

Impact of Free Secondary Education Policy on Gender Equality in Secondary School Education in Kenya: A Case Study of Kericho County

Ngeno Viviline Cherotich; Simatwa Enose M.W & Ayodo T.M.O.

Abstract

Education is one of the basic human rights that are universally proclaimed internationally. In fact it is a precursor to all other basic human rights. The Free Basic Education policy adopted by many countries in the world among other policies aim at achieving equity in education. In most countries of the world gender equality in education is a major concern. The study conducted in Kericho County, Kenya aimed at establishing the influence of Free Secondary Education policy on gender equality in education. This study established that gender parity indices before Free Secondary Education policy were 0.633, 0.649, 0.610 and 0.620 for the years 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 respectively. After introduction of Free Secondary Education policy the gender parity indices were 0.580, 0.570, 0.590 and 0.659 for the years 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011. The gender parity index dropped and later increased in 2011. The expectation was that parity index would improve since the main challenge was thought to be school fees, hence the subsidy. These findings means that Free Secondary Education policy alone cannot be used to improve on gender inequality in education. The other factors like early marriages, preference for the boy child, girl child's attitudes and enhancement of compulsory basic education policy should be integrated in the Free Secondary Education approach so that gender parity in education can be achieved.

Keywords: Impact; Free Secondary Education Policy; Gender Equality; Secondary School Education; Kericho County; Kenya.

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