

IMPACT OF SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM ON LEARNERS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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Many students in underdeveloped nations are unable to attend school because they do not have access to a meal or do not receive all of the meals required for optimal growth in a day. Several of them are even compelled to participate. Malnutrition is caused by a lack of food or an inappropriate diet, forcing youngsters to work odd jobs and labor hard despite their young age in order to earn just one meal to keep them going. Parents and/or guardians are responsible for providing food. However, due to poverty, some people are unable to do so on a regular basis.

To address the problem of hunger and malnutrition, policymakers can utilize a variety of measures to target different groups within a community through social safety nets. 1 Food for Education is one solution that governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have used in specific areas where a major portion of the population suffers from poverty and chronic hunger (FFE). FFE provides food to school children or their families in exchange for enrollment and attendance in school, and it directly relates to the first three Millennium Development Goals: ending extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, and promoting gender equality and women's empowerment by 2015.

FFE was used to enhance children's health in the United States and the United Kingdom as early as the 1930s (Gokah 2008); these early programs took the form of school feeding programs (SFP), in which participants were provided a meal or a snack at school. FFE projects have gained popularity among political leaders and policymakers in developing nations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America as a social safety net. John

Agyekum Kufuor, former president of Ghana, and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, former president of Brazil, shared the 2011 World Food Prize for their effective social projects, which included school feeding. Brazil and India have passed legislation to establish school feeding programs. In 2001, the Supreme Court of India mandated that all state governments serve prepared lunches in designated schools (Bundy et al. 2009), while Brazil included school nutrition to its constitution (Bundy et al. 2009). (Afridi 2010).

One of the main motivations for establishing a school feeding program is to create an incentive for targeted families and disadvantaged children to attend school. It is a widely used technique for attaining both scholastic and social goals among schoolchildren, including preventing and eliminating hunger and malnutrition. Furthermore, the concept of using feeding programs becomes a vehicle for identifying further community opportunities.

The School Feeding Program (SFP) is an important part of a person's physical and mental development. Children require a consistent food supply to support their metabolic needs for body growth and brain development (Akanbi, 2013). Prioritizing the school nutrition program is critical in minimizing short-term hunger, improving learner cognitive performance, and improving the learning environment (Lawson, 2012). The school feeding program would allow students to improve their academic performance by increasing their regular attendance.

In a variety of ways, school meals have been shown to improve the nutritional status of school-aged children. School feeding programs have the potential to improve gender equity in educational access, allowing for gender parity in all aspects of social and economic life. School feeding programs lower the expense of sending girls to school and allow households to send a larger number of girls to school. Furthermore, advances in female literacy associated with increasing schooling have been connected to lower fertility rates, increased economic prospects, and other indicators of female empowerment.

The provision of meals to children through schools is known as school feeding (Adroque and Orlicki, 2013). It has been proven that providing students with a daily meal at school can improve their academic performance in various ways, including increasing attendance, improving specific cognitive functions, and improving attention to learning (Oyefade, 2014). In Kenya, a school feeding program for public schools was found to improve academic performance when compared to schools that did not have a school feeding program (Chepkwony et al., 2013).

In Bangladesh, a school-based meal distribution program increased attendance by 20%, compared to a 2% fall in non-feeding school attendance (Ahmed and Billah, 1994). In Jamaica, it was discovered that students aged 7-11 years who lived in food insecure families performed worse on arithmetic tests than those who received school meals. The school feeding program had a major impact on student achievement. Learners who participate in the school feeding program have the opportunity to improve their academic performance since it allows them to attend school more regularly and study more effectively (Yunusa et al., 2012). Meyers et al. (2013) discovered that children in elementary schools who took part in a school breakfast program improved their academic performance significantly.

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