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Emerging Issues in Secondary School Education in Kenya

*Felicity Murunga, Kennedy Kilaha, David Wanyonyi

Moi University, Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Educational Media, P.O Box 3900, 30100, Eldoret, Kenya.

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Abstract

The Kenyan Government has demonstrated its' commitment to an all inclusive secondary education through the provision of Free Secondary Education (FSE) in all public schools. This is in tandem with the vision of achieving Education For All (EFA) by 2015 so as to give every Kenyan a right to education, no matter his or her socio-economic status (MOEST, 2005). These efforts notwithstanding, the secondary education sector still faces many challenges. This paper highlights some of these challenges, identified as: quality, Information Communication Technology (ICT), equity, sexual harassment, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), teacher supply, HIV/AIDS, Free Secondary Education (FSE), integrity in school management, legal framework, militia groups and demand for higher education, and how they impact on secondary education. This paper is exclusively based on secondary documentary data; information has been extracted from already available sources like books, previous research studies and newspapers. From the findings of the study, more needs to be done in policy development and implementation to ensure that these challenges are overcome and the provision of FSE achieved.

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Introduction

Since independence, Kenya has been responding to the issues raised in the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in different ways, for instance; Kenya has had its own version of MDG'S since 1965 when the government published Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 in which the state committed itself to eradicate poverty, illiteracy and disease which have been emphasized in most national development plans and other policy documents. In most educational reports and policy documents in Kenya, such as those cited by Ominde report , Gachathi report and the Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005, (Republic of Kenya, 1976, Republic of Kenya, 1964, MOEST, 2005) issues of access to quality Education, equity and completion rates have been raised. The documents underline the government's commitment to attaining the overall goal of Education for All (EFA) by 2015.

*Corresponding author: felicitymurunga@yahoo.com
kenkilaha@yahoo.com, ddwanyonyi@yahoo.com

The EFA campaign is based on the following aims and objectives: access to Universal Primary Education (UPE), attaining gender parity at all levels and improving youth and adult literacy and skills training. In Kenya, a number of steps have been taken to provide education for all school -going children. The introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003 and Free Secondary Education (FSE) in 2008 stand out as the major step in giving all children a chance to get an education, but with about three years to the target date for EFA initiative and the UN Millennium Development Goals, there are indications that most sub-Saharan countries, Kenya included, will not achieve this goal. The EFA dream for youths in Kenya seems near yet so far as a host of complex challenges including; equity, teacher utilization HIV/AIDS, free schooling and militia groups still abound and erect road blocks on Kenya's path to the attainment of EFA goals. So far, Kenya has made substantial steps in the education sector, but critical benchmarks in secondary education are yet to be attained in consonance with EFA and MDG's objectives.

Material and Methods

This study was carried out in Kenyan education system in which the secondary school system was evaluated. Secondary data was used to collect information on the issues affecting secondary school education. Information relating to this area of study has been extracted from already available sources like books, previous research studies and newspapers. The authors used this information to analyse the emerging issues in Secondary education in Kenya.

MAIN DISCUSSION

Various issues have emerged in the analysis of secondary school education in Kenya. Some of the issues have to do with quality, Information Communication Technology (ICT), equity, sexual harassment, female genital mutilation and early marriages, teacher utilization, HIV/AIDS, free secondary education, integrity in school management, legal framework, militia groups and post-election violence, and demand for higher education.

Quality

Diverse quality definitions are used due to the wide application of the quality concept. The most widespread definition in the sphere of education, according to Delors (1996), is:

- Conformity to the aims and tasks of education;
- Conformity to the needs and desires of interested parties;
- Understanding and support existing on all levels of the education system

Quality refers to the worth or value or degree of excellence of the education system (Digolo, 2006). It is important that the quality of the teaching force be assessed and answers sought to the questions: What are the characteristics of the teaching force in terms of qualification, experience, teaching methodology and attitude towards their work and schools? Is the curriculum relevant? Does it prepare the majority of school leavers for the next level?

Are the graduates of the secondary education competent? And to what extent do these graduates contribute positively in solving the day to day challenges facing the society? How well are these graduates prepared for vocational jobs? Do the schools have mechanisms that ensure that teachers prepare for lessons, go to class on time and actual teaching takes place in the classrooms? What is the teacher student ratio and teacher work load in our schools? Do the facilities in our schools ensure attainment of quality education?

In an anticipated study, global EFA monitoring report 2012, UNESCO has raised the bar, and argues that documentary literacy is not enough as children require relevant skills to enable them not revert to illiteracy (UNESCO, 2012). The report is expected to chart a roadmap for countries to examine how skills development programmes can improve youth opportunities for decent jobs and better lives.

Ramani (2005) points out that teacher shortage is a threat to the provision of Free Education in Kenya. He makes reference to another report by the Kenya Institute of Education (2002), where poor implementation of the curriculum is blamed on shortages of teachers. According to this report, there is some looseness in the summative education of secondary education curriculum in Kenya as teachers are teaching students to pass exams at the expense of their holistic development. Kihumba (2010) argues that such concentration on accessing, achievement of learning objectives, learners' cognitive ability and promotion of learners to the next class is defective, as students graduate with no practical skills, desired attitudes and values. Such curriculum at the secondary level does not adequately equip learners with necessary competencies to meet the country's aspirations.

One of the inventions that can be taken is in-servicing of secondary school teachers in various domains to enhance their subject mastery and intensifying supervision to guarantee quality. In-service training is important and necessary to remedy deficiencies that teachers discover in skills to keep pace with the changing demands of any given curriculum.

Information Communication Technology

The current millennium has witnessed technological developments that have completely revolutionized human life. These advancements have made it possible for information to be shared among the people of the world. This is what has come to be known as the Digital Era (Buckingham, 2003). Through the use of Information Communication Technology, there has emerged information explosion, connectivity and networking operations in the world. Information and communication skills play a key role in promoting the economic development of any country.

A number of international organizations have partnered with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) to facilitate the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Government offices and educational institutions. Success in the use of ICT in secondary school education requires sufficient and competent human

resource that is well developed and equipped. ICT has a direct role to play in secondary school education, and if appropriately used, it can bring immense benefits in the classroom as well as the entire education sector.

Presently, there are a number of challenges facing access and use of ICT in Kenya including: high levels of poverty that hinder access to ICT facilities, limited rural electrification and frequent power disruptions, costs associated with ICT equipment, high cost of internet services, and inadequate infrastructure. There has been no attempt to make teacher education responsive to the emerging trends in the society in general and education in particular. One of the challenges facing the teacher education in the 21st Century is to produce a teacher who can apply modern information technologies in teaching (Kafu, 2006). Teachers need to be competent enough to operate in this digital era so as to benefit from these innovations and the resources for developing, adopting and adapting to these emerging technologies in teaching.

To address these challenges, the government among other things, needs to:

- 1) Provide computers to secondary schools
- 2) Develop a policy on the provision of adequate infrastructure at all levels of education and training by bringing together the efforts of all stakeholders
- 3) Mobilize adequate public and private sector investments in ICT in secondary schools

There is also need to develop computer laboratories, learning resource centres, and a number of learning facilities. The main characteristic of the computer, as opposed to classic teaching aids, is the fact that it unites the following teaching means: the picture, sketch, photo, scheme, television, projectors, and films. Since it can easily reproduce a number of media simultaneously (sound, tone and picture), it can be referred to as a multimedia means. Teachers need to be trained in the use of ICT in teaching and integrating ICT in lesson preparation. Computers are also very useful in school management. Computer Programs, which aid in analysis of examinations, preparation of report cards and transcripts, keeping track of store records and analysis of school finances, can be integrated in school management. Despite all these benefits of ICT many schools in Kenya are yet to harness them.

ICT has some negative effects in education, these include exam cheating using the web and short message services (sms) and some may even use other

people's ideas, and academic work, without acknowledgement. Students may also download immoral videos and programs from the web or even access pornographic sites leading to moral decadence in society. In addition, teachers who heavily rely on ICT for instruction can be detached from the learners if they totally abandon the traditional methods of teaching. The use of ICT would therefore, be more beneficial in the education system if integrated with other methods of teaching.

Equity

Equity refers to fairness in education at all levels (Digolo, 2006). Since education is the key to success and decent life, there is need for equitable distribution of educational opportunities in all Geographical regions, between gender based groups and socio – economic groups in Kenya. A solution must be found to the regional, gender and socio – economic imbalances of these groups. Gender disparity remains a concern in secondary schools in Kenya, despite government efforts to address this. The ratio of boys to girls who sat Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examinations in 2009 was 55:45 countrywide. The areas most affected by socio-cultural factors like: early and forced marriages were Nyanza and North Eastern provinces, where the ratio of boys to girls was 70:30 (Ongeri, 2010). Therefore, there is need to create a conducive environment for girls in these areas to learn. It is also worrying to note that girls were absent from the top ten positions nationally.

According to Evans (1995), the barriers to women participation in education fall into five categories:

- a) Cultural barriers, where women across countries occupy subservient states as opposed to men.
- b) Qualifications, such as lack of skills in math/science subject predispose them to take traditional subjects, whose qualifications pay less.
- c) Situational barriers such as family commitment, lack of partners' support, financial constraints and rural life continue to disadvantage women in their quest for higher education.
- d) Institutional barriers arise due to schedules at institutions. The same can be linked to rigidity of schedules due to lack of inadequate personnel.

In many societies in Africa, Kenya included, cultural expectations bestow on men more power than women. Consequently, there exists an imbalance in gender and power relations that influence the interaction and decision making processes in both

family and society. Thus, it is the complexity of interaction between social norms and values and broader economic change that could explain the diversity in accessibility and utilization of education opportunities by women.

Admission to the best public secondary schools in Kenya is highly competitive, leading to a very unfair situation, where the bulk of places go to pupils from private primary schools. Since pupils from such schools have better teaching/ learning resources, they perform better in examinations enabling them to get admission in the best public secondary schools. Mechanisms must therefore, be put in place to ensure that children in public schools have an equal chance in these secondary schools. Gender disparity is evident with regard to university admission, where the ratio of women to men is 30:70 (Momanyi and Wawire, 2004).

Access to higher education is also a challenge, since only a fraction of students who meet university admission requirements get a chance. Out of the 70,000, 2008 KCSE candidates who scored C+ and above, only 20,073 got university admission (Kihumba, 2010). Those not admitted are compelled to look for training opportunities on parallel programs in private universities and middle level colleges. Some of them go to neighbouring countries; notably Uganda and Tanzania to seek further education

A study conducted in Igembe District showed that as much as attention was focused on ensuring the girl child remained in school, the boy-child's education is also being compromised in some parts of Kenya. Scholars from Chuka University in a study titled "Drop out among male pupils in primary schools of Igembe District, Kenya" revealed that the male child in the district was in danger of missing out on the gains of FPE and FSE. This is courtesy of the annual traditional circumcision that is fast overturning gender equivalence in favour of girls (Ayodo, 2011). Majority dropped out after the "cut" claiming that they were grown up and had the freedom to engage in activities of choice.

Other factors that push the male child out of school are lucrative miraa (*Cartha endulis*) business, in the area. Others dropped out due to lack of motivation, mistreatment by step-parents, poor performance in school, gross indiscipline and drug abuse. A comparable study conducted in Suba District availed similar findings.

Educationists in Central Province also claim that focus has now shifted to the issues surrounding boy-child attrition from learning institutions despite the existence of the FPE and FSE programmes. Among factors identified were peer pressure, Mungiki set recruitment, sand harvesting, quarry activities, tea/coffee plucking and hawking (Gikandi, 2011).

A Quick glance at Kenya's 2012, KCSE examination results could lead many to argue that, at last Kenya has achieved gender equality in education. However, a critical look at the results shows some glaring gender dimensions that require attention from all stakeholders. One major gap appeared in students ranked top 10 nationally where 2 girls made it to the top 10; it is also clear that there were differences between boys and girls in subject performance with boys dominating the science subjects. Fewer girls scored C+ and above, the minimum score required for one to join university (MOE, 2007), translating to a continuing gender gap in basic and higher education.

Gender inequality in all educational sectors is not only undesirable but fateful. Kenya took her first steps towards EFA by making primary and secondary education free in 2003 and 2008 respectively, but for gender equity to work, the country must think beyond "access" to addressing gender inequality; a challenge determined to keep the youth out of the classroom.

This paper suggests a combination of factors needed to close the gender gap. They include:

- Nurturing well –trained male and female role models for the boy-child and girl-child.
- Catering for the girl child by creation a girl-friendly school environment and provision of basic needs for instance, by providing free sanitary pads to needy girls so that girls do not stay out of school during menstruation in addition to having separate latrines for girls and boys in mixed schools.
- Local leaders have a responsibility to educate parents on the importance of Education for All.
- There is also an urgent need to educate parents and communities on the need to do away with traditional practices that continue to keep girls out of schools. They need to discard cultural practices like Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and early/ forced marriages that are no longer helpful. Some of these practices can be redefined in order to make them relevant to the current times.

- Implementation of the Children's Act: Section 7 (1) of this act stipulates that every child shall be entitled to education. The government and parents should take up their responsibility to provide free and compulsory education to every child in Kenya.
- Parents and teachers should be gender sensitive; encouraging all children to work hard regardless of gender. Nevertheless, girls must be assisted to wade from looming setbacks that have yielded a long history of school drop out and dismal performance in national examinations.
- Having a clear educational policy on sexual harassment to ensure girls are safe from sexual harassment especially from male staff
- Collaboration with the provincial administration to ensure that all children are enrolled in school and child labour curbed.
- Ministries to be gender sensitive by appointing scores of qualified women to senior posts to motivate the young ones.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual abuse, harassment and sexual violence have become subjects of great concern in educational institutions in Kenya. Violence against learners, especially girls, continues to jeopardize their chances in education. The most common form of violence against women is rape. Rape may be committed by fellow students, close relatives, or strangers. The worst case of sexual violence in secondary school was the student unrest that occurred at St. Kizito Mixed Secondary School in Meru District, where 70 girls were raped and 19 lost their lives, following a rampage by boys in the same school (Gitonga, 1999).

Sexual violence leaves the victim traumatized, having been physically and psychologically wounded, and jeopardizes their chances in education. There are many cases of rape survivors who have ended up dropping out of school; while others have had to transfer to other schools. Rarely do school authorities take steps to ensure that girls have security and comfort in schools, neither do they counsel nor discipline boys who commit acts of violence.

Whereas legislation exists that addresses sexual harassment, no stiff punishment has been given to culprits. These acts, therefore, continue to be committed with impunity. As the boys responsible continue learning, the girls affected are left to nurse their pregnancies and children. Cases abound where teachers have love affairs with school girls. Such

girls have ended up dropping from school, getting into prostitution, drugs and contracting STI's like HIV/AIDS. Many of these cases have been highlighted in the print media but very little done. In the harsh economic times, many school going girls are turning to child prostitution to survive. Schools should embrace an all round curriculum, where games, clubs and societies are functional to ensure that the pupils are busy and have no idle time to plot evil.

Female Genital Mutilation and Early Marriages

Though female circumcision was outlawed in Kenya in December, 2001, (FAWE News, 2001) this practice is still rampant in some communities in Kenya like the Maasai, Meru and Nandi. Girls are circumcised at the onset of puberty and are expected to get married thereafter. A number of these girls are forced to drop out of school to marry old men. A study conducted by ICL (I Choose Life) in secondary schools, revealed that 25% of secondary students had had more than one sexual partner in the past 12 months (Kaberia, 2010). The study further established that the average sexual debut for both boys and girls was 12.4 years. Of these sexually active youths, only 33% of the boys and 50% of the girls had used a condom. This shows that a significant proportion of youths risk contracting STIs like HIV/ AIDS.

Despite efforts by the government to ensure free primary education, female genital mutilation still remains rampant in Kenyan communities. There is need to expand educational institutions, facilities and resources in arid and marginalized areas in North-Eastern, Eastern, Coast and Rift valley provinces.

Teacher Utilization

With the introduction of FPE and now FSE, enrolment in secondary schools has skyrocketed, with the number of schools increasing from 4071 in 2003 to 6971 in 2009, which is a 70% increase (MOE, 2007). This has increased the student-teacher ratio as the economy cannot sustain an increased teacher's wage bill, which takes up to 80% of the budgetary allocation. Attempts by the government to hire in-service teachers have since ended in a deadlock, after Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) and Kenya Union of Post Primary Education Teachers (KUPPET) strongly opposed the move.

In the past, unplanned teacher recruitment for public secondary schools affected deployment of teachers consequently; there exists an imbalance in the distribution of secondary school teachers as most of them prefer urban, peri-urban and high potential

areas. According to the latest assessment by TSC, primary schools need 43, 012 new teachers while secondary schools need 23, 291 teachers (Kihumba 2010), such a shortfall is a “catastrophe” for the education system. The projected figures are appalling, and apparently result from the fact that most rural schools have trouble attracting teachers. Teacher shortage has also been escalated by the rapid expansion of schools through the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and the governments’ failure to replace teachers who quit considering more than 10,000 teachers leave the profession annually (MOEST, 2005).

The Teachers’ Service Commission (TSC) has delegated teacher recruitment to School Boards of Governors (BOGs.) This has served to ensure that teachers are posted only where they are required (MOEST, 2005). However, a situation has been occasioned where teachers from the localities are selected, hence, working against national cohesion. These teachers end up owing their allegiance to their perceived employers. Since they hail from the localities where they are posted, they engage in income generating activities which take up most of their school time leaving them little time to attend their school duties. To address this, the wider system must ensure nationwide equity in the distribution of teachers, build a career structure for teachers that attracts and keeps good teachers, and safeguard the rights of teachers, no matter who employs them.

Having this in mind, the MOEST through the TSC should explore alternative modes of deployment of teachers for their appropriate utilization. Additionally, the government should ensure efficient and cost effective utilization of teachers by regularly reviewing and establishing appropriate staffing norms.

Many teachers have stayed in one job group for more than ten years when TSC stipulates clearly that a teacher may be promoted after three years through an interview. Teachers’ upward mobility is further hampered by the limited position available in senior management. This has only served to demoralize them. Many teachers have moved for greener pastures in other sectors, such as: the Ministry of Education, Ministry of youth affairs and the private sector, leaving a big gap in secondary schools. There also exists a trend where teachers promoted to head schools stop teaching, worsening the situation.

HIV/AIDS

The challenge of HIV/AIDS has continued to bedevil our society. Though the rate of infection in the general population has slightly decreased, it has increased among the married couples. This suggests that many more children are likely to be born with this disease. The spread of HIV/AIDS is mainly as a result of heterogeneous and homogeneous sexual relations with infected people. It may also be caused by coming in contact with blood of an infected person through syringes, circumcision knives and road accidents.

Among the reasons for sexual promiscuity are: widespread poverty, which leads to prostitution, drug intake among the youths, retrogressive cultural practices like wife inheritance, and repugnant myths about the disease. HIV patients account for 50% of bed occupancy in hospitals, straining government resources (GOK, 2009). HIV/AIDS has many negative effects on Education in general and secondary Education in particular. Parents living with the disease are not able to support their children in school, since most resources are spent on managing the disease. Many parents die due to Aids and leave children to take care of themselves thus many drop out of school to eke a living and take care of their younger siblings (MOE, 2007).

Children who are orphaned lack guidance and end up in truant behaviour and drug abuse. Some of these youth end up in street and child prostitution. Within the school community, teachers who are infected are not able to deliver their services especially if not properly counselled. The overall effect is that the quality of education is lowered. There is need for greater sensitization regarding how the disease is contracted, how to minimize infection, manage the disease and how to live positively with the disease for those infected.

The shortage of teachers occasioned by HIV/AIDS related deaths on the teaching profession is worrying. According to Ramani (2005), more teachers are dying annually of Aids than those qualifying from the Teacher Training Centres in Kenya. The attrition rate of teachers is estimated at 8,000 annually (MOEST 2005). It is worthwhile to note that, one of the challenges in the implementation of EFA in Kenya is the shortage of teachers. By the end of 2003, TSC recorded a staffing shortfall of 29,093 teachers in primary schools and 8,523 in post primary institutions (MOEST, 2005). Natural attrition compounded by HIV/AIDs pandemic, has increased the strain on a workforce that has had to bend over

backwards to cope with the demands of the noble service (Ramani, 2005; Muindi, 2008).

Free Secondary Education

Free secondary education is a program that was rolled out to address the low transition rate from primary to secondary schools. This is because many, who drop out at primary level, do so for lack of fees. The government in Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005, made a commitment to increase the transition rate from primary school to secondary school to 70% by providing free basic education (MOEST, 2005).

FSE has substantially increased the transition rate from primary to secondary schools however, it has posed some challenges. Some of which are:

- i) Over-enrolment, which leads to stretching of school facilities like classrooms, libraries, laboratories and dormitories. If not well managed, academic performance can be compromised.
- ii) Non payment of fees. Schools charge money to cater for uniform, PTA, lunch and boarding fees upon approval by District Education Boards (DEBs), money which in some cases is not paid by parents.
- iii) Late disbursement of FSE funds. This gives school heads a hard time and makes school management difficult since suppliers can't be paid.

It is therefore, important that schools undertake to increase their capacities by building more classrooms and other facilities. This requires understanding, and support from the parents, BOG's, PTA and other stakeholders. Income generating activities like farming, and hiring out of school facilities should be initiated by the school management to supplement government funds. Teachers also need to adjust their teaching methods to accommodate children who come in with low marks. The government on its part should release FSE funds on time and hire more teachers to enhance efficiency in the education system.

Integrity in School Management

*A public officer shall not use his office to improperly enrich himself or others.
(KACC Act, 2003)*

Integrity is being honest and having strong moral principles that one refuses to change. Corruption, on the other hand, refers to the abuse of power, most often for personal gain or for benefit of a group to which one owes allegiance. Corruption involves fraud, bribery, misappropriation of public funds, and breach of trust, conflict of interest and abuse of

office. It generally means that one has neglected their professional ethics. An outcry has persisted in the public domain about embezzlement of funds meant for FSE in Kenya. This has seen development partners suspend direct funding to schools through the government, and instead, channelling the same through Non-Governmental Organizations.

This outcry is justified, given the importance attached to education. Concerns have been raised about graft in other ministries, with calls for ministers and permanent secretaries concerned to resign. The term, corruption, elicit thoughts of embezzlement of billions of shillings among highly placed people in society. However, this vice is prevalent in Kenyan secondary schools. Corruption can be committed by any member of the school community including: BOG, PTA, Principals, teachers, Students and the non-teaching staff.

Some common corrupt practices by members of school BOG's and principals include: Soliciting money from people in order to give them admission and employment chances in school or receive tenders, influencing promotions of non-deserving teachers, influencing recruitment into the teaching and non teaching posts, sexual immorality with teachers, non teaching staff and students, negligence of duty, and favouring some teachers and students. Among the school workers, corrupt practices which are prominent include: stealing of school property, bribing school heads in order to receive promotion, negligence of duty, sneaking drugs, and mobile phones into school, and embezzlement of school funds by school bursars and accounts clerks.

Corrupt practices among the teachers include: Illicit sex with other teachers and students, soliciting money from parents in order to give special attention to their children, unaccountability in school spending, bribery in order to receive favours including tenders or promotions, conflict of interest by supplying goods to the school they teach, awarding marks to non-deserving students, and leaking of internal and national examinations to students. Corruption among the students exhibit itself in the following ways; Cheating in exams, engaging in sexual activities with teachers, stealing school property and other student's property, and forging official documents such as report cards.

Corrupt practices within the school community hinder academic achievement and harmony. It is important that all stakeholders abide by the requirements of The Public Officers Ethics Act.

Legal Framework

The legal framework within the education system gives children rights that end up lowering discipline

standards. Such rights do not allow a teacher to cane a student, right to entertainment, choose prefects and the best interests of the child. Legal concerns also confront the management of school; for example, the TSC's act assigns the management of secondary schools to BOG's without giving any role to parents through PTA's and communities. Hence, there is need for a new legal framework to identify and indicate the roles of different actors in the provision of education particularly; the government, parents, community, sponsors and the private sector.

Militia Groups and Post-Election Violence

Kenya witnessed an eruption of violence in some areas during the election period. This has led to systematic arming and training of militia groups that are often tribal based. These groups are often used by politicians to scare away opponents during campaigns. After elections, the same groups involve themselves in other acts such as cattle rustling, robbery and manning of routes in urban areas. They are made up of youths, who should be in secondary schools, but are not due to the financial gain and the sanctity of the oaths they take. In areas where these groups wreck havoc, schools have been closed and teachers transferred to other areas.

There are cases where teachers have been killed by these militia groups. Violence instigated by these militia groups has led to thousands of students being internally displaced, hence completing their education from different environments; resulting in poor academic performances (Amadala & Kwalia, 2008). Some students end up being orphans due to the violence.

According to UNESCO's recent EFA global monitoring report (UNESCO, 2003), armed conflict in Kenya is denying 28 million children education by exposing them to widespread rape and other sexual violence, attacks and human rights abuse. Despite the governments' positive self rating, the UNESCO report shows the world is not on track in achieving EFA goals by 2015. Although there has been progress in many areas, most of the goals will be missed by a wide margin, especially in conflict prone areas.

Efforts must be stepped up towards reconciliation and national healing so that these calamities do not recur. Children also need to be taught about the importance of living peacefully with others. They should be sensitized to appreciate and accommodate other people's culture. Governments should also move swiftly and decisively to put policies in place that encourage job creation.

Demand for Higher Education

The current millennium has witnessed unprecedented interest by teachers in Kenya to pursue higher education; either on school based programmes or on full time basis. This has raised concerns on their effectiveness in the day to day running of the school activities. Whereas it is healthy to provide opportunities for professional development through continued learning, the same may be counter productive especially when the teachers do so on full time basis, or in the evening, when they are supposed to be supervising school programmes.

This has led to decreased productivity due to absenteeism, or lack of adequate preparation. Efforts to in-service teachers through Strengthening of Mathematics and Sciences in Secondary Education (SMASSE) are highly commendable, thus, there is need to roll out similar In-service training programs, for teachers in humanities and languages, and to peg promotions to attendance of these courses so as to reduce the demand for university education. Teachers who qualify should be promoted to higher job groups like 'N', 'P', 'Q' and 'R' so that they can be retained in the classroom.

Teachers should be encouraged to make use of school based university programs as it will ensure that they are in school when required. The introduction of parallel degree programs in public universities has led to an increase in student enrolment. This is a positive trend in that students who would otherwise seek higher education in other countries can do so within, hence saving the country on foreign exchange. It has also contributed to the rapid expansion of these universities in terms of infrastructure. Some students knowing that they can access university education with a C+ fail to work to their full potential.

CONCLUSION

Although the dream of having free secondary education has been achieved, there are various issues surrounding the education sector in Kenya. It is evident that various issues are yet to be dealt with by the government and other stakeholders. It is only with the elimination of these issues that the universal access of free basic education will have had a full impact in Kenya.

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