

## The Hidden Costs of Free Primary Education and Their Implication on Enrolment in Kisii Central District, Kenya.

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### Abstract

In spite of the Republic of Kenya's (ROK) efforts to make primary education free and accessible to all, approximately 3.9 million children still remain out of school due to hidden costs (Census Report ,2009), hence the government's initial objective of every child attaining primary education remains unattained. In addition, prior researches have established increase in non – enrolment and drop-out in various parts of the country due to these hidden costs. The study sought to establish the hidden costs in the provision of free primary education and their impact on enrolment in Kisii Central District. The study was guided by the budget principal theory which emphasizes the balancing of three basic components in any ideal educational budget namely; educational programme, expenditure/cost and income/revenue for a successful education system. The study used a descriptive survey method, which was designed to investigate the hidden costs in the Provision of Free Primary Education and their impact on learning in Kisii Central District. Prior to the study, pilot study was conducted to ensure validity and reliability of the research instruments. Cluster random sampling technique was used to select 10% of the Head teachers and 10% of the parents from the sampled schools. This being a survey, the researcher used questionnaires and interview schedules as research instruments to collect data. The data were then analyzed with the aid of frequencies, averages, percentages and presented in tables, bar graphs and pie charts. Thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data: The study revealed that though the introduction of FPE Programme had greatly reduced the financial burden of public primary school going children, the parents still incurred some costs. It was established that on average parents spent Kshs 1674 per child on these costs. In addition the findings established that partially the hidden costs contributed to drop out rates as most parents were unable to meet the hidden costs of FPE. Further, the findings revealed that the government funding on FPE was inadequate and it was characterized by late disbursement. The results indicated that many public primary schools in Kisii Central District have insufficient physical facilities and learning resources. Conclusively, FPE implementation in Kisii Central District has not been effective as evidenced through educational wastage due to hidden costs of FPE; inadequate government funding among other factors. The study recommends government budgetary increase on FPE programme so as to ease the financial burden met by parents, involvement of other stakeholders in funding FPE, timely disbursement of FPE funds to schools by the government among other recommendations as discussed in chapter five of the study. Significantly the study findings underscored the impact of hidden costs on the provision of FPE, which will enable education policy-makers and other stakeholders to cope with strategies for easing parents' cost-burden and ways of mobilizing funds to meet the cost of FPE programme to ensure its sustainability to avoid wastage in terms of human and material resources. Finally, the study has provided information that could form the basis for further critical assessment and evaluation of the FPE situation by future researchers to facilitate more concrete and valid solutions to the problem.

### Introduction

Since independence in 1963, the Republic of Kenya has been committed to expanding the education opportunities to enable greater enrolment. Education expansion has been in response to a number of concerns, which include the desire to combat ignorance, disease and poverty. Abagi's (1999), study on educational reform in Kenya sees education as a fundamental factor for human capital development.

This is particularly important at this particular moment in time, as the country aims to position itself to achieve sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction by the year 2015. It will be increasingly important for Kenyan work force to be literate numerate, skilled and knowledgeable, to effectively participate in nation building and seize the opportunities presented by globalization.

The Republic of Kenya has addressed challenges facing the Education sector through commissions, committees and task forces. The Kenya Education Commission Report by Ominde proposed an Education system that would foster national Unity and the creation of sufficient human capital for national development. Further, it sought to reform the Education System inherited from the colonial Government to make it more responsive to the needs of independent Kenya (ROK, 1964). Session paper No. 10 of 1965 on African Socialism and its application to the planning in Kenya formally adopted the Kenya Education Commission Report as a basis for post independence Education development (ROK, 1964).

The Report of The National Committee on Educational objectives and policies focused on redefining Kenya's Educational policies and objectives, giving consideration to national unity, economic, social and cultural aspirations of the people of Kenya (ROK, 1976).

The Report of the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for The Next Decade and Beyond focused on improving Education, financing quality and relevance. (ROK, 1988).

The commission of inquiry into The Education System of Kenya Report was mandated to recommend ways and means of enabling education to facilitate, accelerate industrial and technical development, life-long learning and adaptation in response to changing circumstances, (ROK, 1999).

The above – mentioned reports saw FPE as a better strategy towards attaining Education for All. Recent policy initiatives have focused on the attainment of Education for All (EFA) and in particular Universal Primary Education (UPE). According to Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005, the key concerns are: Access, Retention, Equity, Quality and Relevance. According to the paper, the effectiveness of the current 8-4-4 structure and System of Education has come under increased scrutiny.

The Republic of Kenya's policy to achieve UPE is entrenched in the new Kenyan Constitution and in the wider international context through the World Declaration Conference on Education for All (EFA), held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. Article 53 (1b) of the new Kenyan Constitution states that every child has the right to free and compulsory basic education, (ROK, 2010). The Universal declaration on Human Rights adopted in 1948, declared that every one has a right to Education, (UNESCO, 1948).

Internationally the World Declaration Conference on Education for All (EFA), held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 to which Kenya is a signatory sparked off a new impetus towards basic education especially with its so-called vision and renewed commitment. (World Bank, 1990).

The Dakar Conference of 2000 renewed the ambition of achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE) in Africa. It set to eliminate gender disparities in Primary and Secondary Education by 2005, and to achieve gender equality in Education by 2015. This was further endorsed by Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Among other things the MDGs set targets to ensure that, by 2015, children every where attain compulsory primary education. The Dakar forum further identified education as a foundation for higher living standards and democracy in societies. It acknowledged that in as much as the countries of the world declared basic education available to all resulting in high enrolment, bigger challenges appeared to reverse the goals of EFA.

The objective for championing free and compulsory education is to increase enrolment in schools and curb dropouts. In 1960s and 1970s through the guiding philosophy of basic education, the Republic of Kenya heavily subsidized education at all levels. The increasingly high expenditure on education became a burden to the government and consequently in 1986, the government adopted cost-sharing policy in education. This required that parents and community provide learning materials and facilities, while the government's main responsibility was to pay teachers' salaries (Sessional paper No.6, 1988). Schools took advantage of this policy and introduced several levies such as tuition, activity, examination fee, development fund, interview fee, registration fee and uniform fee. Despite the high gross enrolment rates (GER) recorded in the 1990s, completion rates were very low. One out of four children who entered school dropped out before completing five years of primary education or acquiring sustainable literacy.

**Table 1.1 Primary school dropout rates by Gender and province in percentage, 2003-2007.**

Province	2003			2004			2005			2006			2007		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Coast	1.9	1.8	1.8	5.6	8.5	6.9	7.7	6.7	7.3	7.3	8.5	7.9	5.4	5.9	5.6
Central	1	0.8	0.9	5.2	3.9	4.5	3.5	3.2	3.4	4.6	2.2	3.4	2.2	1.6	1.9
Eastern	1	0.8	0.9	5.2	3.9	4.5	3.5	3.2	3.4	4.6	2.2	3.4	2.2	1.6	1.9
Nairobi	1.9	1.4	1.6	5.7	5.6	5.6	6.3	6.7	6.5	7.5	5.6	6.6	4.2	4	4.1
Rift Valley	2.3	2.2	2.2	6.5	7.2	6.9	4.7	4.3	4.5	6	5.2	5.6	3.5	3.6	3.6
Western	2.4	2.4	2.4	6.6	7.8	7.2	5.6	4.4	5	9.9	9.6	9.7	1.1	2.2	1.6
Nyanza	2.8	3.1	2.9	6.5	9.2	7.8	3.9	5.3	4.6	6.4	5.7	6.1	2.3	4.4	3.5
North Eastern	2.3	3.1	2.6	12.2	21.4	15.3	6.4	8.1	7	8.7	15.9	11.1	4	6.1	4.7
<b>NATIONAL</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.5</b>

Source: MOEST (2003-2007)

From table 1.1, it is evident that pupils drop out of school. Due to this fact, there is a lot of wastage of resources per pupil per year. To alleviate the problem the NARC government introduced FPE in 2003 to show its

commitment in realizing Universal Primary (UPE) and Education for All (EFA) by 2015 as spelt out in the world conference on Education for All in Jomtien Thailand, in 1990 and the World Education Forum held in Dakar Senegal in 2000.

A report of the Ministerial Task Force on January 10<sup>th</sup> 2003 by the Minister of Education, Science and Technology on the implementation of Free Primary School Education programme indicated that 1.5 million school going children were out of school mainly because of the numerous levies (MOE, 2003). According to Education Sector Report of 2006 through the FPE initiative, there has been an increase in enrolment at primary school level. This has put a lot of pressure on demands for textbooks, other instructional materials as well as the school infrastructure.

The GER in public primary school rose from 88.2 percent in 2002 to 104.8 percent in 2004, (ROK, 2006). Pupil's enrolment as at 2010 reached 8.2 million up from 5.2 million in 2002, (MOE, 2010). The increase in enrolment rates indicates that there is increased demand for primary education. The increased enrolment was more notable in the Eastern, Western and Nyanza provinces.

Despite the above presented information, available data from 2009 National Census Report indicates that about 4 million primary school age children are still out of school, (Standard, 2010, Sep. 26<sup>th</sup> p.18). The Economic Survey of 2011 indicated that more than 400,000 pupils enrolled in 2003 did not complete class eight in 2010 due to either forced repetition or drop outs. The report further established that only 59 % of the beneficiaries who enrolled in 2003 completed class eight in the year 2010. This causes concern on the high level of wastage, (Daily Nation, 2011, May, 19<sup>th</sup> p.9). The National Assessment System For Monitoring Learner Achievement (NASMLA) Report of 2010 compiled by Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) in its findings reported that 70.1% of lower primary pupils are ever absent from schools due to lack of school fees, uniform, work at home, regular meals among other reasons. Further, available data from Kenya National Bureau of Statistics indicates unstable enrolment rates in Kisii Central District, the locale of the study as from the year 2002-2008. The 2009 Kenya Census Report revealed that approximately 29,036 school age going children in Kisii Central were out of school thus negating the national commitment of EFA.

The programme faces challenges which include shortage of teachers and over crowding of pupils and inadequate funds among others. Each child is entitled Ksh: 1,020 annually out of which Ksh 650 is meant for instructional materials and Ksh 370 for current expenditure, which is insufficient given that these amount has not been revised since the inception of the programme in 2003 amidst the escalating cost of goods and services. Worse still the government delays the disbursement to schools. Due to this concern the education PS Professor Ole Kiyiapi James proposed to the GoK to increase the MoE budgetary allocation as the MoE finds it difficult to reconcile the scarce resources available with the budget needed to achieve its goals (Daily Nation, 2011, June. 1st p10 col.1). To remedy the situation the school authorities ask parents to pay fees to bridge the gap or threaten to close schools (Standard, 2010, Sept. 16<sup>th</sup> p.18).

It is clear from the above background information that there is the problem of meeting the cost of primary education. As evident from the review, this is due to inadequate government allocations to the programme. Therefore there is need to tap other sources to realize resources to meet the cost of primary education. Contribution by parents has been emphasized in the review as an important means of raising additional costs, but the nature, the extent and the implication of parents' contribution to FPE has not been shown. Olembo (1982), observes that the contribution of parents to financing primary education is significant but it has never been quantified and added to the total budget for education

Thus it remains a hidden cost, a miscellaneous cost which is exclusive of the government's annual budget for education. It was against this background that the researcher investigated the hidden costs of FPE and its implication on enrolment in Kisii Central District.

#### **Statement of the problem**

In spite of the Republic of Kenya's (RoK) efforts to make primary education free and accessible to all, approximately 3.9 million children still remain out of school due to hidden costs (RoK, Census Report, 2009). In Kisii Central District 29,036 (8.8 %) school going age children are out of school (Kenya Census Report 2009) hence the government's initial objective of every child attaining primary education remains unattained. In addition, prior researches have established increase in non-enrolment and drop-out in various parts of the country due to these hidden costs. This state of affairs has caused concern among the education stakeholders and government. Many questions are asked as to what the exact causes could be and the solutions. Therefore, it is due to this concern that the researcher chose to investigate the hidden costs of FPE and their impact on enrolment in Kisii Central District.

#### **Purpose of the study**

The study sought to establish the hidden costs in the provision of Free Primary Education and their impact on enrolment in Kisii Central District.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study was guided by the budget principal theory which emphasizes the balancing of three basic components in any ideal educational budget namely; educational programme, expenditure/cost and income/revenue for a successful education system.

#### **Significance of the study.**

The study was based on the fact that, though the government is providing free primary education there are hidden costs that are not catered for by the government. Consequently the study will be useful in the following ways:-

- i) The findings of the study shall form part of the relevant educational data for future reference and use.
- ii) The study will provide information that could form a basis for recommendation of any relevant adjustment towards achieving the objectives of education for All (EFA) by the year 2015.
- iii) The findings will make it possible for the education stakeholders and policy-makers to come up with strategy for easing the parents cost –burden like mobilizing funds from donor communities and bilateral partners among others.
- iv) The study will provide information to education stakeholders and policy-makers to assess or evaluate critically the parents' ability in supplementing free primary education thus this will facilitate further research in future to provide more concrete solutions to the problem.

### **Literature review**

#### **Historical development of the UPE.**

According to UNESCO (1993), UPE is an education with no financial burden to parents. This includes any levies or even hidden costs, which can hinder any school going pupil from benefiting from it. The genesis of UPE can be traced back to the period of renaissance.

Gould (1993), acknowledges that the concept of university education is as old as humanity. He adds that during renaissance the states took charge of educational ways from the church in order to increase educational opportunities although education remained largely elitist before the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the end of mass public education in Europe in most countries, formal schooling was very much for the elite. Phillips (1975), notes that education has been traditionally in the hands of religious bodies, guides or private schools. Consequently, many children were unable to profit from these facilities. History shows that amongst the advanced countries the ideas of UPE emerged at various times in different countries as a response to religion, social, economic or political challenges felt by states and governments rather than pressure from parents. Philips (1975), observes that in France, the United State and in other advanced countries, there had been a good deal of heart searching about public responsibility for primary education.

Gould (1993), acknowledges that compulsory education first appeared on countries that developed relatively late or not at all. This includes the various German States between 1724-1806, Russia in 1806, Austria in 1824: Norway in 1848 and Argentina in 1841. In Japan it took place in 1872 France in 1882 Britain and Netherlands in 1900 and Belgium in 1914 in United States was passed in Massachusetts in 1642. Other states were influenced to legislate UPE making its provision an obligation to make it free and secular. Eventually most countries by different methods achieved their quantitative goals by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The ideology of Education as a human right is an outgrowth of the revolution changes in thinking that has spread globally since the end of the Second World War. According to Gould (1993), after the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war emphasis changed and public function of educated became more prominent. Philip (1975), notes that in 1948 the general assembly of the united nation agreed: Everyone has the right to education with the declaration of education as a basic human right.

To translate the UN principle into action, the United Nations Education Scientific and cultural organization (UNESCO), sponsored regional meetings to discuss the future regional meetings to discuss the future of education. In 1956, a meeting was held in Lima on free and compulsory education also Latin America and the Caribbean, a theme that was discussed again in Santiago in 1963. Asian countries met in Karachi in 1960 and Tokyo two years later they (excluding China) set themselves the goals of increasing gross enrolment ratios from about 70% in 1964 to about 90% in 1980. The Addis Ababa Conference of 1961 set a goal for Africa to achieve Universal Enrolment in Primary School by 1980 ( Coombs ,1985).

#### **FPE in China, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Uganda.**

China was one of the poorest and most populous countries of the world but had achieved UPE with a lower proportion of Gross National Product being spent on education than other countries (Colclough and Lewin 1993). The authors further stated that this achievement had been realized because of its successful policies for slowing down population growth. Zimbabwe attained her independence in 1980. After one year, the government introduced a set of educational reforms, which were designed to redress the disparities, and inequalities that were inherited from the colonial government. These reforms included abolishing a dual system of education (for

whites and for blacks) and introduced a racial integration at primary level. Tuition fee was abolished at primary school level and primary schooling was formally declared free and compulsory. Repetition was abolished. Communities were required to finance a large part of educational costs. After 1981, primary enrolment growth rate was 3.5% per year, for each year till 1989 (Colclough and Lewin, 1993). With such enrolment growth rate, UPE was achieved very quickly. It was not easy, however, for this new government to manage these numbers.

Wandi (1983), reported that Tanzania government had made positive progress in the provision of UPE. According to the writer, the introduction of free and compulsory education by Tanzania government in 1977 led to great demand for education. This led to major setbacks in such areas as adequacy of classrooms and teachers houses to match the rapid expansion of primary education. Wandu's (1983), study also revealed that it was not possible to provide adequate classrooms, teaching - learning materials, learning equipment and enough qualified teachers.

In Uganda, the government provision of FPE was introduced in 1996 (Sarah, 1998). Since then United States of America and World Bank have continued to support education in Uganda. The Uganda government guaranteed free but not compulsory education for at most two girls and two boys in each family. However this great opportunity has been affected by wars.

#### **FPE Declaration of the 1970s in Kenya.**

In the 1963 elections, when the Kenya National African National Union (KANU) became the ruling party, it published a manifesto entitled "what a KANU Government offers you" This manifesto committed the party to offering a minimum of seven years of free primary education. In the 1969 election manifesto, the party re - echoed its commitment to providing seven years of free primary education (Sifuna, 2006).

Republic of Kenya (1969), points out that although the enrolment did rise, the rate of increase over the period 1964 to 1969 was only 20 per cent, from 1,010,899 in 1964 to 1,209,670 in 1969. Following the December 1973 presidential decree to provide free primary education in the first four grades in January 1974, the ministry of education had to rethink its priorities and areas of operation in order to cope with the staggering rise of pupil enrolment in standard 1 classes rose by a million above the estimated figure of around 400,000. The total enrolment figure for standards I - IV children increased from 1.8 million in 1973 to nearly 2.8 million in January 1974. Despite this rise it was estimated that another one to two million children of primary school age were still not attending school in 1974.

In 1977, the government abolished all forms of school levies in all public primary schools in the country. In 1979, another politically loaded pronouncement was made. Abagi. (1997), noted that these two measures increased primary school enrolment from 2,994,849 in 1978 to 3,698,246 in 1979. This was an increase of 23.5 per cent.

In January 1974, the Ministry of Education had to rethink its priorities in order to cope with the staggering rise of pupil enrolment (Abagi, 1997). Fees was later abolished in all primary school in 1978 (Mukathe, 1999). At the time of the abolition of school fees no counter measures were announced about how to replace the lost revenue, though gross enrolments soared to over 100% in 1989. Initially, primary schools were at a loss to what they could do about this revenue and after failing to get clear directives school management committees resorted to raising school revenue under the guise of a building levy. The government once again reaffirmed her commitment to achieving UPE, through the preparation of a country assessment support in 1999, which spelled out strategies, for attainment of UPE (Mukathe, 1999).

The high drop out rates was a response not only to the very high levies, but also to the quality of education that was offered following the Government intervention. As a result of high enrolments, there was overcrowding in classes and the supply of teaching and learning materials underwent a severe strain ,(Mukathe, 1999).

The enrolment in primary schools increased but the government could not provide more funds to cater for the increased enrolment. Thus the parents had to raise funds to cater for expenses like building fund activity fee, salaries for non-teaching staff and other miscellaneous expenses (Olembo, 1982).

#### **Hidden costs of free primary education in Kenya.**

Free primary education is a shared responsibility between the parents and the government. According to the MoE financial records, the government spends approximately 17 billion a year in both primary and secondary education as a public cost. For primary education the government had spent up to Kshs. 53.9 billion in the course of six years since inception (Daily Nation, 2009, September 7<sup>th</sup>, p.7 col. 2).

Investment in education at all levels in Kenya involves incurring various costs in terms of resources and facilities required for learning. These costs are usually met from public and private sources and through possible cost-saving measures and strategies within the education system. Parents' contribution is one of the private sources while they contribute also to public funding through taxation. This poses the question of how free is free primary education? Parents are given the role of meeting the following costs: Examination fees for standard eight pupils, Interview fee, Registration fee, School uniforms, Transport to and from schools Boarding facilities, Health care and Meals for day scholars

As already mentioned Olembo (1982), observes that the contribution of parents to financing primary education is significant but it has never been quantified and added to the total budget for education. Thus it remains a hidden cost, a miscellaneous cost which is exclusive of the government's annual budget for education.

#### **Impact of free primary education in Kenya**

Though the current primary schools enrolment stand at 8.2million, the provision of free primary education still faces a lot of challenges (The standard, 2009, September, 7<sup>th</sup> p. 3 col.1). The amount allocated to each student has also not been adjusted since then, despite the high inflation rates in the country (The Saturday Nation, 2009, September, 12<sup>th</sup>, p. 7 col. 1).

Due to the introduction of cost-sharing, high cost of education and rising levels of poverty many students are absent from school or drop out all together. The National Assessment System For Monitoring Learner Achievement (NASMLA) Report (2010), compiled by Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) on its findings reported that 70.1% of lower primary pupils are ever absent from schools due to lack of school fees, uniform, work at home, regular meals among other reasons. Kenya Census Report (2009), revealed that approximately around 3.9 million school age going Kenyan children are out of school.

The Kenya Economic Report (2009), further called for investigations to establish the reason for falling primary school enrolments in Nairobi and other areas despite the free learning programmes introduced in 2003 (Daily Nation, 2009, November 1<sup>st</sup> p. 4-5 col. 1, 2 & 3).

The indirect cost on FPE has had a negative impact on primary education given the poverty levels in the country. It is said to be responsible for declining enrolment in primary education and it seems unlikely that poor parents can sustain and educate their large families. The prevailing situation is that most parents and guardians are already over burdened with school selected expenses which exceed the GNP and per capital. The majority of Kenyans earn income, which can hardly meet education expenses.

#### **Studies on Free Primary Education.**

Ontwani (2004), sought to establish problems faced by the Primary School Head teachers in the management of F.P.E in Busia District. He found that indeed Head teachers were faced with challenges in the management of physical material resource, students and financial resources Similarly Okoth (2004), sought to investigate the problems which head teachers faced in their efforts to implement F.P.E in Kisumu municipality she underscored poor teaching, understanding, inadequate teaching learning resources, undisciplined students and inadequate non-teaching staff as some of the problems while both studies underscored parental contribution as a means to enhance teaching learning facilities they didn't indicate how and its implication to learning hence a gap filled by the current study.

Inyanya (1997), focused on Primary School Administrative constraints in the 8-4-4 education system facing Primary School head teachers in Kisii District with specific reference to curriculum and instruction constrains. He recommended further research on other task areas like finance. The present study accessed the parents' adequacy in meeting the hidden costs of F.P.E and its impact on enrolment as part of strategy of financing FPE.

Njeru (2005), underscored the socio-economic factors of households which affect the implementation of universal free Primary Education in Mbeere District. The study revealed that pupils from low socio-economic status missed more days in class than those from high socio-economic status hence they performed poorly. He recommended for increased government funding to F.P.E, staffing, school feeding programmes and sensitization of parents on their roles in educating their children. However the study was not exhaustive on challenges affecting enrolment rates among primary school pupils like hypothesized hidden costs to parents investigated by the current study thus a gap filled by the current study.

Ong'unya (2004), investigated the challenges faced by Primary School Head teachers in the management of physical teaching learning resources and financial management. His findings indicated inadequate and strained physical teaching and learning resources given the high enrolment rates in schools under FPE policy. However the study did not specify the nature and the extent of parental role in the education of their children. The current study pre-occupied itself with hidden costs of FPE to parents and its impact on pupil enrolment.

#### **Methodology**

The study used a descriptive survey method, which was designed to investigate the hidden costs in the Provision of Free Primary Education and their impact on learning in Kisii Central District. Prior to the study, pilot study was conducted to ensure validity and reliability of the research instruments. Cluster random sampling technique was used to select 10% of the Head teachers and 10% of the parents from the sampled schools. This being a survey, the researcher used questionnaires and interview schedules as research instruments to collect data. The data were then analyzed with the aid of frequencies, averages, percentages and presented in tables, bar graphs and pie charts. Thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data.

#### **Data Analysis**

Kerlinger (1973), defines data analysis as categorization, ordering, manipulation and summarizing of data to obtain answers to research questions. Data analysis involved mainly descriptive statistics such as means,

percentages among others and some inferential statistics such as person's product moment for comparison of responses to establish reliability of instruments. Quantitative data from questionnaires and interview schedules were analyzed manually by computing various statistics. Qualitative data was analyzed through thematic analysis then converted into a write up using coding categories related to research questions. Data was sorted, coded and keyed into statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). In analyzing the collected data, percentages, averages, standard deviation, were used. Data was presented by use of graphs, pie charts, frequencies, means and percentages.

#### **Summary of the major findings.**

The summary of the major findings were guided by the research objectives as follows:

##### **Cost of Primary Education met by the Government and its limitation**

The first objective of the study was to establish the cost of primary school education that is met by the government and its limitation the study established that the current cost of FPE is mainly met by the government, that is, Kshs.1020 per child per year through the Ministry of Education and the Kenya School Equipment Scheme.

However, in all the sampled schools the funds disbursed were reported to be inadequate in meeting the needs of education in the schools. The funds were also characterized by late disbursement which contributed to delays in acquiring learning and teaching materials as well as in undertaking development of various projects in the schools.

Further some of the schools cited bureaucratic procedures in accessing the FPE funds as the challenge. The highest amount disbursed for example among the sampled school was Kshs 3,719,560 while the lowest was Kshs 2,962,316 in account 1 and 2 respectively per year.

Considering that school enrolment had risen from 5.2 million in 2003 to around 8.3 million in 2010 (MoE, 2010). Such amount of money is a mere drop in the ocean. Its impact can hardly be felt. The most unfortunate thing according to the results is that majority of the head teachers had no any other source as a supplement, a part from waiting patiently for the next disbursement by the government few depended on income generating activities and well-wishers.

According to the findings, most schools had mainly acquired textbooks and stationery since the inception of FPE. Little had been done on the development of physical facilities like classrooms repair furniture and electricity. This was mainly due to inadequacy of the funds.

##### **Cost of Primary Education met by the parents**

The second research objective was to establish the hidden costs met by parents in the provision of FPE from the findings the major costs met by parents under the FPE are; uniforms, Examination fee, Development fee, Activity fee, Registration fee' Lunch, School Committee teachers' salary, Transport and *Harambee* contributions in schools. This expenditure remains a hidden cost as it is not quantified and budgeted for by the government in its annual national education budget.

Unfortunately many of these parents had unreliable sources of income which were hardly enough to meet the basic needs of their families and have something to spare for meeting the hidden costs of FPE hence this had negative implication on enrollment.

##### **How parents meet the hidden costs of FPE.**

The third research objective was to find out how the parents meet the hidden costs; the study revealed that most parents depended on small scale farming, odd jobs, small scale business activities and white collar jobs to meet the hidden cost of FPE. However, majority of the parents reported that the income was not reliable to enable them meet the hidden costs of FPE due to inflation or high cost of living this contributed to unstable enrollment rates in primary schools.

##### **Impact of the hidden costs of FPE on pupils' enrolment.**

The forth research objective was to analyze the impact of the hidden costs on pupils enrolment the findings revealed decline in pupil enrolment on the sampled schools with class seven taking the lead and class four. Results revealed an upward trend in enrolment in the sampled divisions between 2003 to 2004 but these was followed by a downward trend in the subsequent years.

The year 2007/2008 recorded the highest negative deviation percentage in enrolment while year 2003/2004 recorded the lowest negative deviation. The decline on enrolment was attributed to the hidden cost of FPE which parents failed to meet. As it was discussed majority of the parents perceived the hidden costs of FPE as high for them. All the head teachers in the sampled schools indicated poverty as the major reason behind most of the Drop-out rates as most parents were unable to meet the hidden costs of FPE.

Some of the head teachers underscored peer influence as another reason for current drop-out rates resulting into early pregnancies and marriages in addition to lack of parental concern. The children who dropped from school resorted to odd jobs as casual labourers to supplement to family income due to soaring poverty levels in the region.

## Conclusion

The study has clearly established that indeed there were hidden costs on FPE which affect the effective implementation of FPE Programme especially enrolment in Kisii Central District hence educational wastage. Such costs included: Development fee, School uniforms, activity fee, extra tuition, lunch, transport, supplementary textbooks, exercise books for homework among others.

Secondly, in addition to inadequacy of the funds, the study has established that the government funds have been characterized by delays in disbursement and receipts. Most of the schools in the study sample did not benefit from other possible sources, hence had no option other than waiting for the next disbursement. The few schools which benefited from other sources like well-wishers and income generating activities indicated that these sources were not reliable for supplementing the parents' and government's efforts in meeting the costs of FPE.

Thirdly the study has revealed that there are many hidden costs met by parents as fore-mentioned under the FPE programme yet many parents have unreliable sources of income, consequently these hidden costs are a big burden to them. Majority of the parents and head teachers in the study sample perceived the hidden costs of FPE as too high for parents to afford. The overall analysis indicates that there is evidence of educational wastage.

The study established increase in enrolment in all schools immediately after the inception of FPE but a decline in enrolment in the subsequent years. In a nutshell though FPE programme has attracted more pupils in terms of enrolment, there is still evidence of wastage though not so much mainly due to hidden costs of FPE. This raises a serious and pertinent question as fore mentioned on "how free is Free Primary Education?" The literal sense of the concept FPE is an education programme that is fee-free and does not involve much financial burden to parents which may hinder any pupil from benefiting from it. The concept FPE embraces inclusiveness in terms of access of all potential learners regardless of their social, political, spiritual or economical inclinations. This has been reinforced by the newly promulgated Kenya Constitution in article 53 (1b) which states that every child has the right to free and compulsory basic education of whose provision shall be the government (ROK,2010).

Conclusively the educational sector in Kenya is faced with challenges such as the hidden among others resulting into wastage in terms of drop outs as revealed in chapter four of this study hence recommendations given in this chapter will serve as a panacea if implemented towards improving the situation if as a country we have to make strides economically, socially and politically.

## Recommendations.

Based on the results presented, the researcher recommends the following measures to make FPE more effective:

- 1) The government should increase the budgetary allocation for FPE programme.
- 2) The CDF allocation should be increased to cater for the provision of physical infrastructure in schools to reduce the burden on poor parents.
- 3) Funds sent to schools should be timely to enable head teachers to avoid incurring huge debts.
- 4) Primary schools should initiate income- generating activities like utilizing the big idle land in the schools in farming activities to supplement the government funding on FPE and avoid over-reliance on the government and parents.
- 5) The Ministry of Education in collaboration with school managers should explore the practicability of double multi-shift use of facilities and all-year utilization of facilities in some situations as options in enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in schools and same to help reduce the burden on poor parents for the provision of physical infrastructure in schools as an hidden cost.
- 6) The Ministry of Education and schools managers should mobilize and encourage greater participation from various stakeholders and development partners, including local and international communities, to support the FPE programme to ensure its sustainability.
- 7) The Ministry of Education through its agents should strengthen guidance and counseling in schools and teaching of sex education in the curriculum to curb the few school dropouts cases partially attributed to early pregnancies and marriages though the higher percentage was due to hidden costs of FPE.
- 8) The study recommends that policy makers, managers and other educational stakeholders should embark on rigorous context-specific cost-benefit and social analysis on fee abolition policy options that are feasible and could yield results for different regions/counties as problems experienced by parents on indirect costs of FPE are context/regional based.

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