and academic performance, and contributing to gender equity in access to education (Drake *et al.*, 2017).

According to Oyemade (2015), different countries have one or a combination of the two feeding modalities in place for various objectives. However, they can be grouped into two broad categories: in-school meals and take-home rations where families are given food if their children attend school. Historically, in-school meals have been the most popular modality of school feeding interventions. The school feeding can be in turn grouped into two common categories: programme that provides meals and programme that provides high-energy biscuits or snacks to generate greater impacts on school enrolment, retention rates, and reduce gender or social gaps (Akanbi, 2015). Uduku, (2017) contended that there are 'indications of a significant swing in thinking about school feeding and many elements of this new thinking are being promoted keenly under the rubric of "home grown school feeding".

School Feeding Programme is a social safety net for children and as part of the national development goals. It provides an important new opportunity to assist poor families and feed hungry children. It provides incentive for poor families to send their children to school and keep them there. The emergence of school feeding programme was traced back to the 1930s in the United Kingdom and the United States of America with a focus on improving the growth of children (Tomlinson 2017). In 1900 Netherlands became the first country to move the programme to a new level of incorporating school meals into a national legislation. By the 1930s, the United Kingdom and the United States had also instituted the school feeding programme as part of their national programme, further account indicates that school feeding initiatives have been in existence since the late 1700's and originated as projects of donors in Europe.

### **The Administration of the School Feeding Programme in Kebbi State, Nigeria**

Kebbi begins free feeding for pupils in April 2018 as part of the government's Social Investment Programme (Kabir, 2018). The State government, flagged off Home-Grown Feeding Programme in primary schools of the state in April 19, 2011. Speaking at the ceremony in Birnin Kebbi, the Commissioner for Education, Mohammad Aleiro, said Governor Atiku Bagudu's administration embraced the programme following the Federal Government's resolve to improve education through the introduction of free feeding for primary 1 to 3 pupils in all public primary schools of the participating states, of which Kebbi is one. According to Aleiro, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Kebbi State and National Social Investment Office, Abuja, for a smooth take off of the feeding programme in Kebbi State.

In August 2021, biometric data capture for 339,642 pupils was conducted by the Federal Government in Kebbi State to scale up implementation of the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, NHGSFP. This was disclosed by a Principal Administrative Officer in the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, Aminu Attahiru-Zagga. The aim of the exercise was to ensure that every child in the country has access to education by providing at least one meal a day to motivate parents to enroll their children. "It is important to note that the implementation of NHGSFP began in 2016 by President Muhammad Buhari's administration with the aim to increase enrolment rates of children from class one to three in public primary schools in the state.

The programme would improve the nutritional and health status of the children, stimulate local agricultural production and boost income of farmers by creating a viable and smallholder market. The programme will also provide empowerment and increase living standard and the local

economy. The exercise was specifically targeted to reach out to vulnerable Nigerians, widows, poor people and encourage parents to enroll their children in schools.

### **The Effect of School Feeding Programme on School Enrolment and Attendance**

The decision to enroll a child in school and, thereafter, for the child to attend regularly is influenced by many factors. These include the perceived value of education, the availability of employment opportunities, the direct and indirect cost of schooling and the availability and quality of school facilities (Oyemade, 2015) Food incentives offered to students such as school meals compensate parents for direct educational costs. He observed further that implementation of SFP is associated with increase in enrolment, particularly for girls. Also, several studies have found a strong relationship between education and poverty, particularly inequality. The poor are heavily deprived and so are their children.

As observed by Oyemade (2015), several factors with significant impact on many dimensions of poverty on school attendance and education quality, particularly early childhood malnutrition, deprivation based on gender and income inequality tend to be responsible. In many countries, such as Brazil, Philippines, Cambodia, Mali, El Salvador, Indonesia, Ghana, Bangladesh, Ecuador among other countries where school feeding programme are implemented, data reveals that the programme has increased enrolment and attendance rates over the years (Akanbe, 2015) In Bangladesh, the research carried out by the International Food Policy Research Institute on the effects of school feeding programme found that the programme raised school enrolment rates by 14.2%, reduced the probability of dropping out of school by 7.5% and increased school attendance by 1.3 days a month.

### **Research Methodology**

In this study descriptive survey design was employed. The population for this study comprises of the 1020 teachers and head teachers in the 81 primary schools in Jega Local Government Area of Kebbi State. Multi stage sampling procedures was applied in determining the sample of the study. Purposive sample method was used to select five (5) areas in the local government and three (3) primary schools from each of the selected area. The Research Advisors (2006) was used to select 240 out of the 939 teachers. Therefore, a total of 260 comprising 20 teachers and 240 teachers were selected.

The instrument which was used for data collection in this study is questionnaire constructed on five Likert's scales titled School Feeding Programme Questionnaire (SFPQ). The instrument was validated by experts from the Department of Education, Kebbi State University of Science and Technology, Aliero and Usman Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. The instrument was administered two times within an interval of three weeks, in order to measure the stability of response over time. A reliability index of 0.73 was obtained from the test-retest making the instrument reliable for data collection in this study. Frequency count, table and percentage were used to analyze the data collected.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

The data for this study is presented and analyzed in this study

### **Research Question One**

**RQ1:** How does home-grown school feeding programme encourage pupils' enrolment in primary school in Jega Local Government Authority?



This question is answered and presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: How Does Home-grown School Feeding Programme Encourages Pupil's Enrolment**

S/No	Item Statement	Response							
		SA		A		D		SD	
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1.	The programme arouses the interest of learners.	181	69.6	60	23.1	10	3.8	9	3.5
2.	It motivates the students to go to school regularly.	138	53.1	87	33.5	25	9.6	10	3.8
3.	It boosts the morale of students in learning.	157	60.4	80	30.8	17	6.5	6	2.3
4.	It motivates students to be attentive in the class.	145	55.8	82	31.5	27	10.4	6	2.3
5.	It encourages teachers' activities and attendance.	131	50.4	73	28.1	35	13.5	21	8.1

**Source: Field work, 2024.**

In Table 1, item 1 tells 9 respondents (3.5%) strongly disagree; 10 respondents (3.8%) disagree; 60 respondents (23.1%) agree and 181 respondents (69.5%) strongly agree. In item 2, ten respondents (3.8%) strongly disagree, 25 respondents (9.6%) disagreed, 87 respondents (33.5%) Agreed, 138 respondents (53.1%) strongly agreed. Item 3 shows 6 respondents (2.3%) Strongly Disagree, 17 respondents (6.5%) disagree, 80 respondents (30.8%) agree, and 157 respondents (60.4%) strongly agree. Item 4 indicates 6 respondents (2.3%) strongly disagree; 27 respondents (10.4%) disagree; 82 respondents (31.5%) agree; and 145 respondents (55.8%) strongly agree. Under item 5, twenty-one 21 respondents (8.1%) strongly disagree; 35 respondents (13.5%) disagree; 73 respondents (28.1%) agree; and 131 respondents (50.4%) strongly agree. The table shows significant proportion of respondents strongly agree with the how home-grown school feeding programme encourages pupil's enrolment statements, reflecting high levels of agreement or satisfaction with the processes.

### Research Question Two

RQ2: How does home grown school feeding programme improve pupils' attendance in primary school in Jega Local Government?

This question is answered and presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: How Do Home Grown School Feeding Programmes Improve Pupil's Attendance**

S/No	Item Statement	Response							
		SA		A		D		SD	
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1.	The programme increases the overall enrolment.	195	75.0	29	11.2	10	3.8	26	10.0
2.	The programme promotes punctuality.	155	59.6	76	29.2	16	6.2	13	5.0
3.	The programme reduces lateness and truancy.	136	52.3	90	34.6	27	10.4	7	2.7
4.	The programme encourages participation in classroom activity.	136	52.3	79	30.4	29	11.2	16	6.2
5.	The programme encourages parents to send their wards to school.	156	60.0	54	20.8	26	10.0	24	9.2

**Source: Fieldwork, 2024.**

In Table 2, item 1 indicates 26 respondents (10.0%) strongly disagree; 10 respondents (3.8%) disagree; 29 respondents (11.2%) agree and 195 respondents (75.0%) strongly agree. In item 2, thirteen respondents (5.0%) strongly disagree, 16 respondents (6.2%) disagreed, 76 respondents (29.2%) agree, 155 respondents (59.6%) strongly agree. Item 3 shows 7 respondents (2.73%) strongly disagree, 27 respondents (10.4%) disagree, 90 respondents (34.6%) agree, and 136 respondents (52.3%) strongly agree. Under item 4, sixteen respondents (6.2%) strongly disagree; 29 respondents (11.2%) disagree; 79 respondents (30.4%) agree; and 136 respondents (52.3%) strongly agree. Item 5 indicates 24 respondents (9.2%) strongly disagree; 26 respondents (10.0%) disagree; 54 respondents (20.8%) agree; and 156 respondents (60.0%) strongly agree. In this table, high levels of strong agreement how do home grown school feeding programmes improve pupil's participation suggest that respondents feel positively about the improvement-related statements, indicating perceived success on how home-grown feeding programme improve pupils' participation in Jega Local Government primary schools.

### Summary of Major Findings

The summary of findings are as follows:

1. The programme led to an increase in pupils' enrolment by arousing learners' interest encouraging classroom participation, and motivating parents to send their children to school.
2. The programme improved pupil's attendance by promoting punctuality, reducing lateness and discouraging truancy.

### Discussions of Findings

The result in Table 1 shows that the programme led to an increase in pupils' enrolment by arousing learners' interest encouraging classroom participation, and motivating parents to send their children to school. According to Wang and Fawzi (2020) in developing countries, almost 60 million children go to school hungry every day and about 40 percent of them are from Africa.

Providing school meals is therefore vital in nourishing children. Parents are motivated to send their children to school instead of keeping them at home to work or care for siblings (Ahmed 2004). A survey conducted by WFP in 2008 showed that as a result of introduction of school meals, the enrolment increased from 77% in 2002 to 92% in 2007. Oyemade (2015) study supported the finding of this study where he observed further that implementation of SFP is associated with increase in enrolment, particularly for girls. Also, several studies have found a strong relationship between education and poverty, particularly inequality. The poor are heavily deprived and so are their children.

Akanbe (2015) claimed that in many countries, school feeding programmed has increased enrolment and attendance rates over the years. In Bangladesh for instance, the research carried out by Anderson, et al (2005) on the effects of school feeding programme found that the programmed raised school enrolment rates by 14.2%, reduced the probability of dropping out of school by 7.5% and increased school attendance by 1.3 days a month. In contrast to this findings, Owenian (2014) observed that provision of food must not be the only focal-point for improving access to education or education opportunity equality. Poor education environment can contribute to drop out rate, while quality education increases enrolment which can lead to classroom overcrowding. Bosah, et al (2019) observed that feeding programme makes children have better opportunities to gain enrolment. Klein (2011), Ahmed (2014) argues that NHGSFP increases enrolment, attendance and retention and decreases the number of children who drop out of school.

The result in Table 2 shows that the programme improved pupil's attendance by promoting punctuality, reducing lateness and discouraging truancy. Ahmed (2014) conducted a study in food insecure areas of Bangladesh to see the impact of School Feeding programme on school participation. According to Ahmed (2004), school meals increased pupils' participation in school. Ahmed found that school feeding increased pupils' enrolment, reduced dropout rate, increased attendance and improved performance. Vermeersch and Kremer (2015), Agu, et al (2023) argue that school meals will disrupt teaching and learning by taking away school hours and hence potentially worsening school performance through increased grade repetition and drop-out. Besides, high level of school participation rate as a result of the program increases the pupil-teacher and pupil-to- classroom ratios causing crowding. Bundy, et al (2009) observed that school feeding interventions were found to have a positive impact on school participation, including enrolment for children not enrolled prior to the introduction of school feeding, and on morning and afternoon attendance.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

The implementation of the programme was successful in Jega LGA but, it was however not implemented in all primary schools in the areas. That has limited to the success of the programme.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that:

1. There is need for Kebbi state Government to continue with the HGSFA programme. This would reduce the effect of poverty in the state and reduce the number of out-of-school children on the street.
2. When reviewing the programme Kebbi state government should establish a broad based multi-sectorial monitoring and evaluation team to monitor the programme and arrest observed infraction at all levels.



3. There is therefore the need for a strong stakeholder's engagement before implementation of any public policy to address the challenges that might be associated with proper synergy among stakeholder.

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