

# RESEARCH PROJECT

## FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION, MERU CENTRAL DISTRICT

BY

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A research project presented to the Department of Education  
Administration, Planning and Curriculum Development in partial  
fulfillment of Masters of Education Degree, Kenyatta University.

June 2005

Ncabira, Misheck  
*Factors affecting  
students access and*



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**DECLARATION**


This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

**NAME**

**SIGN**

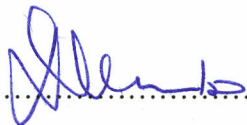
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30-8-2005  
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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as university supervisor.

  
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**DATE**

## **DEDICATION**

This research work is dedicated to my family – my dear husband Mathew Iteere, daughter Sharon and sons Anthony and Collins for encouragement and support.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The completion of a study of this magnitude was partly due to the encouragement and advice from a number of scholars to whom I render due honour and thanks.

I would like to register my gratitude to Professor Jotham Olembo and Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Gitonga for giving me the benefits of insight. Professor Olembo made sure that the quality of my study was up to standard through his effective supervision, accessibility and professional advice.

Many thanks to Mr. & Mrs. Gitonga for coordinating my work. My principal Mrs. Ndege for giving me time to carry out my research.

Lastly but not least, to you Purity Kawira thanks a lot for typing my work.

## **ABSTRACT**

The study is an investigation of factors that affect access and participation in secondary school education.

Access in education in Kenya has not been evenly distributed across sexes, regions and social groups Orodho (2002).

Few girls than boys go to school or work their way up the education ladder. There are fewer places for them and the main reason for this is less pressure from parents to have their girls educated Dadid and Dharam (1974).

The purpose of the study was to investigate the factors that lead to poor access and transition rates from primary to secondary and find out why students drop out of schools.

This research was meant to assist the government in revising policies in financing education to assist students from poor households gain access in secondary schools and reduce dropout rate.

The study adopted a survey design in which a sample to represent the population was taken. Purposeful procedural sampling was adopted to get the sample and random sampling to get the respondents.

The sample population consisted of 160 students, 8 secondary school principals, 14 primary school head teachers, 40 secondary school teachers, 40 parents and 1 District Education Officer.

Data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. Quantitative data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics and results presented in percentages and charts.

The information gathered from the field was analysed. The research revealed that high cost of schooling was the major factor contributing to poor access and participation in education in Meru central district among other factors.

The researcher recommends that the government through the ministry of education should provide a highly subsidized or free secondary education

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets the basis of the study. It highlights the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, assumptions of the study, scope and limitations of the study among others. Theoretical and conceptual framework are also given. The chapter winds up by giving a definition of terms.

### 1:1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In Kenya, between 1963 and the late 1980's the secondary sub-sector was characterized by rapid quantitative growth. This growth was associated with the need for the new nation to develop middle and high-level manpower to replace departing expatriates and high social demand for education as the gateway to high status positions in the economy MOE & UNICEF Kenya (1994).

This magnitude of growth was made possible by the operation of partnership between government, communities, donor agencies, NGO's and private entrepreneurs. While government took over existing public secondary schools and established new ones, communities and private entrepreneurs respectively found harambee and private schools. According to MOE statistics, in 1994 there were 2,639 secondary schools with (90.5 %) being public schools.

According to (1997-2002 National Development Plan), one of the government's guiding philosophies for education is the concern that every Kenyan has the inalienable right, no matter his or her socio-economic status to basic education.

The government achieved some impressive results in enrolment. There was rapid growth in enrolment at all levels of education.

Despite these commendable achievements, Kenya faces several problems on the education front, primarily relating to decline in enrolment and completion rates, financing and relevance of education. Gender imbalances at secondary and tertiary levels are also an area of critical concern.

As regards enrolment in 1995 only 76% of the primary age population was enrolled in primary school while 27% of the secondary age population was enrolled at secondary level. Enrolment at universities is low with a transition rate of only 7% from secondary. Overall, there has been a worrying decline of enrolment at all levels. As compared to the enrolment levels in the current industrializing countries, there are greater relative deficiencies at secondary and tertiary levels in Kenya.

Since independence the government has been concerned about inequalities that exist in the provision and distribution of educational opportunities at all levels. Such inequalities manifest themselves in access, retention between gender regions and households EFA (2000) and beyond. This is particularly critical at this time when poverty and cost sharing is putting an increasing heavy burden on household.

The cost-sharing policy, which the ministry of education introduced in 1988, has shifted the burden of financing education to parents. This move has made it difficult for parents and communities to support education adequately. Consequently, education is now beyond the reach of many households Abagi Etal (1997) MOE studies (1995). This is mainly due to poverty levels which have been rising in the country. The increased level of poverty makes the parents unable to meet the cost of education for their children. Students from poor parents are on and off the school and this affect their performance and have to drop out of school.

## **1:2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Although secondary school education opportunities have continued to expand, a good number of students are not gaining access in secondary schools.

Most secondary schools in Meru Central District, especially in rural arrears are under enrolled. The study intends to find out the factors affecting access and participation in secondary schools. Poor access and participation in secondary education has a number of implications that lead to wastage and therefore hampering government policies and development programmes.

### **1:3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study was to investigate and examine critically those factors affecting access and participation in secondary school education in Meru Central District.

### **1:4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- Find out the number of pupils who sit for K.C.P.E in a particular year,
- Determine the number of those pupils who join form one,
- Investigate the reasons as to why some do not go to secondary,
- Find out the number of drop out since year 2000,
- Examine whether the type and category of the school has any effect on the rate of school dropout.

### **1:5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The study was guided by the following questions,

- What makes some pupils who graduate from standard eight not to join form one?
- What affect the participation of students in secondary school?
- Why is there a difference between those who join form one and those who complete form four?
- Does socio-economic status of the parents contribute to poor access in secondary education?
- Are there schools and home based factors that make students not complete their secondary school education?

### **1:6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The findings of the study are expected to be of great use to parents, teachers, school administrators and other education stakeholders in the following ways.

- a) Assist the government in planning in the education sector.
- b) Policy makers in education can use the results to examine the cost of education in secondary school especially in low potential areas and for students from poor families.

- c) Help the government to move fast to address the problem of enrolment and dropout rates in secondary schools.
- d) Assist the policy makers to put in place policies to make secondary education accessible to all.

### **1:7 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study was guided by four assumptions,

- (i) That schools are of the same level and share the same characteristic.
- (ii) Urban schools did not share the same characteristic as the rural schools.
- (iii) Education level of the parents is not a major factor contributing low to participation in education.
- (iv) That girls are given equal access to education as boys.

### **1:8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The scope of the study was limited to Meru Central District. For more conclusive results other districts could have been selected in various provinces, but this was not possible due to financial constraints and time.

### **1.9 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study was confined to students, parents, head teachers for both primary and secondary and district education officer. Private institutions were not included, as they did not enjoy direct government support in the provision of education.

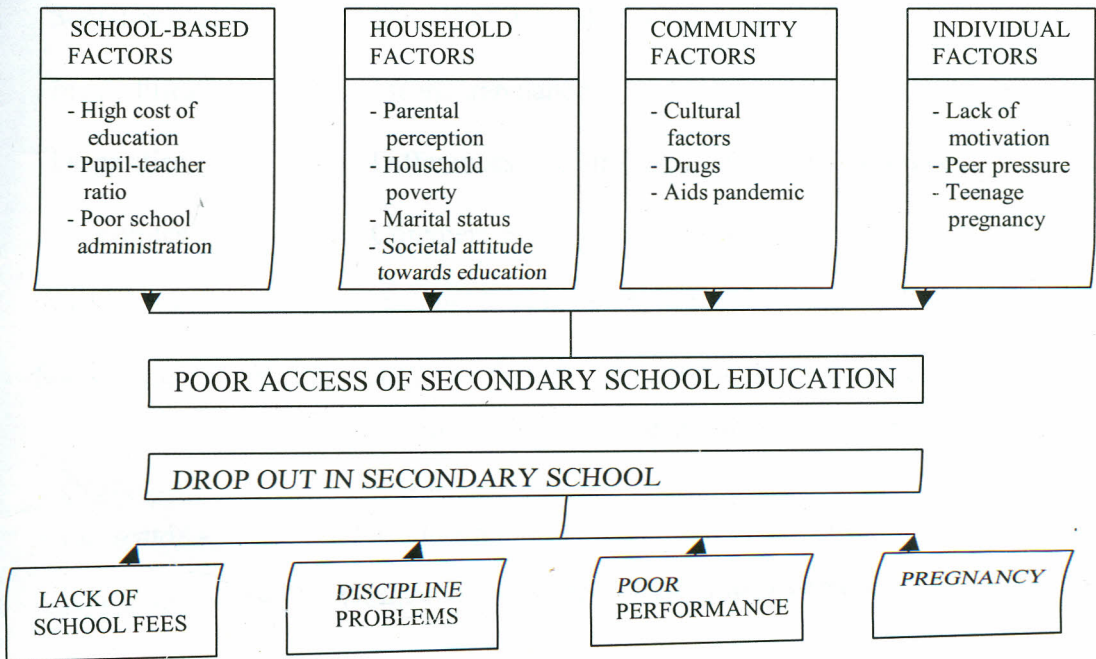
## 1.10 THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

This study derived its theoretical framework from a German philosopher (Herbart 1776-1841) who conceived the mind of a child as tabula rasa – a clean slate without any innate or inborn powers and without tendencies either towards goodness or badness.

By adopting the theory that the mind is tabula rasa without any learning potentialities, he is saying that all knowledge is due to the environment and that whatever inequalities there may be in knowledge, education and other qualities of a person are due to the environment in which he grows.

The environment is the sole source of differences in human beings. According to Herbart, the provision of a conducive environment and proper structuring of the learning environment becomes of vital importance in ones future.

## 1.11 CONCEPTUAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK



1. Individual factors: These consist of lack of motivation by students, peer pressure and teenage pregnancy.

2. Household factors: These include parental perception, household poverty, marital status and societal attitude towards education.
3. Community factors: These include cultural factors, drugs and AIDS pandemic.
4. School factors: These consist high cost of education, pupil-teacher ratio and poor school administration.

## 1:12 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Cost-sharing -	This was a policy that was introduced by the government of Kenya in the education sector, where the government pays the teachers and the parents provides physical facilities, uniform and books in schools.
Households –	These are families.
Access to education –	means opportunities in education.
Participation –	This is retention and completion of education.
Social indicators –	Signals of inequality in the society.
Inequalities –	Means imbalances.
Disparities –	Differences in distribution of national resources.
Economics –	Commercial activities of society.
Socio status –	The position one holds in the society.
Socio-economic factors –	These are factors connected with the social class and what a person possesses as a result of education or acquisition of wealth.
Socio sector –	Sub-division of a society or an economy.
Social services –	Welfare services provided by the government.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, literature related to the area of study was reviewed under the following sub-endings.

- Studies done in other countries outside Africa.
- Studies done in African countries.
- Studies done in Kenya.

#### 2.2 COUNTRIES OUTSIDE AFRICA

The planned rate of increase in school places has not been achieved in many countries because of financial constraints Psacharopoulos Woodhall (1985).

In Thailand, children from poor households do not attend school because poor families often cannot afford to release their children from productive work to attend school regularly or to pay for school fees, uniform, books and transportation. World Bank (1982).

Also in Thailand World Bank further noted that parents who are illiterate often have low educational aspirations for their children. There are few if any reading materials in the house. There is little perception of the value of schooling and hence little encouragement for children to succeed in school.

A survey designed to elicit the social background of secondary school in the Tehran in Iran demonstrated that "lower" class children have much lower chances of gaining access to secondary education World Bank (1980).

From the extensive research on wastage and repetition carried out by UNESCO 1977, 1982 and the international bureau of education 1991, 1972, it was discovered that the problem of dropout is serious throughout the world. World Bank (1982) further discovered that dropout and repetition is most common among students from low socio-economic background and more prevalent in rural than urban areas.

## 2.3 AFRICAN COUNTRIES

Maeke (2003) studied the problem of school dropout in Mali and found out that the budget allocated was high compared to the returns, therefore hindering the country's development. She pointed out that pedagogical conditions and low socio-economic levels of parents were among other factors leading to dropout.

In Zanzibar, Psacharopoulos (1985) noted that greatest rate of drop out amongst girls was attributed to negative attitude of parents towards girls education and early marriages.

In Uganda Ayiga (1997) noted that without education people of different social groups and gender are condemned to inferior positions whether in social life, occupation or decision-making. Ayiga further noted that lack of school fees; community factors like social disruption and individual factors like disability were some of the factors that affect access and participation in Uganda.

Maeke (2003) argues that the rate and causes of dropout may vary from one school to another and from one district to another yet the causes and the rate of dropout among pupils depend on a number of factors such as the composition of students population, the environment and community which the school is situated.

In Tanzania a report from the basic primary education statistics regional level data 1999 indicate that the number of students dropping out of government secondary school in 1997/1998 was 6998 with 93 due to deaths, 6375 due to delinquency and 526 due to pregnancy. These findings point out current causes of dropout like death and delinquency.

In Nigeria the opportunity to enter the formal school system is not equitably distributed across the social class categories which themselves are based on who among the older generations received formal education Ezewu (1990). Ezewu continues to note that to be a child of well educated and wealthy urban resident provides substantial education advantage over those available to the child of the illiterate impoverished rural resident.

## 2.4 LITERATURE FROM KENYA

In Kenya the introduction of cost sharing officially marked the government abandonment of free and highly subsidized education MOE (2003).

The ministry further notes that after the introduction of cost sharing, the government was to continue meeting salaries of teachers and education administration and fund some limited school facilities while parents were to provide for tuition textbooks activity and examinations. The community on the other hand was to provide for the physical structures. When this burden was given to parents, many of the households could not cope.

The rise of level of poverty in Kenya indicates that 56% of Kenyans live below the poverty line Economic Survey (2001). This is one of the major factors that discourage parents from investing in their children's education.

Many Kenyans are unable to meet the cost of education and can no longer access it due to the high cost Abagi and Odipo (1997). Abagi also observes that as the level of poverty rises, child labour has become crucial for family survival. Children are employed in domestic activities, agriculture and petty trade in rural and urban areas. In a situation where parents and children have negative attitude towards education or do not see its immediate benefits the consequence is high dropout rate.

Otieno – Kenya Times daily November 24th 2003 acknowledged the efforts made by the government in providing free primary education. However, he noted that due to poverty and high cost of education in secondary schools, a large number of students are disabled in vertical progression and he feels that it is this group the government could have considered first. He continued to observe that the secondary education at the end of form four, one has the requisite skills to perform certain non-professional jobs or business which add significant value to the national economy.

Okwach et al (1997) noted that social cultural and religious factors such as initiation ceremonies and gender socialization are responsible for pupils failure to complete

schools. Once initiated, some pupils develop negative attitude towards teachers and school. In this connection, some circumcised boys are not ready to be taught by women.

Another factor that lead to lack of access to secondary education in Kenya is teenage pregnancy. Furguson (1988) carried out a study on schoolgirls pregnancies in the country. He observed that about 45% of Kenyan girls aged 19 years are already mothers or pregnant.

Parental attitude towards education also affect access and participation in education. Dadid and Dharam (1974) noted that education in Kenya has not been evenly distributed across sexes, regions and social groups. He further noted that few girls than boys go to school or work their way up the education ladder. There are fewer places for them and main reason is less pressure from parents to have their girls educated. Some families who cannot afford to send both sons and daughters to school reckon that the financial returns on expenditure for girls' education is a good deal smaller than that of boys.

Dadid and Dharam further noted inequalities between regions and groups in access to education, for many social background and regional origin are important in determining access to education opportunities.

A comprehensive education sector analysis report carried out by MOE in conjunction with UNICEF Kenya revealed that there was a drop in enrolment between 1990 and 1992 and 1992 and 1993. The decline resulted from a decrease in the number of students admitted into form one and high dropout rate during the course. There were relatively small dropout rates between form one and two and higher rates were registered between form three and four with females registering the highest dropout rate of 29%.

The higher rate of dropout among females lends support to the view that there are

special factors such as teenage pregnancy, early marriage, household preference for males in allocating resources to education, imbalance in the allocation of household chores and other gender stereotype.

EFA (2000) noted that HIV/AIDS pandemic as one of the crucial challenges facing not just education but national development in all its facets. The pandemic poses serious threats to the society as a whole and students in particular. Already a number of students are infected and many are dying. It is estimated that nationally up to 20% of students between age 14 and 17 years are infected MOE (2003). Majority of the parents are leaving orphaned children who drop out of school.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter focused on the research methodology that was employed in the study. The researcher addresses the research design used in the study as well as the study population. Research instrument used for data collection were identified and described. Finally, the methods of data analysis was highlighted.

#### **3.2 DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

The study adopted an exploratory approach using a descriptive survey design to investigate the factors affecting access and participation in secondary education in Meru Central District. Descriptive survey design is used in preliminary and exploratory studies Orodho (2004).

#### **3.3 STUDY LOCATION**

Meru Central District is one of the thirteen districts that form Eastern Province of the Republic of Kenya and is among the few Districts that are centrally located on the map of Kenya. The District lies to the east of Mt. Kenya. It shares borders with Laikipia District to the west, Nyeri and Kirinyaga District to the southwest, Meru South District to the south, Tharaka District to the east and Meru North and Isiolo to the north.

#### **3.4 STUDY POPULATION**

The target population was 70 public secondary schools in Meru Central District. There are also 320 primary schools in the District. Samples were taken from secondary schools and primary schools.

### **3.5 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES**

The study adopted a survey design in which an attempt was made to select a sample that was representative of the population.

According to Gay (1992) a researcher selects a sample due to various limitations that may not allow researching the whole population. A small sample of the population was targeted for the study. A sample of 10% of the population is considered minimum Gay (1992) for a small population. Purposeful procedural sampling was adopted and then random sampling was used to determine the respondent.

The schools were sampled according to their categories. The researcher considered,

2 provincial boys boarding schools,

2 provincial girls boarding schools,

2 District day mixed schools,

1 boy's day school,

1 girl's day school.

The total schools sampled were 8 schools. From these secondary schools, the researcher collected information from the head teachers of the 8 sampled schools, 5 teachers from each school making a total of 40 teachers, 10 students from each school randomly sampled making a total of 80. From the 320 primary schools, the researcher purposively sampled 2 public schools from each division. There were 7 divisions therefore; the total population was 14 primary schools. Only the head teachers of these primary schools were interviewed. The researcher also interviewed 5 parents from each primary school. The District Education Officer was also interviewed. A sample size of 185 respondents was realized.

### **3.6 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

The research instruments used in data collection included questionnaires and interview schedules.

### **3.6.1 QUESTIONNAIRES**

Questionnaires provided a cheap means of collecting data from large numbers of people. There were 4 types of questionnaires. The questionnaire for head teachers secondary, head teachers primary, secondary teachers and students. These questionnaires were structured or open ended.

### **3.6.2 INTERVIEW SCHEDULES**

The interview schedules were used to gather information from educationist like District Education Officer on the number of candidates who graduate from standard 8, the number that join form 1 and the number that drop out from secondary school.

The semi-structured interview schedules were used to obtain in depth information from parents regarding their education level, economic status, their opinion on education and the problems they encounter in trying to educate their children.

### **3.7 DATA ANALYSIS**

Items from the questionnaires and interview schedules were arranged and grouped according to particular research questions. Responses received from the questionnaires and interview schedules conducted were organized, tabulated using simple frequencies and percentages.

### **3.8 PILOTING**

The research instruments were piloted at Kaongo Secondary School. Orodho (2004) observes that piloting is important as it helps identify mis-understanding, ambiguities and irrelevant items.

### **3.9 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

After the validity and reliability of the instruments was ascertained and permit issued by the Ministry of Education, the researcher administered the instruments to all the respondents. The respondents were given a period of one week to respond to all items adequately.

### **3.10 METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION**

Items from the questionnaire and interview schedules were arranged and grouped accordingly to research questions and different respondents.

Responses received from the questionnaires and interview schedules conducted were organized, tabulated and analyzed using simple frequencies and percentages. Peil (1995) maintains that when making the results of research known to a variety of readers, percentages have an advantage over complex statistics.

The researcher was also careful to note the number of times views were given and the number of respondents who gave the same response. This formed the basis of drawing conclusions.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4.0 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

#### **4:1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter collected data from the sample population was analyzed and interpreted in line with the perceived reasons why pupils from primary schools fail to access secondary schools and why those enrolled in secondary drop out before completion.

To find out why most pupils who sit for K.C.P.E do not join secondary school, the researcher interviewed parents and primary school head teachers.

On participation, secondary school principal, teachers, students and parents were interviewed.

Nine primary school head teachers were interviewed and the information on the number of candidates who sat for K.C.P.E last year and the number that proceeded to secondary school was given as per their respective schools.

The table below represents the data.

## 4.2 FACTORS AFFECTING ACCESS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL

TABLE 1

NUMBER OF CANDIDATES WHO SAT FOR KCPE IN SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN YEAR 2004 AND THE NUMBER THAT PROCEEDED TO SECONDARY

*POX OR SEC?*

NAME OF THE SCHOOL	NO. OF CANDIDATES	NO. THAT WENT TO SECONDARY	PERCENTAGE
NGEENE	29	4	13.8%
CHAARIA	73	11	15.0%
RUIGA	69	25	38%
IGANE	31	2	6.2%
KIRIGARA	53	15	28.0%
LOWER CHURE	65	28	43%
KIAMAKORO	21	9	42%
KAONGO	44	5	11%
KAUGENE	22	8	36%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>26.2%</b>

According to statistics obtained from Meru Central District Education Office, in the year 2003, 12,054 pupils sat for K.C.P.E, 4,260 boys and 3,224 girls joined secondary school respectively in the year 2004. The following year the number of candidates increased to 12,324 and in the year 2005, 4,756 girls and 3,555 boys joined secondary school respectively as shown in table 2.

**TABLE 2**

**FORM I INTAKE IN THE YEAR 2004 AND 2005**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>NO. OF GIRLS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>	<b>NO. OF BOYS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
2004	4,260	35.3%	3,224	26.7%	7,484	62.0%
2005	4,756	38.6%	3,555	28.8%	8,311	67.4%

From the table, although the number of candidate had increased there was an improvement of 1.3%.

This improvement was not even. Some schools in Abothuguchi East Division like Igane primary school and Kaongo primary school recorded a very low percentage of 6.2% and 11% respectively. It was quite evident that the primary schools, which had the least number of pupils joining secondary school, were located in low potential areas of the District.

When a few primary school head teachers and some parents were interviewed they gave reasons why most pupils do not join secondary school after graduating in standard eight. The reasons given were categorized into four.

- School based factors,
- Household factors,
- Individual factors,
- Community factors.

The table below shows the contribution of each factor to accessibility of secondary school education.

**TABLE 3****FACTORS AFFECTING ACCESS TO SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION**

<b>FACTOR</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>HOUSEHOLD FACTORS</b>	16	29.6%
<b>SCHOOL FACTORS</b>	17	31.5%
<b>COMMUNITY FACTORS</b>	10	18.5%
<b>INDIVIDUAL FACTORS</b>	11	20.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100%</b>

**4.2.1 SCHOOL FACTORS**

These include high cost of education, pupil-teacher ratio and the school administration.

The proportion of primary school leavers continuing into secondary school is declining. This decline takes place in spite of evidence that there are more form one places than those actually filled. The reason given is the increased cost of education in the face of declining purchasing power of household income.

**Pupil-teacher ratio**

The study revealed that there is a high pupil-teacher ratio in most primary schools. This contributes to poor performance in some primary schools. When pupils fail in national examinations they cannot access secondary education.

### **School administration**

Poor administration in primary schools was also associated with poor performance. When the quality of administration falls, pupils become in disciplined. Some drop out school while others who complete standard eight do not do well in their final exams and therefore cannot join secondary schools. Nine primary school head teachers were interviewed and this was how they responded.

**TABLE 4**

### **SCHOOL FACTORS**

<b>FACTOR</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>HIGH COST OF EDUCATION</b>	9	100%
<b>PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO</b>	5	55.5%
<b>SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION</b>	2	22.5%

### **4.2.2 HOUSEHOLD FACTORS**

According to the parents interviewed and primary school head teachers, there are a number of household factors that affect access to secondary school education. Among these are parental perception, household poverty, marital status and attitude towards education.

**TABLE 5****HOUSEHOLD FACTORS**

<b>FACTOR</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>PARENTAL PERCEPTION</b>	12	35.3%
<b>HOUSEHOLD POVERTY</b>	15	44.4%
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>	4	11.76%
<b>ATTITUDE TOWARDS EDUCATION</b>	3	8.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Parental perception**

Many parents have the perception that the great majority of secondary schools are low quality institutions. There is intense competition for places in a few secondary schools particularly the boarding national and provincial ones which perform well in the K.C.S.E examinations.

Because the public budget no longer meets many of the expenses of these schools, parental contributions have steeply risen. Many households are unable to meet these expenses and are forced to choose between sending their children into low quality district and private schools or opting out of secondary education.

**Household poverty**

As the level of poverty rises, child labour has become crucial for family survival. The researcher learnt that children from primary schools are being employed in domestic activities, agricultural and petty trades in rural and urban areas. Poor households and in some cases children themselves have to carefully analyze the opportunity cost of secondary education. As a result, parents have continued to send their children particularly daughters into labour market mainly as domestic workers in urban centers after standard eight.

## **Marital status**

Marital status is important for social acceptance and guaranteeing of rights of children. Mothers who are married are expected to overcome some of the many problems in child up bringing including their education. The research shows that children whose parents are currently in union are more enrolled in secondary than those whose parents are not in union.

## **Attitude towards education**

Most parents reported that education was important. However, the benefit of education was central in addressing the question of enrolment in secondary school and continuity with education. Most parents said that for it to be worth its cost and time, education should be materially rewarding which is not the case given the very high unemployment rate among educated youths in Kenya.

### **4.2.3 INDIVIDUAL FACTORS**

According to the parents and teachers, it was noted that most primary school pupils have their own reasons why they do not like continuing with education. Some of these factors include lack of motivation and aspirations, teenage pregnancy for girls and peer pressure. The table shows how individual factors affect access to education.

**TABLE 6**

#### **INDIVIDUAL FACTORS**

**(From 45 parents and 9 primary school head teachers)**

<b>FACTOR</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>LACK OF MOTIVATION AND ASPIRATIONS</b>	7	12.9%
<b>PEER PRESSURE</b>	4	7.4%
<b>TEENAGE PREGNANCY</b>	3	5.5%

## **Motivation and aspirations**

Most pupils in primary schools do not have future aspiration. They do not know what they want in life. Therefore parental motivation is critical in children's learning and performance and influences the life chances for their children in the sense that a family may be supportive, neutral or antagonistic to school education. The value that each family attaches to school education determines the motivation with which its children pursue such education.

It was also noted that at this level children who have little interest in education influence each other to leave school to go and look for avenues which make them quick money. On the other part of older female children are drawn to prostitution and early marriages.

## **Teenage pregnancy**

Most girls do not access secondary school education because they are either mothers or pregnant. Some girls sit for their K.C.P.E when already pregnant. Such girls cannot perform well and even after delivery are not interested with education.

### **4.2.4 COMMUNITY FACTORS**

The state of the society was found to strongly influence access to secondary school education. Cultural factors like initiation and early marriages, drugs and local brew consumption and AIDS scourge.

**TABLE 7****COMMUNITY FACTORS  
(45 parents and 9 primary school head teachers)**

<b>FACTORS</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>CULTURAL FACTORS</b>	5	9.3%
<b>DRUGS AND LOCAL BREW</b>	7	12.9%
<b>AIDS SCOURGE</b>	4	7.4%

**Social cultural factors**

Social cultural factors such as initiation ceremonies and gender socialization are additional factors responsible for pupils failure to join secondary schools. Once initiated, some pupils develop negative attitude towards teachers and school. In this connection some circumcised boys are not ready to be taught by women whom they now consider inferior. Similarly, some initiated girls feel that they are now grown women who should get married.

**Local brew and drugs**

In Meru, Miraa is a common drug, which is abused openly, even by primary school children. The local brew is also too much. Most children come from families where this alcohol is brewed. Children start taking the brew at early age. By the time they get to standard eight their minds are already intoxicated and have no value for education.

**AIDS scourge**

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is one of the crucial challenges facing not only education but also national development in all its facets. Majority of the young parents are dying

leaving orphans with the grand parents. Most of these grandparents cannot afford for education of their grandchildren and therefore most of them drop in primary school. Even those who complete the primary cycle cannot move to secondary.

### 4.3 FACTORS AFFECTING PARTICIPATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

A research conducted among secondary school principals, teachers and students revealed that some of the factors that lead to drop out in secondary schools include, lack of school fees, discipline problems, poor performance and teenage pregnancy among girls.

**TABLE 8**

**FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO DROP OUT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

<b>FACTORS</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>LACK OF SCHOOL FEES</b>	52	58.4%
<b>DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS</b>	10	11.2%
<b>POOR PERFORMANCE</b>	15	16.8%
<b>PREGNANCY</b>	12	13.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### 4.3.1 LACK OF SCHOOL FEES

Research conducted in Meru Central District revealed that relatively high cost of schooling is a crucial variable in the withdrawal of students from school.

The introduction of cost sharing in Kenya has worsened the situation for the education for all. Even where schools do not have high fees for example in day schools, other levies and expenses make schooling out of reach for a significant number of children.

Though the high cost of schooling affect the education of boys and girls, girls from poor households are doubly disadvantaged. In the time of economic difficulties parents opt to withdraw their daughters from school because of several reasons.

- The mistaken view that educating boys is more crucial given their ultimate roles as family heads and breadwinners.
- Internalization of the myth that boys are more intelligent than girls.
- The belief that girls are less success oriented than boys.

Given parental perception of female role and intelligence, it is not surprising to find girls who have dropped out of school due to family inability to meet the financial demands of schooling, being used as a source of income for the household.

Prostitution is another option open to schoolgirls in Kenya, Meru included. Sugar daddies, usually rich and “respectable” members of society are able to exploit the economically deprived situation of a majority of schoolgirls to gain sexual favours.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Most boys and girls in secondary schools are in their adolescence stage of development. The boys and girls are very sensitive to approval and disapproval of the people they live with. In their mental and emotional life, they think more critically and feel more deeply. Because they desire the approval of other people, they exercise greater control over childish emotions such as anger and fear.

The adolescent is highly conscious of himself and sensitive to adult criticism. He/she desires more responsibility for he is confident that he can manage his own affairs. Adolescents are treated like children although expected to behave like adult. With some reasons they resent adult interference and this brings indiscipline in schools which result to drop out.

## **SCHOOLGIRLS PREGNANCY**

Research data indicates that there is a close relationship between the occurrence of schoolgirl pregnancy and the incidence of female drop out. Throughout the country, the school careers for girls are cut short by unwanted pregnancies.

A rational assessment of the situation of pregnancy demonstrates that it is the societal responses to pregnancy rather than the pregnancy perse that push girls out of school. In Kenya it is assumed that pregnancy negatively affect academic performance and thus pregnant girls should be thrown out to avoid further wastage of scarce resources. Labelled as failures and stigmatized, pregnant girls internalize negative self image of themselves that may lead to actual poor performance and self withdrawal by girls from school even before pregnancy becomes visible.

## **POOR PERFORMANCE**

Performance at school was also a cause of high drop out rate. For many students this is a feared exercise since failure to perform well has implications both at home and school. At home, children are ridiculed by their parents and guardians for non-performance and sometimes withdrawn from schooling.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5.0 SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter sought to summarize the entire project work and finally bring in the researchers conclusion and recommendations.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY**

The study intended to identify factors that affect access and participation in secondary schools.

The study was conducted in Meru Central District. Data was collected from both primary and secondary schools. Nine primary school head teachers were interviewed. Some parents with children in public primary schools were also interviewed. The two groups provided the information to answer research questions like what makes pupils who graduate in standard eight not to join secondary schools.

On participation, secondary school principals, teachers and students were interviewed and information was gathered why students drop out of secondary school before completion.

The researcher analyzed the information from the field with the view of fulfilling the research objectives and answering research questions, and the findings were as follows.

The study revealed that there is poor access and participation in secondary school education in some parts of Meru Central District.

The transition rate from primary to secondary is low in low potential areas of the district. School factors like high cost of schooling, high pupil teacher ratio or (understaffing) and poor administration of primary school were found to be some of the factors contributing to poor access to education.

Other factors included household factors like parental perception, household poverty, marital status and societal attitude towards education in general.

On participation factors like lack of school fees, discipline and teenage pregnancy contributed to drop out in secondary schools.

## 5.2 CONCLUSION

According to the MOE, free primary education in Kenya, cost in excess Ksh 7 billion annually. The project has assisted to improve the country's literacy level despite its consideration against more economically viable ventures in the same sector.

The greatest impediment to education for many families in Kenya is poverty, high cost in the name of school fees and other unspecified levies, which push deserving students out of the school system.

Dropout rate has continued to increase as the economy continues to shrink. A large number of students are disabled in vertical progression from one level to the other and it is this group the free approach should have considered first. This is because secondary school education at the end of form four, one has the requisite skills to perform certain non-professional jobs or businesses to which add significant value to national economy.

CB-56-72%  
SE-61-96  
PB-64-89%  
CB-54-99

### 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

With the increasing poverty levels, the escalating cost of education and the dwindling levels of government investment in education, policy makers should look for innovative and viable strategies for enhancing access and participation in secondary school education.

The government through the MOE should provide highly subsidized or free secondary school education. This can be done through,

- The MOE increasing the bursary fund. This will enable poor and deserving students to access education.
- There is need to strengthen bursary funds at the district, division or constituency level to supplement MOE bursary fund. This can be done by appealing to the economically well to do individuals and institutions to boost such funds.
- Schools should be guided by MOE on how to establish fee waivers mechanisms and income generating activities for the poor parents. Schools should work out modalities where parents can pay fees using equipment resources like firewood, cereals or provision of labour. These mechanisms would enable very poor parents to cater for the fees and other financial requirements of their children.

On the socio-cultural traditions values and practices, the MOE in collaboration with civil society groups should,

- Sensitize communities on the negative effects of some cultural practices on education. The communities should be given adequate information on the benefits of education as opposed to retrogressive practices such as early marriages and female genital mutilation.
- Enact and enforce a law compelling parents to educate both boys and girls and make it punishable for any person or institution using or promoting child labour.

On school factors, there should,

- A programme providing for re-entry in education. Most dropouts are forced out of their wish and should be allowed in later.
- Schools should have a well-trained guidance and counseling teachers to guide students in order to reduce the rate of indiscipline.
- Drug use should be controlled and law enacted to regulate handling of drugs by minors.
- AIDS orphans should be given education at no cost.

#### **5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

1. A similar study should be carried out in different geographical regions to investigate factors affecting access and participation in secondary school education.
2. A study can be undertaken to establish alternative means of financing secondary school education.
3. An investigation can be done to establish factors affecting girl child education in arid and semi arid areas.

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*The problem of transition from one level to another.*

**Appendix 1**

**NCABIRA MISHECK  
DEPT. OF EDUCATIONAL  
ADMINISTRATION, PLANNING AND  
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT,  
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY  
P.O.BOX 43844  
NAIROBI**

**RE: AN INTRODUCTORY LETTER**

Dear respondents,

The researcher is a student in the above name institution pursuing a master's degree in education.

My research project is focusing on identifying factors that affect access and participation in secondary school education. I believe that the findings will be useful not only to Meru District but will also assist the policy makers in Kenya.

You are kindly requested to go through the questionnaires and provide the answers to the best of your knowledge. If you have extra information helpful to this study and it is not in the questionnaires, please feel free to write it down.

Yours faithfully,

Ncabira Misheck

**Appendix 2**

**PRIMARY SCHOOLS HEAD TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE**

**NAME OF SCHOOL.....**

1. How many pupils are in this school? ( )
2. How many are in standard eight? ( )
3. How many pupils sat for K.C.P.E in the year  
2003.....  
2004.....
4. Did all the candidates who had registered do the exam?  
Yes ( )                      No ( )  
If no how many ( )
5. What are the reasons that made them not sit for the exam.  
.....  
.....
6. Those who did the exam, how many went to secondary?  
Year 2004 .....  
National schools ( )  
Provincial schools ( )  
District schools ( )  
Repeated ( )  
At home ( )

7. Year 2005 .....

National schools ( )

Provincial schools ( )

District schools ( )

Repeated ( )

At home ( )

8. What is the pupil-teacher ratio in your school? ( )

9. How is the K.C.P.E performance?

Very good ( )      Good ( )      Average ( )      Poor ( )

10. What are some of the factors that contribute to poor performance?

.....

.....

11. What are some of the factors that make pupils who graduate in standard eight not to join secondary school?

.....

.....

.....

### Appendix 3

#### **PARENTS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

The information given will be treated as confidential. Please feel free to answer.

1. What is the level of your education?

Graduate ( )          Diploma ( )          'O'level ( )          Primary ( )  
Never gone to school ( )

2. What is your opinion about education?

Very important ( )          Important ( )

3. Why?

Determines one's life ( )          Not benefiting those who go through it ( )

4. What do you do for a living?

Civil servant ( )          Works with a company ( )          Self employed ( )  
Peasant ( )

5. Are all your children of school going age in school? If yes, how many at each level?

University ( )          Other colleges ( )          Secondary ( )  
Primary ( )          Pre-primary ( )          Nursery ( )

6. If the answer to question 5 is NO, why?

Fees ( )          Uniform ( )          I do not value education ( )  
The child refused school ( )

7. Is your wife or husband alive? If yes, what does she or he do for a living?

8. What other role do you play in supporting your children education apart from paying school fees?

Buying books ( )  
Promoting those who do well by buying present for them ( )  
Others ( )  
None ( )

9. What proportion of your income do you spend in education?  
More than three quarters ( )                      More than half ( )  
Less than half ( )
10. How often do you go to school to check on your children's performance?  
Often ( )              Sometimes ( )              Not at all ( )
11. How informed are you on bursary scheme?  
Informed ( )              Not informed ( )
12. Have your children ever benefited from the bursary scheme?  
Yes ( )                      No ( )
13. Who decides on the schools that your children attend?  
Myself ( )              Teachers ( )              Student ( )              Others ( )
14. If you have two children in standard eight, a boy and a girl and the two do well in their exams and you cannot afford to take the two to secondary school, whom will you give the first priority?  
Boy ( )              Girl ( )
15. Why?

.....  
.....

**Appendix 4**

**DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICERS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

1. What is the number of primary schools in the district? ( )
2. How is the completion rate in primary?  
High ( )                      Low ( )
3. How many students from public primary schools sat for K.C.P.E in the year  
2003 ( )  
2004 ( )
4. How many from public primary schools joined secondary in the year  
2004 ( )  
2005 ( )
5. How is the K.C.P.E performance in general?  
Very good ( )      Good ( )                      Average ( )                      Weak ( )
6. If not good, what are some of the factors that contribute to poor performance?  
.....  
.....
7. How is the transition rate from primary to secondary?  
Very good ( )      Good ( )                      Average ( )                      Poor ( )
8. Is the rate of transition from primary to secondary the same in all the divisions?  
Yes ( )                      No ( )  
If no, why?  
.....  
.....
9. How many students went to secondary in the year 2004?  
National ( )  
Provincial ( )  
District ( )  
Repeated ( )  
Not known their where about ( )

10. How many secondary schools are there in the District? ( )

Public ( )

Private ( )

11. What are some of the factors that lead to poor access in secondary school education?

.....  
.....  
.....

12. How is the rate of drop out in the district?

Very high ( )

Average ( )

Low ( )

13. Why do students drop out of secondary schools?

.....  
.....

## Appendix 5

### SECONDARY SCHOOL HEAD TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Please respond to all the questions as honestly and accurately as possible. The information that you give will be strictly confidential. Please tick against the information(s) most applicable to you or fill in the blank space.

1. What is the status of the school?  
Provincial ( )                  District ( )  
Boarding ( )                  Day and Boarding ( )                  Day ( )  
Girls only ( )                  Boys only ( )                  Mixed ( )
2. What is the total enrolment?  
Boys ( )                  Girls ( )                  Total ( )
3. Apart from the official form one selection, do you admit other students?  
Yes ( )                  No ( )
4. What criteria do you use to give the remaining vacancies?  
Interview ( )                  Others ( )
5. What was the highest marks and lowest marks that you considered during 2003 intake? Highest ( )                  Lowest ( )
6. Among the students who reported, how many were from, Boarding primary schools ( )                  Public day schools ( )
7. Did all those students selected report to school? Yes ( )                  No ( )
8. What is the total fee that you charge per year in form one? ( )
9. Do you have extra levies like development fund, P.T.A. fund and others?  
Yes ( )                  No ( )
10. If yes, how many? ( )
11. How is fees payment in your school?  
100%-70% ( )  
70%-40% ( )  
Below 40% ( )
12. How do parents pay fees? All at once ( )                  In installment ( )

13. How do you find the new methods of awarding bursary through constituency committee?  
 Very okey ( )                      Not okey ( )
14. How many students benefited from the 2004 bursary scheme? ( )
15. How is student school attendance? Very good ( ) Good ( )    Poor ( )
16. What are some of the reasons that lead to poor school attendance?  
 Fees ( )                      Discipline ( )  
 Sickness ( )                      Others ( )
17. Are there some students who drop out of school?  
 Yes ( )                      No ( )
18. What are some of the reasons that lead to drop out?  
 Discipline ( )                      Fees ( )                      Pregnancy ( )  
 Lack of interest ( )                      Poor performance ( )                      Parental attitude ( )
19. Apart from school fees, where else do you get money from?  
 Government ( )                      Donors ( )                      Others ( )
20. How many students from your school joined university? ( )
21. Those who do not qualify to go to university, where do they go?

## Appendix 6

### TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRES

1. What are some of the causes of students' absenteeism?  
Fees ( ) Sickness ( ) Discipline ( )  
Others ( ) specify.
2. Does the school have the facilities like laboratories and library?  
Yes ( ) No ( )
3. If there are, what is state of these rooms?  
Well equipped ( ) Moderately equipped ( )  
Not well equipped ( )
4. If they are not there, what do you do in case of practicals?  
Carry them out in classrooms ( )  
Move to other schools ( )  
Do not do any practicals ( )
5. How often do parents come to check on their children performance?  
Often ( ) During academic day ( ) Not at all ( )
6. From your assessment which category parents are more concerned with their children education?  
High socio-economic ( ) Low socio-economic ( )
7. What do you think is the reason as to why some fail to buy learning materials for their children?  
Lack of money ( ) Ignorance ( ) Others ( )
8. How is the academic performance of those who drop out of school?

**Appendix 7**

**STUDENTS QUESTIONNAIRES**

Do not write your name on this questionnaire. All the information given will be treated as confidential. Please attempt all the questions by ticking where applicable.

1. Name of the school.....
2. Class.....
3. Which year did you sit for your K.C.P.E? ( )
4. How many marks did you get? ( )
5. Why did you join secondary school?  
Forced by my parents ( )  
Forced by my former teachers ( )  
Wanted to continue with education ( )
6. Which secondary school was your first choice? ( )
7. If not the one you are in, what made you not go to the school of your choice?  
Did not qualify ( )  
Fees was too high ( )
8. Are both your parents alive?  
Father ( )                      Mother ( )                      All ( )                      None ( )
9. Do you live with both of your parents? Yes ( )                      No ( )  
If the answer is NO, whom do you live with  
Others ( ) specify.
10. How often do you go home for fees? Often ( )                      Sometimes ( )  
Never ( )
11. What is the occupation of your parents?  
Father.....  
Mother.....

## Appendix 8

### TIME SCHEDULE

TIME	ACTIVITY
2004 September to December	Writing and submission of the proposal
2005 January	Piloting, testing the instruments in 3 schools
February	Analyze the data and adjust instruments
March	Focus discussions and interviews
April & May	Coding, summarizing and compile the information
June	Writing the remaining 3 chapters of proposal presenting corrections
July	Final presenting

## Appendix 9

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>COST</b>
1. Proposal writing, typing and correcting.	4,000
2. Preparing research instruments.	2,000
3. Piloting the project in a few selected schools.	3,000
4. Carrying the actual research transport expenses.	10,000
5. Data analysis.	3,000
6. Typing, correcting and binding the project paper.	4,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26,000</b>