

Evaluation Report No.96
June, 1983



**Study on
The Pre-school Feeding And School
Feeding Programme In
General Area
(Non-Plan)**

**EVALUATION AND MONITORING DIVISION
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GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM**

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PREFACE.

11. The evaluation study on the pre-school feeding and school-feeding programme launched by the department of Panchayat, Assam was taken-up with the objective to study the working of the programme in all its aspects including impediments and bottle-necks in the smooth implementation of the programme.

22. The study was designed firstly to go in depth to various aspects of the programme. But due to constraints of time and some unavoidable circumstances it had to be made a quick one. The study covers the year 1980-81 only as upto-date pertaining to some of the aspects of the programme could not be collected due to obvious reasons. Physical verification of the functioning of the centres could not be carried out properly as activities in some of the centres were stopped at the time of investigation. As such the study is based on limited data maintained at various levels for the year 1980-81 and observation made in the course of the field investigation.

23. It is hoped that the concerned department will find this study report useful and make a dent on removing the bottle-necks in order to achieve desired goal.

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THE STUDY OF
PRE-SCHOOL FEEDING AND SCHOOL FEEDING
PROGRAMME FOR GENERAL AREAS
(NON-PLAN)

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

1. The Scheme:

With a view to combat the malnutrition among the vulnerable groups of population, the Department of Social Welfare, Government of India undertook the Special Nutrition Feeding Programme for Pre-school Children of age group (0-3) years in the month of October, 1970.

Originally the programme was meant for scheduled tribes and other backward classes. In 1972, the facilities of the programme were extended to all the children of age group (0-6) years belonging to low income group families.

2. Financial Pattern:

From 1970-71 to 1974-75 the programme was included in the Plan with 100% central assistance. Since 1975-76, the programme has become a part of the states non-plan sector.

3. The objective:

The objective of the Feeding Programme is to combat hazards of under and malnutrition by catering food having the required end protein value.

4. Organisational structure:

The overall responsibility of implementing the programme in the state falls on the Directorate of Panchayat and Community Development, Assam. At the block level, the programme is implemented by the Block Development Officer and his staff. In addition, the Mahakuma Parisads in the plain districts and the District Council in the hill districts are also responsible in successful implementation of the programme as per provision of the Panchayat Raj (Financial) Rules.

5. Need for the study:

The study has been taken up at the instance of the Financial Commissioner, Government of Assam in order to focus the performance of the various activities supposed to be rendered by the Government department and the voluntary organisations involved in the implementation of the programme.

6. The objective of the study:

It was proposed to carry out a quick evaluation study with the following objectives:

- (1) To examine the extent to which feeding is being provided to the children of (0-6) year age group as per prescribed norms.

- Indicators:
- (i) Actual per capita supply of food to the selected beneficiaries
 - (ii) Frequency of supply of food.
 - (iii) Adequacy of food items.
 - (iv) Quality of food components.

- (2) To ascertain, whether the target group have been broadly from amongst weaker section of the population.

Indicators: (1) Social group of beneficiaries

- (ii) Income and occupation of families belonging to the beneficiaries.

- (3) To examine, if the procedure as laid down in dealing with fund and its utilisation has been properly followed.

Indicators: Procedure followed

- (i) at the Directorate level
- (ii) at the Mahkuma Parisada level
- (iii) at the Block level

- (4) To examine adequacy of supervision arrangements and co-ordination of various voluntary organisations for implementation of the programme.

- Indicators: (i) Supervision carried out at different levels.
(ii) Peoples participation.

7. Method of study:

As the study is a quick one, (it was proposed to carry out in Kamrup District only. There are as many as 25 development blocks under the three Mahakuma Pansads in which the programme is in operation. One development block from each Mahakuma Pansad and from each of the three blocks two feeding centres were selected at random, the priority in selection was given in Scheduled caste and scheduled Tribes centres. Thus a total of 6 Feeding Centres, were covered out of 71 centres operating through-out the district. From each selected feeding centre 10 beneficiaries were selected following the principle of random sampling method.)

8. Tools of the study:

(For collection of primary and secondary information, the following tools were developed:-

- (i) Feeding Centre Schedule
- (ii) Beneficiary schedule with guide-points for observation.
- (iii) Record proforma for collection of financial data from the Directorate level, Mahakuma Pansad level and Block level.)

9. Time Schedule

The field work of the study was to be completed during the months of January and February '83, but due to some unavoidable circumstances only 50% of the field work could be covered. The write-up of the report was completed in the month of May, 1983 on the basis of the limited information collected so far, observations and discussions held with the government and non-government officials involved in implementing the programme.

CHAPTER II
FINANCIAL STRUCTURE AND PROCEDURE
FOLLOWED AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

2.1 Allocation of Fund and its utilisation:

An amount of Rs.20.90 lakhs was budgeted for 1980-81 for running a total of 350 feeding centres through-out the state. Full amount was reported to have been utilised during the year under reference.

The fund allocated for Kamrup district in which 71 feeding centres were operating during 1980-81 stood at Rs.3.55 lakhs. The Mahakuma Parisad-wise break-up of the fund with its quarterly utilisation is given in the table below:

Table No.I : Fund allocated and utilised during 1980-81.

(Rs. lakhs)

Name of M.P.	Allocation	Utilisation during			
		1st Qr.	2nd Qr.	3rd Qr.	4th Qr.
1.Cauhati	1.45	0.39	0.39	0.39	N.A.
2.Nalbari	1.00	0.27	0.27	0.27	N.A.
3.Barpetta	1.10	0.30	0.30	0.30	N.A.
Total =	3.55	0.96	0.96	0.96	-

(Source: Directorate of Panchayat)
N.A.=not available

The above table demonstrates that the fund utilized in the 4th quarter of the year is not available with the department. The non-availability, as has been reported by the department is due to the fact that the M.Ps concerned have not yet intimated the department about the expenditure incurred during the period.

The above table also brings out that the utilisation of funds in each of the first three quarters constituted 27% of the total allocation, while only 19.1

of it (Rs.0.67 lakh out of Rs.3.55 lakhs) was left for the 4th quarter. It is therefore, puzzling as to why there were over-release of funds during the 1st three quarters. This clearly indicates that no normative method was followed in quarterly phasing of expenditure during the year.

2.2. Flow of funds:

As for release of fund, there is a clear instruction from the Government that the Controlling Officer (Director, Panchayat) should release the quarterly advance to the M.Ps concerned only after receiving from them the account of monthly expenditure supported by the vouchers. It is also instructed that the Controlling Officer should ensure submission of such monthly expenditure by the M.Ps by the 10th of the following months. The Director of Panchayat in turn should consolidate the expenditure statement and submit the same to the Accountant General positively by the 20th of the following months. Failure on the part of the M.Ps to submit the statement may lead to stopage of monthly release of fund.

It is seen from the statement of disbursement of funds for 1980-81 submitted by the department that quarterly advances in respect of first three quarters were disbursed in one month and on the same date i.e. on 25.9.80. The department has reported that although the M.Ps. were insisted upon to submit the monthly expenditure statements with vouchers, they were not careful enough ^{to} furnish the statement regularly. Hence the procedure as laid down could not be followed.

It is gathered through discussion with the Mahkuma Parisad, Gauhati that they did not obtain relevant vouchers from the concerned BDOS inspite of repeated reminders issued to them. As a result, the submission of vouchers to the controlling officer was irregular. Sometimes, the BDOS submitted incomplete vouchers for which consolidated Expenditure

Statements could not be compiled. Hence there is irregularity in ~~this~~ matter.

Thus, it indicates that it is due to lack of integrated and co-ordinated approach on the part of different levels involved in dealing with the financial matters for which the programme itself is going to lose its basic objectives.

CHAPTER III

PROGRESS OF THE SCHEME IN RELATION TO ITS VARIOUS ACTIVITIES

3.1. As already stated, for the purpose of quick evaluation study, 6 Feeding Centres under 3 Development Blocks were taken up. The progress of various activities made so far are discussed as under.

3.2. Selection of Centres:

Backwardness and poverty are generally kept in view in selecting the feeding centres in the blocks. Although precise dimension and composition of the target population are not available in the blocks for ascertaining the selection of centres, the Block Advisory Committees of the selected blocks were seen to have adopted valid criteria in selecting the feeding centres. But one noticeable thing is that in the same premises of the Naranga Feeding Centre under the Boko-Bangaon Development Block, an Angawadi Centre of the ICDS scheme has also been operating side by side. This is perhaps not encouraging due to the fact that while people in the most needy areas where no such other social input services have yet reached, persons in a certain locality are deriving facilities through two programmes of the same nature.

3.3. Selection of beneficiaries and their characteristics.

The performance of a social input programme could better be assessed with reference to the base-line information such as target group of population. In this quick study, in absence of such precise data, it would not be possible to compare the coverage of the target beneficiaries with the base line group. However the characteristics of the selected children for the feeding programme pertaining to their social status as revealed by the study is presented below:

Table No.2: Percentage distribution of the target group according to social status.

<u>Social status</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
(1) Scheduled Caste	55.0
(2) Scheduled Tribes	18.4
(3) Other Backward Class	25.0
(4) Others	1.6
Total=	100.0

The table brings out that the benefits flowed more to those belonging to children of the weaker sections of which the children of the scheduled castes have rated to be benefited most.

It was learnt on probing to the households of the selected beneficiaries that no medical officials were consulted at the time of selection of the children to the feeding centres and that no medical personnel have ever visited the areas where the centres are located for the purpose of checking up the children about their health.

3.4. Estimated value of requirement of Food Components in the selected centres

As per norms laid down, each beneficiary is to get food worth 18 paise per day and feeding is to be served for 25 days in a month. Accordingly, the estimated value of food supposed to be served to the children of the selected 6 centres is calculated as shown below:

Table No.2: Estimated value of requirement of food components.

No. of centres	No. of days	No. of beneficiaries	Total child-days	Estimated value in Rs.
6	300	600	1,80,000	32,400

Actual value of supply of food:

The quantities of food components with the value, actually supplied to the selected 6 centres in 1980-81 are as follows:

Table No.4: Quantity and value of food items supplied and consumed in 1980-81.

Item of Food materials	Quantity	Value in Rs. (0.00)
1. Rice	872 Kgs.	2,581.80
2. Dal	506 "	2,496.20
3. Gram	574 "	2,524.00
4. Ground nut	92 "	1,146.00
5. Onion	31 "	75.50
6. M.Oil	11.200 Litrs	133.00
7. Salt	58 Kgs.	54.90
8. Haldi	8.400 "	70.50
9. Milk	205 litrs	563.00
Total=	-	9,643.50

Keeping in view the Table No.3 and table No.4, it will be seen that against the estimated value of food materials of Rs.32,400.00, only Rs.9643.50 (29.8%) was actually incurred during the year under reference. The reason of unsatisfactory delivery of services, as has been reported by the concerned B.D.Os was partly non-release of fund in time and partly the prevailing situation in the state for which for the major part of the year, the feeding centres could not function.

3.5. Attendance of beneficiaries:

The table below is the indicative of months and days of operation, attendance of beneficiaries during 1980-81 in respect of 6 selected centres for the study.

Table No.6: Months and days in operation, attendance etc. during 1980-81 (Centrewise).

Name of Block/Centre	Feeding Months	Feeding Days	No. of Children attended daily	Total Child-days in 1980-81.
1. Boko Bangaon				
(i) Narenga Centre	2	50	150	7500
(ii) Jalukbari "	2	50	150	7500
2. Tamulpur				
(i) Chokasari Centre	5	125	100	12500
(ii) Chogapay Centre	5	125	100	12500
3. Gobardhana				
(i) Labdanguri Centre	4	80	100	8000
(ii) Jakhelibilal Pathar	4	80	100	8000

(Source: Attendance Register at the Centres)

The table above brings out that the No. of feeding days in the selected centres ranges from 50 to 125 only during the reference year. Another noticeable thing is that 150 beneficiaries took part in the feeding programme daily against 100 prescribed as norms, in the two centres under the Boko-Bangaon Development Blocks.

3.6. Per-capita supply:

Per-capita value of food materials supplied during 1980-81 in respect of 6 feeding centres under 3 Development Blocks is indicated by the following table.

Table No.7: Per-capita value of food supplied during 1980-81.

Name of block	Value of consumed food items Rs. (0.00)	Total Child-days in the year	Per-capita (Rs. (0.00))
(1) Tamulpur	4717.50	25,000	0.18
(2) Gobardhana	2864.00	16,000	0.18
(3) Boko-Bangaon	2062.00	15,000	0.14

The table above reveals that while percapita value of food materials in respect of both Tamulpur and Gobardhana Blocks was 13 paise, the same for Boko-Bangaon Development Block stood at 14 paise only, which is far below the prescribed norms. The reason might be attributable to excess no. of Childrens' taking part in the feeding programme.

3.7. Menu for feeding programme and its adequacy.

The menu for feeding programme consists of Khisiri, Gram, Milk and fruits. Beneficiaries of almost all the centres complained that quantity of items supplied to them was inadequate. They received less quantity than what they were served earlier. The supply of food was also reported to be irregular. Complaints were also received from the guardians of the beneficiaries in Gobardhan Development Block that no milk was served in the feeding centres during the reference year, for which the babies of 0-1 yr. group were deprived of any benefits from the feeding programme. Sometimes rotten bananas were distributed in the feeding centre, which were unfit for consumption.

3.8. Source of supply food materials, storage and Transport.

Food materials were supplied by the contractors authorised by the Mahakuma Darisads. It was gathered that there was no storage arrangement in the block office. Food materials were stored at the contractors own house. As a result the BDOs could not check up the quality of food articles supplied to the centres.

The Presidents or Secretaries of the Mahila Samities in-charge of the feeding centres had to take delivery of the food articles from the contractors house. No stock-register was seen at the BDOs office although there is a provision to maintain a register book incorporating the quantity of food articles supplied to the feeding centres. Complaints were received from the Mahila Samities that there was no regularity at all in giving delivery of food articles to the feeding centres. Some of the Mahila Samities also complained that reimbursement of transport charges incurred by them was also badly delayed.

CHAPTER IV

Role of Voluntary Organisations, Supervision and Peoples' participation.

4.1. Role of Mahila Samity:

Mahila Samities play a vital role in running the feeding programme in rural areas. Their functions are mainly (i) to store food materials (ii) to maintain stock register and attendance register of the beneficiaries (iii) cooking and (iv) distribution of food to the beneficiaries at the feeding centres.

It is seen during the time of field visits that all the Mahila Samities have possessed either damaged huts or no huts of their own. As a result food is being cooked in open places, often in the President's own house. The difficulties faced during rainy season can well be imagined. Some of the Secretaries of the Mahila Samities, being illiterate could not keep the records in the stock register properly. It is also observed that the names of some beneficiaries were entered twice in the attendance register of the feeding centre. They were not taught how to keep records in the stock-register and how to fill-up different columns assigned for various information in the attendance register.

4.2. Supervision:

Inspection done by the block officials was found to be far from satisfactory. Although Extension Officers (Ranchayat) were entrusted with the supervision work at the centre level, it was seen that no effective supervision was done by them. It was revealed from the Inspection books of the Mahila Samity that the Extension Officers visited the centres once or twice in a year and the comments offered about the various aspects of the feeding centre were generally of perfunctory character which, it seems, could not bring out any actual bottlenecks facing the programme.

The visits of the Gram Sevikas in-charge of the feeding centres were also found to be occasional. Some of the Gram Sevikas reported that they could not give frequent visits to the feeding centres because of lack of proper communication

to the villages where the feeding centres were operating. Their another complain was that they could not visit the feeding centres frequently as they are entitled to fixed T.A. (Rs. 30.00 per month).

4.3. Peoples' participation:

It is learnt after contacting various sections of people in the selected centres that many of them are fully aware of the usefulness of the feeding programme. Particularly the scheduled castes households showed better appreciation of the programme as compared to the other communities. Except one out of six centres, the people in the villages are rendering help like contributing fuel/free of costs, supplying utensils for cooking and distributing and donating in cash and in kind.

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CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

(A). (Major findings that emerge from the evaluation study are:-

5.1. Although full allotted fund was reported to have been utilised during 1980-81, the department could not furnish us with the information about the utilisation of fund in the fourth quarter in respect of three Mahakuma Parisads under Kamrup district.) (2.1) *BDO/ inspection of block* *PL. 100*
not received

5.2. No normative method seems to have been followed in quarterly phasing of expenditure during the reference year (21)

5.3. (In spite of Government's instruction in the matter of release of advance, receipt of monthly expenditure statement supported by vouchers and submission of consolidated statement to the Accountant General, Assam in fixed date, the department disbursed the quarterly advance to the Mahakuma Parisads without following those instructions.) (2.2.) *not received*

5.4. The study brings out that precise dimension and composition of target population are not available in the blocks for ascertaining the selection of centres. The Block Advisory Committees seem to have adopted valid criteria in this respect. But two centres of same nature executed by different departments, that is, by the department of Panchayat and the Department of Social Welfare, Assam in one place is not perhaps encouraging. (3.2 & 3.3) *not received*

5.5. (The study reveals that benefits followed more to those belonging to children of the weaker sections of population.) (3.3.)

5.6. (No medical personnel have ever visited the selected centres for checking-up of health of the children before or after the operation of the feeding programme.) *M*

(Para 2, 3.3)

PHS
Medical Officer
12/11/81

5.7. (Against the estimated value of requirement of food materials amounting to Rs.32,400, only Rs.9,643.50 was spent during the year under reference) being 29.8% of the total estimated value. The reason of poor utilisation, has been reported by the B.D.Os, was partly non-release of advance in time and partly the prevailing situation of the state for which major part of the year the feeding centres could not function (3.4).

5.8. The study brings out that the norm of food value worth 18 paise perday per beneficiary could not be maintained due to excess number of childrens² taking part in the feeding centre for which less quantity of food was supplied to them.

(3.6.)

5.9. The supply of food to the target beneficiaries was reported to have been inadequate and irregular. (Sometimes, quality of food supplied to the children was not good and so the food was not fit for consumption. In some centres no milk was supplied for which babies of '0-1 yr group were deprived of the benefits available from the programme.) (3.7)

5.10. (The study reveals that as the food materials meant for the feeding centres are stored at the contractors' own house, the BDOs could not check the quality and quantity of food stuff supplied to the centres at the time of taking delivery of by the concerned Mahila Samities.) Some of the Mahila Samities complained that reimbursement of carrying charges of food stuff to the centres, incurred by them and release of honouraria to the Helper @ Rs.30.00 per month were badly delayed. (3.8)

5.11. The Mahila Samities pay a vital role in running the feeding programmes. (Most of the Mahila Samities have either possessed damaged huts or no huts at all. As a result, food was being prepared and distributed in open places.) The difficulties faced, particularly in rainy season can well be imagined. Due to lack of guidance, the Secretaries of the samities have been maintaining relevent records both in the stock register and attendence register wrongly. (4.1).

Handwritten notes:
M. S. Samity
School
4.5
check up

5.12. (Supervision done by the block officials was found to be ineffective.) From the Inspection books maintained at the centres, it was found that the comments offered about the various aspects of the feeding centres were of perfunctory character. Frequent visits by the Gram Savikas in-charge of the centres could not be done due to fixed T.A. entitled to them and lack of communication facilities to the villages where the centres were operating. (4.2).

5.13. People in the selected centres are aware of the usefulness of the feeding programme. They are rendering help by contributing fuel for cooking purpose free of costs, supplying utensils and donating in cash and in kind.

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(B) Recommendations:

1. The benefits offered to a certain target group of population by implementing any social input programme can well be assessed only when the baseline data in relation to the characteristics of target group are available. This data gap can be minimised by conducting proper surveys in those areas where the programme is in operation.
2. Overlapping of programmes of same nature in a certain area is perhaps not encouraging in view of the fact that while people in the most needy areas where no such type of facilities have yet reached, persons in a certain area are deriving benefits of two programmes of same nature.
3. Irregular flow of funds is the basic element of the programme which affects adversely its functioning and prompt delivery of inputs to the target groups. Therefore, this should be streamlined by eliminating administrative bottle-necks for successful implementation of the programme. In this respect the BEOs may be given more power under the overall control of the Director of Panchayat.
4. Feeding of children with high incidence of infections and infestations cannot produce the desired nutritional impact. Such leakage should be investigated through proper and timely check-up. Otherwise benefits given to the children would be wasted.
5. The prevailing norm of delivery of food worth 18 paise per day per beneficiary is perhaps too low to cater to the minimum need of the nutritional improvement of the children belonging to the weaker section of population. Considering the current value of food components, it should be enhanced to a suitable level. In this connection norms prescribed by the Government of India for various social input services from time to time may be followed.

6. Uninterrupted supply of food commodities to the feeding centres is crucial to the successful operation of the programme. In this respect responsibility for storing and carrying of food stuff to the respective feeding centres should be vested upon the BDOs and his staff to avoid delay in reaching them to the beneficiaries. Supply of food materials through the contractors is not encouraging in view of the fact that in absence of proper supervision and inspection by the block level staff, the beneficiaries are not getting good quality of food served to them. There is also doubt in supplying actual quantum of food materials to the feeding centre. Therefore the BDOs may be empowered to purchase food stuff from the authorised dealers.

7. There is a great need to make the supervision by the officials of both block level and state level more effective. Periodical inspection and training to the Secretaries of the Mahila Samities in keeping the records properly should be ensured.

8. The role of Mahila Samities should be given specific recognition. Their poor conditions should be improved by offering benefits through the linkage of various development programmes/ schemes operating in rural areas. The honorarium paid to them may be raised substantially so as to give them incentive for performing their services to the societies.

*Approved
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