Implementation of Subsidized Secondary Education in Mombasa County in Kenya
A Perspective of the Schools Administrators
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This study was intended to examine the effectiveness and challenges faced in the implementation of subsidized education in public secondary schools in Mombasa County. Descriptive survey research design was used in this study. Data was collected from Principals, their deputies and heads of departments in the schools. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings revealed that the implementation of subsidized secondary education in Mombasa County has faced numerous challenges which are attributed to high enrolment, high drop-out rate, low transition rate and inadequate funds among others. This study will greatly inform educational policy developers in addressing the pertinent issues affecting the subsidized secondary education.

Key words: Challenges, subsidized education, public secondary schools, Mombasa

INTRODUCTION


One challenge that the government encountered was to ensure that pupils graduating from primary schools access secondary education. Therefore, in 2008 the government introduced subsidized secondary education as earlier promised in 2007 election campaigns. The subsidized education was to address illiteracy, low quality education and low completion rates at the secondary level, high cost of education and poor community participation Republic of Kenya, (2005). According to Chabari (2010) introduction of subsidized secondary education enhanced students’ access to secondary education.

The government was committed to increase transition from primary to secondary to be seventy percent in all Counties (Ohba, 2009). According to the subsidized education policy, the government was expected to meet the tuition fees of Kshs.10, 265 per student per year while the parents were required to meet other requirements like lunch, transport and boarding fees for those in boarding
schools besides development projects. The government aimed at ensuring that regional special needs and gender disparities were addressed (Ohba, 2009). These efforts are a positive move towards the realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for example, goal number 3, which aims at the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women by elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education and Education For All (EFA). There are two categories of secondary schools in Kenya namely: Public Schools and Private secondary schools. The government has introduced plans to offer subsidized secondary education in 2008 to all students who are admitted into secondary schools. Private secondary schools and some few public schools are generally high cost schools offering students an alternative system of education with better or more luxurious facilities compared to public schools (GOK, 2010).

Fresh questions are now emerging on the sustainability of the subsidised Secondary education plan as the government ponders over slashing the subsidy in the wake of financing gaps arising from soaring student admission to public schools, while administrators argue strongly that although the government and private sector makes subsidies in the form of finance and material, the truth is that it places unrealistic and challenging administrative burdens on them. Head teachers interviewed in the County have provided guided answers discreetly and feel that schools are seriously constrained to improve the state of learning facilities. This is due to the government’s ban on school levies (Edu/41/2000/HQ Circular) at the same time, conditions laid down to request for concessions to institute levies are cumbersome that they hesitate to embark on such processes. Consequently, these challenges impede learning programmes.

In an effort to enhance accessibility, equity and retention after the FPE initiative of 2003, the Government of Kenya introduced Subsidized Secondary Education in 2008. The Government and other development partners have endeavored to provide facilities for the realization of subsidized secondary education. Concerns have however been raised over the implementation of the programme and whether it could be a reality.

The challenges faced in the implementation differ from region to region and the solutions offered could also differ. As such challenges and solutions have not been documented in regard to Mombasa County. This study sought to determine the challenges likely to face the effective implementation of Subsidized Secondary Education in public secondary schools in Mombasa County, Kenya.

Objectives
The objectives of the study were to:
- To establish the effectiveness of subsidized education in public secondary schools in Mombasa County.
- To examine the challenges faced by school administrators’ in the implementation of subsidized secondary education in public schools in Mombasa County.

Literature Review
The study employed the Human Capital Theory (Schultz 1988). The human capital theory has been employed by various scholars in studying the management of education as a process of human capital development. Hargreaves (2001) developed a theory of school effectiveness and improvement based on four major concepts namely, outcomes, leverage, intellectual capital and social capital. These concepts are vital in the promotion of quality education. Hargreaves (2001) argues that effective school mobilizes intellectual capital and social capital to achieve desired outcomes of moral and intellectual excellences. Hence, Hargreaves (2001) uses this theory to present definitions of effective and improving schools.

Schultz (1999), define human capital as a collection of human resources such as the knowledge, talents, skills, abilities, experience, intelligence, training, judgment, and wisdom possessed individually and collectively by individuals in a population. These resources are the total capacity of the people that represents a form of wealth which can be directed to accomplish the goals of the nation or state or a portion thereof. It is an aggregate economic view of the human being acting within economies, which is an attempt to capture the social, biological, cultural and psychological complexity as they interact in explicit and/or economic transactions. It explicitly connect investment in human capital development to education, and the role of human capital in economic development, productivity growth, and innovation has frequently been cited as a justification for government subsidies for education and job skills training. Becker (1964, 1993)

Human Capital Theory is appropriate for this study because using it will unearth the challenges that could hinder desired outcomes, creation of intellectual and social capital in secondary schools. This theory is applicable in the study in the fact that all the theoretical concepts-outcomes, leverage, intellectual capital and social capital plays significant role in the provision of quality education. It is a right for every Kenyan child to acquire quality education regardless of gender, ethnic background, or socioeconomic status. This theory sought to unearth the challenges that could hinder desired outcomes and creation of intellectual capital and social capital in public secondary schools.

In Kenya, Education reforms that are aimed at increasing access to and participation in any level of education, carry significant financial demands according to Cladwell (1992). In 2003, Kenya introduced the Free
Primary Education (FPE) policy with a view to meeting the goal of Universal Primary Education (UPE). Having successfully initiated the implementation of this policy, the country is now gearing to widening access to and improves the quality of secondary and tertiary education.

However, the country faces constraints in mobilizing additional public and private resources to meet the high cost of expanding access to quality secondary education. Ayodo (2009) reasons that resource constraints are compounded by inequalities in participation across regions, social class and gender. Any attempt, therefore, to expand access to secondary education must take into account the existing disparities within the society, failure to which such expansion will be a tool for propagating social-economic inequalities. The goals of expanding levels of schooling and maintaining access to education are inextricably linked to issues of education costs and finance. Ndungu (2004) explains, in Kenya, education financing is based on the cost-sharing policy introduced in 1988, which requires most costs in education to be met through partnerships between public sector and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), religious organizations, development partners, communities/individuals and private sector. Within this funding policy framework, overall government role includes professional development, teachers' remuneration in public institutions, provision of infrastructure, administration and management, and provision of bursaries and scholarships for needy students.

Responsibilities for other players include physical infrastructure development and maintenance, payment of fees for tuition, public examinations, catering and accommodation in boarding schools and post-school institutions, school/college amenities (transport, water, energy and communication), student's personal expenses and remuneration of school/college non-teaching staff. Opportunity cost of attending school by children from low-income groups would exclude most households. Reforms aimed at making quality secondary education affordable and improving access to majority of households are therefore inevitable. A study on financing lifelong learning in the global knowledge economy concludes that with the optimism for introduction, it remains a question of the best practices of administering the implementation of subsidized school programmes that poses the greatest challenge to principals.

Olembo and Cameron (1986) indicate that school principals face increasing administrative difficulties. These include inadequate and badly constructed buildings; shortage of books and equipment; lack of proper school furniture particularly desks; poor or sometimes non-existent maintenance and repairs; untrained and half trained teachers who seldom stay long; over-crowded classrooms; poor communications and few supporting services especially health services.

As a result the administration of schools has become one of the most taxing jobs in the whole education system.

In relation to the structure of physical facilities, Olembo and Ross (1992) indicate that the development efforts of school head teachers have sometimes been frustrated because of lack of space for extension of the school and lack of housing for teachers. In some schools where they exist the facilities are in deplorable conditions which are hazardous to students and staff. Such a situation is a common occurrence in public secondary schools at present.

Adding to the agony of parents, Gogo (2002) revealed that 77.14 percent of secondary school head teachers believe that fees should be increased because the current school budgets reflect the lowest fees despite consistent increase in prices of goods and services thereby straining the budget. They argue that the existing charges per vote head cannot provide quality education together with the high living standards in the country and the increase in salaries of school employees.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed descriptive survey to establish opinions and knowledge about the challenges faced by administrators in the implementation of subsidized secondary school education in Mombasa County.

The target population of this study was the principals and their deputies and all heads of departments (HODs) from the thirteen public secondary schools in Mombasa County. This comprised a target population of one hundred and four (thirteen principals, thirteen deputies and seventy eight HODs).

Respondents were selected from seven randomly selected schools in out of thirteen schools. This comprised a sample of fifty two was then drawn by selecting all the HODs in those schools together with their Principals and or the Deputy Principals.

Data was analyzed by way of descriptive statistics and findings summarized in tables and pie charts.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the findings of the study focusing on the effectiveness and the challenges. Transition rates, dropout rates, improvement in quality of education, community participation and affordability and sustainability were used as indicators of effectiveness.

Transition rate

The researchers sought to establish whether the introduction of subsidized secondary education by the government has improved the transition rate of the learners based on school’s enrolment in Mombasa County. The Likert scale was provided for this purpose to guide the respondent on whether he/she was in
agreement or not on the matter. The combined responses (HODs’ and Principals’) were as presented in figure 1.

From the results in figure 1, an overwhelming majority, 90.5 percent confirmed that due to introduction of subsidized secondary education, the transition rate in Mombasa County increased due to increased enrolment. However, 2.4 percent of the respondents indicated that the transition rate has remained unchanged despite the move to subsidize education in secondary schools in Mombasa County as opposed to 7.1 percent who remained undecided on the matter. The findings agrees with Cladwell (1992) that increase enrollment and high transition rate contribute to access and high retention rate.

**Minimizing on wastages-dropouts**

The respondents were asked to indicate whether subsidized secondary education has minimized on wastages such as students dropout as a measure of its effectiveness. The results obtained were as indicated in the figure 2.

The results in figure 2 indicated that most of the respondents were in agreement that the move to subsidize secondary education saw the level of wastages being minimized as this was confirmed by 61.9 percent response. 28.6 percent response was however of the contrary opinion, that the move had engineered a lot of wastages as in the cases of increased dropout. This might be due to laxity among parents to support the subsidized secondary education. This finding therefore confirms assertion that parents still find secondary education expensive. These were the combined responses from both the heads of departments and the principals’ office.

**Improved quality education in secondary schools**

In a related issue, the respondents were asked whether the introduction of subsidized secondary improved the quality of education especially in Mombasa County of Mombasa County. The responses were as indicted in table 1.

From the results in table 1 most of the respondents (about 61.9 percent) were in disagreement that the move to introduce subsidized secondary education improved the quality of education in Mombasa County as opposed...
Table 2: Community Participation/Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: Affordability and Sustainability of Subsidized Education

to 23.8 percent respondents who thought so. Increased enrolment and hence strain on physical facilities and learning resources were cited as factors behind the decline in quality education. This finding therefore confirms assertion by Chabari (2010) that challenges such as inadequate physical facilities, increased enrolment and poor curriculum delivery contribute to poor quality education.

Community participation/involvement

The respondents, in relation to effectiveness of subsidized education, were put to question to show as to whether the introduction of subsidized education improved the participation of the community in supporting schools' development. The responses were as indicted in table 2. The results in table 2 indicated that a large percentage (about 40.5 percent) response participated in the study were in disagreement that there is active community participation to be seen in terms of supporting the schools through effective payment of school fees by parents. This is due to the fact that parents viewed subsidized secondary education not as a waiver but a complete relief from performing their educational obligations and hence some sought of relaxation from among most of them. On the other hand, 35.7 percent of the respondents indicated that the move came as a motivation for the community to fully support schools especially in Mombasa County. The findings confirm assertion by Ndungu (2004) that the cost of secondary education be met through partnerships.

Affordability and sustainability of subsidized education

Similarly the researchers sought to establish whether the introduction of subsidized education waivered on parents in regard to fee payment by making it affordable and hence sustainable. The responses were as presented in figure 3.

Most (50.0 percent) of the respondent, both the school heads and heads of department who participated in the study revealed that despite secondary education being subsidized by the government, it remains unaffordable to most parents and schools and hence unsustainable. This is because fee payment remains a scuffle to most parents. However, 40.5 percent of them agreed that the move had improved affordability of education in most public schools in the County. These findings confirm assertion by Orodro & Njeru (2003) that hidden costs in secondary education hinder access to education.

Challenges faced by school administrators in the implementation of subsidized education

In regard to the second objective of the study, the researchers sought to examine the challenges faced by school administration in the implementation of subsidized education in public secondary schools upon its introduction in Mombasa County. The question was put to the respondents to highlight the major challenges. The responses to this were as indicated in the table 3. From the results in table 3, majority of the respondents (17.5%) in the study indicated that the major challenge to implementation of subsidized secondary education in
Table 3: Challenges faced by school admin. in implementation of subsidized education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased enrolment</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased workload</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate learning resources</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strained physical resources</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate finances</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortage of teachers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiscipline</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compromised quality of education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of goodwill from parents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting for funds</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Possible Solutions to the Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased funding</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment of teachers</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timely disbursement of funds</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality assessment</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive parental involvement</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced discipline</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance appraisal</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource mobilization</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

public secondary schools in Mombasa County is increased enrolment. This major challenge in turn triggered other setbacks in the process of implementation of the program which among others include increased workload among teachers and administrators (at 16.3 %), strain on physical facilities in schools (11.3%), inadequate teaching and learning resources (13.6%), and shortage of teachers (11.3%). Other challenges cited were indiscipline as a result of high population among students at 8.8% response, compromised quality of education at 5% response, lack of goodwill from parents to support the move at 2% response, unforeseen sustainability and accountability of funds at 1.3% response each. This finding confirms assertion by Chabari (2010) that inadequate facilities and increased teachers workload compromise quality education.

The researchers sought to establish from the respondents some of the possible solutions to the challenges facing schools’ administration in the implementation of subsidized education in Mombasa County. The responses to this were as indicated in table 4.

From the results in table 4, increased funding of public secondary schools, employment of more teachers, timely disbursement of funds and quality assessment of schools were cited by the respondents to be some of the solutions to the challenges indicated in figure 4.10 of section 4.2.2 with 22.5 %, 18.6%, 13.6%, and 12.5% response respectively. Enhanced parental involvement and discipline among students, objective appraisal of schools and resource mobilization by schools in the County were also indicated to be solutions to the predicaments. The findings confirm assertion by Nyaga (2005) that the Government should fully fund education.

CONCLUSIONS

The present research aimed at examining the challenges faced by school administrators’ in the implementation of subsidized secondary education in Mombasa County. In regard to the findings, the study concluded that subsidized education in secondary schools in Mombasa is effective in terms of transition and retention rates among students. However, the effectiveness was found to be compromised by quality of education, affordability and hence sustainability and involvement of the community to support the move.

In regard to objective two, which was to examine the challenges facing implementation of the subsidized education in Mombasa County, the study concluded that the main challenge was increased enrolment which triggered several other challenges, which among others included increased workload to teachers, strain on physical facilities in schools, inadequacy of teaching and learning resources and increased cases of indiscipline among students. The study also concluded that there was an element of lack of accountability among some schools’ administration especially in cases where funds are availed and separation from the school among
students such as transfers occurs.

In regard to the third objective, which sought to establish some of the possible solutions to the highlighted challenges, the study concluded that increasing funding to schools would be other important remedy to the predicament as such would improve on other aspects geared towards the realization of the objectives of the initiative-subsidized secondary education. In a nutshell, the success of subsidized secondary education in Mombasa County is overriding and is pegged on addressing the challenges in the most good-humored manner.

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