

Influence of Free Primary Education Policy on Pupil Access by Gender in Public Primary Schools in Rongo Sub-County, Kenya

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Abstract

Kenyan Government, in its efforts to attain gender parity and increased access at primary education level in 2003 implemented the Free Primary Education (FPE) Policy which narrowed gender gap nationally; public primary school Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) in 2010 was 119.8% (119.2% girls; 120.4% boys). However, Rongo lagged behind with a GER of 105% (95.4% girls; 114.6%) in the same year suggesting there was a wide gender disparity in the Sub-county. The purpose of the study therefore was to determine the influence of FPE policy on pupil access by gender in Public Primary Schools in Rongo Sub-county. Ex-post-facto and descriptive survey designs were used in the study. The study population comprised of 42 schools, 1 Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (SQASO), 966 and 624 Class 7 and 8 pupils respectively. Data was collected using questionnaires, interview schedules, focus group discussion and document analysis guide. The study revealed FPE policy had a positive influence on access on both gender but girls still lagged behind. The study concluded that though girl's enrolment in public primary schools was lower than expected it was discovered these girls did not remain at home as they constituted a higher proportion than boys in private primary schools hence explaining the huge disparity in public primary schools. Provision of enough teaching and learning resources in public primary schools was found to be crucial to eliminate congestion and overcrowding which led to transfers by many pupils to private primary schools. The findings are significant to, educational planners, donor agencies, parents and community in making decision in improving FPE Policy to enhance gender parity.

Keywords: Access, Free Primary Education, Policy, Gender, Rongo Sub-county.

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