

The major objective of this study was to analyze the implications that community financing of primary schools has had on their quality. The rationale for the study was that parents and communities were increasingly financing both the development and recurrent budgets of primary schooling, with the government paying only teachers' salaries. However, the implications of this responsibility on quality, especially in terms of securing teaching and learning materials, have not been explored.

The study used a framework that conceptualized the quality of schooling to lie in the interaction of three sets of variables. These were, the degree and quality of relationship between the school and the community, the amount and quality of inputs provided to the school by the community, and the manner the inputs were used in school to improve pupils' learning environments. The positive interaction of these variables results to the realization of social capital in the development of quality primary schools. In this regard, quality of schooling was seen as a process that is attained when there is positive synergy among the three variables.

A descriptive case study methodology was utilized in the collection, analysis and reporting of data. The study took the design of comparative and collective case studies, of primary schools in Kajiado and South Kisii Districts of Kenya. Hence, a group of case primary schools from the two districts were separately studied on the basis of the objectives of the study, then, comparative conclusions drawn. The choice of the two districts for the study was purposively done to reflect the basic concerns of the study, of exploring how community socio-economic factors determined the quality of primary schools. The sample for the study consisted 498 pupils, 8 headteachers, 26 class teachers, 46 PTA/school committee members, 16 education officers and 40 parents, from 8 primary schools in Kajiado and South Kisii Districts. To gather as much information as possible, the study triangulated various methods for data collection and reporting. The methods were; a questionnaire for pupils, structured interviews for teachers, parents and Education Officers, FGDs for PTA and school committee members, a content analysis of school documents, and school and classroom observation schedules. Both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used for data analysis and reporting.

The study established that community financing of primary schooling had led to the deterioration in quality, of both the school physical facilities, and the learning process. This was due to various factors. First, socio-economic background of communities affected household demand and ability to pay the required schooling levies. The economic inability of communities to afford schooling levies was traced to historical circumstances, related to colonial and post-colonial policies in the development of the districts. The historical circumstances meant that in the study districts, the requisite social-economic developments, and positive attitudes had not been realized among the population. Consequently, the communities lacked not only the monetary outlays to support quality schooling, but also, the social attitudes to sustain demand for the same.

Second, the negative implications that community economic inability had in the quality of schooling were demonstrated in the scarcity of teaching and learning materials, and desks in schools. The shortages were more in schools that had not received financial assistance outside of what parents provided.

Third, reliance on parents and the community to finance school inspection had undermined the quality of teaching in schools. This was due to the fact that parents were not able to pay for this activity.

Fourth besides financial demands, headteachers were not keen to involve communities more in the running of schools. This undermined the synergy that would have been realized between parents and the schools to improve the quality of learning. This synergy was further eroded by

political, religious and clan based interests in the location and management of schools, thereby undermining the development of community social capital for the development for the development of quality schools.

Last, the study established that the increased responsibility on the community to finance primary schools had led to a decrease in parental interest in schooling issues. This meant that the policy had not led to increased parental interest on the schooling of their children, in line with the aims of the cost-sharing policy. In the overall, this study concluded that community financing of primary schooling was undermining the role of primary education in national development. Besides, the findings of the study indicated that the quality of primary schools continued to be determined by the level of economic development of the different Districts of the country. To this end, the study recommends for the Kenya government to institute various affirmative strategies to ensure quality primary schooling for all the children in the country.