Socio-Economic Determinants on Learner Access to Primary School Education in Kenya: A Survey of Kaloleni and Rabai Sub – Counties

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Abstract
Education has been recognized as human right and a key factor to reducing poverty and child labour. It is therefore imperative that all girls and boys have access to basic education by ensuring that gender disparities at this level are eliminated. To attain this desire the Government of Kenya announced the introduction of free primary education in January 2003 which saw enrolment in primary schools increase by about 70 percent. While the program created an opportunity for big number of children it created challenges of how to efficiently and effectively ensure learner access to education especially in the rural counties of the country. Vision 2030 acknowledges that "Despite recent improvements, high disparities in access to education at all levels remain a challenge" The study reported in this paper was purposed to determine the socio-economic determinant influencing efficiency to education in Kaloleni and Rabai Sub-Counties in Kenya. Two specific objectives and two research questions were used in the study. The study employed a survey research design with constructivism as epistemology underpinning the study. (Babbie, 1990; Fowler, 2002; Patton, 2002) One hundred and forty public primary schools (140) formed the total population. Random sampling was used to select seventy six school head teachers (76), one hundred and eighty pupils (180) and 180 households. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data from the class teachers and pupils while Interviews were carried out for head teachers, household heads and a District Quality Assurance Standard Officer (DQASO).Observation checklists were also used to capture data on socio-economic status of the households, school facilities and the population dynamics in the area. The data gathered from the field was organized and presented in form of frequency schedules, counts and percentages for the purpose of analysis. Both descriptive statistics were used to analyze data and reported things the way they were. The study findings revealed low enrolment and access trends of girls (48.5%) as opposed to that of boys (54.2% in the rural counties are determined by low income (20%) earning between ksh, 1,000/= to 5,000/= per month, poor education background (20%) illiterate no education and (19%) only primary education, parents and large families 80% have children between 6 and 8 per family). One hundred percent of the respondents interviewed cited adverse economic conditions as detrimental to pupils' enrolment. The study also revealed that school related factors, cultural and religious beliefs and practices as well as negative attitudes towards girl's education tendered to deter female participation than their male counterpanes. The study recommended stepping up of public education campaign against retrogressive socio-cultural practices. It is imperative that collaborative efforts between the Government, communities and Non-Governmental Organizations are enhanced to ensure success of such efforts. Increasing participation of women in all economic, social and political decision making processes right from the grass root level will be vital and bound to empower them to make rational decisions in education of their children.
Keywords: Socio-Economic, Learner Access, Free Primary Education

1.0 Introduction

The enthusiasm and Euphoria that welcomed the Free Primary Education in 2002 subsided as soon as Kenyans realized that offering free primary education to all children would not be as easy as the government had hoped and planned. Subsequent years especially between 2006 and 2007 the enrolment explosion subsided and euphoria waned with standards plummeting downward unbelievably. The 70% enrolment explosion in class one at the inception years hardly recorded more than 5% of standard one enrolment at the beginning of year 2008.

According to a task force set up by the MOE (2007) report, most of logistical problems bedeviling the implementation of the FPE programme such (as commonly known setbacks) as lack of facilities, and teachers, are well known to the educational administrators in the country but due to the "culture of fear and silence inculcated by former regimes, coupled by secrecy in revealing the extent of the near collapsing programme, the official position was that the programme was on course. Another report on the statistics of endorsement and budgetary estimates (2010) from the MOE points out that, in the 2010 /2011 financial year, the government increased its education budget from 7.2 billion to 9.2 billion specifically allocated to the FPE programme. The

donor community, which received the FPE policy with high enthusiasm, was quick to assist the government. The World Bank, for example, gave a grant of Kshs. 3.7 Billion, while the British Government through the Department for International Development gave Kshs. 1.6 billion. Other donors included the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Kshs. 1.2 billion, the Swedish Government, Kshs. 430 million and UNICEF Kshs.250 million. Such donor funding was usually temporary and further funding was dependant on the transparent use of the already given funds. The cost of FPE was (in 2011) way beyond the normal education budget allocation. It was also a fact that the country's economy had not been performing well in the past few years and could not support the realization of the UPE goals without the infusion of outside funds.

For the country to sustain Universal Primary Education there would be a need for economic growth to generate public funds for education. Otherwise, prioritizing UPE was most likely to take away from the provision for other sectors. Aduda (2003) and Abagi (1999) observed that the increased pupil enrolment had over stretched the existing physical facilities leading to congestion in the classrooms, inadequate toilets and lack of furniture and inadequate teaching and learning resources. It had been noted that, children sat on stones and learnt under trees as a result of shortage of desks and classrooms. Furthermore, free movement in the classrooms by the teachers was hindered because of the congestion. Consequently, the teachers concentrated on those seated in front of the class at the expense of the backbenchers. It was not possible for the teachers to pay special attention to the weak learners. The teacher pupil ratio had increased thus affecting the effectiveness of curriculum delivery. David Archer (2004) observes that due to lack of funds the government had forgotten teacher employment while classrooms were congested. In order to address this shortage parents were hiring untrained teachers.

2.0 Theoretical Framework

The Classical Theory of Equity of Opportunity guided this study and Social Darwinism Theory, which was found relevant hence, asserts that every person is born with a given amount of capacity, which largely is inherited and cannot be substantially changed. In relation to the study it means that education systems should be designed in a way to remove any kind of obstacles such as geographical, social, economical, cultural, gender disparities, historical etc. These were evident in the research findings, which played a key role in the female determinants to access primary education in the rural counties of Kenya. The theories demands going through primary and secondary education for every child at which access would be determined based on individual's merit and not on social-economic background as evident during research findings.

3.0 Research Methodology
3.1 Research Design
The study employed a survey design with constructivism as epistemology underpinning the study (Babbie, 1990; Fowler, 2002; Patton, 2002). One hundred and forty public primary schools (140) formed the total population. Random sampling was used to select seventy six head teachers (76) while purposive sampling was employed to select 180 pupils from class eight. Both the snowball and random sampling procedures were used to select seventy six household heads. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the class teachers and pupils while Interviews were carried out for head teachers, household heads and a District Quality Assurance Standard Officer (DQASO).

3.2 Target Population
The researchers' target population was 140 primary schools sampled from various primary schools within the district. For effective conducting of the survey, the research locale was put under manageable administrative structures. In an exploratory descriptive survey, informed specialist and consumers are very crucial in giving detailed information, (Orodho2004).

3.3 Sampling Procedure
Out of the 76 primary schools selected for the study, the researchers randomly sampled at least ten by use of a stratified sampling technique. The logic and power of purposive sampling technique in selecting information rich enough for in-depth study (Patton 1990)

Table .1 Sampled Schools Households and Head Teachers

Division	No.Schs	Pupils	Households	H/Teachers
Mariakani	27	60	60	27
Kaloleni	27	60	60	27
Rabai	22	60	60	22
Total	76	180	180	76

3.4 Research Instruments
The researcher used teachers' questionnaires to draw information on the enrolment rates by gender in the

primary schools and factors for dropout rates in primary schools. Santyanarayana (1993) observes that questionnaire is used to obtain objective data hence was found to be relevant for this study. An interview schedule was conducted to collect information from District Quality Assurance Standard Officer (DQASO).Santyanarayana (1993), asserts that interviews help interviewers to cover all dimensions of the investigation. More people are willing to communicate orally than in writing (Kerlinger 1973).This was appropriate to draw information to from the education officials who did not have time to fill the questionnaire.

3.5 Validity and Reliability
Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) describe validity as the degree of accuracy and mindfulness of inferences, which are based on the research results. It determines how accurately the data obtained in the study represent the variables of the study. To determine validity, the researchers first did pre-testing of the research instruments. Pilot study was carried out in 5 public primary schools out of the total 15 public schools in Kaloleni Division.

Reliability is measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results of data after repeated trials. It is normally influenced by random error. This is the deviation from a true measurement due to factors that have not been addressed such as inaccurate coding and ambiguous to the subjects (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). In this study, reliability was determined through pre-testing of the instrument. Questionnaires administered to the 3 groups of respondent namely the head teacher, teachers and pupils. The pre-testing covered the 5 out of the 140 public primary schools that were targeted for the study.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure
Before data collection, the researchers sought permission from the NACOSTE and then wrote letters of information seeking permission to avoid any mistrust and withholdings of information. The researchers therefore paid visits to various schools to administer questionnaires to the respondents for purpose of data collection.
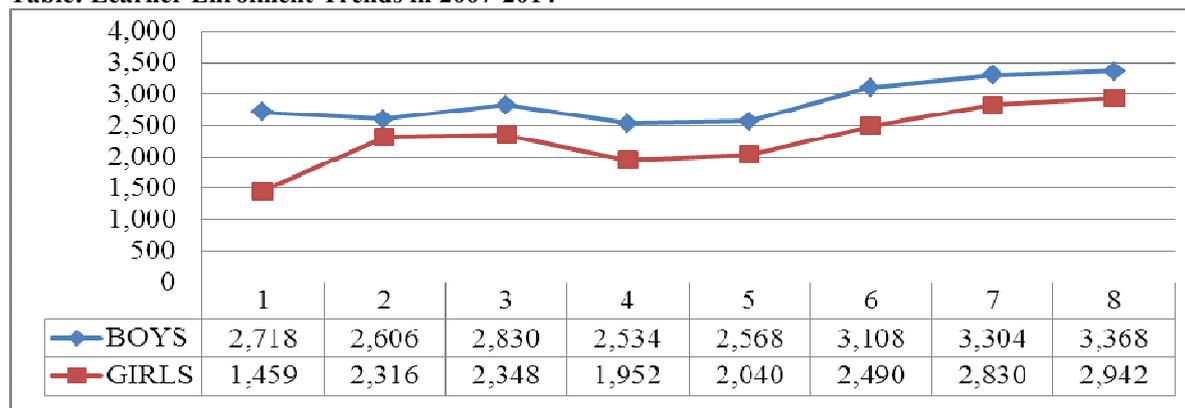
3.7 Data Analysis Techniques
Data analysis is the process of using various statistical procedures with a view to interpret data. Before the actual data analysis, the information gathered was validated, edited and manually coded and tabulated using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 computer programmed. In validation process, the collected data questionnaires were checked in terms of used instruments by use of computer. Data analysis was done using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Qualitative Analysis of data was analyzed using descriptive statistic. The purpose of descriptive statistic is to enable the researcher to meaningfully describe the pattern and trend of enrollment and retention.

4.0 Research Findings
The findings of the study were drawn from the research questions which sought to find out the socio-economic determinants on efficiency of free primary school
Table: Learner Enrolment Trends in 2007-2014

|	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
BOYS	2,718	2,606	2,830	2,534	2,568	3,108	3,304	3,368
GIRLS	1,459	2,316	2,348	1,952	2,040	2,490	2,830	2,942

The first task taken by the study was to generate answers aimed at understanding determinants of female access to primary education in the Rural Counties in Kenya A Survey from 2009-2014. The research findings revealed a low enrolment of girls in the year 2007 (2,718 boys and 1,459 girls respectively) and 2011 (2,534 boys and 1,952 girls). The trend has not changed much even after the introduction of free primary school education in the rural counties the number of boys accessing primary education in the sub counties as not changed much. This in itself clearly explains that there could be other underlying factors to disparities in education access of female to education. In spite of FPE, female students' enrolment is still low.

Table 2: Access Rate 2007-2014

|	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
GIRLS	35%	37%	45%	44%	39%	41%	42%	43%
BOYS	65%	63%	55%	56%	61%	59%	58%	57%
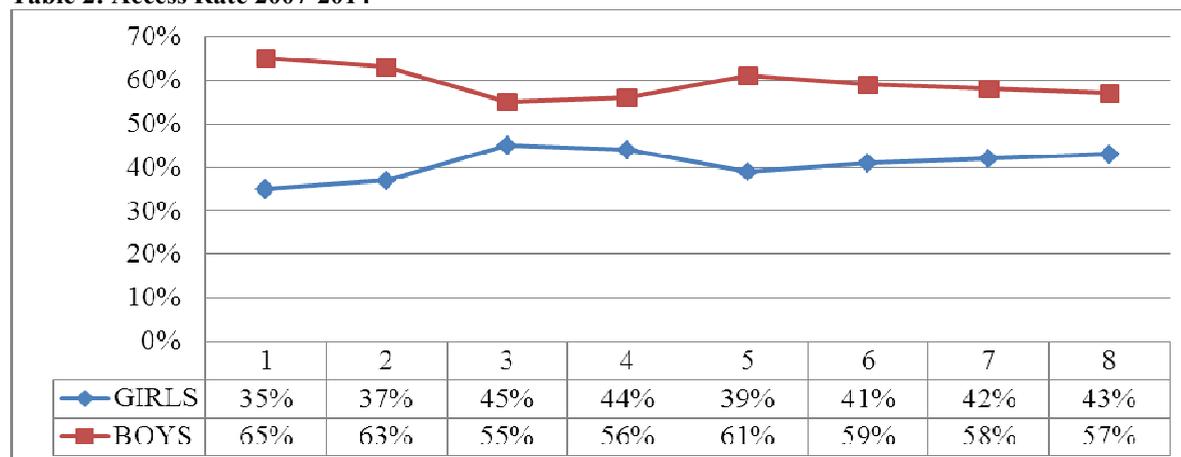
The findings reports that in 2007, 35% of the girls and 65% boys were enrolled, in 2008, 37% of the girls and 63% boys were enrolled, while 2009, 45% of the girls and 55% boys were enrolled, and in 2010, 44% of the girls and 56% boys were enrolled, 2011, 39% of the girls and 61% boys, 2012, 41% of the girls and 59% boys were enrolled, 2013, 42% of the girls and 58% boys were enrolled and in 2014, 43 % of the girls and 57 % boys were enrolled in primary school. The trend has not changed still girls are disadvantaged to access primary education.

Table 3: Repeater Rate from 2007 -2014

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
REPEATERS	264	233	265	239	243	210	181	112
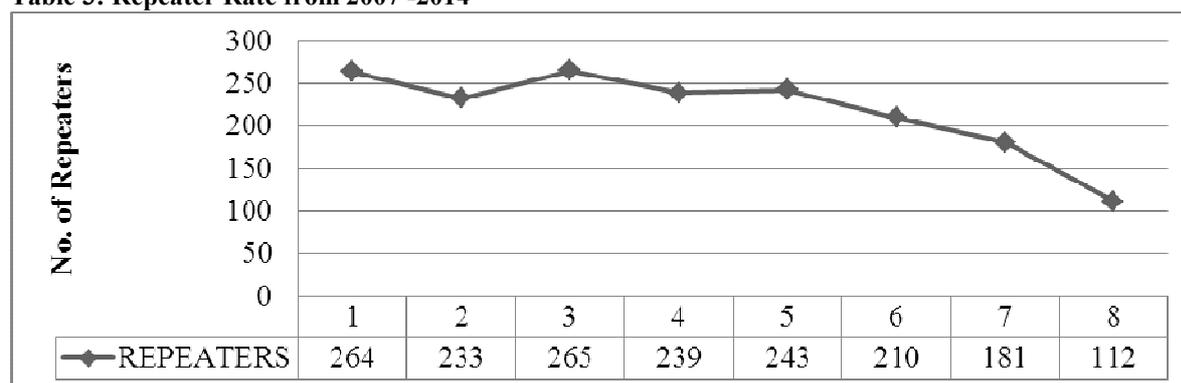
The findings reported in the table revealed that there was a decline in the repeater rate from (264) 6.3% in 2007 to (112) 1.9% in 2014, 233 pupils in 2008 in standard eight repeated classes, in 2009, 256 pupils repeated class eight, in 2010, 265 pupils in standard eight repeated class, in 2011, 239 pupils repeated class eight, in 2012, 243 pupils repeated class eight, in 2013, 181 pupils repeated class eight and in 2014, 112 pupils repeated class eight.

Table: Dropout Rates 2007- 2014

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DROPOUTS	130	92	97	102	129	103	118	151
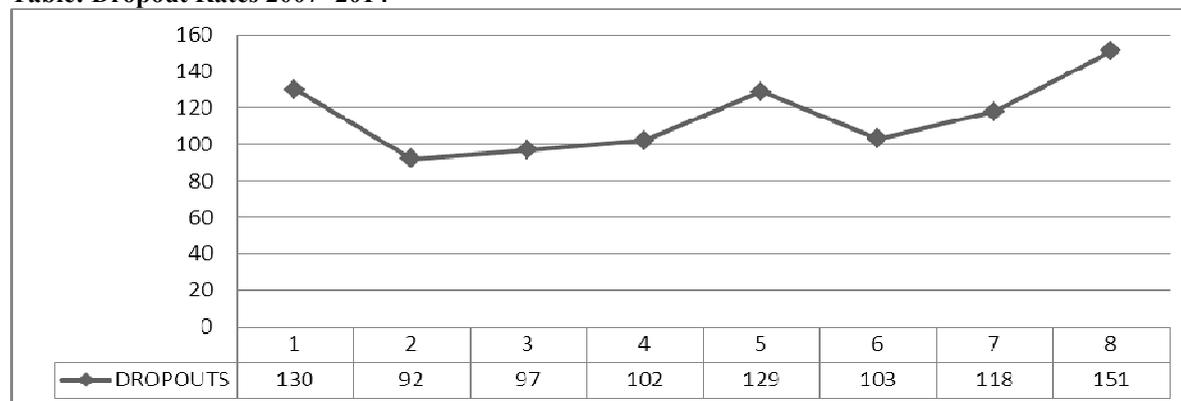
Learner dropout rate was on the very high in 2007-2008 (130 - 92) this was a decline rate of 41.3%, in 2008 to 2009 (92 - 97) this was an increase rate of 5.15%, in the year 2009 – 2010 (97-102) this was an increase rate of 4.9% , 2010 -2011 (102-129) this was an increase rate of 20.93% , 2011 – 2012 (129-103) this was a decline rate of 25.2, 2012-2013 (103-118) this was an increase e rate of 12.7% and in 2013-2014 (118-151))

this was an increase rate of 21.85%. The trend shows that the dropout rate is on the increase. Only two years had a decline 2007 - 2008 and 2011-2012

Households Income, Education Levels and Number of Children per Household

No. Families	Children	Percentage	Monthly Income in Kshs			Parental Education Level
2	3	1%	41,000/=	-	60,000/=	2nd University Degree
5	4	3%	31,000/=	-	40,000/=	1st University Degree
8	5	4%	21,000/	-	30,000/=	Diploma Level
9	5	5%	16,000/=	-	20,000/=	Diploma Level
13	5	7%	11,000/=	-	15,000/=	Certificate Level
20	6	11%	11,000/=	-	15,000/=	Certificate Level
23	7	13%	11,000/=	-	15,000/=	KCSE Level
30	8	17%	6,000/=	-	10,000/=	KCSE Level
34	9	19%	6,000/=	-	10,000/=	KCPE Level
36	10	20%	1,000/=	-	5,000/=	No School Education
180		100%				

Economic Factors

The families' economic factor has a role to play in the learner access to education. Most heads of the family earn between ksh.6,000/= and ksh10,000/= which is 36% representing 74 families which were sampled. While 56 families representing 31% of the sampled respondents earn between ksh11,000/= and ksh15,000/= 20% of the respondents that is 36 families earn between ksh1,000/= and ksh.5,000/= this formed the majority of the respondent whose earning is less than $ US per day. Those whose earning range between ksh 16,000/= and ksh 20,000/= were 5% of the respondents who were only 9 families 4 % earn that is 8 families earn between ksh 21,000/- and ksh30,000/= while 3% represented by 5 families earn between ksh.31,000/= and ksh40,000/= and only 1% represented by 2 families earn above ksh41,000/=. From the findings, it can be concluded that many parents are faced with economic hardships because of the low income earnings per month. The findings are consistent with Maritim (1980:28) who observes that many parents in the rural areas where 95% of schools are faced with economic hardships; hence opt education of their children is not a priority. During the oral interview with all the 76 head teachers selected for the study observed that poor economic status of most families was a key determinant of school efficiency.

Social Factors

The study identified that the social set of the house hold is composed of large families. Only 1% of the households 2 families had 3 children and their earnings was between 41,000 and 60,000/= with the education level of 2nd university degree this enabled them to take all their children to access and complete the primary education. 3% of the respondents, 5 families had a maximum number of 4 children with an earnings between ksh31,000/= and ksh.40,000/= with an education level of 1st University degree similarly had the ability to retain all their children in school.8 families representing 4% of the respondent earned between ksh 21,000 and ksh 30,000/= with a diploma education level with an average of 5 children per family, another 9 category of family 5% had a diploma education level this family had an average earning of between ksh.16.000/= and ksh.20,000/=. 13 families 7% of the respondent whose earning was between ksh.11,000 and ksh.15,000/= had a certificate level of education had an average of 5 children per family. Same to another category of 20 families 11% whose earning was between ksh.11,000 and ksh.15,000/= had a certificate level of education had an average of 6 children per family. 23 families 13% of the respondent had a monthly earning of between ksh.11,000 and ksh.15,000/= had a KCSE with an average of 7 children per family. 30 families 17% of the respondent had a monthly earning of between ksh.6,000/= and ksh.10,000/= had a KCSE with an average of 8 children per family. 34 families 19% of the respondent had a monthly earning of between ksh.6,000/= and ksh.10,000/= had a KCPE with an average of 9 children per family. Finally, 36 families 20% of the respondent had a monthly earning of between ksh.1,000/= and ksh.6,000/= had no school education with an average of 10 children per family.

5.0 Conclusion

Despite the fact that most household heads of families were aware of the free primary education, most of them felt that primary education was not free because they kept on paying some money to cater for their children's education. Most parents and head teachers felt that the free primary education was still costly to the rural people. Many parents pay for examination fees, learning materials, pupil's uniform and admission fee before joining primary school.

All the parents paid for the pre-primary school education, which they felt was expensive and was mandatory for primary school enrolment. The learning facilities were not adequate, these included classrooms, desks, toilets hence parents and pupils were not comfortable because it meant parents occasionally contributing

for such facilities in terms of money.

Most households' heads had low earnings and believed in the cultural beliefs therefore girls were affected in accessing education

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