

Journal of Research in Education (JoRE)

ISSN: 3059-9741

Published by: Journal of Research in Education (JoRE)
A Multidisciplinary Peer Reviewed Open Access Journal**Email:** jore.centralcampus@gmail.com**Website:** <http://education.fwu.edu.np/>**Stakeholder Perceptions Among School Nutrition and Mid-Day Meal Programme****Hari Prasad Joshi¹ and Kishore Bohara^{2*}**¹Mid- West University, Babai Multiple campus, Gulariya, Bardiya²Far Western University, Mahendranagar, Kanchanpur

*Corresponding author e-mail: kishorebohara4261@gmail.com

Abstract

The midday meal program is a key initiative that aims to improve school-aged children's health, nutrition, and education. This study carried out in a basic school in Gulariya Municipality, Bardiya District, Nepal, investigates the perspectives and experiences of students, parents, teachers, and the school management committee on the program. Data were obtained using a qualitative case study design based on social cognitive theory, with focus group discussions and in-depth interviews to understand better the dynamic interplay between individual, behavioural, and contextual factors. The findings emphasize the program's beneficial effects on students' health, attendance, and learning outcomes. Despite these advantages, major obstacles to implementation exist, including insufficient finance, inadequate infrastructure, limited human resources, and concerns about the quality, quantity, and variety of food. The program's short length reduces its potential. These limitations are consistent with broader issues raised in global research on school-based lunch programs, but they are exacerbated by Nepal-specific variables such as resource restrictions and cultural considerations. To maximize the program's benefits, stakeholders must address these concerns by boosting financing, enhancing facilities, and encouraging greater community and policymaker collaboration. By overcoming these challenges, the mid-day meal program can continue to contribute to the overall development and well-being of school children, ensuring its long-term viability.

Keywords: Case study, enhancing, health outcomes, involvement, quality education,

Introduction

The mid-day meal program for school children is an important effort focused on enhancing health, educational quality, social fairness, and equality (Menezes, 2014). Studies have repeatedly demonstrated that having healthy meals available at school not only improves children's health but also supports their all-round growth and development (Acharya & Acharya, 2020). Nutritious foods at schools address issues like stunted growth and poor nutrition in students while also improving the success shown in health outcomes at the country level (Calvert et al., 2021). Additionally, mid-day meal programs have been connected to students' regularity in school and lower dropout rates, which can result in improved learning outcomes and later financial benefits (Krämer et al., 2018).

Proper nutrition is crucial for children's health and growth, especially in school environments (Hada, 2010). In several nations, like Nepal, mid-day meal initiatives have turned into an important approach to tackle nutrition problems and improve learning outcomes for students (Government of Nepal, 2019).

The improvement of children's health and well-being is a worldwide issue, with nearly one-third of the global population being below 18 years old, mainly in low- and middle-income nations (Krämer et al., 2018). Bad health and nutrition in children and teenagers can greatly influence school achievement, which subsequently affects a country's growth (Foroozanfar et al., 2022). In Nepal, studies have indicated that every rupee spent on a healthy mid-day meal can bring back 5.2 times its worth in economic advantages (Bastola & Acharya, 2015). The mid-day meal program is open to all, making sure that every child gets the same standard of food, which is in line with Nepal's constitutional promise of free and mandatory basic education and the right to food security (School Day Meal Management Handbook 2077, 2020). This program, called "Diva Khaja," helps to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by tackling hunger, poverty, and guaranteeing quality education for everyone (Pant, 2020). Mid-day meal is a significant initiative that satisfies the objectives and pledges of sustainable development, including the eradication of hunger and poverty and guaranteeing that everyone has access to high-quality education (UNICEF, 2021). The mid-day meal program in Nepal is built on the strong link between nutrition and education, as shown by several studies (Shrestha et al., 2019). This programme starts from the fiscal year 2077/78. Currently, the government has given mid-day meals to

students from early child development up to class 5 in all government schools, highlighting the principle that a sound mind in a sound body (Government of Nepal, 2019). The goals of the program include meeting 30% of children's daily nutrition needs, improving involvement in teaching and learning, ensuring fair access to quality basic education, and supporting local farm products to strengthen the local economy (School Day Meal Management Handbook 2077, 2020).

Various research studies indicate that the midday meal Program, initiated by the Government of Nepal in schools, positively influences the health and well-being of students (Tripathi, 2020). For this program to succeed and be productive, all involved stakeholders (teachers, parents, students, and the school management committee Members) need to engage actively and work in harmony (Bassi et al., 2019). However, a substantial number of schools in Nepal encounter considerable obstacles, such as insufficient funding and restricted physical resources (Pun & Shrestha, 2020). In this scenario, effective cooperation among these stakeholders becomes essential to deliver quality mid-day meals to students. While extensive research has been conducted on different facets of the mid-day meal program in Nepal, a significant gap exists in studies that explore the concerns of those stakeholders directly engaged in the program.

Keeping this thing in mind, a basic school situated in Ward No. 4 of Gulariya Municipality, Bardiya District, was chosen for this research work. The main aim of the research is to explore the perceptions of students, parents, teachers, and the school management committee concerning the mid-day meal and school nutrition programme. This study specifically seeks to answer the following research questions: i) What difficulties and barriers exist in the program's effective management and operation? ii). What are the stakeholder's experiences regarding the implementation of the school nutrition Program? By exploring these questions, the research intends to provide an in-depth overview of stakeholders' perspectives and generate practical suggestions for improving the mid-day meal programme.

Review of Literature

A commonly implemented programme worldwide for improving nutritional status and learning outcomes among school-going children is known as the mid-day meal programme (Menezes, 2014). Though it has enormous potential, the success of the same rests squarely on the perceptions and attitudes of various

stakeholders. Many researches have indicated that stakeholders' perception is the most influencing factor in the implementation and subsequent success of school nutrition programs (Shrestha et al., 2019). Therefore, a study into the views of stakeholders involved in Nepal's mid-day meal programme becomes quite appropriate.

In order to investigate the social dynamics and relationships that affect the implementation and results of the school nutrition and midday meal program, this study applies a sociological approach. For an understanding of these interactions, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986) provides an effective framework.

According to this theory, people's perceptions, experiences, and interactions with their surroundings all influence their attitudes and behaviours (Hall et al., 2015). This indicates that, in the case of the school nutrition program, the opinions and experiences of stakeholders are impacted by their own participation in the program, their contacts with school staff and other stakeholders, and their views of how the program is being carried out (Kim et al., 2016). A number of studies examine the perceptions of beneficiaries regarding Nepal's mid-day meal programme. (Acharya & Acharya, 2020) Highlight how family norms and feeding culture bear the most influence on forming and fostering healthy eating behaviour among children. In their study, the role of parents in food habits and feeding strategies is seen as the dominant determinant in developing eating behaviour and food choices related to mid-day meals in schools. (Bassi et al., 2019) Showed that stakeholders perceive the program as very helpful for students' health and education; however, there is a need to overcome some challenges in the areas of finance and infrastructure. According to Pant (2020), mid-day meals in schools have various problems in the aspects of management, financial resource shortage, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of facilities for hygiene and sanitation-all impeding the proper implementation of the program and its ultimate objective of providing healthy meals to students and impacting their health and education.

By synthesizing the findings of these studies, this literature review aims to gain a deeper understanding of the social processes and relationships that shape the outcomes of the School nutrition and mid-day meal programme in Nepal.

Methodological Process

The study used a qualitative case study design to investigate the perspectives of various stakeholders on the execution of the school nutrition and mid-day meal program at a selected school. The case study was chosen to look thoroughly into the stakeholders' experiences, obstacles, and perceptions, resulting in a more comprehensive insight into the program's background and impact. This design enabled a thorough investigation of the program's operational features, governance, and community involvement, resulting in findings that were rich and contextually relevant (Gerring, 2019).

The study was conducted in a basic school in Gulariya Municipality's Ward No. 4, Bardiya District. The school, located about 3 kilometers from Gulariya, the district headquarter, provides education from early childhood development until grade 8. There currently exist 212 students. The student enrollment is largely Madhesi, with little representation from the Tharu, Brahmin, Chhetri, and Dalit communities. Despite its proximity to the district offices, the school was chosen for the study owing to its limited physical resources and the fact that the majority of its students are from economically disadvantaged families.

Participants were carefully selected through a combination of census and purposive sampling procedures to provide a wide representation of stakeholders. The study comprised teachers, members of the school management committee (SMC), students, and parents. The headmaster and selected teachers presented insights into the program's overall management and operational system, as well as their perspectives on its implementation and impact on students. The SMC members exchanged ideas on governance, decision-making, and community involvement. Two students from class (3-5) were chosen based on gender and caste to represent those who will be directly impacted by the program. Furthermore, the parents of the same students were asked to share their thoughts on how the program affected their children's diet and education. This multi-stakeholder approach improved not just the reliability and validity of the findings, but also ensured a thorough understanding of the program's complex impact. The details of the sampled population process are presented in the table below.

Table 1. Population, sampling procedures and applied tools

Participants	Male	Female	Total	Sampling Method	Applied Tools
CMC Members	4	3	7	Census	FGD
Teachers	3	2	5	Purposive	FGD
Parents	4	2	6	Purposive	FGD
Students	3	3	6	Purposive	Interview
Total	14	10	24		

Focus group discussions (FGDs) and individual in-depth interviews were used to collect data, to encourage participants to communicate openly and honestly. Each stakeholder group received tailored discussion guides that focused on key issues such as program experiences, perceived benefits, problems, and suggestions for improvement. These instructions were pilot-tested to guarantee their clarity and relevance. FGDs were held in both combined and separate groups to promote open and extensive conversations (Eeuwijk & Angehrn, 2017). Teachers and SMC members participated in joint groups, while students and parents were divided into individual groups. Each session lasted about 60-90 minutes and was led by a qualified moderator to ensure that all attendees could contribute.

All discussions were audio-recorded with participants' permission and transcribed for analysis, ensuring that the perspectives of all stakeholders were accurately represented. Secondary data sources, such as relevant publications, guidelines, policies, and research articles, were also reviewed to help contextualize and validate the findings. The study is based on Social Cognitive Theory, which stresses how individual, behavioural, and contextual factors influence perceptions and actions (Hall et al., 2015). This theoretical framework led the analysis by emphasizing how stakeholders' experiences and perceptions are influenced by their social contexts, relationships, and the larger educational environment, resulting in a more comprehensive understanding of the program's dynamics.

This study conforms to strict ethical standards. Prior to data collection, all participants provided informed consent, confirming that they understood the study's aims, procedures, and any possible risks. The research method was conducted with complete confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were promised that their personal information would be kept strictly confidential and that their identities would not be exposed in any study papers or reports. The data collected was securely stored, and access was limited to the research team.

Result

The selected school for the study is about 3 kilometres north of the district headquarters. The Madhesi community dominates the area, but Tharu, Brahmin, Chhetri, and Dalits also live there. The majority of residents in this area face difficult social and economic conditions, with many living in poverty. Agriculture is the community's major occupation, but many people also work as day labourers. The management committee members and parents interested in the study work mostly in agriculture. While the majority of these people are normally literate, just a few have completed their schooling through the 12th grade.

After collecting the necessary information from the participants in this study, some themes were created based on the main concepts expressed by the participants, which are explained and analyzed as follows.

Situation of mid-day meal operation and management

The midday meal program is essential to enhancing the nutrition and general health of kids. However, based on the opinions of participants, the results show a number of difficulties and obstacles to its effective operation and functioning. A discussion of these challenges is provided below, backed up where needed by the participant verbatim.

One major obstacle that was often brought up by participants was the inadequate physical infrastructure. The lunch area is disorganized, according to students, because there aren't enough classrooms. As one student put it, *"We typically eat day meals in the same room that we study."* It is untidy and uncomfortable. The efficiency of the program and the overall eating experience are severely impacted by the absence of a designated dining area. Similarly, members of the school management committee highlighted the difficulty of managing both the kitchen and food storage in a single location. One CMC member said, *"The lack of separate areas for cooking and storage makes it difficult to maintain hygiene and organize meals on time."*

The limited availability of resources, both human and material, emerged as a common issue. Parents criticized the lack of variety in meals, with one parent saying, *"My child frequently complains because they get the same type of food every day. There is no variety, and it's not always fresh."* Teachers noted that the limited teaching staff is obliged to do meal preparation tasks, which has an impact on both teaching and meal management. The teacher said, *"We are already understaffed. Managing lunch takes away from our teaching responsibilities."* Parents were dissatisfied with the school's lack of participation in the meal

program. One parent stated, *"We were never asked about what meals should be served."* If parents were involved, the food could be more carefully arranged." This lack of interaction has resulted in stakeholder unhappiness and an impression of poor management.

Likewise, concerns regarding the nutritional value of the meals were prevalent. Both parents and school teachers stated that the quality and dietary value of food are not consistently checked. According to a teacher, *"We follow a menu, but there is no systematic testing to ensure it meets nutritional standards."*

Inefficiencies abound in the program's day-to-day operations. Students noticed delays in meal service, with one remarking, *"Sometimes lunch is late, and we miss part of our break."* This dilemma derives from teachers' dual roles as educators and meal preparers. The school management committee also noted the need for more staff to ensure that meals are prepared and distributed on time.

Despite these problems, a separate committee is in charge of supervising the initiative. However, its usefulness is restricted due to resource and personnel shortages. The headmaster said, *"We try to ensure quality and adherence to guidelines, but without adequate resources, it is impossible."*

Stakeholders, Perception of the mid-day-meal Programme

The school nutrition program, especially the mid-day meal program, has received broad approval from teachers, students, parents, the school headmaster, and school management committee (SMC) members. Stakeholders typically report considerable health improvements among kids and relate these benefits to the program.

Teachers highlight that the students from families with limited incomes, who frequently confront food insecurity at home, benefit significantly because the program meets up to 30% of their daily nutritional requirements. Students are excited about the program, saying it encourages a sense of equality and friendship during meal times. Many students indicate that *"Eating with friends during lunch breaks improves our overall school experience and allows us to focus better on later classes."*

According to the parents, the programme has reduced the financial burden of supplying daily meals, resulting in healthier eating habits and overall well-being for their children. Many parents have noticed that their children's interest in healthy eating has increased as a result of the wide and nutritious menu. On the other hand, positive effects on educational results, such as lower dropout rates and higher attendance, are noted by the school headmaster. According to him,

"Students are more inclined to attend class all day, which promotes their learning achievement.:"

Similarly, an important factor in the school nutrition program's success has been its cultural relevance. The majority of participants argue *"The meals' conformity to local dietary requirements has proven advantageous since it ensures that students and their families will recognize and like the food they consume. The program's acceptance and participation rates have increased as a result of this cultural convergence."* Nevertheless, there have been times when new foods have been introduced, which has caused some children to object and be reluctant to eat the meals. In order to lessen this, initiatives to include the community in meal planning and selection can help guarantee that the program continues to be culturally appropriate and to satisfy the requirements and tastes of the local populace. Chairperson of SMC emphasizes *"The program's contribution to lowering stigma, promoting equality among students from different socioeconomic backgrounds, and strengthening school communities."*

The program has many advantages but also has several drawbacks. The government only allows 15 rupees per student, of which 4 rupees are used for fuel and labour, leaving just 11 rupees for the purchase of food. This is a significant problem. The headmaster said *"it is getting harder to serve wholesome meals within this restriction as market prices rise."* Due to restricted availability and high prices in local markets, schools also find it difficult to purchase a variety of food items, which leads to repetitious menus that occasionally cause parents and students to complain.

Inadequate infrastructure makes these problems even worse. A shortage of non-teaching staff puts extra strain on teachers and disrupts classroom activities. The teacher said, *"There are still questions about the food's quality and cleanliness, and some parents blame the program for unrelated health problems, which puts extra strain on school officials."* Another drawback is that the alliance is only provided for 180 of the 220–230 school days that are offered each year. This disparity prevents students from having access to meals for a significant amount of the school year.

Stakeholders Suggestions for Improvement of Mid-Day Meal Programme

The Nepal government's Mid-day Meal Program has surely been a huge step forward in promoting pupils' overall development. However, the program faces problems that limit its full potential, as noted by stakeholders such as teachers, parents, School Management Committees (SMCs), and students. Their opinions

provide a complete assessment and suggest plausible modifications that should be seriously considered.

One of the key problems highlighted by teachers is the program's incomplete implementation, which is limited to primary-level students. They claim that this produces a perception of unfairness among students at the same institution, increasing thoughts of injustice. Excluding secondary-level students weakens the spirit of inclusion, which may have an impact on school relationships and student morale. A teacher made the observation, *"The students attending the same school whereby some are given lunch while others are not, will make students feel less of each other."* Such observations highlight the significance of expanding the program to include secondary levels, guaranteeing equitable treatment and long-term learning and nutritional benefits for all students. However, fiscal limits, as evidenced by the government's decision to end the program at class five, highlight systemic financial issues. Addressing these obstacles requires additional financing and effective resource distribution systems. The subsidy's limited maximum duration of 180 days, despite a school year extending to 220-230 days, raises serious concerns. An SMC chairperson appropriately noted this gap: *"Currently, the funding is only up to 180 days when our school is open for 220 to 230 days per year."* This gap leaves students unsupported for a significant portion of the school year, reducing the program's effectiveness. To fulfil this gap, the funding period must coincide with the school year, ensuring continuous meal service while lowering reliance on internal funds, which is frequently insufficient. Another major issue is the inadequacy of the per-student budget, which is now fixed at 15 rupees. According to an SMC member, this amount is insufficient to offer nutritional meals, especially given rising living costs. He continued: *"It is getting increasingly difficult to provide nutritious meals within 15 rupees per student."* Raising this allocation to at least Twenty-five rupees per student, as proposed, would be a practical step towards improving meal quality and achieving nutritional standards.

Discussion

The findings outline the mid-day meal program's strengths and challenges. Its benefits include improved student health, increased school attendance, and greater educational equity. Participants reported that the program covers up to 30% of pupils' daily nutritional needs, which is an important benefit for low-income children. Furthermore, the shared lunch experience promotes equality and social solidarity, enhancing students' overall educational achievements. On the other hand, the programme has widespread support from stakeholders such as teachers,

parents, and students. The perceived health benefits, particularly for low-income families experiencing food insecurity, are significant. The mid-day meal program, according to many participants, has significantly improved students' health and learning outcomes. The sense of community generated during mealtimes contributes to a pleasant educational environment by encouraging equality among students from various backgrounds.

Similarly, the cultural relevance of the meals increases program acceptance, demonstrating that matching food offers to local dietary habits is critical for success. However, the introduction of new meals can elicit resistance from students, indicating the necessity for continued community involvement in meal planning.

Despite these successes, considerable challenges remain. Issues such as insufficient infrastructure, resource constraints, and operational inefficiencies impede the program's efficacy. The lack of defined dining places, insufficient staff, repetitious menus, and insufficient student financing were all highlighted as key challenges. These implementation gaps highlight areas that require specific adjustments to fully realize the program's potential.

The findings are consistent with previous research, such as (Calvert et al., 2021) which established the benefits of regular nutritious meals on students' physical and cognitive health. Similarly, (Shrestha et al., 2019) stressed the relationship between a healthy diet and enhanced academic performance, particularly in terms of cognitive function and concentration. Various studies conducted under the ambit of school nutrition showed that mid-day meal programs are some of the great initiatives taken by many countries to offer free or subsidized meals to students (Karn et al., 2017). Among the program's objectives are fostering educational equity, lowering malnutrition, and guaranteeing food security (School Day Meal Management Handbook 2077, 2020).

However, this study also identifies context-specific problems that have not been thoroughly explored in worldwide research. For example, whereas studies like (WFP, 2017) found improved enrollment and academic outcomes in international contexts, this study focuses on Nepal-specific challenges such as limited funding allocation. The existing financing of Fifteen rupees per student severely limits the ability to provide a variety and nutritious meals, highlighting an important area for governmental intervention (Pant, 2020).

The results have theoretical and practical implications. From a theoretical approach, the study contributes to our understanding of how social and economic conditions influence nutrition program efficacy. The favorable benefits seen, such

as improved health and reduced stigma, are consistent with Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), which emphasizes the interaction of personal, contextual, and behavioral factors (Islam et al., 2023). The program's role in promoting social cohesion strengthens SCT concepts by illustrating the impact of environmental interventions on behaviors and attitudes.

However, the observed obstacles, such as limited community participation and insufficient resources, reveal areas where SCT principles are underutilized. For example, incorporating stakeholders in menu design may strengthen reciprocal determinism by aligning environmental parameters with community needs and expectations.

This study presents various novel ideas that help to comprehend the challenges of program execution. First, localized issues like financial constraints and infrastructural limitations emphasize the significance of designing context-sensitive solutions that are adapted to unique locations. These limits highlight the need for novel ways that address resource scarcity while maintaining program quality. Second, cultural relevance emerges as a key element in program acceptance. Integrating local dietary preferences into program design improves cultural alignment, resulting in increased acceptability and participation from stakeholders. This conclusion underscores the need to include cultural concerns in program structures. Third, the simultaneous burden on educators, who are responsible for both teaching and meal supervision, exposes systemic inefficiencies that impair educational quality and program success. To address this issue, duties and responsibilities must be reviewed in order to ensure that teachers receive adequate support. Collectively, these observations point to the necessity for an integrated approach that incorporates global best practices while addressing local issues, assuring the program's longevity and efficacy.

The findings emphasize the importance of social cognitive theory in analyzing and improving school nutrition programs. The observed improvements in health and social fairness demonstrate the impact of environmental factors, such as meal provision, on individual outcomes. However, the issues highlight inadequacies in the theory's implementation, particularly in resource-constrained environments.

To fill these shortcomings, the paper proposes expanding SCT by incorporating participatory design and resource optimization methods. Similarly, actively involving stakeholders, such as parents, in program planning may increase community ownership and acceptance while boosting menu diversity and nutritional quality.

Several practical approaches can be adopted to improve program effectiveness and sustainability. First, boosting the per-student budget to at least Twenty-five rupees with the coordination of various donor agencies will increase meal quality and diversity, alleviating worries about nutritional sufficiency and monotonous menus. Expanding program coverage to include secondary-level students would promote equity and social cohesion while minimizing feelings of exclusion among older students. Furthermore, upgrading infrastructure by dedicating funding for specific dining areas and additional personnel would increase hygiene and operating efficiency. To fulfil this need, it would be appropriate to request the necessary budget from school parents, local and provincial governments, and other donor agencies. Increasing the involvement of stakeholders such as parents, teachers, and community members in program design and monitoring will promote shared responsibility and result in improved outcomes. Adopting this holistic approach will address current issues, maximize program benefits, and ensure long-term sustainability.

Limitations of the study

The study's findings are limited by factors impacting generalizability and reliability, such as its concentration on a single school in Gulariya Municipality and a small sample size of 24 participants, which may not be representative of broader settings. Potential biases in self-reported data, affected by social desirability and fear of repercussions, as well as time limits during 60-90-minute sessions, limited the scope of exploration. The single-case design limits comparative research, while linguistic and cultural limitations, notably with Madhesi and Tharu populations, as well as reliance on the moderator's skills, pose further challenges to data accuracy. Secondary data restrictions, as well as ethical or practical difficulties such as participant hesitation and scheduling challenges, all had an impact on the results.

Conclusion

The study investigated the perspectives and experiences of children, parents, and teachers regarding the school nutrition program at a primary school in Gulariya Municipality, Bardiya District, Nepal. The findings demonstrate the program's ability to improve kids' health, academic performance, and general well-being. However, various obstacles, such as insufficient finance, a lack of infrastructure, and limited resource availability, impede its effectiveness. To overcome these issues and increase the program's impact, focused actions are required. These could include boosting government financing, enhancing infrastructure, training employees, and incorporating the community in program

conception and execution. By addressing these concerns, the school nutrition program has the potential to greatly improve Nepali children's health, education, and general development. The study provides policymakers, educators, and administrators with useful insights into improving school nutrition programs and fostering a healthier and more equitable environment for school students. Further, the mid-day meal program aligns with such sustainable development goals as eradicating poverty, eradicating hunger, and ensuring quality education for all. It serves to fulfill constitutional rights towards food sovereignty and free and compulsory basic education.

References

- Acharya, M., & Acharya, K. P. (2020). Teachers' and Parents' Perceptions on Eating Behaviour of Primary School Students: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of Health Promotion*, 8(June), 119–128. <https://doi.org/10.3126/jhp.v8i0.32991>
- Bassi, S., Gupta, V. K., Park, M. H., Nazar, G. P., Rawal, T., Bhaumik, S., Kochhar, K. P., & Arora, M. (2019). School policies, built environment and practices for non-communicable disease (NCD) prevention and control in schools of Delhi, India. *PLoS ONE*, 14(4), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0215365>
- Bastola, S., & Acharya, B. (2015). Nutritional Status of Primary School Children in Pumdi Bhumdi Village of Kaski International Journal of Health Sciences and Research Nutritional Status of Primary School Children in Pumdi Bhumdi Village of. *International Journal of Health Sciences and Research*, 5(5), 339–346.
- Calvert, H. G., Ohri-Vachaspati, P., McQuilkin, M., Boedeker, P., & Turner, L. (2021). Prevalence of evidence-based school meal practices and associations with reported food waste across a national sample of U.S. elementary schools. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(16). <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18168558>
- Eeuwijk, P. Van, & Angehrn, Z. (2017). How to.... conduct a focus group discussion (FGD): Methodological Manual. *Zurich Open Repository and Archive*, April, 1–16.
- Foroozanfar, Z., Moghadami, M., Mohsenpour, M. A., Houshiarrad, A., Farmani, A., Akbarpoor, M. A., & Shenavar, R. (2022). Socioeconomic determinants of nutritional behaviors of households in Fars Province, Iran, 2018. *Frontiers in Nutrition*, 9. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2022.956293>
- Gerring, J. (2019). Case Study Research Principles and Practices. In *Cambridge*

- University Press*. Cambridge University Press. http://scioteca.caf.com/bitstream/handle/123456789/1091/RED2017-Eng-8ene.pdf?sequence=12&isAllowed=y%0Ahttp://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.regsciu_rbeco.2008.06.005%0Ahttps://www.researchgate.net/publication/305320484_SISTEM_PEMBETUNGAN_TERPUSAT_STRATEGI_MELESTARI
- Government of Nepal, M. of E. science and T. (2019). *Midday meal standards and program facilitation manual in community schools*.
- Hada, B. (2010). Problems of Educational Wastage In Primary Level Education of Nepal: Some Suggestions to Reduce It. *Tribhuvan University Journal*, 27(1–2), 35–42. <https://doi.org/10.3126/tuj.v27i1-2.26368>
- Hall, E., Chai, W., Koszewski, W., & Albrecht, J. (2015). Development and validation of a social cognitive theory-based survey for elementary nutrition education program. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 12(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12966-015-0206-4>
- Islam, K. F., Awal, A., Mazumder, H., Munni, U. R., Majumder, K., Afroz, K., Tabassum, M. N., & Hossain, M. M. (2023). Social cognitive theory-based health promotion in primary care practice: A scoping review. *Heliyon*, 9(4), e14889. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e14889>
- Karn, S., Devkota, M. D., Uddin, S., & Thow, A. M. (2017). Policy content and stakeholder network analysis for infant and young child feeding in Nepal. *BMC Public Health*, 17(Suppl 2). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-017-4340-6>
- Kim, J., Woo, T., Lee, K. A., Lee, S. M., & Lee, K.-H. (2016). Application and the Effect of Nutrition Education Program Based on the Social Cognitive Theory Among Middle School Girls. *Korean Journal of Community Nutrition*, 21(6), 497. <https://doi.org/10.5720/kjcn.2016.21.6.497>
- Krämer, M., Santosh, K., & Vollmer, S. (2018). Improving Children Health and Cognition: Evidence from School-Based Nutrition Intervention in India. *Courant Research Centre*, 247, 1–45.
- Menezes, G. (2014). Mid Day Meals: What, Why and How. *Research Horizons*, 4(July 2013), 44–50.
- Pant, A. (2020). Motivational Role of Free Mid-Day Meals on Learning Process in Basic Community Schools of Western Nepal. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 5(11), 62–68. www.ijisrt.com62

- Pun, B. R., & Shrestha, G. K. (2020). Assessment of Child Sensitive Social Protection Programmes in Nepal. *Journal of Social Protection*, 1, 51–69. <https://doi.org/10.3126/jsp.v1i0.38211>
- School Day Meal Management Handbook. (2020). Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Department of Education and Human Resource.
- Shrestha, R. M., Ghimire, M., Shakya, P., Ayer, R., Dhital, R., & Jimba, M. (2019). School health and nutrition program implementation, impact, and challenges in schools of Nepal: Stakeholders' perceptions. In *Tropical Medicine and Health* (Vol. 47, Issue 1). Tropical Medicine and Health. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41182-019-0159-4>
- Tripathi, K. P. (2020). Child-Friendly School Environment: A Case of Community Schools of Pokhara. *Prithvi Journal of Research and Innovation*, 2(December), 9–19. <https://doi.org/10.3126/pjri.v2i0.33428>
- UNICEF. (2021). Conceptual Framework on Maternal and Child Nutrition. *Nutrition and Child Development Section, Programme Group 3 United Nations Plaza New York, NY 10017, USA*, 2–3. www.unicef.org/nutrition
- WFP. (2017). *The year in review - 2016*. <https://doi.org/10.18356/de0d97fb-en>