

## **National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) in Nigeria: Achievement, Problems of Implementation and way Forward**

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**Abstract:** National feeding programme is one of the national programme designed for the basic education with the aim to increase the school enrolment in Nigeria. The implementation of this programme since inception is faced with many challenges. This article examines the problem facing the implementation of the programme. This article identified inadequate funding, increase in population, corruption, poor monitoring and evaluation, lack of data to plan, delay in releasing money, inflation and insecurity problem as the challenges preventing the implementation of the programme. To address these challenges, the article recommended adequate funding of the programme, improvement in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, redefine the roles of each tier of government in the implementation of the programme, government should monitor the funds released for the implementation of the programme and ensure political will of the implementation of the programme.

**Key words:** Feeding, National, Programme, Education

### **1. Introduction**

Federal government of Nigeria in 2016 launched the National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) in public primary schools in Nigeria with the aim of ensuring one solid quality meal a day for children in order to increase enrollment, reduce dropout rate and ensure quality learning outcome. The implementation of the National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) in public primary schools in Nigeria since its inception in 2016 has been facing many implementation problems. Adekunle, & Christiana,(2016) submitted that the implementation of the School Feeding Programme falls short of some of the standards stipulated by the World Food Programme due to various challenges in Nigeria. This article will discuss the problems facing the implementation of National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) in public primary schools in Nigeria. This paper is aimed to discuss the problems facing the implementation of the programme.

### **2. Concept National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP)**

The National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) is an educational policy for improving the quality of education. The National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) is an educational policy with the aims of increasing primary school enrollment. The National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) in public primary schools is designed to reduce the out of school children in Nigeria. The national feeding programme varies from countries to countries with different objectives. Globally, the feeding programme in public primary schools is design to improve the quality of public primary school education across the World. The objectives of the home school feeding programme in Nigeria include:

- a. To increase school enrolment, retention, completion and reduce dropout rate in primary schools. The progrmme was designed to help improve the enrolment of primary school pupils, ensure retention, reduce dropout rate and ensure total completion in the school. others which may not be considered now are :

- b. Improve nutrition and health of primary school children. The idea was to provide one meal per day to all primary school pupils with the classes of 1-3 in Nigeria with the objectives of improving their health status.
- c. To stimulate local agricultural production and boost income for the local farmers through using food that is locally grown by small holder farmers.
- d. To create jobs for community members and increase their finance by improving access to school feeding market and community benefit from new catering, processing and food handling jobs (Bosah, BosahChukwuebukaf&Obumneke-Okeke, 2019).

The federal government would cater for feeding of pupils in primary 1, 2 and 3, while the state government would feed those in primary 4, 5 and 6 in the programme. “The programme is designed to improve enrolment rate by mopping out of school children from streets. It provides jobs for cooks and sustainable income for farmers who key into the scheme (Thisday 2020).

The federal government has disclosed that about 56,000 public schools in 35 states have benefited from its National Home Grown School Feeding Programme since its commencement in 2015 (Thisday 2020). According to the Federal Government, the school feeding aims to improve the health and educational outcomes of public primary school pupils. It said over 300 million meals have been served to more than 7.5 million pupils in 46,000 Public Primary Schools in over 30 states since 2016 (Punch,2020).

### **2.1. Achievement of Home Grown School Feeding Programme in Nigeria**

The national home school feeding programme in Nigeria has done a lot in the improvement of quality of education at the primary school level. The achievement of national home school feeding programme in Nigeria include; increase in the enrolment of children in school, improvement in academic performances students and employment generation for men and women.

Empirical studies showed that school feeding programme is increasing the enrolment of children in the basic school in Nigeria and across the world. In Nigeria, Bosah, BosahChukwuebukaf&Obumneke-Okeke, (2019) submitted in their study that the HSFP has helped to increase the pupils’ population in schools, make the pupils to attend school regularly, increased punctuality to school, reduce dropout rate, ensured continuous stay in school and contributed to low rate of children change of school while in Bangladesh, Ahmed and Billah (1994) in a study found that school-based food distribution in Bangladesh increased enrolment by 20% as against 2% decline in non-participating schools. Similarly in Ghana, Osei-Fosu, (2011) concluded that the school feeding programme had a high positive and significant impact on school enrolment, attendance and retention. World Food Programme (1996) recorded 76% increase in enrolment while attendance increased by 95% after introducing a school feeding programme in Pakistan. Ahmed (2004) observed that in Bangladesh, a study by International food policy research institute on the effect of school feeding programme on enrolment which 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. To enjoy this benefit, girls were given one or two tins of oil for not missing school for 20 days or more per month. In Burkina Faso, SFP schools reported 5% increase in girls’ enrolment (Kazianga, Del Walque& Alderman 2009).

Issa, Willy, & Mohamed (2019) carried out a study with the objective of investigating the effect of school feeding programme to the Bossaso Primary Schools. The study revealed that School Feeding Schools increased by 110% compared to the Non School Feeding, which achieved enrolment rate of 88% during the last 12 years according to the MOE data. According MOE data,

the pupil's completion percentage or retention rate of the Scholastic point out those students receiving School Meals constantly shown higher compared to the Non School Meal Pupils by an average of 9%. The data indicate that 11 out of 12 years the School Feeding schools enrolled higher girls by 46% compared to the Non School Feeding by 44%. In terms of Academic Performance, the research investigated percentage of the School pupils promoted to the next grade in the last 12 years. According Ministry of Education data Non School Feeding Program Pupils failure were an average of 5% during last twelve years against 2.3% of the School Feeding Pupils, which is equivalent to 97.7%, promoted to the next Scholastic compared to the 95% for Control Primary Schools, which quite significant for high number of Schools Pupils to achieve required academic performance. Similarly in Nigeria, Adekunle, & Christiana, (2016) found that the school feeding programme in Osun State has resulted in an increase in pupils' enrolment (78.4%), retention (44.8%), as well as regularity (58.6%) and punctuality (69%) in school attendance. It has also enhanced the pupils' performance in curricular and extracurricular activities (55.2%). The major challenges were found to be insufficient funding (62.2%), insufficient classrooms and furniture to cope with increase in enrolment (60.86%), heavy workload for teachers (60.86%) and lack of effective monitoring and evaluation system (60.86%).

In the area of boosting academic performance of students, researchers like Eugene, Gabriel & Mark (2017) and Pollit, (1995) submitted that the national feeding programme contained nutrition that improve learning of the children while poor health and nutrition are known to affect children's ability to learn (Eugene, Gabriel & Mark 2017, Pollit 1990; Simeon & Grantham-McGregor 1989).

Eugene, Gabriel & Mark (2017) also observed that there is a correlation between nutritional and health status and school attendance and academic performance of children. Weak health and poor nutrition among school-age children reduce their cognitive development either through physiological changes or by reducing their ability to participate in learning experiences. The school feeding programme must not be allowed to die because some children get their only balanced meal in a day just because they go school and it has increased school enrolment as well. We need to be very innovative about this issue," (Punch,2020). Olumuyiwa, Olusegun, Oluwemimo, & Wale, (2012) did a study to assess the School Feeding Programme in Nigeria: The Nutritional Status of Pupils in a Public Primary School in Ile-Ife, Osun, State, Nigeria. Meals were collected and analyzed for nutrient composition and compared to the requirement for their age group. The mid-arm circumference (MAC) ranged between 15 and 21 mm and the body mass index, (BMI) was within the WHO reference standard for healthy children. The crude protein (CP) content of the served foods varied between 12% and 28%. The average intake of amino acids per meal ranged between 122 and 684 mg, vitamins from 0.1 to 0.8 mg while mineral intake varied from 2.7 to 85 mg. The protein digestibility corrected amino acid score varied between 50% and 114%. These results indicated that the feeding programme has greatly improved the nutrition status of these children. The continuation of the programme would go a long way to preventing malnutrition among the public school children.

In term of empowerment of men and women, the national feeding programme have reduced the rate of unemployment by engaging thousands of men and women in the programme. Fowler (2012) observed in his study that stakeholders were of the view that the school feeding programme made it possible for families to have more disposable income and Eugene, Gabriel & Mark (2017) submitted that the school feeding programme is a good social intervention programme and it is beneficial to the communities. This is because the implementation of the programme has helped to alleviate poverty in the communities by reducing the heavy burden of responsibility on parents towards their wards. Anderson, Moreen, Peterson and Tobey (2005) concluded that due to the positive perceptions of the school feeding programme and the benefits to the various communities, the communities were much involved by building kitchens and store rooms, volunteering,

providing security, monitoring and oversight responsibilities. The presidential aide for the implementation of school feeding programme in Nigeria stated that over 8.6 million people are enjoying the programme, added that more than 107,000 cooks and over 200,000 small holder farmers are taking part in the programme (Thisday 2020). The programme will also provide opportunities of increased income level for farmers and cooks who engage in the programme and those who supply all other products. The increased income level and education would lead to increase in development of human (Thisday 2020)

### **3. Problems facing the Implementation of Home School Feeding Programme in Nigeria**

The problems facing the implementation of national feeding programme in Nigeria include: inadequate funding, poor monitoring and evaluation, lack of data to plan, security, delay in releasing money and insecurity.

#### **3.1. Inadequate Funding**

Inadequate funding is one of the major problems facing the implementation of national feeding programme in Nigeria. The annual budgetary provision for the implementation of the programme across the nation is inadequate and this is affecting the implementation of the programme. This submission is in agreement with the finding of Adekunle, & Christiana, (2016) who discovered in their study that majority (62.2%) of the respondents indicated that insufficient funding was identified as another challenge facing the programme implementation. This also accounts for the reason why there are insufficient classrooms and furniture to cope with the increase in enrolment (62.86%). One of the Head teachers interviewed noted that sometimes some pupils have to share desks and chairs with their mates while some others sit on the floor or stand up while lessons are on. Similarly, Eugene, Gabriel & Mark (2017) did a study that sought to explore the factors impeding the implementation of the school feeding programme in the South Tongu district through in-depth interviews. Results of the study revealed that the most prominent factor that impedes the implementation of the SFP in the study area was lack funds. According to the participants, this has led to shortage of food items, irregularity in the preparation of food, inadequate cooking facilities, sub-standard quality of the meals and inadequate cooking staff. The participants believed that inadequate funding and delay in releasing funds have consequently resulted in delay in paying the remunerations of the matrons. A school management committee member had this to say. Similarly, in Nigeria, Bosah ,Bosah Chukwuebukaf &Obumneke-Okeke (2019) identified some challenges such as insufficient fund for teeming population, delay in release of fund to the cooks and lack of supervision of the activities of the cooks due to exclusion of head teachers and teachers from the implementation of the program and other problems are some of the challenges facing the new program in Nigeria.

#### **3.2. Poor Monitoring and Evaluation**

Another problem facing the implementation of the national feeding programme in Nigeria is the problem of poor monitoring and evaluation. The monitoring and evaluation programme designed for the implementation of the programme at the federal, states and local government councils is weak and ineffective. Adekunle, & Christiana, (2016) observed that the importance of monitoring and evaluation system in implementation of programmes cannot be underestimated, in view of this 60.86% of the respondents noted that lack of adequate evaluation and monitoring mechanism is a major challenge of the programme. Some of the interviewees however, noted that there exists some form of monitoring systems at the state and school levels. At the state level, the state monitoring committee and state steering committee responsible for programme oversight, the state ministry of education and the state universal basic education board are responsible for collecting data on school enrolment and attendance on regular basis; the ministry of health is responsible for



collecting state-wide data on general child health and nutritional status; Local government education authority secretaries and planning officers are responsible for collecting weekly feeding forms that consist of the number of pupils that have been fed and for collating the data for the programme and the zonal inspectors of education are responsible for monitoring the feeding process, environmental health and enrolment data. At the school level, the school-based monitoring committees are responsible for the programme oversight; the quality of the food is monitored by the head teacher or health teacher while the Parents' Teachers' Associations' representative and the school prefects randomly inspect the food. Surprise checks are also conducted regularly by programme monitors. These monitoring systems are challenged by lack of funds, vehicles and growth monitoring gadgets required for effective programme planning, review and improvement. Tomlinson (2007) concluded that although the school feeding programme contributed to an increase in enrolment and attendance, enhanced participation of beneficiaries in the classroom and generated jobs in the communities, it has come under criticism for its poor management, poor coverage, inconsistencies and high-cost.

### **3.3. Lack of Data for Planning**

Lack of data for planning the national feeding programme is another problem confronting the implementation of national feeding programme. There is problem of getting reliable data to plan the implementation of the national feeding programme in Nigeria. Ogunode, Ahmed, Gregory & Abubakar (2020) submitted that another problem facing the administration of public education in Nigeria is the lack of current and reliable data to plan. Data are very important for educational planning. No meaningful educational planning can take place without adequate current and reliable data/information. One of the basic challenges facing the Nigerian educational sector is lack of data. There is lack of information on key areas of the Nigerian educational system. This is because educational data are not constantly been generated and if generated, the methodology of collection is poor. Many data collection officers in the country lack the new method of generating data due to poor capacity development. The data collection officers also lack working tools. The attitude of the government towards generating current and reliable data is poor. There are many factors responsible for poor data collection in Nigeria and they include inadequate funding of data collection agencies, inadequate data collection officers, insecurities, lack of political will, poor capacity development of data collection officers and corruption. A study by Adekunle, & Christiana, (2016) showed that very few (26.8%) of the respondents indicated that an absence of a legal framework and policy to back up the programme was a challenge. The response from the State programme officer interviewed revealed that efforts were being made by the Osun state government to back the programme up with appropriate legislation in order to enhance it and ensure its sustainability.

### **3.4. Corruption**

Corruption is a major problem facing the implementation of the national feeding programme in Nigeria. The funds released for the implementation of the programme is been looted and mismanaged by some officers handling the implementation across the federation. The former coordinator of the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in Nigeria Mrs. Uwais said that, She noted that government has suspended some officials of the programme in Benue and Niger States because some of them have taken money without the knowledge of government and even opened personal accounts where they had directed that some money for the programme should be lodged into, adding that those that were caught in the act were currently under investigations by the Economic And Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). Corruption on fund diversion has been reported in all the forms of education in Nigeria. At the early child and basic education, the Education Secretary of Sabon Birni Local Government Area of Sokoto State, Ishaka

Abdullahi, was on Monday, arraigned before Justice Malami Umar Dogondaji of the state high court for fraud. Abdullahi was arraigned by the Sokoto zonal office of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) after investigators traced school feeding funds to bank accounts linked to him (Thewhistler, 2020). Mismanagement was also cited as a challenge to the implementation of the School Feeding programme in the South Tongu District by (Eugene, Gabriel & Mark (2017).The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission, ICPC, announced that it found N2.67 billion in some private accounts which was meant for the provision of school feeding to federal colleges during the COVID-19 lockdown (Nairametric, 2020).

### **3.5. Delay in Releasing Money**

Delay in releasing funds for the programme is also affecting the implementation of the national feeding programme in Nigeria and other part of the world where the programme is being implemented. In Ghana for instance Eugene, Gabriel & Mark (2017) submitted in their study that the participants believed that inadequate funding and delay in releasing funds have consequently resulted in delay in paying the remunerations of the matrons. Similarly, in Nigeria, Bosah ,BosahChukwuebukaf&Obumneke-Okeke (2019) identified some challenges such as delay in release of fund to the cooks, not providing food rich in quality and quantity to the pupils due to insufficient fund for teeming population and lack of supervision of the activities of the cooks due to exclusion of head teachers and teachers from the implementation of the program and other problems are some of the challenges facing the new program.

### **3.6. Insecurity**

Insecurity problem in Nigeria is also affecting the implementation of the national feeding programme in Nigeria. According to UNICEF (2017) the insurgency in north-eastern Nigeria has been especially damaging to the education system. Since 2011, an estimated 19,000 teachers have been displaced and 1,200 schools have been damaged or destroyed. Approximately 1 million children in need and 600,000 children have lost access to learning due to the conflict. The education sector sustained an estimated \$272.96 million of damages to its infrastructure with Borno State most affected. Many states in the Northern part of Nigeria cannot implement the programme as planned due to the insurgencies in the area. Ogunode&Adah (2020) identified insecurity challenge, inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructural facilities, inadequate professional teachers, institutional corruption, lack of political will, lack of continuity in commitment to policy implementation, political instability, poor policy formulation, poor relationship between policy designers and policy implementers as challenges preventing effective implementation of educational policies in Nigeria.

## **4. Conclusion**

Based on the analysis and study reviewed, the paper concludes that the national home school feeding programme in Nigeria have done a lot in the improvement of quality of education. The achievement of national home school feeding programme in Nigeria include; increase in the enrolment of children in school, improvement in academic performances of students and employment generation for men and women. The paper also identified the problems facing the implementation of national feeding programme in Nigeria to include: inadequate funding, poor monitoring and evaluation, corruption, lack of data to plan, delay in releasing money and insecurity.

## 5. Way Forward

To address the problems identified in this paper, the following were recommended: increase in the funding of National Home Grown School Feeding programme (NHGSFP) by the federal, state and local government, improve the monitoring and evaluation system of the programme, ensure effective data generation and distribution to aid planning of the programme; funds meant for the implementation of National Home Grown School Feeding programme (NHGSFP) should be release on time and the government should tighten security across the Nigeria.

- a. The federal, state and local government should increase the funding of the National Home Grown School Feeding Policy (NHGSFP). This will aid the administration of the programme;
- b. The federal government should strengthen the monitoring and evaluation system of the National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP). This will help to realize the objectives of the programme;
- c. All form of corruption should be discourage in the implementation of the National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) through effective use of anti-corruption agencies and ensuring accountability in the disbursement of the funds;
- d. Current and reliable data should be generated and made available for the planners of the National Home Grown School Feeding programme (NHGSFP) for effective administration of the programme;
- e. Funds for the implementation of the National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) should be released on time to aid effective administration of the programme

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