

Free Primary Education Policy: Coping Strategies in Public Primary Schools in Kakamega South District, Kakamega County, Kenya

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Abstract

This study examined the challenges of implementing free primary education and coping strategies in public primary schools in Kakamega South District, Kakamega County, Kenya. The study was premised on the demand and supply theory. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The sample comprised 23 headteachers, 92 teachers and one Ministry of education officer working in the study locale, yielding a sample size of 117. The main research instruments were questionnaires and interview guidelines. The main findings of the study were that whereas the free primary education policy had led to an exponential increase in the numbers of children enrolling in primary schools, this had over stretched the available human and physical resource base to cope with these numbers. This had led in poor teaching strategies resulting into poor academic performance at the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) Examinations. The major coping strategies included hiring of extra teachers paid by parents through school management committees to supplement those posted by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) as well as providing material and financial incentives to teachers to enable them go an extra mile and teach longer hour outside the recommended workload. It was recommended that that the Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education should rationalize and equally distribute the few available teachers to all schools in the country. The SMC should also be accorded legal and logistical means of engaging in viable income generating activities that could boost the resource base of various primary schools in the study locale of Kakamega South District, Kakamega County, Kenya.

Key Words: Free Primary Education Policy, Coping Strategies, Public Primary Schools, Kakamega South District, Kakamega County, Kenya.

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