

## Free Day Secondary School Education: Causes of High Drop Out Rates of Students in Secondary Schools in Kipkelion Sub-County, Kericho County, Kenya

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### Abstract

The study endeavoured to investigate factors that cause dropout of secondary school students in Kipkelion Sub County. The study was guided by social demand theory. The objective of the study was to identify factors that cause drop out in secondary schools in Kipkelion Sub County. The Study population comprised 1600 form 4 students and 25 head teachers in 25 secondary schools in Kipkelion Sub County. The sample size consisted of 343 students and 19 head teachers which were selected using both purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics. Questionnaires and document analysis were used to collect quantitative data while interviews with the principals and sub county directors generated qualitative data. Validity of instruments was confirmed by involving experts. Reliability was determined by using parallel form technique and cronbach's alpha of 0.78 was obtained. It was established that despite the introduction of free day secondary school education (FDSE), there is still a good number of obstacles. The greatest causes of dropouts are early marriages and teenage pregnancies among girls. There are also latent costs which are beyond the reach of most parents and others are retrogressive cultural practices, pregnancies, lack of sufficient teachers, HIV and AIDS. In spite of innovative strategies the Government of Kenya has undertaken, the cost of education has not substantially decreased for a majority of students whose backgrounds are poor. The recommendation is that the Government of Kenya through the ministry of education should increase the amount of capitation and sensitize the communities on the importance of taking their children's education more seriously especially the girl-child and elimination of retrogressive cultural values.

Key words: Free Day Secondary Education, dropout rates, Kipkelion Sub County.

### 1.0 Introduction

Policies to improve transition of students to move from one level to another and reduce the number of children dropping out of school are critical if the goal of education for all (EFA) is to be achieved. Large numbers of children join secondary level of education but unfortunately most of them drop out before completion of the cycle. The research was keen to establish factors that cause this type of mess and particularly in Kipkelion Sub County.

Education is a key pillar for development of any society. Education holds a key to economic empowerment of the people and any national development of any nation. It improves the people's ability to take advantage of the opportunities that can improve their wellbeing as individuals and be able to participate more effectively, politically, socially and economically. Apart from promoting national development, education also plays a key role in promoting national unity, equality, social justice and international consciousness.

It has been established that there is a positive correlation between enrolment ratios and Gross National products (Harbinson and myers, 1963). The higher the enrolment ratio a country has the higher the Gross national products (GNP) and vice versa and that is why most countries invest heavily in education.

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The provision of education to all Kenyans is fundamental to the success of government's development strategy. This was reflected in the Sessional paper No 1 of 2005 on policy framework for education, training and research which underlines the government's commitment to achieve that kind of objective (ROK, 2005). Edward Davison (1994) in his study on the causes of economic growth as shown by increases in National income (Gross National Product) of the United States of America established that land and capital without knowledge did not account for a substantial proportion and he attributed this to lack of knowledge about the components of growth of national products. One of most powerful influences on demand for secondary and higher education is the level of family income (Psacharopolous and Woodhall, 1985).

In Kenya the government spends a lot of money to finance education instead of leaving out to individuals to do so and this is because the society benefits directly or indirectly from education and one of the ways is by providing bursaries to the needy students and provision of FPE in primary and FDSE in secondary level respectively.

The main aim of subsidised secondary school education which was implemented in 2008 was to reduce the cost of learning as well as increase transition rates from primary to secondary schools (ROK 2008). The Government of Kenya then released ksh.2.9 million for subsidised secondary school education and allocated ksh.10, 265 to every child to cater for tuition and operational costs annually (ROK 2008). This amount has remained constant ever since in spite of inflation and the rise in cost of living. This amount however, does not cater for hidden costs such as development of physical facilities and hidden costs of education such as transport, lunch boarding fees and uniform. These types of costs are supposed to be met by the parents and they are still high for poor households who may find it difficult to maintain their children in secondary schools

In spite of free education, poor families always find it difficult to meet out of pocket expenses, uniform, transport, books and earnings foregone and many other indirect costs for their children and this view is supported by UNICEF (1989). Huge part of the burden is borne by the parents because they pay for books, uniform, development funds, furniture only to mention a few. According to World Bank (1980) social costs of education is increased by wastage and repetition which happens without corresponding benefits

As a result of high costs involved in the education process most of the poor families find it extremely difficult to educate their children and this adversely affect transition of students from one level to the other and hence enrolment because of dropout.

Njeru and Orodho(2003), argue that secondary school bursary is improperly managed and also not sufficient to meet the objectives of enhancing access to secondary Education and reducing dropout rate among the poor. The bursary equally is not sufficient in reducing dropout rates.

In spite of the government's effort to ensure that every deserving citizen gets at least basic education there are still a good number of students who drop out of the system before completing the cycle of basic education due to a number of factors.

The issue of school dropout is a worldwide problem facing education industry around the world. School dropout in its simplest meaning is the untimely withdrawal from school ( Jaja& Patrick 2012).

One of the countries affected by the menace is Nigeria and most of the research findings concerning causes of dropout in Nigeria include : early marriages, teenage pregnancies, types

of parents occupation, broken homes, poor school facilities, failure in school exams, poor academic performance, Poverty among others. (Ajaja 2012).

In Kenya attainment of secondary education is adversely affected by high dropout rates as well as low transition rates between primary and secondary schools (ROK,2003).High drop outs can stem from many causes. Achoka, (2007) for instance , portends that poverty, HIV/AIDS pandemic, and early marriages are some of the factors that cause drop out in both primary and secondary schools. In Kenya one of the major cause of drop out is the bursary funds. Apart from the bursary in secondary school being poorly managed it does not sufficiently meet the objectives of enhancing secondary education and also fail to reduce dropout rate among the poor (Njeru and Orodho, 2003).

Transition rate from primary to secondary school has surpassed the projected 70% (Republic of Kenya,2005). It further argues, of this 30% of the students who enrol in secondary schools drop out before completing secondary cycle.

Failure to complete a basic cycle of secondary education not only limits future opportunities for children but also represents a significant drain on limited resources that a nation has for provision of secondary education.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem.**

In spite of various efforts made by the government of Kenya so far to strengthen enrolment at various levels of education, such as introduction of FPE at primary school level in 2003 and FDSE at secondary school level in 2008, the situation is still wanting. Although the response has been commendable, children who are out of school at the moment ,comprise a very big percentage and one of the main reasons is high dropout rate which takes place between standard eight and form one level and also between form one and form four, leave alone before reaching standard eight in primary.

In Kipkelion Sub County the dropout rate in secondary school varies between three and five percent. In the year 2011, 3.75 percent of secondary students dropped out of school out of whom 2 percent were girls and in the year 2012, 4 percent disappeared of whom 2.5 percent were girls, in 2013 the figure was 4.8 and 3.2 of them were girls ( DEOs office, Kipkelion, 2014). Given this wanting scenario, this study, was set to find out why dropout of students in kipkelion Sub County is still a big challenge.

### **1.2 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate causes of dropout in secondary schools in Kipkelion Sub County.

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The objective of the study was to find out the causes of high dropout rates in Kipkelion Sub County.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study will assist the government and policy makers: Establish alternative ways of increasing gross enrolment of the students and ensure that the enrolment growth rate is in phrase with the increasing population of eligible age group; Assist the Ministry of Education in coming up with strategies required in the achievement of full enrolment of students in secondary education level and; Plan for education in future.

### **1.5 Limitation of the Study.**

Although the study was successful, nevertheless, it suffered from the following two limitations:

- i) The extent of generalization of the findings might have been limited since the study was confined to only one Sub County.
- ii) Some students might have transferred from the sub county but owing to communication breakdown they were perceived as dropouts.

## **2.0 Theoretical Framework**

This study is based on social demand approach which refers to the aggregate/total demand for school places in a nation. Basic education according to this approach is to develop the learners irrespective of whether they will acquire gainful employment or not; it emphasizes on the right of the individual to be educated, it views education in it and it assumes that the society has adequate resources to support the education sector. The approach does not discriminate on any category of people in the provision of national education. Hence it ensures that there is equity in the provision of education across the board. This therefore discourages dropping out of school on any ground.

The major goal of this approach is to provide education to as many people as possible who may be in need of it. Since independence Kenya has always tried to expand educational opportunities for its citizens particularly at basic level of education. This kind of gesture has been reflected in the provision of free primary education and free day secondary education.

This approach calls for the promotion of educational equity. One of Kenya's educational goals is to ensure that every student gets the type of education he or she wants. To ensure provision of secondary education to all those who are eligible as applied in the distribution of educational opportunities should be promoted and also the target of achieving full enrolment at all levels of education should be attained.

## **2.1 Literature review**

### **2.1.1 Basic Education for All**

Education plays a key role in the development of human capital, which is in form considered as the most important input in production. It is for this reason that over the years, since attainment of independence by Kenya policy documents have consistently, stressed on the need to offer an education that addresses the importance of national development, national intergration, economic growth and poverty eradication. Part of the policy documents is the need to promote equality and justice.

While spending on education generates immediate economic benefits, a more significant and lasting contribution results from growth in the number of educated workers who are capable of competing for high demand jobs in the global economy. Investing in higher education can also serve as an incubator for long-term growth of high demand industries which are in line with the vision 2030.

The provision of education for all has been the major goal of the government since independence in 1963. This commitment is reflected in the amount of public expenditure that has been going to education in the last decades. Various strategies, conferences and seminars discussing the provision of Basic Education for all have been going on all over the world.

The Kenya government has taken a bold step in providing free basic education at primary school level. In the year 2003 free basic education was started which saw a sharp increase in enrolment from 5.9 million in 2002 to 7.2 million in 2003. The same gesture was extended to secondary school level in the year 2008. According to professor Onger (2011), since the programme was launched in 2008, enrolment has risen from 1 million to 1.8 million and

about ksh.50 million has been spent on free day secondary schools. The new constitution has now made secondary learning part of basic education which shall not only be free and compulsory, but also a human right.

The Jomtien declaration on Education for all (EFA) (1990) provided an expanded vision of Education to include life- long learning and life skills programmes. Basic Education is a fundamental right that includes early childhood, non-formal Education, adult's literacy, upgrading and life skills programmes. EFA is the government's declaration to provide basic reading, writing and life skills to all children, youth and adults in the country.

The world Education forum in Dakar, Senegal in April 2000 set these six cardinal principles (goals) of Education for all. These are; free and compulsory primary Education of good quality, expansion of early childhood care and to all young children, training and life skills for youth and adults, adults literacy programmes, eliminate gender disparities in access, progression and completion and improve overall quality of Education.

With the declaration of free primary school education in January 2003, the government accelerated its speed to meet one of the goals of the EFA; of free and compulsory primary Education affirmed at Jomtien, Thailand (1990) and Dakar, Senegal (2000). The world summit for children (1990) and the world summit of population and development.(Cairo summit,1999) recognized basic education as a human right and a means of social, economic and political development.

The EFA framework for action in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA); Education for African Renaissance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the Johannesburg declaration for African based on the ideology of African Renaissance. The emphasis is on the fact that education in Africa shall prepare African people to take control of their own destiny, liberate them from dependence and endow them with initiative, creativity, critical thinking, enterprise, democratic values, pride and appreciation of diversity. Secondary school education was incorporated as part of basic education in 2008 by the Kenya government and tuition free secondary Education or subsidised secondary education was declared (Republic of Kenya, 2008).

Accordingly secondary school education is supposed to enable the children from poor households acquire a quality education that enables them to access opportunities for self advancement and productive members of the society. In addition it will ensure access and high quality secondary education in Kenya. However, one is left wondering up to what degree is education free because of the huge non-schooling gap. According to the national and household census (2009) it was established that the number of children who were out of school in the formal education system was as follows: 2.1 million (58 percent), in pre primary; 1.9 million (23percent), in primary and 2.7 million (76 percent), in secondary (GOK 2009).

### **2.1.2 Causes of Drop Out**

In spite of the Kenya government's effort to make education affordable by putting in place policies on free primary Education(FPE) and free day secondary Education (FDSE), it is evident from credible research studies that the cost of education is still a big dream to most poor parents. According to MOEST (2005) transition rate from primary to secondary since inception of FPE has surpassed 71%, but 30% of them drop out before completion of the cycle. Orodho (2014) argues that huge latent user fees have found their way into the free primary education (FPE) and free day secondary education (FDSE) in most basic educational institutions in the country. He pointed out that although parents, teachers associations (PTAS) have been authorized to suggest extra levies to be imposed with their consent; they have

ended up being mere rubber stamps for excessive school levies being witnessed in schools. This tendency has locked out children from vulnerable backgrounds because the fees charged in most secondary schools has sky rocketed beyond the means of most poor households.

A study by Summon (1980) showed that more than 50% of the students who enrolled in primary schools drop out before completing their studies. The drop out rate in Latin America and America ranged from 33.1% to 74.7% and from 22.2% to 81.3% respectively. His conclusion is that the drop out rate is aggravated the problem of regional disparities in access to education because some areas have a higher drop out rates than others.

A study on regional disparities in Kenya by court and Chai (1974) observed that the disparities were prominent. They gave examples of central and rift valley provinces, which had 15% and 20% of the national population but 24% and 14% of the primary school enrolment respectively. However, the study did not show the disparities in other levels of education and also did not use small units of analysis.

Kenya, like many other developing countries is still facing the problem of wastage in education (Wamahiu, 1993, Eshiwani et al 1987, Ciano 1982 and Gitau 1985). Although wastage exists in the education system, it tends to be higher among girls than boys as evidenced by a world bank study conducted in developing countries (World Bank, 1990). Differences in gender enrolment, however, widens as one moves up the educational ladder, with more boys than girls being enrolled at secondary and tertiary levels of education (UNECA, 1990).

It is now high time that a study to establish the reasons for such a trend was carried out. Female enrolment has not been stepped up to achieve equality in educational provision but also because of the importance of women's education, in the development of any country (republic of Kenya, 1985).

According to the World Bank (1990) report the number of female students keeps on decreasing at the secondary and tertiary levels of education in Kenya because of high dropout and repetition rates UNECA (1990). In Kenya, for example, although girls constitute 50% of the pupils enrolled in primary school, the percentage of girls decreases even further at the tertiary level, where it is about 27.2% of the girls only, Kamotho (2003). In 1991, the proportion of females' enrolment at the tertiary level was 30%, (Wamuhui, 1991). This shows that the rate of wastage among girls' education has been worsening over the years, especially between secondary and tertiary levels and this therefore calls for efforts to establish the nature, magnitude and causes of this wastage among girls.

Factors behind gender inequality in education include negative cultural values, teenage pregnancy, early marriages, sexual harassment, and excessive domestic chores thus disregarding girl's education. The community discriminate while sending the children to school. Girls are married off to get to get resources for the family.

### **3.0 Population and Sample**

The target population was composed of 1600 Form 4 students in the sub county from 25 secondary schools and 25 principals and also Education officials. A sample of 343 students and 19 head teachers was selected randomly. Yamane (1967) formula was used to obtain the sample. Out of the sampled schools, there were two pure boy schools and four girl schools and the rest were mixed schools. The table below shows the distribution of students.

Table 1: Population sizes alongside respective sample sizes.

School	Form four population			Sample		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Mercy girls		114	114		29	29
Taita Towet	63		63	16		16
Lesirwo	37	35	72	10	8	18
Kipkelion girls		79	79		20	20
Siret	27	22	49	7	5	12
Kipchorian	22	23	45	5	6	11
Kamarus	20	11	31	5	3	8
Kalyet	23	33	56	7	7	14
Murao	29	17	46	7	5	12
Lelu	42	30	72	10	8	18
Kasheen	24	21	45	6	5	11
AGC Lilocho	175	122	297	40	36	76
Kipsegi	19	13	32	10	8	18
Chilchila	28	34	62	8	8	16
Kokwet	19	17	36	5	4	9
Chepkechei	79		79	20		20
Kiteris Girls		35	35		9	9
Ndubusat		46	46		12	12
Tunnel	32	22	54	8	6	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>1313</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>343</b>

Source : researcher's findings

### 3.1 Research Design and Methodology.

The study employed *ex-post facto* research design. The choice of the design is premised on the fact that events that have happened cannot be manipulated nor engineered (Kothari, 2008). Events such as the number of students enrolled and those who have dropped out cannot be manipulated as they have already occurred.

Random sampling technique was used to select the schools to be involved in the study.

### 3.2 Data Collection Instruments.

Three types of instruments; questionnaires, interview schedule and document analysis were used. The questionnaires were used to generate data from the principals and students while discussion and interviews were used to collect data from the sub county directors and the principals. Document analysis was used to generate data from records at the sub county director's office.

### 3.3 Validity of the Instrument

A valid instrument contains content that is relevant to the study (Kerlinger, 1983). Validity of the instruments, was established before going to the field by discussing the items in the instrument with colleagues and experts in the department of educational management of Moi University and policy studies. Their suggestions and recommendations were very useful in the improvement of the instrument.

### 3.4 Reliability of the Instruments.

Reliability of an instrument refers to its ability to yield the same results when repeated measurements are taken of the same individual under the same conditions (Kothari, 2003). Reliability of the instruments was determined through a pilot study. The researcher carried out a pilot study in Koibatek district through parallel form technique. Some were administered to the Sub County education officers and the head teachers and their responses were assigned numerical values. Nunnally, (1978), defines Cronbach's alpha as a measure of squared correlation between observed scores and true scores. A coefficient correlation of 0.70 or higher is considered acceptable in most science research situations. This study used Cronbach's alpha to find the reliability of the research instrument and a value of 0.78 was obtained and the research instrument was considered reliable.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected through questionnaires were edited and computation of descriptive statistics was carried out using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. The descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution and percentage was used to analyze the data. Qualitative data was placed under themes consistent with research objectives and conclusions made based on the trends and patterns of responses.

## 4.0 Results and Discussions

The table below shows the frequency of responses from the respondents.

Table 2: Factors Causing Drop out

Factor	frequency	%	Total sample population
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Lack of teachers	77	22.5	343
retrogressive cultural values	226	66	343
Poverty& lack of funds	211	61.5	343
Pregnancies	268	78	343
Early marriages	237	69	343
Insufficient facilities	196	57	343
Repetition of classes	201	58.5	343
Peer pressure	206	60	343
Inadequate personnel	108	31.5	343
HIV/AIDS	165	48	343

Source: researcher's findings

The objective of this study was to investigate the causes of high dropout rate in secondary school in kipkelion Sub County. The study established that the greatest contributory factors were unwanted pregnancies and early marriages with 78% and 69% respectively. Retrogressive cultural practices impact negatively on the part of education. 66% of the respondents confirmed very strongly that high dropout rate in kipkelion Sub County is contributed by retrogressive cultural factors such as earning of a dowry and respect through marriage of girls and even the boys are also encouraged to get married as early as possible. According to poverty Reduction strategy paper (2001-2004) poverty is inability to educate children, inability to feed self and family, lack of proper housing and health. According to the study poverty and lack of funds was cited by 61.5% of the respondents. It was reported that although the government of Kenya has tried its best to subsidize secondary school level of education by providing FDSE, quite a good number of people in the society cannot afford to educate their children due to latent costs such as school uniforms, lunch programmes, development, etc.

Other factors that contribute very highly to the menace are peer pressure (60%), repetition of classes (58.5%), HIV/AIDS (48%) and lastly lack of personnel (31.5%).

### Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that most of the students who drop out of school are due to a number of factors and the greatest of which include: early marriages, teenage pregnancies and poverty. The first two rank highest and that is why the girl child carries the greatest brunt as compared with the boy child. According to Education Act (2013) any parent or guardian who defaults in the discharge of his or her responsibility to educate a child is seen to have committed an offence and must face the full force of the law. In the real sense nothing much has been achieved because the stakeholders who are supposed to play a big role have not

tightened their nuts accordingly. In view of this therefore, the researcher recommends that the head teachers, education officers and the provincial administration together with the village elders must work hand in hand and make sure there no is school going child loitering in the villages instead of being in the school. Secondly student mothers should be encouraged to go back to school after delivery and the culprits brought to book by applying the law. It is also recommended that the Government of Kenya through the ministry of education should increase the amount of capitation for FDSE and also sensitize the community more vigorously on the importance of devoting their resources and time to the education of their children and particularly the girls.

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