

THE SUCCESS AND SUSTAINABILITY OF FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION FUNDING IN ARID AND SEMI ARID AREAS OF BARTABWA DIVISION, BARINGO COUNTY; KENYA

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Education administrators and the government worldwide should promote and tailor their organizational or institutional objectives and goals to the interest, desire and needs of all the stakeholders to curb the foreseen sustainable challenges associated with an illiterate society as spelt in the sustainable development goals (SDGs). Therefore the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) by National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government in Kenya in 2003 was received with mixed reactions and a lot of pessimism. This research sought to: To determine the extent to which (free primary education) FPE was affected by financial resource constraints in arid and semi-arid areas of Bartabwa and finally investigate the effects of FPE on students' population and academic improvement in arid and semi-arid areas in the arid and semi-arid areas of Bartabwa division, Baringo County; Kenya. The research adopted Descriptive survey design and was guided by structural functionalism theory of school effectiveness and socialization. Purposive sampling technique was used to select a total of 75 respondents with the target population of 140 teachers from 24 schools and 9 education officers. Data was collected by use of questionnaires and interview guides that were administered to the sampled population. Later the data collected was coded, analysed and presented in percentages. The results disclosed that parents failed to support schools to cover inadequacy of funds and therefore they were not able to initiate additional projects. The research recommends that the government should therefore increase the allocation to schools in order to achieve the objectives of FPE. Finally the study will finally help scholars undertake studies and make recommendations on how to facilitate education financing for all as spelt out in Kenya's Vision 2030 and consequently attain the SDGs

Key words: Free Primary Education, financial resources, SDGs, Vision 2030 and insecurity

1. INTRODUCTION

Individual development is highly regarded through education achievement as oriental discipline in life as asserted by Carson, (2002). Education overseers and administrators should promote and tailor their organizational or institutional objectives and goals to the interest, desire and needs of all the stakeholders to curb the foreseen sustainable challenges (MOE, 2006). Curbing of educational sustainable challenges in the institutions brings about enhanced positive change and effective sustainability in all levels. The second goal in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals was to achieve and sustain (universal primary education) UPE by 2015. The intention was to make children of the world complete full course of primary circle without discrimination.

Looking into the objectives of education for all and the then millennium development goals then, all young children must access formal education for growth as a citizen. According to the current research outcome, there are still more than 113 million children around the world of primary age going who are not yet in school (UNESCO, 2007). Therefore Proper sustainability of FPE is the measuring scale in education worldwide. In the USA schools have variations in sustainability of FPE which have almost led closer to achieving equality of education opportunity as an American ideal. Some other country policy makers receive reports on sustainability of FPE of their country in participatory conferences organized internationally and locally in arid and semi-arid areas. Conduction of research study nationally and assessment was another way of realizing the sustainability of the FPE.

According to Otach, (2008), free primary and universal education had not been extended to Africans before 1960s. When Kenya attained independence in 1963, the government committed itself to increasing educational access and creating a qualified specialized human resource base with aptitude for modernization and development. High

demand for education by the populace compounded with general belief that it was the sure avenue for socio economic development meant that formal education acquired a central position in the budget and national development plans, (John and Mugo, 2009). The pivotal role that politics played in education sustainability in arid and semi-arid areas became apparent when the first ruling party KANU in its 1963 manifesto entitled “what a KANU government offers you”. It promised seven years of free primary education (MOEST 2001). The Ominde Commission (RoK, 1964), was mandated with charting a new education policy for the country.

The Ominde Commission report, attempted to redress the underdeveloped parts of the country and the emergence of a policy shift with emphasis to Universal access to Education For All (UEFA). The Ominde Commission further identified areas in arid and semi-arid areas of Baringo North among others as the warranting higher grant allocation where boarding schools and mobile schools are required (RoK, 1964). That would be an immediate strategy to uplift school participation through boarding services where government will provide the basic needs to cater for the education growth and development. The national development plan 1970-1974 specifically championed for low cost boarding schools in arid and semi-arid areas. This led to increased funding enabling their establishment across some parts of Baringo north particularly Bartabwa schools within the arid and semi-arid areas.

The impetus for addressing declining education participation was derived in Jomtien in the 1990 “World Declaration on Education for All.” Nations of the world renewed the call to universalize education. In Kenya combined strategies of formulation, presidential orders and a move to decentralize funding coalesced to revamp school participation, (GOK, 2006). According to Rawlinson and Forth C, (1996), sustainability of FPE must be progressive. It was not sensible to assume and do shoddy investigation. This was done so as to find out whether targets are achieved if not, early intervention would be done. According to Ngarago, (2001), the abrogation of tuition fee by the late Mzee Jomo Kenyatta way back in 1970s was one step towards universal primary education targeting economic marginalized districts in the country (UNICEF, 2009, World Bank, 2009). The policy abolished school fees and other levies arguing that fees and levies posed a serious hindrance to children wanting to access education in schools (Okwach and George, 2008) lauded the move. Sifuna, (2005) asserted that abolition of school fees was good because of its effects on Gross Enroll Rate (GER) but teething issues have been raised due to delay or inadequacy of funds remitted to schools by the government.

According to Buchman, (1999), poverty and educational inequality in sub Saharan Africa points to the high levels of absolute poverty and decline in primary enrolment rate in the region as a result of inadequate resources. He cites evidence demonstrating that modest level of education significantly improves the life chances of the people and therefore education should be embraced by all for the benefits of children living in poverty, equally to those in other potential regions. In many cases government supply aid interventions aimed at providing universal primary education to narrow the regional disparities and imbalances to full participation in the country. The degree to which countries of Africa can view the remaining challenges facing the sustainability of FPE, hinges on the ability of the countries to deal with the issues facing schools in arid and semi-arid areas. Many factors contribute to the low education participation and learning outcomes.

On the demand side, children in arid and semi-arid areas may be less interested in attending schools due to high opportunity cost and low returns. Parents in arid and semi-arid areas often have a relatively low level of education and as a result may attach low value to schooling and be unable to help their children to learn since role model were lacking. Inadequacy of resources in schools creates discomfort and undermines the intended objectives of sustaining FPE. World Bank, (2007), laments that every school has its own set of traditions and culture which have been built over a long period of time. However, head teachers need to develop sustainable skills of FPE's traditions and cultures particularly in arid and semi-arid areas, given that sponsors, government and parents have pumped resources to the schools despite their geographical adversaries like drought and famine, cultural beliefs, socio economic factors, political alienation and population density in these arid and semi-arid areas.

The desire that every child in every country has a chance to complete at least a primary education cycle as stipulated by World conference on EFA in Jomtien Thailand of 1990 set goals which were to be achieved by 2000. The world education forum in Dakar Senegal in 2000 acknowledged the convention doctrines of Jomtien conference. UPE completion and gender equity in primary and secondary were affirmed by (World Bank, 2000). Primary education was a powerful soul searching progress towards the attainment and sustainability of MDGs. On the collapse of MDGs the sustainable development goals (SDGs) also spell out inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all in goal 4 (UN, 2016). More equitable distribution of education was correlated with low poverty and inequality and foster economic growth and development (Kattan, 2006)). Education is fundamental for the construction of globally competitive and democratic societies. It is one of the most powerful instruments for reducing poverty and inequality. These would lay the basis for sustaining economic growth, positive governance and enhances effective service delivery.

The research was guided by the following objectives:

- i) To determine the extent to which FPE was affected by financial resource constraints in arid and semi-arid areas of Bartabwa.

- ii) Investigate the effects of FPE on students' population and academic improvement in arid and semi-arid areas in the arid and semi-arid areas of Bartabwa.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 The Research Design

The study employed descriptive survey, where both quantitative and qualitative survey research strategies were used. Orodho, (2005) asserts that a descriptive survey is the most appropriate in studying individual beliefs, values and attitudes. The survey design was used by the study to get the relevant information and make informed decisions regarding the sustainability of Free Primary Education in arid and semi-arid areas of Bartabwa division, Baringo North Sub-County in Baringo County.

2.2 The target population

A total population of 140 teachers were targeted to be involved in the study and 24 schools in the study area. The researcher utilized the third rule method to arrive at the target population of 8 out of 24 schools sampled in the division, 8 head teachers and 64 teachers, spread among the 8 selected schools in which 8 teachers per school were purposefully sampled. 3 education officers were also identified and included in the research, making a total of 75 persons. Questionnaires and interview guides were used to get qualitative and quantitative data information.

2.3 The sample and sampling techniques

Sampling is the systematic process of selecting a number of individual for a study to represent the larger group from which they were selected (Salganik and Heckathorn (2004). Purposive technique was used to select the sample for the study. Every element in the study had an equal chance of being selected to be used. According to Salganik and Heckathorn (2004), 30% of the target population constitutes a representative sample. The study utilized the third rule method which was equivalent to 30 % of the target population higher than 10% minimum sample recommended for social science research as observed by Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003).

2.4 Data collection instruments

The instruments that were used in the research were questionnaires and interview guides. The questionnaires targeted teachers and head teachers who presented their views over the researched area. Interview guides targeted county education officers in presenting their views and opinions on the researched area. These assisted in capturing each group's contribution.

2.5 Validity of data collection instruments

The validity of the questionnaires and interview guides to generate information was accepted after consultation with resource persons and peers. It involved peers and college mates in the discussion so as to come up with concrete findings from the data collection instruments.

2.6 Reliability of data collection instruments

According to Fraenkel and Wallen, (2000) reliability is the consistency of an instrument to give the same results at different times. They were ascertained through piloting of the instruments. The Cronbach Alpha co-efficient was a model of inter-item correlation. A co-efficient of 0.7 and above was recommended for the study. This was used to inhibit the relationship between the reliability and the consistency of the research done in this area which gave the similar results at different times of the piloting.

2.7 Method of data analysis

Data collected were both qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative data collected from the interview guide was checked for completeness and consistency equally to qualitative data collected from questionnaires. Factor analysis was used to rate each factor in the order of their significance. Each factor was checked against the tables, frequencies and percentages and the data collected was coded, analysed and presented using frequency table and percentages.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Extent in which Free Primary Education is affected by financial inadequacy in arid and semi-arid areas

The results indicated that due to inadequacy of FPE funds, the parents will support the school, 5(62.5%) strongly agreed and 3(37.5%) agreed. On projects will be initiated to supplement inadequacy, 4(50.0%) were not sure, 3(37.5%) disagreed, while 1(12.5%) strongly disagreed. 1(12.5%) and 3(37.5%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively that children will seek for alternatives, 2(25.0%) disagreed and 1(12.5%) strongly disagreed.

Majority of the respondents 3(37.5%) agreed and 4(50.0%) strongly agreed that will lead to inability of some pupils to attend school frequently. Similarly, 6(75.0%) agreed and 2(25.0%) strongly agreed that there will be lack of learning facilities. Majority 5(62.5%) of the respondents also agreed that pupils will drop out hence early marriages, while 3(37.5%) agreed.

The results indicated that due to inadequacy of FPE funds, the parents need to support the schools. Therefore the parents should be sensitized on the importance of education of their children, hence provide financial support to schools in order to cushion the limited finances the governments have offered. The interviews from education officers on effects of inadequacy of funds were inadequate for instructional materials, repairs and maintenance and incomplete projects. Majority of the respondents agreed that inadequate funding would possibly lead to inability of some pupils to attend school frequently and possibly result to early marriages.

Table 4.2: Extent in which Free Primary Education is affected by financial inadequacy in arid and semi-arid areas

Factor	SA= 5		A=4		NSA=3		D=2		SD=1	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Parents will support the school	5	62.5	3	37.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Projects will be initiated to supplement inadequacy	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	50.0	3	37.5	1	12.5
Children will seek for alternatives	1	12.5	3	37.5	1	12.5	2	25.0	1	12.5
Inability of some pupils to attend school frequently	3	37.5	4	50.0	1	12.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
There will be lack of learning facilities	2	25.0	6	75.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Pupils will drop out hence early marriages	5	62.5	3	37.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

3.2 Effects of FPE on students population and academic improvement in arid and semi-arid areas

Majority of the respondents 2(25.0%) strongly agreed and 6(75.0%) agreed that inadequate FPE funds leads to pupils drop out. Most respondents 2(25.0%) strongly agreed and 4(50.0%) agreed with the statement that lack of funds in FPE disrupts learning activities in institutions. The findings indicated that adequacy of FPE funds from the government has promoted quality academic performance, 3(37.5%) strongly agreed and 5(62.5%) strongly agreed. Similarly, 7(87.5%) strongly agreed and 1(12.5%) agreed that adequate FPE funds from the government leads to increment in school enrolment (pupils population).

The findings indicated that adequacy of FPE funds from the government has promoted quality academic performance, similarly, they agreed that adequate FPE funds from the government leads to increment in school enrolment.

Table 4.3: Effects of FPE on students' population and academic improvement in arid and semi-arid areas

Factor	SA= 5		A=4		NSA=3		D=2		SD=1	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
With inadequacy of FPE funds dropout rate heightened or experienced hence academic improvement undermined	2	25.0	6	75.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Adequate tranche of funds of FPE leads to parents absconding their responsibilities	0	0.0	2	25	4	50.0	1	12.5	1	12.5

Continuation of Table 4.3

Lack of funds in FPE disrupts learning activities in institutions	3	37.5	5	62.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Adequacy of FPE funds from the government has promoted quality academic performance	3	37.5	5	62.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Adequate FPE funds from the government leads to increment in school enrolment (pupils population)	7	87.5	1	12.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

SA =Strongly Agreed, A =Agreed, NSA= Not Strongly Agreed, D= Disagreed
SD=Strongly Disagreed

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study identified inadequate funding, poor perception by parents towards FPE, less community support and negative attitude towards education as major obstacles to education in Bartabwa division, Baringo County area in the arid and semi-arid in Kenya. The same opinion was reaffirmed by Sifuna, (2007), who asserted that the limitation facing education in arid and semi-arid was the act of pastoralist life style where they engage in cattle rusting applying a aggressive confrontation strategy based on the social cultural background and retrogressive traditions outburst for survival.

In spite of all the efforts the government has made, FPE programme still faces several challenges that have hampered its sustainability as was articulated clearly by all the respondents as: delay in disbursement of funds, poor parental and community perception and shortage of teachers. Finally there was general misconception about the meaning of free primary education with regards to parents taking the view that they were no longer needed to participate in school activities and especially in extending financial support to school projects.

The results of the research indicated that inadequate funds would make the pupils not attend schools regularly and at the same time there will be inadequate learning resources in the schools. The study therefore recommends that the government should increase the allocation to schools in order to achieve the objectives of FPE. Finally if the government agrees to increase budgetary allocation of FPE, the school head teachers should undergo training on financial management and at the same time involve more Stakeholders in the management of FPE funds.

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