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National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) in the rural area at Mkhuhlu (Bushbuckridge)

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public and Development Management)

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ABSTRACT

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Abstract of Masters' Thesis submitted May 2013

National School Nutrition Programme in rural area at Mkhuhlu (Bushbuckridge)

The purpose of this study is assess how the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) is being implemented and monitored in Bhejani and Thulani primary schools at Mkhuhlu (Bushbuckridge) in the Mpumalanga Province

The study was conducted in July to September 2012 and data was collected through interviews and observations. The subjects of this study were 22 and they were all met and interviewed by the researcher. The researcher interviewed and observed the subjects and the data was recorded and thereafter transformed into useful facts.

The results indicate that the implementation and the monitoring of the of NSNP in both schools do not meet the required standard for implementation and monitoring.

Since the NSNP is for the deprived South African learners it is therefore important that all stakeholders should work together towards the implementation of the NSNP in school at Mkhuhlu (Bushbuckridge).

Key words: national, nutrition programme, rural area

DECLARATION

I declare that:

- I have checked all copies of my research report and no pages are missing or poorly reproduced;
- All revisions have been completed in accordance with recommendations of the examiners;
- The electronic copy is identical to the printed copy approved by the faculty;
- The research report complies with the rules relating to abstract and style, copies and formal declaration, duly signed by me, as shown in the General Rules of the University;
- I have properly acknowledge all sources

MATHONSI T.A

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

This document is a research report that is assessing how the Primary School Nutrition Programme (PSNP) is being implemented and monitored in schools Mkhuhlu (Bushbuckridge) in Mpumalanga. Nutrition is a basic human right and prerequisite for the attainment of full intellectual and physical potential as outlined in the South African Constitution and Bill of Rights (Section 27(1b) of Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). The fulfilment of this basic right usually fails due to many constraints and influential factors that adversely affect food availability.

Initially, the focus areas of the PSNP were providing meals to feed learners establishing and facilitating food gardens or other food projects and educating learners and community at large about good nutrition (NSNP Annual Report, 2008/9). The focus in this regard was only for Primary School learners that is Grade R to 7. However the program has also rolled out to some of the secondary schools. The program target public schools serving the poorest communities, with particular priority given to farms, rural and informal settlement for school feeding. It is funded through conditional grants with which provinces buy goods and services.

It is assumed that NSNP will improve problem solving skills, school attendance and malnutrition. The main targets are orphans and vulnerable children. This research undertaken sought to explore the ways in which the NSNP was implemented in Mkhuhlu, which is located in Bushbuckridge in Bohlabela District.

Background

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) are eight developmental goals that all the 193 United Nation member states and at least 23 international organisations have agreed to achieve by the year 2015. They include eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality rates, fighting disease epidemics such as AIDS and developing a global partnership for development (United Nations Development Program, 2006).

The Primary School Nutrition Programme(PSNP) was implemented on the 1 September 1994 (Wildeman and Mbebheto, 2005, 6), following a commitment in President Nelson Mandela's State of the Nation Address on 24 May 1994, that a nutritional programme would be implemented in every primary school where a need had been established.

In its first ten years, the PSNP was jointly managed at the national level by the Department of Health (DoH) and the Department of Education (DoE). The DoH was responsible for the nutritional and health aspects, and the DoE for school and educational elements (NSNP Mpumalanga Provincial Report, 2008).

The PSNP was transferred from the Department of Health to the Department of Education in April 2004 and was renamed the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), because the Department of Health stated that the focus of the programme was on the educational outcomes of school feeding, therefore the program should be viewed as a fundamental functional responsibility of the Department of Education (Kallman, 2005).

The NSNP is an important means of ensuring that the impact of poverty on children is mitigated. It also has an impact on learning because it enhances children's active learning capacity, alleviating short-term hunger, providing an incentive for learners to attend school. Besides the latter mentioned objectives that are education based, the NSNP also addresses the constitutional rights to sufficient food (Section 27(1b) and the right to basic nutrition (Section 28(1c). These rights are seen as entitlements to children in our country.

The government of South Africa is therefore committed to satisfy these rights of children as enshrined in the constitution. The Department of Education has established the necessary mechanism to deliver the required goods and services in an organised and equitable manner within all provinces in order to ensure that the needy primary school learners from the disadvantaged communities benefit from the NSNP.

The national government funds the NSNP through a conditional grant distributed to the provincial departments of education. The government through its economic and

geographic targeting criteria is able to allocate resources to provinces according to their need.

Wildeman and Mbebetho (2005) point out that targeting is done by the Department of Education, using Norms and Standards listings. They identify the poorest indexes from 1-5, 1 being very poor and 5 being the privileged. If a school falls within a poverty index 1, the grant covers 100% of the pupils, index 2 the grant covers 80%, on sliding scale until 20% for poverty index 3 schools. In provinces like the Western Cape, the budget is limited and they focus on schools with poverty index 1-3. They supplement the programme through non-governmental organisation (NGO) service providers.

School feeding programmes differ from one country to another throughout the world, but they have successfully attracted poor children and retained them (Kallman, 2005). The implementation of the feeding schemes, however, is hindered by, amongst others, a lack of skills, amongst the principals, teachers, food suppliers and members of the School Governing Body (SGB), and lack of communication and participation of all the stakeholders.

Kent (2005) indicates that in India the beneficiaries of the program are the learners, and the feeding scheme encouraged learners to attend school, making them more capable for learning and providing special opportunities for teaching. In Tamil Nadur - a school feeding programme attracted more girls to attend school and those already in schools learned about family planning.

According to Tender Specification (2005/2006), the established nutritional status and learning capacity in South Africa necessitated the Department of Education to accept feeding of under-nourished learners as a priority of school like it is of home. The rise in lack of job opportunities, spread of HIV/AIDS, single parent families and child headed families led government to implement a number of Integrated Nutrition Programmes that aim to provide food safety nets for the most vulnerable people. Beside the NSNP, there are other most notable programmes such as Child Support Grants and Agriculture Starter packs for needy families (Integrated Food Security Strategy for South Africa, 2012).

The research presented in this document was conducted in Mpumalanga focusing at two schools located in a remote village of Mkhuhlu in Bushbuckridge.

Mpumalanga province is one of the nine provinces in South Africa and most of the schools in this province are found in rural areas and do not provide an environment for effective teaching and learning, particularly in the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) approach (van Dyk 1997, 22). These create many challenges, including amongst others; poor performance of learners, high dropout rates, teenage pregnancy and these causes the communities to be trapped continuously in the cycle of poverty.

Mkhuhlu is located in deep rural parts of Bushbuckridge, one of the remote towns in South Africa. Beside poor infrastructure, Mkhuhlu comprises of communities that are poverty stricken so most learners attending school are victims of poverty (Researcher's observation).

Poverty in the community of Mkhuhlu manifests in adverse factors such as ill health, malnourishment, backlogs in education and a negative view of the future and thus adults and young people in this community do not even attempt to maintain reasonable standards of respect, hygiene and sexual morality. These lead to the transmission of most sexual infections inter-alia HIV/AIDS and all this have detrimental effects on the mental development and performance of the learners at school.

The principal of Bhejani indicated that most of the learners who attend school in Mkhuhlu receive social grants suggesting that these learners are from poor families that require some sort of financial assistance (Observation, 12 July 2012). Even though some grant recipients do not at all times take decisions that support better nutrition outcomes – most do.

According to Wildeman and Mbebetho (2005) poverty means that many young children are deprived of food and therefore will not be able to participate fully in their own educational development.

Eloff and Ebersohn (2004) suggest that socio-economic status and the education level of parents are the main determinants in children's development, academic outcomes and

occupational attainments as adults. Landsberg, Kruger, & Nel, (2005) similarly argues that the home environment should provide a background that is conducive for development and positive behaviour patterns. In all societies, the family is the basic source of security and support and the springboard for the physical, emotional, cognitive, moral, social and spiritual development of children.

The family serves to provide guidance to the children so that they may behave in a socially acceptable manner according to values and norms of the society. The paramount task of the family is to provide for the basic physiological needs (food, shelter, clothes and water) of all its members.

Most primary school learners in Mkhuhlu travel long distances to school with little or no food at all, therefore hunger interferes with the children's concentration during teaching and learning hours.

Looking at the state and condition of families around Mkhuhlu, it is evident that the National School Nutrition Programme should have a positive influence in improvement of the performance of learners in schools that are located within the communities of Mkhuhlu.

Research problem, purpose and question

The Mpumalanga Department of Education has implemented and monitors the NSNP, which provides meals at most primary and some secondary schools throughout the province. An estimated number of 751 767 learners in Mpumalanga benefit from this program (NSNP Annual Report 2010/2011). This constitutes 589 607 learners in 1 404 quintile 1 – 3 primary schools and 1 62 160 learners in 235 quintile 1 and 2 secondary schools (NSNP Annual Report 2010/2011).

Given the potential educational and social benefits of adequate nutrition, this research explores if learners are receiving their meals at the right time according to menu per day. If the programme is implemented poorly, the learners are likely to be stuck in a cycle of poverty and deprivation.

According to Kallman (2005) evaluation reveals that targeting directives were not being adhered to at either the provincial or school level. This evaluation also revealed a lack of uniformity in school menus, timing of meals and the number of feeding days.

The research therefore aim to explore whether the programme is implemented in a manner which improves the life changes of children, given that research demonstrates the overall educational and social benefits of nutrition.

Buhl (ny) indicates that a survey of primary schoolchildren from rural areas in KwaZulu-Natal where school feeding has been in operation at school level for nearly two years, revealed a great number of children with persistent micro- nutrient deficiencies. It further indicates that not all children entitled to school feeding received food, with great variation in food availability between rural and urban areas. While urban school often report that their stocks are sufficient to provide food regularly, rural schools may not always have sufficient ingredients. Also there may be inadequate communication mechanism between schools and caregivers regarding whether or not children receive food on daily basis.

It is important that nutrition programmes adhere to certain objectives in order to be of any benefit to children. However, little monitoring has been undertaken to examine if the programme is implemented correctly for the benefit of the children, so the purpose of this research is to establish and investigate that the objectives are being achieved .

The research was conducted to find out how the Primary School Nutrition Programme is being implemented and monitored in two schools at Mpumalanga Province, Bohlabela District (Bushbuckridge).The two schools are under the jurisdiction of Mkhuhlu Circuit office and they are not located next to each other. Both schools are public schools, classified in Quintile 1.

The Consortium for Research on Education, Access, Transition and Equity (2009) explain the quintile system as the mechanism the government use in ranking schools to improve the equity in education financing. The criterion used in ranking the schools is based on the rates of income, unemployment and illiteracy within the school catchment area. (CREATE, 2009).

Schools in Bushbuckridge (Mkhuhlu) experience difficulties in the implementation and monitoring of the National School Nutrition The programme is rolled out by the Department of Education, but many schools shows some signs of failure in properly implementing and monitoring the programme, e.g. Bhejani and Thulani primary school show difficulties in the implementation and monitoring of the NSNP.

The purpose of the research is to monitor the implementation of the NSNP in order to determine the effects of implementation and monitoring in schools in Bushbuckridge (Mkhuhlu). The research will help to explore positive ways in which the schools and other stakeholders can work together in implementing and monitoring the School Nutrition Programme in their school.

Research Question

How is the National School Nutrition Programme implemented and monitored at Bhejani and Thulani primary schools?

Research Report outline

Chapter 1: Introduction and background

This covers the introduction and background to the research. It also gives an overview of the contents and the subject of the study. It further gives the research question, problem statement, objectives, significance and limitations of the study. The section also gives the outline of the research report.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This section outlines the literature relevant to the research question and the problem statement in order to gain more insight to the study.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This section shows the research methods used and explains why these methods were applied in the study.

Chapter 4: Data Presentation

This section presents the research findings from the field, which is supported by the theoretical framework of the study.

Chapter 5: Research findings and analysis

This section shows the way in which data was organised, categorised and the manner in which data was analysed.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and recommendations

This section outlines the conclusions that were drawn from the study and recommends suitable ways to overcome the challenges that have been found.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This section provides an overview of relevant literature to the study. It focuses on the policies and theories of the framework of the studies which give the core point of the research. The literature review also looks at other countries experiences on feeding schemes so as to look whether South Africa is on the same level with required ways and means of the subject of study. The literature further outlines the beneficiaries of the National School Nutrition Programme. It will further explore problems of the scheme that enlighten the main objectives of the study.

Kallman (2005) is of the view that children with diminished cognitive abilities and sensory impairments perform less and are more likely to repeat grades and finally drop out of school, but school feeding programmes throughout the world have successfully attracted poor children to school and retained them by offering them what they would not probably get elsewhere: hot food and nourishing snacks.

According to World Health Organisation (WHO) (1998) good nutrition strengthens the learning potential and well being of children. Children with more adequate diets score higher on tests of factual knowledge than those with less adequate nutrition. Nutrition and feeding programmes contribute to the improvement of the nutrition and health status of student in project schools (WHO, 1998).

School Nutrition Programmes

The National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) was introduced in South Africa to foster better quality education by enhancing children's learning capacity, encouraging regular attendance and punctuality, and alleviating short term hunger by providing 30% of the daily energy requirements of the child (Kallman, 2005).

School nutrition programmes were introduced in South Africa on 1 September 1994. The provinces use the school funding norms resource targeting lists, which rank schools according to poverty levels and divides them into quintiles (DoE Annual Report, 2009/2010). The poorest schools in Quintile 1 and Quintile 2 are targeted, as well as all

schools previously targeted by the Department of Health, irrespective of the quintile designation of the school. Initially all learners in grades 0 to grades 7 in targeted schools were fed. The NSNP was extended to quintile 1 secondary schools in 2009 and extended to quintile 2 secondary schools in 2010 (DoE Annual Report, 2009/2010).

The National School Nutrition Programme provides daily nutritious meals for learners. The programme reached a total of 8 281 927 learners in 20 815 Schools (including quintile 1– 3 public primary and Q 1 – 2 public secondary schools).There was a national increase of 1 000 422 learners as compared to 785 194 additional learners in 2009/10 (DoE Annual Report 2010/2011). This increase is attributed to the successful expansion of the programme to Q2 secondary schools in April 2010 (DoE Annual Report 2010/2011).

School nutrition programmes are not unique to South Africa or to developing countries. Many countries offer school nutrition programmes as a means to support learning and promote health amongst children. Research has demonstrated that adequate nutrition improves the learning opportunities of children thereby ensuring better life changes through education. Lessons from school nutrition programmes across the world show the importance of healthy ingredients, nutrition education, coordination between government, schools and communities, using local providers and regular monitoring.

United Kingdom

In Britain, the school nutrition programme is aimed at promoting health among children. Primary schools are seen as a setting for fruit and vegetable promoting activities. The British Nutrition Foundation (BNF) believes that all pupils should receive a comprehensive food and nutrition education while at school, beginning at the age of 5 and continue throughout their school careers (Fine, 1995).

The main objective of the BNF is to teach pupils the importance of nutrition rather than to provide food to them. The objectives of the BNF are to help individuals to recognise that food is a basic requirement of life and should be enjoyed, develop an understanding of the underlying scientific principles on which issues of nutrition are based and inform about methods of food production and food processing in domestic and commercial

situations and to encourage the an awareness of social, economic and cultural aspects of food choice (Fine, 2006).

Bowker, Crosswaite and Hickman (1999) indicate that there is a range of school policies and initiatives that have been set up across the UK. Some of these programmes are discussed below as examples of the types of nutrition schemes that have been established.

The "Food Dudes" programme aims to increase primary school children's fruit and vegetable consumption through the use as role models in videos and prizes (Lowe & Horne, 2009). The "Grab 5" project was set up which aimed at increasing fruit and vegetable consumption among 7 to 11 years olds using rewards, practical curriculum activities , growing and cooking schemes , tuck shops and breakfast clubs (www.sustainweb.org/grab5/). Nutritional standards for school lunches regulate the minimum quantity of fruits and vegetables that must be included in every school meal and in fruits and vegetable dishes (Burchett, 2003).

Moon, Mullee and Rogers (1999) indicate that The Healthy School Scheme is based on the concept of the 'Health Promoting School' which embodies a whole school approach to personal and community health promotion within a school setting. The National Healthy School Standard (NHSS) provides an accreditation process for local schemes by defining a whole school approach to healthy eating.

United States of America (USA)

The National School Lunch Programme (NSLP) was established in 1946 when the then state president Truman signed the National School Lunch Act into law (USDA Report 2002). The National School Lunch Programme is administered by state education agencies, operating in over 101 000 public and non-profit private schools is regulated and administered at federal level by the Food and Nutrition Service of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA, 2002). At the state level, the programme is administered by state education agencies, which operate the programme through agreement with schools food authorities.

Unlike in South Africa where schools are graded and financed according to their quintile status, in America, school districts and independent schools choose to take part

in the lunch programme and get minimal cash subsidies and donated commodities from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for each meal they serve. The schools are expected to serve school lunches that meet the applicable recommendations of the 1995 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (USDA Report, 2002). The local schools also have the right to make decisions about what specific foods to serve and how they should be prepared.

In 1998, Congress expanded the National School Lunch Program to include reimbursement for snacks served to children in afterschool educational and enrichment programs. The programme is divided into three categories and families with income at or below the poverty level are eligible for free meals. The nutrition standards used by the National School Lunch Programme are continuously updated to meet the nutritional needs of children (USDA report 2002).

India

The mid-day meal programme in India was introduced by the Akshaya Patra Foundation in 2000 with a mandate that "no child in India should be hungry and hunger should not be an obstacle to education". Unlike in South Africa, where the food is prepared at school, the food is prepared in a centralised kitchen, packed in stainless steel containers and distributed through insulated vehicles to schools located within the 50 km radius from the kitchen (Nielson 2006). The kitchens are often operated by groups of women villages who are given basic training in cooking, hygiene and nutrition.

The programme seems to have been effective in enhancing the school enrolment and retention rate, improved classroom performance and overall health status (Nielson 2006). However, it has been noted that there are challenges implementing the programme. According to Kent (2005), there is evidence that people do not get the quantity and the quality of service they are supposed to get. The food that is offered at times in the nutrition programmes is sometimes of poor quality. This means that the food is sometimes food and might pose a health risk to the learners.

Japan

After World War II, Japan imported food from other countries to solve malnutrition, and then dieticians provided nutrition education to people for effective food utilization.

Flour and skimmed milk imported from the United States were distributed to the school for the school lunch programme. School lunch was extended to all elementary schools in Japan in 1952 and, with the enactment of the School Lunch Law, to junior high schools in 1954 (Nakamura 2008, 349).

All students are provided with a school lunch and parents pay 250 to 300 yen per student for the ingredients and the local authorities are responsible for the payment of labour costs. All meals provided to students in Japanese schools in the 50s were identical and include bread or bread rolls, milk and a dish which changes daily. Provisions of rice were introduced in 1976. Today school lunches include a wide range of soup and side dishes.

China

The WHO introduced a pilot school feed project to China in 1995 to improve the nutrition and health status of the students, school personnel and parents and develops a model project for nutrition interventions (Xia et al. 2004). A provincial Working Group based at the Health Education Institute of Zhejiang Province Centre for Disease Control and Prevention selected six pilot schools (three primary and three secondary schools) and developed a work plan so that the objectives of the project could be attained (Xia et al. 2004).

Each pilot school held meetings which aimed at informing the school communities about the plans for the specific nutrition promotion activities to be conducted by the school and encourage teachers, students and parents and community leaders to participate in the project. Visits were regularly made and there was a great improvement to all school kitchens, dining halls, school rest rooms, gardens and sport fields. This therefore means that the project was not concentrating on giving food only but also in the improvement of hygienic conditions in the schools.

School policies were established that place a high priority on health and nutrition promotion. Project evaluations confirm the importance of a coordinated approach that includes the whole school as well as parents and the community and other stakeholders in education. This shows that schools should seek close collaboration with institutions from the beginning of the projects so that the aimed goals can be attained.

Implementation Challenges

As indicated in the comparative review, key issues in the implementation of school nutrition programmes include food quality, community participation and regular monitoring. These trends are evident in evaluations of nutrition programmes in South Africa and elsewhere. In addition, while school meals can help students fulfil their important nutritional and educational needs, there is a tendency that students do not receive the quantity and quality of food they were supposed to get (Kent, 2005). Kent (2005) further states that any programme that provides goods or services create temptations for diversion of the goods or services away from the intended beneficiaries.

The South African Human Rights Commission report on NSNP (SAHRC Report 2006-2009) indicated that inadequate food quality, lack of human resources and inconsistency were key challenges in the implementation of the programme. In addition, there was a tendency to ignore recommended national targeting directives and food safety recommendations. Finally, irregular monitoring meant that food serving does not comply with national and provincial guidelines. School feeding is also noted for being expensive and logistically complicated. An internal evaluation by the Department of Health in 2003 indicated that there were critical challenges to implementing school feeding in an effective and efficient manner (Kloka 2003).

Food quality, safety and distribution

Gopaldas (n.y) suggest that school feeding schemes help to deal with prominent health problems experienced by deprived school children such as raw hunger, unsafe water, and intestinal worms. Many undernourished children experience serious problems in learning such as impaired cognition, absenteeism due to illness, tiredness and irritability. He suggests that meal programmes can improve learners' physical appearance and performance at school. However, the extent of this improvement depends on the quality of the food.

Kallman (2005) states that in South Africa, provinces wanted to cover as many schools and feed as many children as possible – an approach that resulted in compromising the quality and quantity of food as they failed to provide optimal feeding as was originally planned by the Department of Health. Food quality and basic hygiene was also

compromised in most schools due to lack of running water and basic infrastructure for food storage and preparation. Water used in food preparation has to be collected from rivers, streams, tanks and dams in nearby villages.

Many schools do not have kitchens and or refrigerators. Some of the schools have to improvise and cook outside which becomes a problem during rainy seasons and this further compromise the safety and quality of food produced. Lack of refrigerators also obliges that foods are prepared from dry non-perishable ingredients that are kept for a long time and do not require long time or lot of complex preparations. Lack of water is also a problem when the food that needs to be prepared requires a lot of washing (Bastia, 2007). School nutrition programmes in other countries include training for the preparers of food on basic hygiene, preparation and refrigeration and set standards for the types of food that much be used.

The National Government makes a contribution for a stipend R500 for the preparer which means the preparers are poorly paid. In addition to being poorly paid they are also overloaded because a certain number of preparers are allowed to work in a particular school. The Indian experience of using self-help groups is useful in this regard as it enables the local community to assist and creates employment. Though educators perceive the NSNP as contributing to learner cognitive awareness, they are also burdened because at times they have to leave their classes to attend to the deliveries of food.

Some of the food that should be prepared for school children is at times sold or replaced by food of lesser value that is not nutritive and does not make the difference in the health of the learners. Therefore there should be vigorous participation by the students in the feeding programmes so that they may know what is intended for them.

Stakeholder participation and logistics

Bastia (2007) notes that there is very limited community participation in the school feeding programme which means there is lack of ownership of the programme at the local level.

According to Kallman (2005), the NSNP has been limited to being a vertical school feeding programme which means the learners are less involved in the matters of the NSNP thus there are no or less vegetable gardens in most of the schools.

School nutrition programmes are generally organised by adults who provide food to children who passively accept it. Some students though they may offer some suggestion or complains their views have little impact in the feeding programme. People who are directly involved or benefit should have a right to know what they are entitled to and what they can do about it if they don't get it.

The China program in Hyunyi Cho noted the following logistics challenges: lack of funding, leadership and communication, poor facilities for preparing and serving food, disinterested teaching and poor coordination between the school and food providers. Both Brazil and India experienced a lack of managerial skills among the stakeholders involved in the programme such as principals, teachers, food suppliers and members of the school governing bodies.

Benefits and monitoring

Weak governance mechanisms are identified to be posing challenges to the successful implementation of the NSNP. In 2002, the Eastern Cape though the poorest and the most rural of the provinces had under spent R328.4 million on services which were earmarked for the school feeding programme.(Bastia, 2007). However, the availability of the School Nutrition Programmes has beneficial effects for school children. According to Kent (2005) the school meal programmes facilitate the educational process by increasing the likely hood that children will come to school and by making them more capable of learning.

In the USA, studies show that providing breakfast to disadvantaged students can bring about improvement in the attendance and performance of those learners at school. Children who participated in the school breakfast program scored high scores on test administered to them than those who did not participate (Del Rosso, 1999). In Burkina Faso, school canteens are associated with increased school enrolment, regular attendance, consistently lower repeater rates, and lower dropout rates in disadvantaged provinces and showed higher success rates on national exams (Del Rosso, 1999).

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the literature on school nutrition programmes focusing specifically in the types of programmes implemented, the challenges and the benefits. The broad themes form this chapter were used as the basis for developing the questions for the study and for organising and identifying key focus areas.

CHAPTER THREE: Research Methodology

Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology used in this research to examine if the objectives set out in the NSNP policy are achieved and also to check if proper monitoring takes place during implementation. Research design, data collection strategies and methods of analysing data are discussed. It further discusses the validity and reliability of the findings of the study, ethic consideration and the limitation of the study.

Research approach and design

In this study, qualitative research has been chosen to enable the researcher to arrive at a complete description and understanding of the programme researched and to make meaningful recommendations that can be applied in similar situations in future. The method of research used further enabled the researcher to gain meaning and extensive insight into the research by using people who have hands on information and directly affected and influenced by the implementation and monitoring of the NSNP.

Leedy and Omrod (2005) describe qualitative research as a tool used to answer questions about the complex nature of phenomena, with a purpose of describing and understanding the phenomena from the participants' point of view.

A case study has been selected as an appropriate design for use in this research study. According to Omrod and Leedy (2005) in a case study a particular individual, event or programme is studied in depth for a defined period of time. They further outline that a case study gives a better understanding on any phenomenon about which little is known or poorly understood and that it may be useful in investigating how a programme or individual changes over time maybe as a result of certain circumstances or interventions.

Case study selection

The researcher selected two schools that are located at Mkhuhlu and according to government specifications this school falls under Quintile 1 and they are involved in the NSNP.

The researcher chose these schools because they are both under the jurisdiction of Mkhuhlu Circuit in which she is employed and that would help her to access the Departmental Official responsible for NSNP in this region. Both schools are also accessible in terms of infrastructure, though they have bad roads they are better when compared to other schools in this circuit office.

The researcher chose the schools because they all benefit from the NSNP and they are located in rural area, and this would help the researcher to find more information towards conducting this research study.

The first school is Bhejani Primary School with 965 learners, 33 educators, 28 classrooms, 2-administration clerk, 3 general workers and 5 helper mothers who prepare food for learners. There is no administration block and one of the classrooms is used as the principal's office and staffroom. This means that the principal and his Senior Management Team (SMT) hardly have time to properly plan school activities. There are pit toilets that are used by educators and learners. The school principal (interviewed, 2011) indicated that the school experiences shortages of water and relies on the water supplied through trucks by the local municipality therefore it is difficult to plant vegetable garden that assist in the nutrition programme.

The second school is Thulani Primary school with 906 learners, 28 educators, 18 classrooms, 1 admin clerk, 3 general workers and 4 helper mothers. The school has an administration block, pit toilets, enviroloo toilets, flush toilets and a kitchen built by the school that is not of the best quality. The school started in 1998 and it was well planned showing a potential of being extended in future.

Data Collection Strategies

The three month study employed observations, interviews and document review as data collection strategies. The data collected was primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected in the form of interviews and observations. Merriam (2009) outlines an interview as a method which involves oral questioning of the participants either individually or in focus groups.

Interviews

In this research study, the researcher used in depth interviews to all the selected participants at Bhejani and Thulani Primary school. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) describe in depth interview as a conversation with a goal to encourage the participants to talk in detail about the area of interest. The researcher in this study had thirty minutes with each interviewee from Bhejani and Thulani primary schools. The participants interviewed were:

- The principal and the educator responsible for nutrition programme in each school.
- A departmental official responsible for nutrition programme.
- 3 learners in each school
- 4 helper mothers in each school
- 1 SGB member in each school
- A supplier responsible in both schools.

In total, 24 interviews were conducted. Questions were structured in the manner that they intended to ensure that participants are comfortable and are encouraged to give more information.

The interview questions were structured as follows:

Questions for Principals and Educators

1. What are the most difficult aspects in the implementation of the NSNP in your school?
2. How did you expect the teachers to react to the school NSNP?
3. What are the most difficult aspects in monitoring the NSNP?

4. What is the impact of the NSNP in the performance and attendance of learners in your school?
5. What role do parents play in implementation and monitoring of the NSNP in your school?

Questions for Departmental Official

1. What challenges do you encounter when helping schools in implementation and monitoring of the NSNP?
2. What were your expectations from the SGB and the helper after attending workshops on the NSNP?
3. What were you expectations from the service providers after they have attended information sessions workshops in your province?
4. What would you like to see the planning committee do with regard to the NSNP?

Questions for learners

1. How does the NSNP help to improve you attendance and performance in class
2. What do you think need to be improved in the NSNP?
3. How did you expect you parents and educators to be involved in the NSNP?

Questions for helper mothers

1. What challenges do you encounter when preparing food for the NSNP?
2. What are you expectations from the members of the school nutrition committee?
3. How did the workshops attended changed your view of the NSNP?

Questions for SGB members

1. Do the parents of your school value the NSNP?
2. What are your expectations about the involvement of the community members in the NSNP?
3. What are you expectation about the involvement of educators in the NSNP?

Questions for the supplier

1. What are the challenges you experience in sourcing out food for NSNP to be delivered at the schools?
2. What challenges do you encounter when delivering food parcels at schools?

3. What difficulties do you encounter in receiving payments after rendering a service at the schools?

Observations

According to Maree (2007), an observation is a systematic process of recording the behavioural patterns, objects and occurrences without necessarily questioning or communicating with them. Maree (2007) further outlines that observation helps the researcher to gain a deeper insight and understanding of the phenomenon being observed.

In this study the researcher ensured that she is quiet yet friendly to anyone who approached her. The researcher shifted focus from one thing to another while writing down field notes.

Secondary data

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001) secondary data are written sources, many of which have been preserved in archives, manuscripts, collections or libraries. Sources of secondary data the researcher used in this research study are NSNP documents, books and articles; attendance registers of learners, attendance registers for workshops, minutes for official nutrition meetings, NSNP implementation guide circulars, reports, gazettes and internet searches.

Data Analysis

Collected data was transformed into useful facts that gives meaning and answers to the research questions. The data analysis focus mainly on the interpretation of the information collected during interviews and observations of participants in this research study. The collected data was reviewed and categorised based on the theme that emerged from the data so as to qualify and process the information. Leedy and Omrod (2005) outlines the three steps in data analysis; organisation of data, categorisation of data and interpretation of data.

The researcher organised data about facts on the implementation and monitoring of NSNP at Bhejani and Thulani primary schools. Data was logically arranged on challenges encountered in the implementation and monitoring of NSNP, its impact on

education, participation of parents, learners and educators in the NSNP and the expectations of parents, educators, learners and the educational authorities.

The researcher grouped data according to the participants groups; principals, learners, helper mothers, SGB members, departmental official and supplier. The researcher had to relate the finding to the original research programme and determine the significance of the findings to the implementation and monitoring of the NSNP at Bhejani and Thulani Primary schools.

According to Maree (2007) coding is the process of reading carefully through the transcribed data and dividing into meaningful analytical units. The researcher combined the data as a way to find out key words and themes. Similar passages of transcripts were marked with a highlighter. Through coding the researcher reduced data into smaller pieces so that can be easily retrieved when needed.

Validity and reliability

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001) validity refers to the degree to which the explanations of a phenomenon matches realities of the world and reliability refers to the extent to which results are similar over different occasions of data collection. The researcher in order to test the validity and the reliability of the collected data used triangulation. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) denote that triangulation is the process whereby the researcher compares different sources of data with a view to find regularities in the data and to see whether the same pattern keeps recurring.

The researcher in this research study compared data found in various NSNP collections, NSNP documents, books and articles; attendance registers of learners, attendance registers for workshops, minutes for official nutrition meetings, NSNP implementation guide circulars, reports, gazettes and internet searches) and informant interviews (Principals, teachers, learners, helper mothers, SGB members suppliers and departmental officials).

Limitations of the Research

The study will focus on how the NSNP is implemented and monitored in two primary schools (Bhejani and Thulani Primary) at Mkhuhlu Circuit in Bohlabela District under the jurisdiction of Bushbuckridge Local Municipality.

Language is a serious limitation to this research because the majority of parents in the rural areas in which the two schools are located are illiterate and cannot express themselves in English. Most of them express themselves in the African languages, which are predominately spoken in Bohlabela district, namely Xitsonga, Sepedi, Siswati and Sizulu. The researcher can speak and understand these languages and translation will be provided to ensure free expression.

The researcher is currently a school manager, so the research will be done in other primary schools not at her school as a way to avoid bias. Another serious limitation is the accessibility of literature looking specifically at NSNP. Little has been researched about NSNP so there is still a big gap of information in this section.

Ethical Considerations

Leedy and Omrod (2005) outlines that ethical issues fall under four categories; protection from harm, informed consent, right to privacy, and honesty. This implies that it is not enough for the researchers to be aware of fundamental principles guiding ethical decisions; the researcher should also be concerned about ethics so as to be cautious of hurting people who have something to do with the research.

The researcher in this research study ensured that basic ethical principles guiding research were adhered to. Honesty and openness were used as guiding words. This means being open to and honest with the research participants; explaining to them the purpose of the study and other information that might increase their willingness to participate. In addition, the researcher readily clarified issues in the interview questions as the need arise.

The researcher obtained informed consent of the research participants before they participated in the study and also provided the participants with required information

which could help them decide whether to agree or decline to participate in the study. The researcher further assured the participants that their views would be absolutely anonymous and confidential.

Permission to conduct the research study was asked from the circuit manager. After receiving permission, the researcher also requested permission from the schools managers and the SGBs of both schools. The researcher always treated the participants with dignity and respect as this is encouraged by the constitution of South Africa. This was done to reassure that indeed the information provided will not be used against them and will remain confidential as agreed upon.

Participants were free from any harm because it was explained to them that the study was done for research purpose for the university degree and not for reporting to higher authorities.

Conclusion

The chapter has discussed the research methodology used in the study. It further outlined that two case studies are used in understanding organisational innovation and change in NSNP. The chapter has also discussed how the data was presented and interpreted. In collecting primary data, in-depth interviews and observations were used. In collecting secondary data, a number of scholastic articles such as book, journals and internet were consulted. This chapter of research study also discussed the data presentation methods or techniques such as classifying themes and coding. The chapter has discussed how the findings of the study will be made valid and reliable.

Chapter Four: Research Data

Introduction

The aim of the use of qualitative research methodology in this research study was to investigate the implementation and monitoring of the NSNP at Bhejani and Thulani Primary school in Mkhuhlu Circuit under the jurisdiction of Bushbuckridge Local Municipality.

The response rate of the participants in this research study was good. The following participants were interviewed; the principals of the two schools, educators responsible for the NSNP in the two schools, 3 learners from each school, 1 official from the department of education, 1 supplier, 1 SGB member of each school and four helper mothers in each school.

The primary data gathered through interviews will be presented under the following themes:

- The difficult aspects in the implementation and monitoring of the NSNP
- Parents, educators, learners and community involvement in the NSNP
- Impact of the NSNP in the performance and attendance of learners
- Support of schools from the district
- Food supply
- Capacity of stakeholders

These themes seek to answer the research question raised as the baseline of the research study.

The Primary School Nutrition Programme

Mpumalanga province is one of the provinces in the Republic of South Africa and it draws its policies from the policies of the National Government inter alia the policies of the NSNP. With the expansion of the programme to quintile 2 secondary schools, the Mpumalanga feeding programmes reaches 751 767 learners. This constitutes 589 607 learners in 1 404 primary schools and 162 160 learners in 235 secondary schools. (NSNP Annual Report 2010/2011).

In Mpumalanga province, there are 47 officials who are responsible for monitoring National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) activities and processing claims by service providers. There are five officials at provincial level and 42 in the four Mpumalanga education districts (Gert Sibande, Enhlanzeni, Bohlabela and Nkangala) (NSNP Annual Report 2011).

The Mpumalanga department of education conducted 14 training workshops for NSNP provincial officials, school principals, NSNP coordinators and volunteers. The workshops focussed on basic nutrition, healthy eating habits, food security, stock taking, food preparation, food and gas safety as well as basic hygiene practices (NSNP 2011 Annual Report).

Van Rensburg (2004) indicate that the Primary School Nutrition now National School Nutrition Programme have made some progress in alleviating malnutrition amongst the most vulnerable in the country.

Van Rensburg (2004) further indicate that the National School Nutrition Programme aims at improving education i.e. learning, capacity, school attendance and punctuality by providing an early morning snack, improving health through micronutrient supplements, parasite control and education on health and nutrition.

The implementation standards of the NSNP

The implementation of the National School Nutrition is guided by a number of important pieces of legislation. Section 27(1b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa states that every citizen has the right to sufficient food and water. This means that the government has to take reasonable measures, with available resources, to provide access to food. The Constitutional Court has held that the state must institute measures to realize all aspects of this right over time. This means that this measure must be comprehensive and coherent, inclusive of all significantly “at risk” groups in society, co-ordinated, flexible enough to respond to both short and longer term needs, effectively implemented and transparent (Kallman, 2005).

Section 28(1c) of the Bill of Rights further outlines the right to basic nutrition. Children’s rights to basic nutrition require that the state guarantees that they receive

nutritious food that enables dignified survival and basic physical and mental development. This means that the government needs to ensure that families provide these basic needs and in case where they are unable to, the government should provide (Kallman, 2005).

On 1 September 1994 the Department of Health (DoE) introduced a national-scale Primary School Feeding Programme. On the 18th September 2002, Cabinet decided that the PSNP should be transferred from the Department of Health to the Department of Education with effect from April 2004; this decision was based on the fact that schools are the functional responsibility of the Department of Education and this nutrition programme was thereafter named the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP). The NSNP is funded through a conditional grant that is transferred to provinces according to the Division of Revenue Act (DORA) and other directives from the Department of Basic Education and the National Treasury.

The Primary School Nutrition Programme appears on the list of projects which aimed to contribute towards the improvement of education quality by enhancing primary school pupil's punctuality and contribute to general health development by alleviating hunger (Kallman, 2005).

Food security, quality and distribution

The high level of under nutrition found in South Africa is one of the most important reasons for the implementation of the NSNP (Kallman, 2005). The Integrated Food Strategy for South Africa (IFSSA) define food security as "physical, social and economic access to sufficient and nutritious food by all South Africans at all times to meet their food preferences for an active and healthy life" (Kallman, 2005). The implementation of the NSNP aims at ensuring that the learners receive a variety of foods to give them all the nutrients that are needed by their bodies. (NSNP Generic Training Manual).

The learners should receive a balanced diet composed of proteins, starch and vegetables and the menu must be socially acceptable.

Primary School Nutrition Programme Tender specification (2005/2006) outlines that items supplied for the National School Nutrition Programme must not be repacked or reworked but must be supplied on their original packaging with their specific expiry

dates affixed. This is to ensure that food supplied is secured and good for human consumption.

The Primary School Nutrition Programme Tender specification (2005/2006) further indicate that all packaging must have the nutrition contents printed and all food products must comply with applicable requirements of legislation such as the Foodstuffs, Cosmetic and Disinfectants Act No 54 of 1972, Health Act No 63 of 1977, Marketing Act No 59 of 1968, Trade Metrology Act No 77 0f 1973 and the Agricultural Products Standard Act No 119 of 1990.

The national policy and implementation guidelines on National School Nutrition Programme require regular ad hoc sampling of food products for analysis at accredited laboratories for food safety purposes. (Tender Specification 2005/2006)

The Primary School Nutrition Programme Tender specification (2005/2006) outlines that prospective suppliers must supply the specified quantity and quality of food items as stipulated in the menu specification of those schools approved to participate in the feeding programme.

The supplier must also ensure that correct and complete quantities of the menu are supplied as payment will only be made for complete menu supplied. The supplier must further ensure that the delivery note has all requirements needed to process payments. (Tender Specification 2005/2006)

Stakeholder participation and management

The NSNP is implemented in the school level and for the programme to succeed; stakeholders within and outside the school have the important role to play. Stakeholders within the school refers to the learners, educators and the SGB and those that outside the school can amongst others include churches, parents, non-governmental organisations etc. According to Dell Rosso (1999) schools that depend on the community to organise and implement School Feeding Programmes offer certain advantages of increasing contact and communication between parents, teachers and other officials. This contact and communication will give the parents the opportunity to be aware of what goes on at schools and will serve to raise the value of education and the school for parents and the whole community (Dell Rosso, 1999)

Section 36(1) of South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996 indicate that the SGB must take all reasonable measures within its means to supplement the resources supplied by

the State in order to improve the quality of education provided by the school to all learners at the school.

It is therefore the responsibility of the SGB to ensure that they participate in the NSNP by providing resources such as fuel, cooking equipments, eating utensils and the erection of the food preparation shelters in the absence of the kitchen (NSNP Annual Report, 2008).

The SGB has as its responsibility to see to the safekeeping of all foodstuffs, utensils and further ensure the availability of safe drinking water and further report progress of the NSNP to other parents in scheduled parents meetings (NSNP Annual Report, 2008)

The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 stipulate the seven roles of the educator and the NSNP, because of its legislative framework is, accommodated under the community, citizenship and pastoral role, because it is in this role where it is indicated that the teacher has the responsibility to develop a supportive and empowering environment for the learner and respond to the educational and other needs of the learners. The researcher is therefore of the view that the teacher has to actively participate in the NSNP by monitoring the feeding of learners and keeping records of the learners feeding.

Monitoring

Castle and Bialobrzeska (2009) indicate that the NSNP is centralised to the Provincial Department of Education i.e. most of the activities and payments for the NSNP are planned and paid for by the Provincial Department of Education. However, the school principal has the responsibility to ensure that the programme succeed in his school.

According to Castle and Bialobrzeska (2009) the school principal has the authority to nominate a senior educator to oversee the nutrition programme. The teacher has to ensure that the supplier supplies the correct quantity and quality of food to the school. The educator collects and authorises the suppliers' invoices to facilitate payment by the Department of Education.

As a way to monitor the implementation of the NSNP the school provides the facilities needed to run the nutrition programme. This includes storage space for food, stoves/firewood, pots and utensils for cooking, and crockery and cutlery (Castle and Bialobrzeska, 2009)

Mpumalanga province is one of the provinces in the Republic of South Africa and it draws its policies from the policies of the National Government inter alia the policies of the NSNP. With the expansion of the programme to quintile 2 secondary schools, the Mpumalanga feeding program reaches 751 767 learners. This constitutes 589 607 learners in 1 404 primary schools and 162 160 learners in 235 secondary schools. (NSNP Annual Report, 2010/2011).

In Mpumalanga province, there are 47 officials who are responsible for monitoring National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) activities and processing claims by service providers. There are five officials at provincial level and 42 in the four Mpumalanga education districts; Gert Sibande, Enhlanzeni, Bohlabela and Nkangala. (NSNP Annual Report 2011).

The monitors are required to monitor the NSNP at school level. This oversight is somewhat compromised as the circuit managers (who are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the educational programme of the schools in their circuits) are not accountable or involved in ensuring that the NSNP is also a key objective of the department. This does compromise the effectiveness of the management in the programme (NSNP Mpumalanga Provincial Report, 2007)

The Mpumalanga department of education conducted 14 training workshops for NSNP provincial officials, school principals, NSNP coordinators and volunteers. The workshops focussed on basic nutrition, healthy eating habits, food security, stock taking, food preparation, food and gas safety as well as basic hygiene practices (NSNP Annual Report, 2011). In addition, administrative skills and work flow was improved through a partnership with the Enterprise Business Solution, a non-governmental organisation, which conducted a workshop for four provincial NSNP administration staff. The focus of the workshop was on validating claims, reconciling claims against

the budget, telephone etiquette, writing internal memos and Basic Account System reports (NSNP Annual Report, 2011).

The Schools

Both Bhejani and Thulani primary school are located in the deep rural area of Mkhuhlu in the Mpumalanga Province. Bhejani Primary School is located at Tshemamarumbu Trust and Thulani Primary School is located at Matangaleni Trust and they are all under the jurisdiction of Mkhuhlu Circuit under the Mpumalanga Department of Education.

Bhejani Primary School

Learners who attend this school travel a distance of about ten kilometres to school on foot because their parents are unable to pay transport for them. Besides that, the school is located in area that lacks proper road infrastructure. The learner interviewed (16 July 2013) indicated that by the time they arrive at school they are tired and hungry and this hampers their listening and performance in class. Most of the learners come to school without shoes and the state of their school uniform is not satisfactory and this convinces the researcher that their parents rarely care for them (Researcher's observation, 16 July 2012).

Most of the learners in this school seem to be small in stature and one can conclude that they are malnourished and they show some signs of having chronic illnesses caused by lack of food with valuable micronutrients. Many of the community members of this school are alcoholics and this means that they do not value education and cannot encourage their children to go to school (Researcher's observation, 16 July 2012).

The principal indicated that most of the community members are unemployed and live under harsh circumstances where they cannot provide food, shelter and clothes; prerequisites in the development of the child and this has a detrimental effect in the education of the learners(Interview 17 July 2012).

The school is well built showing that the government of GaZankulu planned it properly, but the buildings are dilapidated because the school was opened in 1975 and since then there was no efforts to improve the state of its buildings. The school principal and the school governing body (SGB) tried to erect a kitchen to be used for preparing food for

the feeding programme but its state is. One of the classrooms is used as a storage place for their food and this encourages the community to steal some of the food parcels. The school has a teacher who is responsible for the nutrition programme but she showed no interest in the work that she is doing.

Looking at the manner in which food is dished out it is clear that some of the learners do not get their ration because during break, food for the learners is just left in their classes and there is no one who helps to dish out the food to them. The younger learners from the junior classes are the ones who become victim because there is no one who cares for them (Observation, 18 July 2012).



Photo 1: Bhejani learners during break

The educators in this school are less concerned about the matters of nutrition because they believe it is not part of their job (Interview, 23 July 2012). The helper mothers also think that their job is to prepare the food and put it in various classes and the learners will see to it on how they dish out for themselves (Interview, 30 July 2012).

The school's storage room is small in the sense that it cannot keep all the supplies. It therefore becomes difficult for the helper mothers to pick up the food that needs to be prepared for the day. This means that they have to unpack all the supplies, put them outside, and repack them after cooking. This is time consuming and frustrating to the helpers. The food prepared at times is not well cooked because of the time wasted in unpacking the food parcels.



Photo 2: storage space at Bhejani primary

Thulani Primary School

The learners at Thulani Primary school are from a poor village next to the school. The learners travel a distance of about 7 kilometres per day (Observation 21 August 2012).

The community has roads and there is an access to public transport but unfortunately many of the parents cannot afford to pay transport for their children (Observation, 13 August 2012) The principal indicated that the challenges in the community that Thulani Primary school is located is that there is a shortage of water and they rely on the water delivered by municipality trucks. At times, there are delays in delivery of water and this causes delays in the preparation of food (Interview, 13 August 2012).

The school principal and his subordinates in this school are committed towards the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme and they also encouraged the learners to establish a vegetable garden in this school. The only challenge is that there is a shortage of water (Interview, 13 August 2012).

During break the learners queue up in front of their classes and educators help in dishing out food.



Photo 3:Thulani learners during break

Food quality and distribution

The NSNP implementation guidelines outlines that food offered to learners should be of good quality. The Food Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDG) indicates that learners should receive a variety of foods that will give the learners all the nutrients their bodies need and which will keep them healthy. The NSNP guidelines indicate that the senior teacher who is responsible for the Nutrition should check the expiry dates on the food packages this means that the distributers of food are also expected to deliver fresh products good for human consumption.

The participants in this research study showed great concern in the implementation and monitoring of the NSNP. The following matters were raised as issues that affect the implementation of the NSNP. The information recorded is from the interviews the researcher had with the participants in this research study from both Bhejani and Thulani Primary Schools.

Lack of storage space and adequate kitchens

Both schools in which this study was conducted were built in the apartheid era and there was no provision for a kitchen or a storage place for food parcels. The food parcels in Bhejani Primary are stored in a classroom.



Photo 4: Thulani Primary storage space

The principal of Bhejani Primary indicated that they ended up taking one classroom and used it as a storeroom, because initially the food was stored in the staff room and this caused problems because the helpers would disturb the educators when they went in to fetch food parcels (Interviewed, 18 July 2012). The principal indicated that this was not a good practice because the educators would no longer concentrate in the planning of their work but they had now to concentrate in the food parcels. The principal also

indicated that the community members come to school at night to steal the learners' food (Interviewed, 19 July 2012)

The principal at Thulani Primary said 'we have a storeroom but it is too small to accommodate all the food supplies we receive' (Interviewed, 15 August 2012). He further indicated that the helper mothers find it difficult to draw out the food that they need to cook. He said 'the helper mothers are compelled to unpack the parcels and repack them after finishing cooking and this is tiring experience and it is time consuming' (Interviewed, 15 August 2012).

The principals of both schools indicated that the store rooms are not safe because at times rodents get inside and spoil the food parcels. They further mentioned that the store rooms are leaking and they become problematic when there is rainfall.

The kitchen at Bhejani Primary is made out of corrugated irons. The helper mothers in this school indicated that the kitchen is problematic when it is raining.

The kitchen at Thulani was built out of bricks but is not of a good state. One helper mother interviewed said 'this kitchen wall once collapsed while we were still preparing food and it nearly killed us' (Interviewed, 31 August 2012).



Photo 5: Thulani primary NSNP kitchen

Shortage of clean water

The helper mothers, educators, learners and the school principals interviewed showed their concern about the shortage of water in both schools. The learner from Thulani Primary School said 'the issue of water is a health threat because at times we have to eat

food without washing our hands and after eating we have to leave our containers unwashed till in the afternoon when we go home' (Interviewed, 23 August 2012).

The principals indicated that at times the helper mothers fail to prepare food because there is a shortage of water and that means the learners cannot eat in that particular day. The educator from Bhejani Primary School indicated that the shortage of water at times disturbs the tuition in classes because the time for serving food has to be squeezed, especially on days where cooking started late because of the shortage of water (Interviewed, 25 July 2012)

Both schools are located in poor villages where there is a lack of infrastructure and this makes it difficult for the municipal trucks to deliver water during rainy days. One learner from Bhejani Primary School showed to be frustrated about this situation, she said 'how can they say they give us food but at times we come to school hungry and go back hungry and at times we have to stay for the whole week without food' (Interviewed, 27 July 2012).

Quality of food

The learners interviewed in both schools complained about the food that is served to them. The learners said 'we just eat this food because we are hungry but in a real sense we eat nonsense'. The educators also indicated that the food is not well cooked especially on the days when there is a late delivery of water. The helper mothers also complain that the suppliers at times they supply food which is stale and no longer good for human consumption.

Lack of cooking utensils

The participants indicated that there is a shortage of pots and other cooking utensils such as wooden spoons, spoons and dishes. One of the helper mothers interviewed from Thulani Primary said 'it is quite frustrating to wake up in the morning and come to work knowing exactly that you will be struggling with cooking' (Interviewed, 17 August 2012). Another helper mother Thulani Primary School said 'it is time consuming to prepare for food in this school because you have to cook porridge and beans using the same pot, and this means that after cooking beans you have to wash the pot again and then cook porridge'(Interviewed, 29 August 2012).



Photo 6: Thulani Primary cooking utensils

The principal at Bhejani Primary indicated that the shortage of utensils interferes with the tuition time and at times the learners are not fed at the time stipulated by the department of education.



Photo 7: Bhejani Primary cooking apparatus

Food supply

The supplier interviewed said ‘it is a difficult task to source food for the school especially when one has to deliver a bulk of fresh vegetables and fruits’. He further said ‘most of the schools to which we deliver goods they are not organised, because at times you are compelled to wait for the educator concerned to come and help you and this is a challenge because you have to deliver to all the schools before the end of the school day’ (Interviewed, 03 September 2012).

The school principal at Bhejani Primary said ‘ the delivery guys do not understand that the teachers responsible are also having a task of teaching in this school, when they

arrive they expect the teacher to be spot on they do not consider the fact that the teacher might be in class teaching' (Interviewed, 20 July 2012).

One of the learners from Thulani Primary School said 'this delivery trucks though they bring food to us they also pose danger to the learners especially during break because the drivers drive as if they are on the freeway they forget that there are school kids who might playing at that time' (Interviewed, 23 August 2012).

The interviewed educator of Thulani Primary school said 'another problem that we experience is that at time the food parcels delivered are without relevant documents and one does not know if the we receive the relevant food parcels or not' (Interviewed, 24 August 2012). He also said 'several times we receive goods that have already expired and they are no longer good for human consumption'.

Stakeholder involvement

The NSNP is implemented in the school level and for the programme to succeed; stakeholders within and outside the school have the important role to play. According to Dell Rosso (1999) schools that depend on the community to organise and implement School Feeding Programmes offer certain advantages of increasing contact and communication between parents, teachers and other officials. This contact and communication will give the parents the opportunity to be aware of what goes on at schools and will serve to raise the value of education and the school for parents and the whole community (Dell Rosso, 1999).

According to all the participants an endeavour to involve parents in both schools is ineffective because they are illiterate and they are less concerned about the education matters. The principals of Bhejani Primary School said 'it is hard to get hold of parents in these schools' (Interviewed, 20 July 2012). He also indicated that even if you can give the learners letters to give to their parents, they will not turn up because the parents do not even bother themselves in reading those letters (Interviewed, 20 July 2012).

The learners of Bhejani Primary School said 'the educators do not bother of what is happening in the kitchen they just sit and expect the helper mother to cook and further serve the food to us' (Interview, 25 July 2012).

School meals are prepared by the helper mothers in both schools and the learners have to accept what has been prepared. A learner from Thulani Primary School said ‘even if you can try to complain about the food that has been prepared you will be told to keep quiet because you do not know how to prepare food’(Interview, 23 August 2012). The learners feel that they are denied the opportunity to be involved in this feeding program.

Capacity of stakeholders

The helper mothers in both school clearly indicated that they are not capacitated in food handling and preparation. One of the helper mothers from Thulani Primary said ‘we need extensive training so that we may be able to cook the food without compromising its quality’ (Interview, 30 August 2012).

The helper mothers also indicated that even the workshops they attend are not informative and leaves them without understanding of what they have to do when they go back to their respective school. The helper mother from Bhejani Primary School said ‘It would be better if they could take us on a practical course of cooking rather than to tell us in theory’ (Interview, 01 August 2012)

Benefits and Monitoring

Castle and Bialobrzeska (2009) indicate that the NSNP is centralised to the Provincial Department of Education i.e. most of the activities and payments for the NSNP are planned and paid for by the Provincial Department of Education. However, the school principal has the responsibility to ensure that the programme succeed in his school.

According to Castle and Bialobrzeska (2009) the school principal has the authority to nominate a senior educator to oversee the nutrition programme. The teacher has to ensure that the supplier supplies the correct quantity and quality of food to the school. The educator collects and authorises the suppliers’ invoices to facilitate payment by the Department of Education.

As a way to monitor the implementation of the NSNP the school provides the facilities needed to run the nutrition programme. This includes storage space for food, a stoves/firewood, pots and utensils for cooking, and crockery and cutlery (Castle and Bialobrzeska, 2009).

The principals of both schools indicated that the implementation of the NSNP helped to improve the performance and attendance of the learners. The principal of Thulani Primary School said 'the performance of the learners in these schools was unsatisfactory before the implementation of the NSNP' (Interviewed, 17 August 2012). They highlighted that this was caused by failure of learners to concentrate in class and at times the learners would bunk classes or not come to school the reason being that they are hungry.

The Principal of Thulani Primary School further indicated that the number of learners enrolled in these schools increased from 600 to 1000 over the years. The number of absentees in this school has declined from overall of 75 learners per week to 30 per week. According to the schools principals this absenteeism is no longer caused by the issue of nutrition but rather the illnesses from which the learners and their parents suffer (Interviewed, 17August 2012).

Learners interviewed indicated that they do not have a reason of being absent from school because they know that they will get food every day. They indicated they feel disappointed on days in which they are not served with food. The learners also indicated that they can now concentrate in class rather than thinking of what they will eat when they arrive home.

The SGB members interviewed indicated that they are now proud of the performance and the attendance of the learners in both schools and they believe such a change has been brought by the implementation of the NSNP.

District support

The district official interviewed said 'as a district we provide mentoring to principal on how to implement and monitor the NSNP and this is done through workshops, meetings and school visits' (Interviewed, 10 September 2012). He further indicated that most of the school principals do not turn up when such meetings are organised. He said 'I believe the principals are not interested in the NSNP. However there is no way in which we can stop it because it is a national project'.

Though the district official indicated that he provides enough support to the schools pertaining the NSNP, the school principals and educators feel they do not get enough support, because the officials come once to school and the workshops that they organise are not detailed they just call the workshops because they are maybe pressurised to submit reports to their seniors.

Conclusion

NSNP is a government project which is aimed at improving the attendance and improving the performance of school learners through the alleviation of hunger and poverty. According to conclusions derived from the interviews NSNP challenges emanate from poor infrastructure, insufficient human resources and the incapacity of stakeholders and lack of support from the relevant officials.

Chapter 5: Research Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents the findings on the implementation and monitoring of the NSNP at Bhejani and Thulani Primary School of Mkhuhlu Circuit office of Bohlabela district under the jurisdiction of Bushbuckridge local municipality. The findings are presented according to the themes derived during the analysis of data and the themes outlined are as follows: The difficult aspects in the implementation and monitoring of the NSNP, parents, educators, learners and community involvement in the NSNP, impact of the NSNP in the performance and attendance of learners, support of schools from the District of Education on NSNP, food supply and capacity of stakeholders.

The purpose of the research is to monitor the implementation of the NSNP in order to determine the effects of implementation and monitoring in schools in Bushbuckridge (Mkhuhlu). The research will help to explore positive ways in which the schools and other stakeholders can work together in implementing and monitoring the School Nutrition Programme in school at Mkhuhlu in Bushbuckridge.

The research seeks to find answers on the National School Nutrition Programme implemented and monitored at Bhejani and Thulani primary schools?

The researcher conducted a three months research from July to September 2012 and Bhejani and Thulani primary schools with an aim to explore the standards of the implementation, monitoring and participation of stakeholders in the NSNP programme in these schools.

Food quality and distribution

The NSNP guidelines and policies requires that school children should be served with food that will help to reduce hunger, undernourishment, good and safe for the children's health and growth, increase their cognitive thinking while reducing absenteeism and illnesses.

The schools therefore have an obligation to ensure that food served to learners is healthy clean and has the nutrients that will help to give the learners energy, build and repair

body tissues and regulate the normal processes of the body. The suppliers are also expected to distribute food that is fresh and still good for human consumption so that the goal of the NSNP can be realised.

Looking at the implementation of the NSNP in both Bhejani and Thulani primary schools, it is evident that the NSNP in this does not meet the required standards in the implementation of the NSNP.

Lack of storage space and adequate kitchen

The effective implementation of the NSNP requires that there should be necessary infrastructure and equipment in these schools. The findings indicated that there is no adequate storage space and adequate kitchens. The storage space and the kitchen available in both schools are not good for the delivery of the programme.

Shortage of clean water

Water is one of the essential requirements for the smooth running of the NSNP in school. The findings indicate that there is a poor water supply system in both schools and these pose a threat to the hygiene of the learners and the implementation of the NSNP. The participants in both schools clearly indicated that water is a serious problem because at times the learners are compelled not to eat.

The researcher also observed that the learners in most cases eat their food without washing their hands and after eating they do not wash their hands they either use papers to clean their hands or they have to roll their hands on the ground which is unhealthy and these pose a threat of the spread of germs which will in return cause diseases to this learners.

Quality of food

The findings in this study indicated that the food prepared is not of good quality and the primary beneficiaries do not benefit as expected.

Lack of cooking utensils

The findings in this study indicated that there is a great shortage of the cooking utensils needed to deliver the programme. The researcher also observed that the pots used were not in a good state to run the programme effectively and efficiently.

The findings also indicated that there are no dishes on which the learners can be served food and the learners have to bring their own dishes from home and this pose a challenge to those learners who are from the poorest families which cannot afford extra dishes.

The researcher observed that the shortage of cooking utensils cause the NSNP in both schools to interfere with tuition time and at times the learners are given the food after school hours which contradict the feeding time stipulated by the department of education.

Food supply

The finding indicated that the suppliers endeavour to deliver the goods in time however at times they deliver goods that are not listed on the delivery invoice. The participants indicated that the suppliers do not have good human relations and this make it difficult for the NSNP coordinators to attend to them in time.

Stakeholder involvement

All stakeholders and participants should play an important role in the implementation of the programme. The stakeholders in both schools show little concern in the implementation and monitoring of the NSNP and this have detrimental effects in the implementation of the programme.

Capacity of stakeholders

The researcher found out that there is still a lot of work to be done in capacitating the helper mothers so that they can prepare food which is of good quality. Even though they know how to cook they need more training in food handling for ensuring the effectiveness and the efficiency of the NSNP in these schools.

Parents, educators, learners and community involvement in the NSNP

The findings of the study is that the parents are partially involved in the NSNP and the community only shows up when there is a need to replace the helper mothers or when they want to complain about the food served to the

The findings also show that most teachers shift the task of NSNP to the teacher chosen as the coordinator of the programme instead of working hand in hand with him.
The findings also show that the learners are always at the receiving end of the NSNP their views are not taken into consideration they are expected to accept what is given to them.

Benefits and monitoring

Learners from both Bhejani and Thulani primary school do benefit from the NSNP. Educators, Parents and the other stakeholders have to ensure that they work hand in glove to ensure that all the learners in this school benefit from the programme. The educators at Bhejani primary school are less concerned about the matters of the NSNP, though they are expected by the department of education to be in loco parentis status when they are at school.

Though all learners are expected to benefit from the programme lack of supervision at Bhejani primary cause some of the learners not to get their ration though they are counted as beneficiaries in this programme.

Both schools seem to have a lack of proper administration and monitoring system on the NSNP though the policy indicates clearly that there should be monitoring in place.

The findings indicated that the NSNP play a vital role in improving the attendance and the performance of the learners. All participants interviewed indicated that implementation of the NSNP brought about a great change in the perception the parents of both schools had in education. The findings indicated that more learners are enrolled in these schools and no longer bank classes as they did in the past.

District support

The findings indicated that there is a lack of support from the district of education. The participants indicated that the official only come when they know that they need report to be supported to the seniors. The researcher also observed that on the visitors register there are no entries that show that there was once a visit of an official concerned with NSNP.

Summary of findings

The NSNP have a positive impact in the two schools in which the research study was conducted. The primary beneficiaries of this programme seem to have improved their attendance, performance and participation in the classroom. Though the principals, learners and SGBs have some concerns, they all share common understanding and appreciate the value of the NSNP. The appointment of helper mothers from the local community has improved the lives and economic status of some members of the community.

The NSNP aim at providing food that is of good quality to all learners enrolled in both primary and secondary schools that benefit from this programme. However, findings indicate that it is not all the learners who benefit from Bhejani Primary school, because the learners are not monitored when food is dished out during break. The food is just left in the classrooms so that the learners can help themselves and this is evident that the younger learners are bullied by the older learners in the classrooms.

The NSNP aims at providing clean, safe, and healthy and food that is of good quality to learners, findings indicate that in both schools there is a shortage of water and at times learners eat food without washing their hands, at times food prepared is not fully done especially on days when there is late delivery of water. Lack of proper storage for food and refrigerators indicate that the food that is given to learners is not of good quality.

The NSNP requires that all stakeholders and participants should play an important role in the implementation of the programme, finding in this research study indicate that there is lack of proper participation of stakeholders and this have detrimental effects in the smooth running of the programme.
Besides the positive impact on the lives of the learners in these schools, there are still some challenges which need to be overcome. The key challenges are:

Recommendations

After thorough analysis, the under mentioned recommendations are presented. The following paragraphs are the recommendations on what the schools (Bhejani and

Thulani primary) and Mpumalanga Provincial Department provincial are required to do in order to improve service delivery in schools that participate in the NSNP.

Lack of clean water

The schools should make arrangements with their SGB to buy water tanks which will help for the storage of clean water needed by both the helper mothers in cooking and washing their hand when preparing food and before they eat the prepared food. The schools can further make arrangement that a bucket of water is kept in class so that the learners can be able to use the water during lunch time for cleaning their hands and washing their dishes after eating.

Lack of adequate storage space, kitchens and cooking apparatus

The Mpumalanga Department of Education must make provision of funds, to those schools that already benefit from this programme, for the building of adequate storage spaces, kitchens and cooking apparatus needed for the NSNP. The provincial department has to ensure that when planning to build new schools there should be provision for the entire infrastructure needed for the proper implementation of the NSNP.

Involvement and participation of stakeholders in the NSNP

Communities of Mkhuhlu, as parents of learners of Bhejani and Thulani Primary School, need to be involved in the NSNP activities of the schools. Community projects, such as vegetable must be introduced and the community must be encouraged to participate and the community should also time and again render their services in helping the school in growing vegetable gardens.

Learners as beneficiaries, should also be involved in the implementation of the NSNP, their views have to be considered as this will help the success in the implementation and monitoring of the programme.

Educators should be consulted on matter pertaining to the programme; issues should not be imposed but must be discussed so that the educators can take ownership of implementation and monitoring of the programme.

Non-compliance by the suppliers to the set expectations in the supply of food products
The schools should ensure that there are systems in place that will control and monitor the delivery of food parcels. The educator who is in charge of the NSNP and the helper mothers should work hand in glove to ensure that food delivered is fresh and good for human consumption.

Support from the district of education
District officials should regularly and systematically consult the school, so that deviations can be diagnosed in time and dealt with before many problems are experienced. This will also help them to provide necessary support to the schools and make recommendations to Department of Education on the best way to implement and monitor the NSNP.

Conclusion

In chapter one of the research report a problem in the NSNP was identified and it led to the following research question: How is the National School Nutrition Programme implemented and monitored at Bhejani and Thulani primary schools?

Chapter two of the research focused on the overview of the relevant literature to the study. It focused on the policies and guidelines in the implementation of the NSNP in South Africa and other countries. This chapter further outlines the beneficiaries and those who have absolute monitoring responsibility of the programme.

In chapter three the researcher outlines the research methodology applied in this research study. The research approach and design which the researcher applied in gaining meaning and extensive insight into the research problem were outlined.

The findings in this research indicate that though the NSNP play an important role in the education of the learners as beneficiaries in this programme, there is still a lot of work to be done to ensure that the programme fully meet its objectives.

The finding indicate that there is a lack of: clean water, adequate storage space, kitchens and cooking apparatus, non-compliance by the suppliers to the set expectations in the

supply of food products, support from the district of education, involvement and participation of stakeholders in the NSNP.

The NSNP is for the deprived South African learners, it is therefore important that the suppliers, teachers, learners, education authorities and parents at Bhejani and Thulani primary school work together and take responsibility on the implementation and monitoring of the NSNP so that it can effectively function for the development and advancement of the learners in these schools.

Effective and efficient management and control of the NSNP at Bhejani and Thulani primary school will help to ensure that these poorest schools contribute towards the learning capacity of the learners and the empowerment of the community.

Further research will be made on the relationship of food nutrition and performance of learners in today's classroom setting.

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