



Sustainable Financing Initiative
for School Health and Nutrition (SFI)

School Meals Financing Rapid Assessment

Bangladesh

April 2022

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my special thanks of gratitude to Dr. Nurul Amin Chowdhury, Mr. Forhad Alam and Mr. Feroze Ahmed of DPE and Mr. Rezaul Karim and Ms. Sneha Lata of WFP and Former Project Director of the School Feeding Programme Mr. Bablu Kumar Shaha for their valuable support.

April 2022

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau Of Statistics
DPE	Directorate of Pimary Education
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
IDA	International Development Association
IMED	Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division
icddr,b	International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh
MoPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
NMS	National Micronutrient Survey
WFP	World Food Programme

School Feeding Programme in Bangladesh

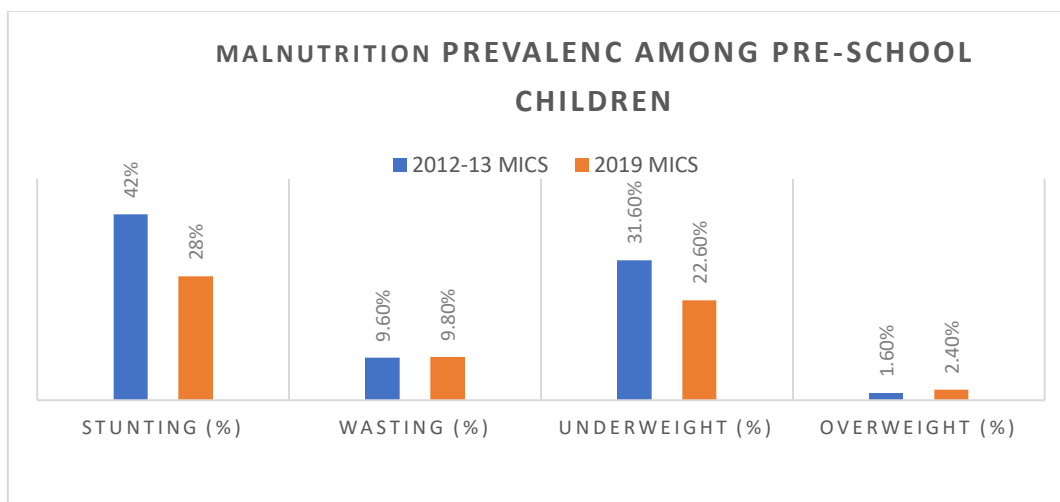
1. National context

Bangladesh is a South Asian which is ranked 94th in the world in terms of its area but ranked 8th in the world in terms of population. It is a nation of more than 166 million people and is one of the most densely populated countries in the world with 1,265 people living per kilometre. Bangladesh has a fairly large young population with 34% aged 15 and younger.¹ A total of 21.55 million pre-primary and primary school-going children are there in the country.

1.1 Levels of reported malnutrition among school age children

Despite achievements in economy, food security, health and nutrition over the past decades, the nutrition situation remains a serious concern in Bangladesh. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2019 of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and UNICEF reported a national prevalence of stunting at 28 percent, wasting at 9.8 percent and continuous moderate to high prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies among pre-school children (6-59 months).² In Bangladesh, the usual

Graph 1: Prevalence of stunting, wasting, underweight and overweight



Source: Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019

diets consumed are typically deficient in one or more micronutrients, notably vitamin A, iron,

¹ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/bangladesh-population>

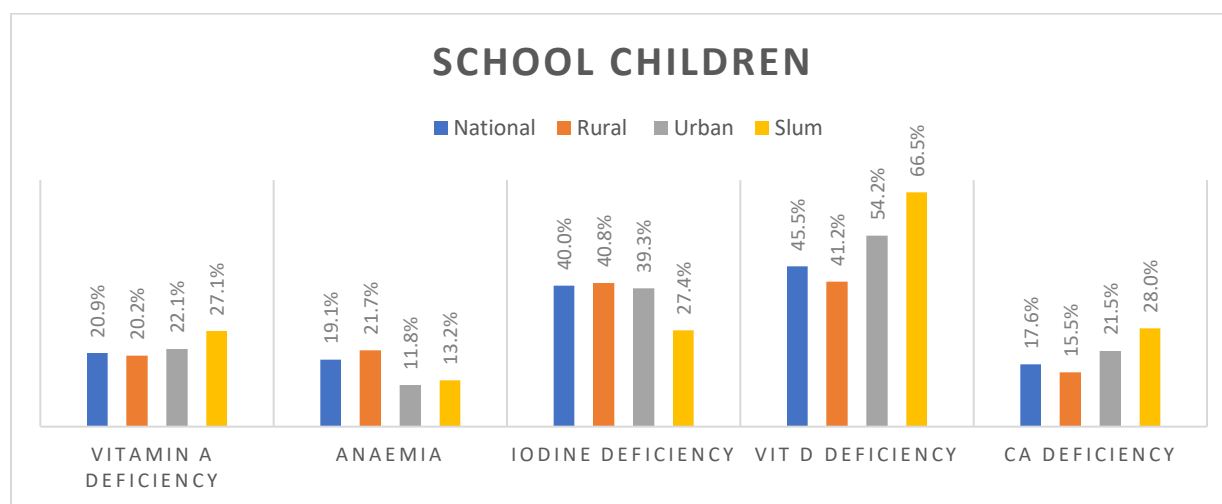
² BBS, UNICEF 2019: Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2019

iodine and/or zinc. Bioavailability of micronutrients, especially iron, zinc and vitamin A, in food usually eaten by the poor is low, because most of the food consumed is plant based. It is poor dietary quality, rather than quantity, that is considered to be the key determinant of impaired micronutrient status in the population. ³

The National Micronutrient Survey (NMS) 2011-12 revealed that a significant proportion of preschool children live with multiple micronutrient deficiencies; for example, one in five preschool children were found to have vitamin A deficiency and two in five preschool children were found to have vitamin D deficiency. The prevalence of anemia in the preschool age children was 33% and in the school age children was 19% and 17 % respectively in the 6-11 year and 12–14-year groups. The national prevalence of zinc deficiency was 44.6% in the preschool age children. It appeared to be higher in the slum children (51.7%) compared to urban children (29.5%). The prevalence of calcium deficiency among preschool children was 24.4 per cent. ⁴.

According to Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2017-18, 31% of children under age 5 were stunted, 8% were wasted, 22% were underweight, and 2% were overweight. There was a rural-urban gap in stunting, with a higher prevalence among rural (33%) than urban (25%) children. Stunting was found least common among children in the highest wealth quintile and most common among those in the lowest quintile (17% and 40%, respectively).

Graph 2: Multiple micronutrient deficiencies among school children (6-14 years)



*Source: National Micronutrient Survey 2011-12

³ National Strategy on Prevention and Control of Micronutrient Deficiencies, Bangladesh (2015-2024), Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh 2015.

⁴ National Micronutrient Survey 2011-12, Final Report. Dhaka, Bangladesh: Institute of Public Health Nutrition, United Nation Children’s Fund (UNICEF), icddr,b and Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)

Evidence shows that children, especially from low-income households, often start school with at least one form of malnutrition⁵. Amongst school-age children, the prevalence of iodine deficiency was as high as 40 per cent. Further, one in five school-age children also were found to have vitamin A deficiency and anaemia, while over 40 per cent of school-age children were living with vitamin D deficiency and about 20 per cent with calcium deficiency. (Graph 2)

There is no such anthropometric survey conducted among school age children in Bangladesh. Therefore, there is data gap for the actual nutrition situation of school age children. In 2019, another round of National Micronutrient Survey (NMS) was conducted by International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b) but the report was not finalized. Although micronutrition deficiencies among pre-school children were measured, school aged children's micronutrition deficiencies were not measured in the survey. The preliminary finding of NMS 2019-2020 reportedly revealed a further deterioration of vitamin A deficiency and iron deficiency anaemia with a decreased prevalence of anaemia, iodine deficiency and zinc deficiency among pre-school children.

1.2 National school feeding policy – aims and objectives

On 19 August 2019 Government of Bangladesh approved the National School Meal Policy 2019. The objectives of the Policy are :

- a. To contribute appropriately to the education, nutrition, health and social security of all pre-primary and primary school age children by bringing them, in phases, under the purview of the school meal policy.
- b. To ensure that the programme improves the quality of education and helps reduce disparity in quality of education by reducing difference between rich and poor. As an permanent programme for addressing children's temporary hunger and nutritional support, the programme is to play an effective role in converting the children into skilled and capable human resource by improving their merit, developing thinking and imagination power and increasing creativeness and production capacity.

The Policy aims at fulfilling the following minimum nutritional needs of the children through school meals:

- a. minimum 30% calorie needs of Pre-primary and Primary school children, aged 3-12 years , to come from school meals.
- b. in case of half-day school,⁶50% of daily micronutrient requirements of the children to come from school meal.

⁵UNSCN (2017). Schools as a System to Improve Nutrition A new statement for school-based food and nutrition interventions. Available at: <https://www.unscn.org/uploads/web/news/document/School-Paper-EN-WEB-8oct.pdf>

⁶ In Bangladesh most of the Primary schools run staggered shifts for 6 days a week. On Thursday's schools run half a day.

- c. 10-15% of the daily energy requirements, as laid down in Bangladesh Desirable Dietary Guidelines, should come from protein and 15-30% from fat, of which saturated fat should be less than 10%
- d. to ensure minimum dietary diversity of at least four food groups, including at least one from animal source, to be selected from the ten food groups.

The policy also has a target to gradually provide cooked meal for five days and fortified biscuits for one day (primary schools run six days a week in Bangladesh) for pre-primary and primary school students.

2. Current programme

Government of Bangladesh and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) have been implementing 'School Feeding Programme in Poverty-prone Areas' since 2011. The programme initially supported only 55,000 children but now it supports 3 million children.

Table 1: Student Information by type of School (Pre-primary to Grade V) -2020

Primary Institutions Type	Boys	Girls	Total	Girls (%)
Government Primary School	5,930,562	6,491,220	12,421,782	52.3
Private Primary School	341,302	342,781	684,083	50.1
Ebtadayee Madrasa	423,894	390,507	814,401	48.0
Kindergarten	2,112,463	1,963,070	4,075,533	48.2
NGO Schools (Garde 1- 5)	324,867	341,670	666,537	51.3
High Madrasa attached primary section	543,324	517,241	1,060,565	48.8
High Schools attached primary sections	369,234	396,902	766,136	51.8
NGO Learning Center ⁷	359,992	397,809	757,801	52.5
ROSC Learning Center	2,902	2,831	5,733	49.4
Sishu Kollyan Primary School	15,098	15,907	31,005	51.3
Others ⁸	136,602	131,513	268,115	49.1
Total	10,560,240	10,991,451	21,551,691	51.0

Source: Annual Primary School Census 2020

The programme provides 75g packet of biscuits to pre-primary and primary school children six days per week. The biscuits provide 338 kcal per day and from time to time, taste of the biscuits is changed. The biscuits are fortified, and the micronutrient content is sufficient to meet on average 67 percent of the children's daily micronutrient requirements. The school feeding programme also provides learning packages to children, parents and other community members. These involve setting up school vegetable gardens and conducting lessons on water, sanitation and hygiene, health, nutrition and social issues, such as dowry and early marriage and pregnancy. Deworming tablets are also provided by the Government.

To explore opportunities and modalities within school feeding programme, cooked hot meals were introduced on a trial basis in some schools of two upazilas by WFP. The meals were composed of 90 grams fortified rice, 25 grams dal, 12 grams oil along with vegetables. These schools did not receive fortified biscuits, except on Thursdays, when they do not get a hot meal.⁷

DPE also ran a pilot programme in a few upazilas, where a combination of nutrition dense cooked meal and micronutrient fortified biscuits were distributed to the schoolchildren on alternative days of a week. But because of the COVID 19 pandemic the pilot was abandoned and there is no plan to restart the pilot under the current programme, which is going to be closed in next three months.

The school feeding programme is being implemented with the overall guidance and supervision of the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME). The Directorate Primary Education (DPE) implements the programme and at field level the programme is supported by NGOs.

2.1 Number of children targeted/reached:

Currently the programme is going on in 104 poverty-prone upazilas (sub-districts) out of 495 upazilas of the country. Of the 104 Upazilas in 94 upazilas the programme is financed by GoB and in 10 upazilas by WFP. For GoB financed interventions poverty-prone upazilas were targeted following only the poverty ranking of upazilas in the poverty map, jointly prepared by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and WFP.⁸ But for the WFP funded upazilas criteria for targeting were ranking in poverty map as well as the rate of primary cycle completion by the children of that upazila.

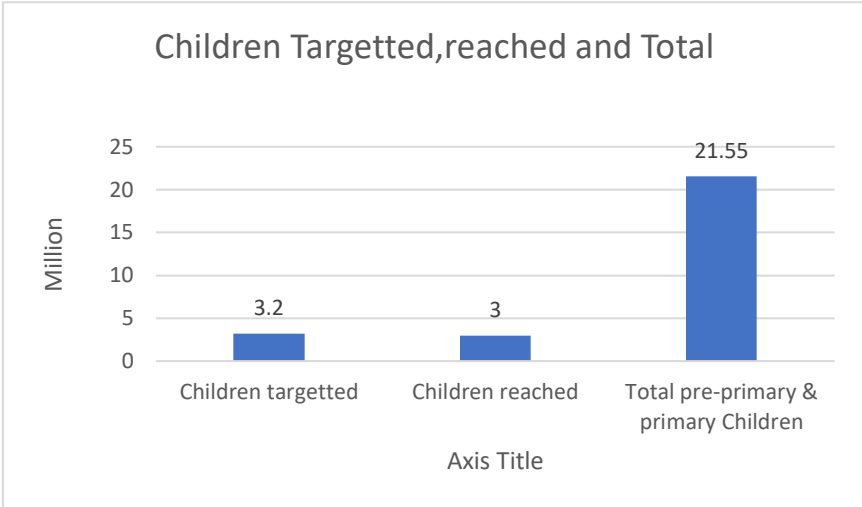
⁷ The Impact of School Feeding Programme in Bangladesh 2018 WFP, Bangladesh

⁸ Poverty map was prepared with the help of data from Population and Housing Census and the Household Income and Expenditure Survey and using Small Area Estimation (SAE) Methodology. 'Through the Population and Housing Census, BBS collects information of all households and individuals on employment, housing conditions, educational attainment, sources of drinking water, access to sanitation, electricity, etc. As a global practice, population census does not include consumption and income data Both the HIES and the Population and Housing Census have some strengths and weaknesses; none of them provides a complete picture, but they have a common set of explanatory variables. The SAE technique uses the parameter estimates from a consumption model derived using the 2016 HIES data to predict/simulate consumption data for each census household.' (Poverty Map : Key Findings 2016)

WFP provides technical support to the whole programme. The number of targeted preprimary and primary level schools are 15,289 out of 133,002 schools in the country.

The current programme had a target of reaching an estimated 3.23 million children in 104 upazilas. By the end of 2021 the programme reached out all the targeted students of the intervention upazilas. The actual number of the children reached is 3 million, meaning that the estimated number of children was little more than the actual number. The programme was due to end on December 2021. But the government decided to extend the programme up to June 2022 and a new programme is in the offing.

Graph 3: Pre-primary and Primary students targeted, reached



The activities of the programme in GOB financed upazilas have recently been stopped temporarily awaiting some procedural approval related to no-cost extension of the programme up to June 2022.

2.2 Brief summary of relevant evaluation evidence

Since its inception in 2011 School Feeding Programme in Poverty-prone Areas of Bangladesh has been evaluated by various agencies. Most of the evaluation reported positive outcome of the programme on attendance, retention, completion and child nutrition.

The outcome study of WFP Country Programme in 2015, showed positive impact on school enrolment. School feeding was claimed to be effective in retaining those students, who were already enrolled in school, confirming that the provision of school breakfast is a retention booster. The completion rates showed statistically significant increases in the primary completion rate from baseline to mid-term for both intervention and control schools.

In 2018 WFP published a validation study of the school feeding programme. The study made an assessment of the programme in two WFP funded upazilas where parallel to the biscuit programme cooked meals were also provided in a few schools on a trial basis. The five years long study observed that over the assessment period (2012-2017), enrolment in the primary schools of study areas had decreased. The report however, resolved that, 'It is difficult to draw any conclusion from that overall finding, as long as there are no demographic data from the area to compare the decrease in enrolment to. Still, the decrease in enrolment in intervention schools was smaller than for control schools, in almost all grades and locations, which may be explained as a positive impact from biscuit-based school feeding on enrolment.'

The study also found that the attendance rate derived from headcount was significantly lower than that of school records. This indicated that over-reporting of students was taking place in school records for certain reasons. The study report assumed that the inconsistency of the attendance rates might be caused by over-reporting of attendance by school authorities as the schools needed to report a minimum of 85% attendance to qualify for student stipends. The study concluded that school feeding had an increasing effect on attendance rates (1.9%), with the highest difference (2.5%) for girls, if the headcount data are assumed to be accurate.

The study found that compared to control schools, improvement in the rate of completion between the year 2012 and 2016 was better in intervention schools and concluded that school feeding had a positive impact on the primary completion rate.

Table 2: Primary completion rates 2012-2016 in WFP study area

	Year			Change over Time		
	2012	2014	2016	2012-2014	2014-2016	2012-2016
Intervention	27%	37%	41%	10%	4%	14%
Control	35%	42%	43%	7%	1%	8%

Source: The Impact of School Feeding Programme in Bangladesh 2018 WFP, Bangladesh

Table 2 shows in the school feeding-assisted schools, in each of the two-year periods, 3% more students completed primary school, totaling 6% more over the measured 4-year period.

The effect of school feeding on the nutrition status of children was found to be encouraging. Whereas the results form BMI were mixed, the results for anemia were impressive. Rates of anemia were found significantly lower in the intervention groups.⁹

⁹ The Impact of School Feeding Programme in Bangladesh 2018 WFP, Bangladesh

Table 3: Percentage of children with anemia in WFP study area

	Girls	Boys	All
Meal Group	6.4%	5.5%	5.9%
Biscuit Group	10.5%	10.8%	10.6%
Control Group	21.4%	23.9%	22.5%

Source: The Impact of School Feeding Programme in Bangladesh 2019 WFP, Bangladesh

Table 3 shows that anemia was significantly lower in the school meal groups, with the biscuit group as a good second. The anemia levels for the control group were found much higher for both girls and boys.

The Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) of the Ministry of Planning is responsible for evaluation of all government supported projects/programmes and in 2020 the IMED made an evaluation of the School Feeding Programme. IMED's evaluation report had a general observation that the school feeding programme increased enrolment and attendance, reduced drop out and gender gap and helped reduce protein deficiency among primary school children. The report specifically observed, among others, that the in intervention-schools drop-out rate reduced by 6.6% against that in control schools to 3.2%, a difference of 3.4 percentage

Table 4: Impact of school feeding on dropout, attendance, body-weight, STM incidence

	Intervention schools	Control schools
Reduction in dropout rate	6.6%	3.2%
Increase in attendance rate	17%	7%
% of children with low body-weight	18.17%	30.7%
Percentage of children with Soil Transmitted Helminth (STM)	4.7%	14.7%

Source: Evaluation of the 'School Feeding Programme in Poverty-Prone Area' (Third Revision) , IMED, Ministry of Planning, GoB 2020. (In Bangla)

points. Attendance in intervention schools increased by 17% against that in the control schools by 7%. Percentage of children with low body-weight was much higher in control schools (30.7%) compared to intervention schools (18.17%). Percentage of children with Soil Transmitted Helminth (STM) was three times lower in school feeding intervention schools compared to control schools (4.7% against 14.7%). The report, however, observed that supply of same food everyday created monotony with the school meal.¹⁰

¹⁰ IMED, Ministry of Planning: Evaluation of the 'School Feeding Programme in Poverty-Prone Area' (Third Revision) (In Bangla)

3. Public financing

3.1 Level of financing from national and local government

School feeding programme in Bangladesh is financed by the national government and WFP. There is no financing from local government or any other sources. The national government finances school feeding programme from the resources obtained through general taxation. There is no earmarked taxation for the school feeding.

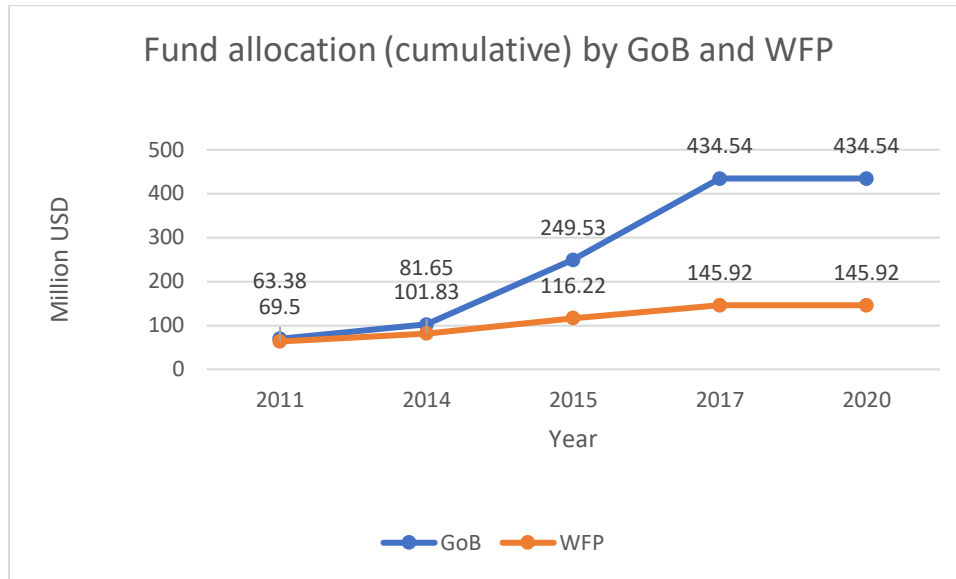
For the current school feeding programme of USD 580 million national government provided USD 434 million (75%) and WFP provided USD 146 (25%) million. Over the last ten years, from June 2011 to December 2021, USD 528 million (93% of the allocation) has been spent. The remaining fund will be spent by June 2022, after when a new programme is expected to commence.

Table 5: Programme Cost and coverage of upazila

	Original Project	First Revision	Second Revision	Third Revision	No Cost Extension
Duration	July 2010- June 2014	Extended to Dec., 2014	Extended to June, 2017	Extended to Dec. 2020	Extended to June. 2022
No. of upazilla covered	GoB: 34 WFP: 52	GoB: 42 WFP: 30	GoB: 72 WFP: 21	GoB: 94 WFP: 11	GoB: 94 WFP: 11
Project cost (Million Taka)	11427.99	15779.31	31455.22	49919.72	49919.72
Project cost (Million USD)	132.88 ¹¹	183.48	365.76	580.46	580.46
GoB (Million USD)	69.50	101.83	249.53	434.54	434.54
WFP (Million USD)	63.38	81.65	116.22	145.92	145.92

¹¹ At current price IUSD= Taka 86

Graph 4: Financing by GoB and WFP (2011-2020)



The school feeding programme is limited to primary schools only. Secondary schools are not included in the programme. Again, the programme does not include all types (see Table 1) of primary schools in the country. The programme covers the following three types of schools, where largest portion of the pre-primary and primary school children are enrolled:

- a. Government Primary Schools
- b. Schools run by Children Welfare Trust of the government
- c. Independent Ebtedayee (Primary) Madrasa.

In each upazila pre-primary and primary students attending other types of schools are not covered by the programme. Apart from that children attending 'quami' madrashas (madrashas outside the mainstream education, where teaching and learning strictly confined to religious education and supported almost exclusively by donation) are also excluded. The number of children attending the qwami madrashas are difficult to assess as these madrasas are not registered and they do not keep records of enrolment properly.

People involved in the management of the programme confirmed that the funding was quite adequate for implementing the programme. The programme did not suffer any shortage of resources and allocation was available on time. Rather 1.5 years no cost-extension of the programme was possible with saved money after December 2020.

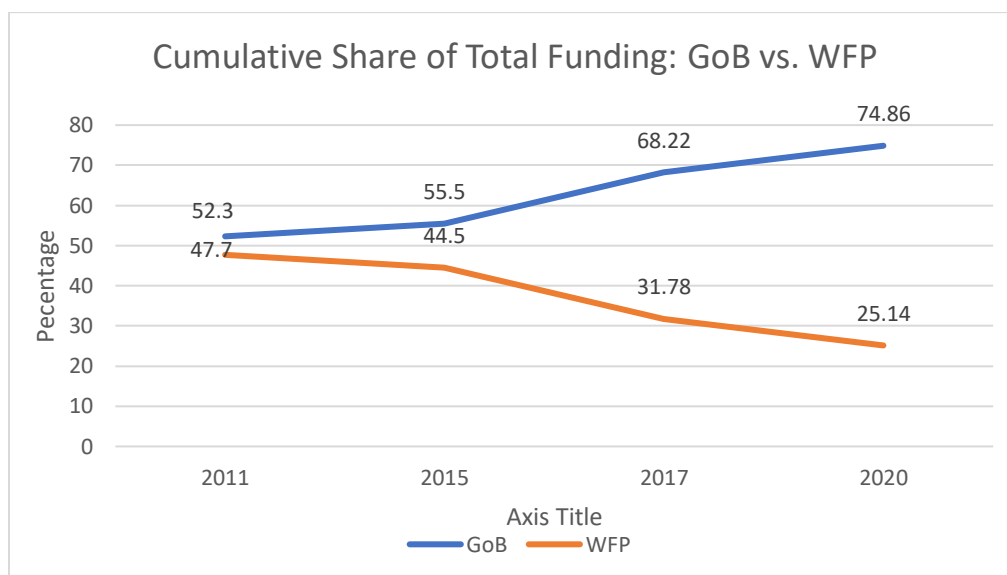
4. Donor financing

Compared to donor financing in primary or secondary education the level of donor financing for school feeding is low. For example, in primary education development partners have been supporting sector-wide programmes (SWaP) since 2004. Donors' contribution to the ongoing Fourth Primary Education Development Programme is USD 1390 million for five years, including USD 700 million and USD 500 million concessional loans from World Bank (IDA) and ADB respectively. In secondary education, for the ongoing Secondary Education Development Programme World Bank (IDA) and ADB are providing concessional loans amounting to USD 500 million and USD 225 million respectively. However, for school feeding programme WFP is the only development partner involved.

4.1 Level of donor financing

Since 2011 WFP has put USD 145.92 million for the USD 580.46 million School Feeding Programme of Bangladesh. From 2011 to 2020 WFP's share in the programme decreased from 47.7 % to 25.14% while GoB's share increased from 52.3% to 74.86%.

Graph 5: Cumulative Share of Total Funding: GoB vs. WFP



4.1 Type of donor financing

WFP's funding to the programme is a grant. WFP receives funding for the programme from three different sources

1. McGovern-Dole (50%)
2. Government of Bangladesh (30%) and
3. Other multiple donors through WFP HQ (20%).

WFP through its own mechanism coordinates with its donors. For the implementation of the programme GoB and WFP's activities are coordinated through the Project Implementation Committee (PIC), headed by the Director General of DPE and the Project Steering Committee (PSC) headed by Secretary, MoPME.

5. Per Capita finance

The cost of a 75gm fortified biscuit increased over time. DPE source indicated that for the whole program period on an average the cost was Taka 8.50. WFP source informed that the current cost is about Taka 10.00 per 75gm packet.

As the school feeding programme was coming to a close, last year, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) prepared a draft project proposal for next School Feeding Programme. However, that proposal was sent back unapproved by the planning commission with a request to review and revisit the proposal. In the draft proposal price of a packet of 75 gm fortified biscuit was estimated at Bangladeshi Taka. 10.00 and for cooked meal the estimated cost was Tk. 20 per meal. Based on these two figures a rough estimate of per capita per day finance for a future programme can be calculated:

Table 6 : Per capita finance for next programme based on a draft plan

Food item	Proposed per pupil per day expenditure	No. of school days in a year	Proposed per capita per year expenditure
Fortified biscuit (75 mg)	TK. 10	242	Tk. 2420 (USD 28)
Cooked meal	TK.20	242	Tk. 4840 (USD 56)

In the above-mentioned draft, there was a plan to provide school feeding to all children going to government primary school only. In that scenario only 58% of the total 21 million children would have been covered in five years. Cost of that draft project was estimated at USD 2 billion with

100% financing from GoB. The Project planned to gradually introduce both biscuits and cooked meals in all the upazilas of the country over a period of five years.

6. Role of private sector and households

The role of the private sector in this programme is limited to production of fortified biscuits. WFP engages private sector biscuit factories for preparing the fortified biscuits for the programme. A few private sectors firms are also engaged for quality control of the biscuits. WFP also engages a few NGOs for distribution of the biscuits to the schools. For school meal pilot programme six private sector millers were engaged for fortification on rice.

Private sector was not involved in financing the school feeding programme. Similarly, households do not contribute anything for the programme.

7. Efficiency and equity reflection

7.1 Administrative costs of programme delivery

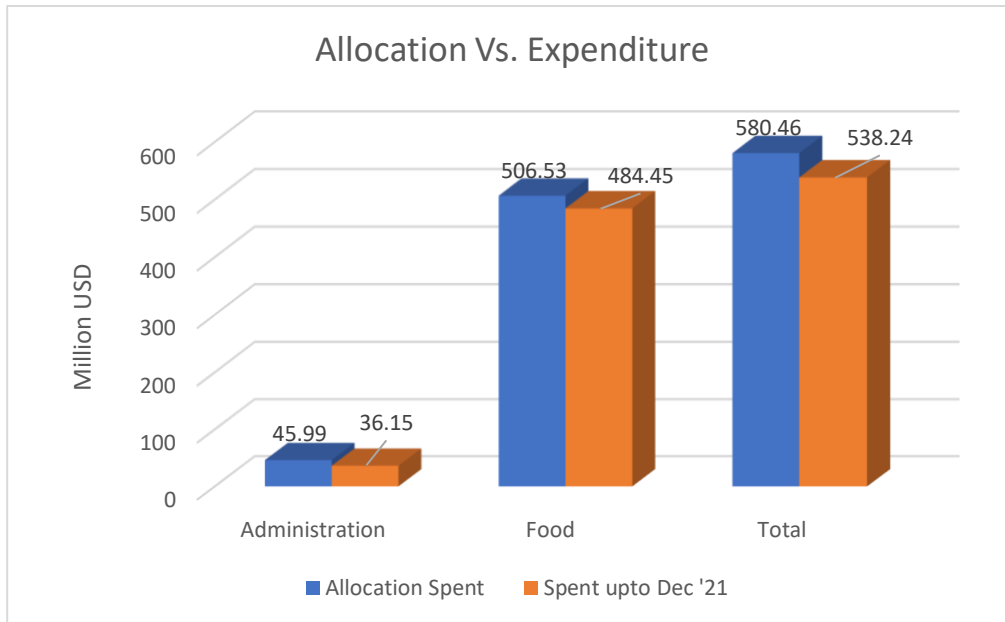
The School Feeding Programme is implemented by the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE). Two types of people work in the in the project – personnel exclusively recruited for the programme on a temporary basis and a few government personnel seconded to the programme. For distribution of biscuits NGOs has been engaged. WFP provides technical support to the program.

The administrative cost of the includes, among others, following items:

1. Salary and allowances of the staff
2. Equipment, stationery, furniture
3. Transport
4. Monitoring
5. Training, workshop etc.
6. Fee for distribution of biscuits (paid to NGOs).

Out of the total USD 580.46 million USD 46.38 million are related to administrative expenditure, which is 7.85% of the total programme cost. Of the remaining amount USD 506.53 million (87.26% of the total) has been allocated for food, USD 27.56 million (4.75% of the total) for a small pilot in some selected areas and USD 0.79 million (0.14% of the total) for social mobilization.

Graph 6: Allocation Vs. Actual Expenditure



Up to December 2021, against an expenditure of USD 484.45 million (95.64% of the allocation) for food USD 36.15 million (79.29% of the allocation) was spent as administrative cost. Of the total expenditure 6.72% was spent as administrative cost.

6.1 Allocation against deprivation and targeting indicators

The very name of the school feeding programme in Bangladesh is ‘School Feeding Programme in Poverty Prone Areas.’ The programme targets socio-economically disadvantaged and nutritionally vulnerable school children of the country.¹² Poverty prone intervention areas are selected using the poverty map, jointly prepared by GoB and WFP. In the intervention upazilas the programme covers only three types of schools, Government Primary Schools, Independent Ebtedayee (Primary) Madrasa and schools under Children Welfare Trust. Although most of the poor and nutritionally vulnerable children attend these types of school, a lot of poor and deprived children are outside the programme.

According to official record (as shown in Table 1) there are 11 types of Primary level (pre-primary to grade 5) schools and Madrasas in the country and 21.55 million children are attending these schools. On an average 62% children attend these three types of schools. Children attending these types of ‘free’ primary schools come from poor families. After a mushroom growth of kindergarten over the last two or three decades, 19% of children now attend privately run kindergarten schools and they come from relatively better off families. However, there are still a

¹² Operational Guideline for School Meal Programme in Bangladesh, DPE & WFP

lot of children who attend primary sections of high schools or high madrasas and other schools deserve school feeding.

7.0 Observations on scope for financing scale-up of programmes

When the National School Meal Policy 2019 was approved government had an ambitious vision of bringing all primary schools of the country under school meal programme by the year 2023. However, up till now the current programme could cover only 104 upazilas out of 495 upazilas of the country and reach 3 million (14%) children of the total 21.55 million pre-primary and primary school going children in the country. About 18 million more children are yet to be brought under school feeding programme. The National Policy requires introduction of cooked meals under the programme. During the current programme a pilot programme for providing cooked meals was initiated. But because of the Covid 19 pandemic the pilot was abandoned.

As the current programme is coming to a close, DPE is preparing a new programme with an ambitious aim to bring all upazilas of the country under the programme in five years. DPE sources indicated that the plan includes introduction of cooked meal and increasing the number of interventions upazilas in phases until the whole country is covered. However, it is yet to be finally decided what types of primary schools will be included in the program.

The new Project is yet to be processed for approval of the government. The estimated cost of the next programme and GoB and WFP's share is not yet known.¹³ However, WFP has already committed itself to the upcoming project and identified the following four areas of WFP intervention:

To begin school meals in Dhaka city and another municipality of the country to learn necessary lessons for upscaling school meals in urban areas.

- a. To provide technical assistance to MoPME in establishing and operationalizing a Research and Development (R&D) centre for the school meal programme.
- b. Implement school feeding activities in two upazilas of Cox's Bazar district with resources received from USDA under McGovern Dole Food for Education programme.
- c. To provide technical assistance, including essential training, to the whole school feeding programme of the government.

¹³ Few months ago, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) prepared a draft project proposal for next School Feeding Programme. However, that proposal was sent back unapproved by the planning commission with a request to review and revisit the proposal. In the above proposal there was a plan to provide school feeding to all children going to government-run primary school only. In that scenario only 58% of the total 21 million children would have been covered in five years. Cost of that draft project was estimated at USD 2 billion with 100% financing from GoB. The Project planned to gradually provide both biscuits and cooked meals to all target students.

Currently WFP has commitment of funding from McGovern Dole and GoB till 2023 and 2026 respectively. WFP will receive USD 19 million from McGovern Dole and USD 4 million each year from GoB for the next five years.

Government is perhaps thinking of keeping school feeding interventions limited to some selected types of schools in the next program as well. This implies that a significant number of pre-primary and primary school going children will remain excluded from the programme only for choosing 'wrong' type school.

According to Household Income and Expenditure Survey of 2016 in Bangladesh monthly food expenditure per household was Tk. 7354 (USD 85.50 at current exchange rate), which was 47.69% of average monthly consumption. Recent COVID '19 Pandemic has pushed about 25 million more people into poverty. A recent study funded by the UK Government's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) through the Covid Collective and conducted by Centre for Peace and Justice of BRAC University found that 41.6% marginalized people of Bangladesh are decreasing food consumptions and 65.9% people are borrowing as coping strategy during pandemic. Most common purpose for borrowing is food purchase. Reduction in the family food consumption invariably leads to worsening of nutrition situation and the children are always the worst victim. There should not be any doubt that COVID 19 has already a negative impact on children's nutrition and the situation is going to worsen in the near future. Wide coverage of school feeding would be an effective means to offset the impact of COVID 19 on child nutrition.

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