

# FINANCING SECONDARY EDUCATION IN KENYA THROUGH THE BURSARY SCHEME: ACCESSIBILITY AND IMPACT ON COMPLETION RATES IN NAIROBI PROVINCE

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**Abstract:** The need for secondary education financing has been growing steadily, particularly as a result of escalating poverty levels, a scenario that is worsened by devastating effects of HIV/AIDS at the household level. To mitigate the situation, the government initiated a bursary scheme to assist poor students acquire education. However, in efforts to improve quality of social services within the framework of decentralization, the government rolled out management of the bursary scheme to the 210 constituencies under the patronage of Members of Parliament in 2003. Although little has been documented about impact of the scheme under the new administrative arrangement, sentiments are rife that many students are unlikely to complete secondary education as the issue of fee shortage continues to intensify. This necessitates a comprehensive investigation to provide information that would stimulate policy action to strengthen the Constituency Bursary Fund (CBF) and make it more effective in meeting financial needs of learners. Based on this, the study sought to: -

1. Assess the attributes of needy students and how it affects completion of secondary education.
2. Determine the contribution of CBF on completion of secondary education.
3. Assess secondary education financing practices in Nairobi County.
4. Evaluate the management, effectiveness and accessibility of the CBF.

The study sourced requisite data from 308 students, 243 parents/guardians, 52 headteachers and deputy heads as well as 3 Quality Assurance and Standards Officers. The respondents were drawn using a combination of multi-stage, random and purposive sampling procedures. Parents/guardians were reached through the sampled students. Quantitative data was analyzed using frequency distributions, cross tabulations with Chi square and binary logistic regression using SPSS and MS-Excel software packages. Qualitative data in form of experiences, opinions and suggestions, were analyzed using qualitative procedures and were used to strengthen quantitative findings.

It was noted that completion of secondary education was associated with *status of orphan hood, parent's marital status, number of siblings, place of residence within Nairobi, parents'/guardians level of education and parents'/guardians' occupation*. Besides, the CBF only enhanced the likelihood of secondary education completion by marginal 5.4%. Although the family unit is the major financier of secondary education, the CBF played an important supplementary role. However, the potential of the CBF was undermined by various issues arising from inadequacy of funds, faulty selection of committee members, lack of important institutional linkages, delay of funds, corruption and high-handedness among others.

It is recommended that the bursary kitty and award guidelines be revised to reflect actual fee structures; that Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoES&T) to take up its leadership role; Monitoring and Evaluation institutional frameworks be strengthened or established where they don't exist; the CBF should open doors for stakeholders to get in; the CBF to spearhead resource mobilization to revamp the bursary kitty; need for

professionals only to be admitted to the Constituency Bursary Committee (CBC); other members should be trained in essential skill areas; the CBCs to develop strategic plans with programme-specific visions, missions, strategic objectives and core values; need for comprehensive data base of needy students at the national and constituency levels; CBF should create interactive communication channels with the community; need for effective record keeping at national and grass-root levels; economic empowerment for households, especially women; schools to initiate Income Generating Activities (IGAs) to supplement secondary education financing and that CBF should venture into post-secondary education financing.

*Definition of Keywords:*

- **Access:** Addresses the open-ended nature of education, which in this context is recognized as a basic right of every child, youth and adult, irrespective of gender and socio-economic status.
- **Bursary scheme:** Money provided by the MoES&T to assist needy and bright students attain secondary school education.
- **Capital expenditure:** The money spent to provide and improve physical and institutional facilities.
- **Completion rates:** The proportion of students who complete secondary school education.
- **Cost-sharing:** A policy of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) that was introduced in 1988 and emphasizes sharing of educational costs between the government, communities, parents, sponsors and the beneficiaries.
- **Financing of education:** The process of budgetary allocation, both public and private, on a rationalized basis to ensure equitable distribution.
- **Needy student:** Any student who is genuinely unable to pay school fees because of economic hardships.
- **Poverty line:** An abstract socio-economic divide between households that live on 1 US \$ or less a day and the rest of the society.
- **Public schools:** Schools maintained or supported out of public financial resources.
- **Recurrent expenditure:** This is money spent on the daily running of schools, including expenditure on textbooks, stationery, examination fees, transport, salaries etc.
- **Secondary education:** Education offered to all those who graduate from the first tier in the education system.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the priorities of the Government of Kenya (GoK) in the Twenty First Century is to achieve a life of prosperity and dignity for all the citizens, as articulated by the *Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)* (United Nations, 2000). The role of education towards this goal has been underscored since independence, as documented in the *Sessional papers No. 10 of 1965, No. 6 of 1988* and the current *National Development Plan for 2002-2008* (Republic of Kenya, 1965; 1988a; 2002). The policy documents indicate that education is not only a fundamental right of a child but also a critical tool for sustained socio-economic development and hence an important exit route from poverty (Republic of Kenya, 2003a; 1999). In addition, it improves people's ability to participate more effectively in community development. More still, the documents resonate the government's policy position that every citizen should have inalienable right to social services, which includes education, irrespective of their socio-economic, gender, race or political background, (Republic of Kenya, 1997; Njeru and Orodho, 2003).

The poor economic performance witnessed in the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century coupled with high HIV/AIDS prevalence, retrenchment and effects of multi-party democracy are some of the factors that have worsened poverty situation in the country. According to the *Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005*, high cost of living has persistently inflated the cost of secondary education making it unaffordable to the poor majority, currently estimated at 14 million Kenyans (Republic of Kenya, 2005). High user-fee charges continue to burden poor households, hence, only a few eligible students from these households take up places at the educational institutions. According to Mutakyahwa (1999), poor families may be unable to access the benefits accruing from investment in the development of quality education. The high drop-out rate, especially, at the secondary level in the country emerges as a strong antagonistic force undermining the current

education policy as well as economic recovery efforts by undermining the nurture of competitive human resource needed in the years to come for sustained economic development and poverty reduction (Republic of Kenya, 2003; 2005).

Even though the government initiated a bursary scheme to cushion the poor and vulnerable students, there are concerns regarding equitable accessibility and effectiveness of the scheme in enhancing completion of secondary education, especially among the poor and vulnerable groups. Better still, there is evidence that administrative systems are riddled with inefficiency and irregularities such as delays in disbursement funds to beneficiaries; thereby frustrating school operations, inhibiting regular school attendance for the affected students and lowering academic performance. Besides, issues such as corruption, political patronage, nepotism and tribalism have plagued the bursary award process. Worse still, is the little regard for defined bursary eligibility criteria. There is inadequate information to facilitate re-orientation of the secondary bursary scheme to make it a needs-based initiative. This study seeks to establish accessibility of the government secondary education bursary scheme by students from income-poor families and impact of the scheme on completion rates in Nairobi Province.

### 1.1 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do the background attributes of needy students affect completion of secondary education?
2. What is the impact of the Constituency Bursary Fund on completion of secondary education?
3. What are the secondary education financing practices in Nairobi Province?
4. How accessible and effective is the Constituency Bursary Fund?

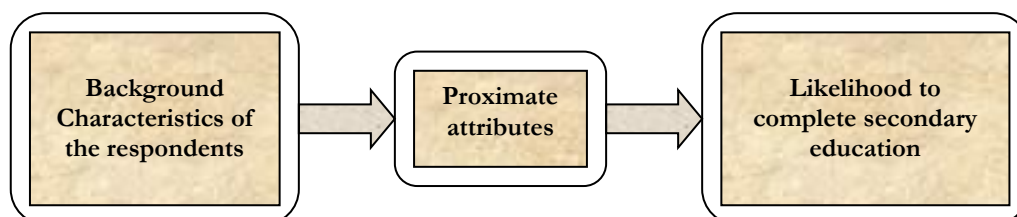
### 1.2 Objectives

The research questions were addressed through the following objectives: -

1. Assess the attributes of needy students and how it affects completion of secondary education.
2. Determine the impact of the Constituency Bursary Fund on completion of secondary education.
3. Assess secondary education financing practices in Nairobi Province.
4. Evaluate the management, effectiveness and accessibility of the Constituency Bursary Fund.

## 2. THE ANALYTIC CONCEPTUAL AND OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

As indicated by the literature that were reviewed, attainment of quality secondary education is purely a function of the background characteristics of an individual in terms of economic, demographic and social factors. For instance, **economic issues** such as the level of household income determines whether a student is able or not to stay in school till completion. Students from households with high incomes are more likely to complete secondary education than those from low-income earners. Likewise, **demographic attributes** such as gender or parents' marital status affect the likelihood that an individual will complete secondary education. In situations of resource scarcity, boys are more likely to complete secondary school than girls because of the strong preference for male children among many African communities. In addition, **social factors** such as parents' level of education or orphanhood are also likely to affect secondary school completion rate. Figure 2.1 illustrates that completion of secondary schooling is principally determined by the background attributes of the respondents.



Source: Researcher, 2006.

Figure 2.1 Analytic conceptual framework

The background attributes interact to provide either a weak or a strong base for a student to remain in school till completion. While individuals with strong bases are more likely to complete secondary education, those whose bases are weak are more likely to drop out. The amount of bursary allocated comes in as an intervention to support students with weak bases to remain in school till completion. Hence, cost is the main factor influencing adequate secondary schooling, especially within the cost-sharing policy framework when other factors such as substance abuse, unwanted pregnancy, early marriages etc are controlled for. Through this conceptual framework, the study attempts to determine impact of the bursary scheme on the completion of secondary education. An impact assessment involves measurement of the net effect of an intervention on the phenomenon of interest. In view of this, figure 2.2 illustrates that as the cost of education rises, the proportions completing school dwindle due to inability to afford the rising costs (*Curve C<sub>1</sub>*). However, when intervention *X* (e.g. bursary) is introduced into the system to cushion poor students against effects of the high cost, the proportions completing secondary education begins to rise gradually in response to the intervention (*Curve C<sub>2</sub>*). The difference between the two curves (*C<sub>2</sub> - C<sub>1</sub>*) yields the impact of the bursary intervention on completion of secondary education. The magnitude of an impact is directly proportional to the amount of bursary intervention; hence, the higher the amount of bursary allocated the greater the impact on completion rates and vice versa.

### 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study applied the survey design. Bryman and Cramer (1997), contends that survey designs reveal relationships between variables and draws attention to the design’s limited capacity in connection with the elucidation of causal processes. Precisely because in a survey research, variables are not manipulated (and are often not capable of manipulation), the ability of the researcher to influence the cause and effect are limited (*Ibid.*); Using the design the study elicited background information and opinions from the students and parents/guardians, teachers and MoES&T officials. The design was most appropriate because of its ability to capture a diverse range of information pertaining to background attributes and opinions of the respondents (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996).

**Table 3.1: Sampling students**

| Level/Stage | Unit                  |         | Total |
|-------------|-----------------------|---------|-------|
| Divisions   | 8 in Nairobi Province |         | 8     |
| Schools     | 4 per division        | (4*8)   | 32    |
| Students    | 10 per school         | (10*32) | 320   |

Source: Survey Data, 2006

**Table 3.2: Distribution of the teachers by workstations**

| School             | No. of teachers Interviewed | School                 | No. of teachers Interviewed |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Aquinas            | 2                           | Kahawa                 | 1                           |
| Eastleigh          | 2                           | Hospital Hill          | 2                           |
| Huruma             | 2                           | Parklands Arya         | 1                           |
| Jamhuri            | 2                           | Moi Girls'             | 1                           |
| Langata            | 2                           | Maina Wanjigi          | 2                           |
| Muhuri Muchiri     | 2                           | Kayole                 | 2                           |
| Ofafa Jericho      | 1                           | Nairobi School         | 2                           |
| Our Lady of Fatima | 2                           | Dagoretti              | 1                           |
| Our Lady of Mercy  | 2                           | BuruBuru               | 2                           |
| Pumwani            | 1                           | Embakasi               | 2                           |
| Ruaraka            | 2                           | Precious Blood, Riruta | 2                           |
| Ruthimitu Mixed    | 2                           | Ruthimitu Girls'       | 2                           |
| St. Teresa's       | 2                           | Nembu                  | 2                           |
| Starehe            | 2                           | Moi Forces             | 2                           |
| Uhuru              | 2                           |                        |                             |
| <b>Total</b>       |                             | <b>52</b>              |                             |

Source: Survey Data, 2006

### Quality Assurance and Standards Officers

Purposive sampling technique was applied to obtain 4 officers with whom key-informant interviews were conducted. The selection was based the fact that the respondents were office-holders at the time of the study. However, 75% officers were successfully interviewed. The other respondent could not be reached as she was out of office on official duties.

### Data Collection

The study collected primary and secondary data, both qualitative and quantitative. Primary data were elicited from students, parents, headteachers and their deputies as well as MoES&T officials. Secondary data was sourced through the documentary review of school attendance registers and secondary education bursary records at the MoES&T headquarters. The data were collected using the instruments discussed in the subsequent sections.

### Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis began with field editing to minimise errors. This was followed by coding the open-ended data, entry, cleaning, transformation, analysis and interpretation (Obure, 2002). The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to run univariate or descriptive analyses to produce frequency distribution based on various characteristics of the respondents; and in inferential analysis, hypotheses were tested using *cross-tabulations with chi square* and *binary logistic regression*.

### Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative information obtained through in-depth interviews with headteachers and MoES&T officials were processed and analysed following three steps (*Ibid.*). In the first step, the data were *organized* following key thematic questions. In the process, the data were summarized into daily briefs after each interviewing session. The second step involved *description* of the responses to produce interim reports; areas that required additional information were identified and the requisite data sourced. The third step involved *systematic analysis and interpretation* of the interim report, which was then integrated with quantitative data in the main report.

### Reliability and Validity Issues

Reliability and validity ensure scientific usefulness of any research work (UNESCO, 2004). Reliability is the ability of a research instrument to consistently measure the characteristics of interest over time. Reliability in research is influenced by random error. Thus as error increases reliability decreases.

**Table 3.3: Reliability of the instruments**

| Instrument              | $\alpha$ |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Students' Questionnaire | 0.673    |
| Parents' Questionnaire  | 0.774    |
| Teachers' Questionnaire | 0.801    |

Source: Survey Data, 2006

## 4. DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

The quantitative findings are presented in both descriptive and inferential forms. The main purpose was to describe the attributes of students and verify the existence of significant statistical associations between the dependent variable (completion of secondary education) and each of the independent attributes; which was performed using *cross-tabulations with Chi-square tests*. The procedures culminated in testing null hypotheses ( $H_{o1}$ ,  $H_{o2}$ ,  $H_{o3}$ ,  $H_{o4}$ ,  $H_{o5}$ ,  $H_{o6}$ ,  $H_{o7}$ ,  $H_{o8}$ ,  $H_{o9}$  and  $H_{o10}$ ) as outlined in chapter two. Based on the test results, the attributes that were significantly associated with the dependent variable were incorporated into *binary logistic model* to establish the probability of school completion among students on CBF and those who did not have any bursary support. More still, the qualitative findings in the form of views, opinions, experiences and lessons learnt elicited from the students, parents, headteachers, deputy heads and MoES&T officials were used to complement and strengthen the quantitative results.

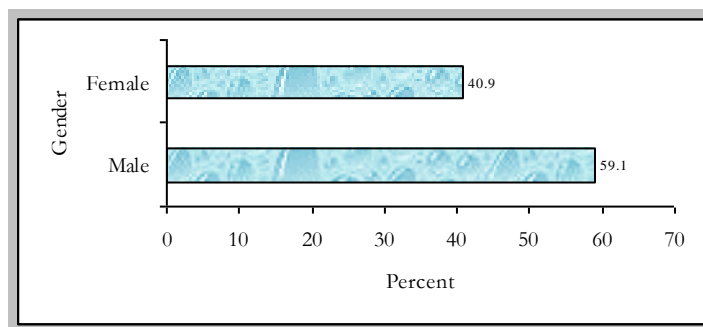
### a) The attributes of the students and completion of secondary education

The acquisition of secondary education is a costly venture, especially in developing countries where large proportions of inhabitants dwell in a vicious cycle of poverty. Several socio-economic and demographic factors interact to influence the

ability of learners to successfully complete secondary education. For instance, learners from poor<sup>1</sup> families are less likely to complete secondary education as compared to those from middle and upper classes, assuming that no intervention such as bursary funding is provided. In this study, the background variables that were selected for analysis included *gender, status of orphanhood, parents' marital status, number of siblings, ethnicity, place of residence, parents' level of education and occupation*. The following section provides detailed discussions of the variables and their association with completion of secondary education in Nairobi Province.

**b) Gender**

Gender disparity in acquisition of formal education is deeply entrenched in traditional African value systems, which favour the boy child and worsened by inadequacy of resources to meet the escalating cost of education for all children irrespective of their gender. In this study, as illustrated in Figure 4.1, 182 (59%) of the respondents were males, while 126 (41%) were females.



**Figure 4.1: Distribution of students by gender**

Assessment of the variation between gender and completion of secondary education yielded the results presented in table 4.1, where more boys and girls [116 (64%) and 88 (70%) respectively] indicated that they were unlikely to complete secondary education, given the financial difficulties they experienced at the time of the study. By comparison, only 66 (36%) and 38 (30%) of the boys and girls respectively, hinted that they were certain of completing their secondary studies, notwithstanding the difficulties they faced.

**Table 4.1: Gender by likelihood to complete secondary education**

| Gender | Likelihood to complete education |              |
|--------|----------------------------------|--------------|
|        | Likely (%)                       | Unlikely (%) |
| Male   | 36.1                             | 63.9         |
| Female | 29.6                             | 70.4         |

The results implied that the need for financial support was high for all students in general, but higher among girls than boys. In other words, more girls than boys were in need of bursary funding to improve their chances of completing secondary education. In view of this, most inhabitants were keen about equitable access to education for all children irrespective of resource scarcity. Based on the finding, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) stating that *there is no significant association between gender and likelihood to complete secondary education* was retained for lack of sufficient evidence to warrant rejection.

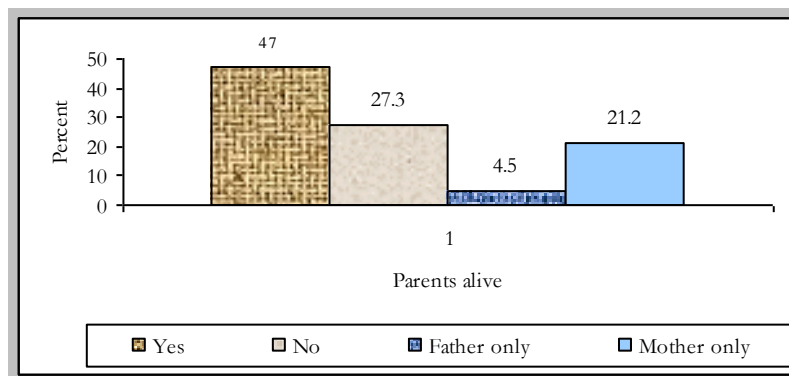
**c) Status of orphanhood**

In this study, out of 308 students, 145 (47%) indicated that both parents were alive; while 83 (27%) reported that none of their parents were alive. Figure 4.2 further shows that 65 (21%) students said that only the female parents were alive, while about 15 (5%) stated that only male parents were alive. In total, the findings revealed that slightly more than a half

<sup>1</sup> Defined by expenditure less than 1 US\$ a day on basic needs.



of the students, [163 (53%)], were either total or partial orphans, most of whom hailed from poor backgrounds and were at risk of dropping out due to fee-related issues. It is also noted that, most widowed families were headed by female parents and this intensified the need for bursary funding given the fact that most females were low-income earners (*Ibid.*).



**Figure 4.2: Whether both parents were alive**

Assessment of the association between status of orphanhood and completion of secondary education revealed that for students who indicated that both parents were alive, about 88 (61%) believed they could not complete their education considering the prevailing fee difficulties; by contrast, only 57 (39%) exuded confidence of completing their studies. For those who reported that none of their parents were alive, 60 (72%) students said they were unlikely to complete secondary education. Table 4.2, shows that all the students who stated that only male parents were alive, [15 (100%)], hinted that they were unlikely complete secondary education; while for those who said that only female parents were alive, 42 (64%) reported that they were unlikely to complete secondary education.

**Table 4.2: Both parents alive by likelihood to complete secondary education**

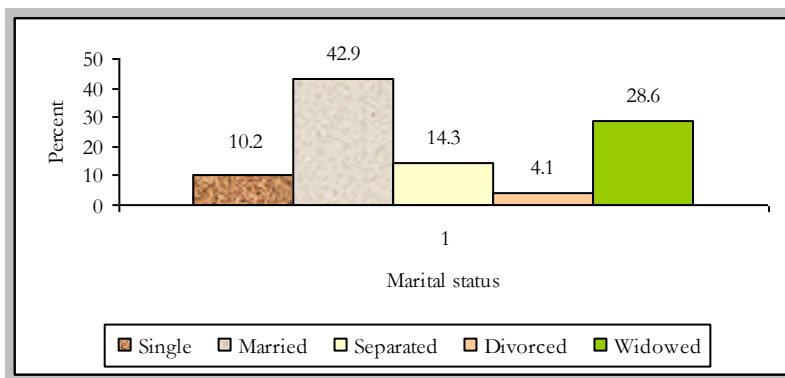
| Both parents alive | Likelihood to complete education |              |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
|                    | Likely (%)                       | Unlikely (%) |
| Yes                | 39.3                             | 60.7         |
| No                 | 27.8                             | 72.2         |
| Father only        | 0.0                              | 100.0        |
| Mother only        | 35.7                             | 64.3         |

The programmatic implication of the finding is that interventions for economic empowerment of household heads should focus more on women rather than men because the former have demonstrated greater level of committed to the welfare of children. Further analysis of the association between the status of orphanhood and likelihood to complete secondary education yielded a calculated Chi Square of 2.445, which was found to be significant at 90% and 95% confidence levels<sup>2</sup>. This implied that status of orphanhood was one of the variables affecting completion of secondary education in the study area. Consequently, it is imperative that efforts to improve completion of secondary education should pay special attention to the needs of orphans. Based on the test results, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), which stated that *there is no significant association between status of orphanhood and likelihood to complete secondary education*, was rejected because it was not true.

**d) Parents' marital status**

*A good number of our students with fee problems are from single families either because of separation or abandonment".* As presented in figure 4.3, out of 308 students, 132 (43%) said that their parents were married; about 31 (10%) reported that their parents were single; a further 89 (29%) stated that their parents were widowed; and 43 (14%) indicated that the parents were separated; while 12 (4%) hinted that their parents were divorced.

<sup>2</sup> Sig.=0.037;  $\alpha=0.1$  and 0.05



**Figure 4.3: Distribution of students by marital status of parents**

In total, more than half of the students, [175 (57%)], came from either single, separated, divorced or widowed families and most of them were in need of financial support to be able to complete their studies. Further, the study revealed that of the 31 students who reported that their parents were single, 12 (40%) were likely to complete their education while the majority, 19 (60%) felt that they were unlikely to finish up. Among the 43 who hinted that the parents were separated, 21 (48%) believed they would complete their studies but 22 (57%) said they were unlikely to do the same. Table 4.3 shows that for those whose parents were divorced, 4 (35%) were likely while the majority, 8 (65%) indicated that they were unlikely to complete their studies. More still, of the 89 whose parents were widowed, only 26 (29%) hinted they were likely to complete their education, while the majority, 63 (71%) stated they were unlikely to finish up. By contrast, of the 132 whose parents were married, the majority, 82 (62%) were likely to complete their studies while 50 (38%) were pessimistic about completion of secondary education.

**Table 4.3: Parents’ marital status by likelihood to complete secondary education**

| Marital status | Likelihood to complete education |              |
|----------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
|                | Likely (%)                       | Unlikely (%) |
| Single         | 40.0                             | 60.0         |
| Married        | 61.9                             | 38.1         |
| Separated      | 47.9                             | 57.1         |
| Divorced       | 35.0                             | 65.0         |
| Widowed        | 28.6                             | 71.4         |

It was pointed out by headteachers and deputy heads that marital status of parents affected family income, which in turn influenced the likelihood of children to complete secondary education. Continued analysis into the association between marital status and likelihood of school completion yielded a calculated Chi Square of 2.722, which was found to be significant at 90%, 95% and 99% confidence levels<sup>3</sup>. This led to rejection of the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), which stated that *there is no significant association between parents’ marital status and likelihood to complete secondary education* because it did not reflect the reality.

## 5. DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The need for financial support at the secondary tier arose from the unprecedented decline in Kenya’s GDP, especially in the succeeding decade (1990s), after the cost sharing policy was introduced in the education sector as part of the wider Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) for the country. Generally, the poor economic performance in the reference period was blamed for deterioration in overall welfare of the Kenyan population. The worsening living standards was shown by deterioration of primary indicators such as disease prevalence, high mortality rates, especially of the under-five and pregnant mothers, unemployment, illiteracy and more interestingly, low enrolment and non-completion rates across all tiers of the education sector. The net effect of the poor economic performance was widespread poverty. The situation was worsened by high prevalence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic among citizens leading to an unmanageable number of AIDS orphans. This intensified the need for financial support, especially at the secondary level. According to the

<sup>3</sup> Sig. =0.009;  $\alpha=0.1, 0.05$  and  $0.01$ .



USAID/FHI (1996), HIV/AIDS has become a serious threat to the socio-economic prosperity of many developing countries. This is because the virus affects individuals during their most economically productive years, at an age when families are formed and investments in education begin to pay off. In addition, orphanhood has been identified by this study as one of the factors that affect completion of secondary education along with parents'/guardians' marital status, number of siblings, residential area within the city, parent's/guardians' educational level and parents'/guardians' occupation. These background factors constrain the ability of families to gather adequate resources to effectively meet the cost of secondary education. Hence, each year majority of the students who qualify for secondary education are in need of financial assistance to meet fees and other requirements. It is imperative that measures to improve completion of secondary education should take into account the identified variables for a greater impact.

Noting the dwindling enrolment and completion rates, the government intervened with a bursary scheme that was managed from the MoES&T headquarters in conjunction with school administrations. The scheme cushioned needy students with bursaries, which were awarded according to the level of need. Prior to the year 2002, when the country experienced a political transition, the MoES&T had an upper hand in management of the bursary funds from the headquarters. The funds were disbursed in lump sum to school accounts each year and the school heads in conjunction with the PTAs and BOGs did factual selection based on the level of need. However, when the country transformed its political leadership in 2002, the new government embarked on the implementation of policies that would jumpstart socio-economic development across the country within a decentralised framework. Secondary school bursary scheme was one of the government programmes that were decentralised to the constituency level to be managed by the local political leadership. This automatically, relieved the MoES&T and school administrations of the responsibility of management and selection respectively. Decentralization is a relatively new concept in socio-economic development agenda that is currently sweeping across many developing nations. The policy aims at rolling out goods, services and the power for decision-making away from the central government down to the peripheral administrative units. It empowers the citizens to make viable decisions and utilise local resources to initiate development activities according to the priorities of the local people. Besides it ensures equitable distribution of national resources and opportunities to participate in development activities.

The CBF is the most important source of supplementary funds to the resources raised by the family unit in secondary education financing. However, its coverage is limited to about 20.7% of the total fees. This is grossly inadequate and has tilted bulk of the load towards family unit, especially given the fact that about 57% of families live below poverty levels with incomes as low as Kshs. 4000 per month. Even though the MoES&T has continuously revised the bursary kitty each year, the effect is minimal. The findings of this study showed that the scheme is only able to increase the likelihood of school completion by 0.0535 or 5.4 %. Hence, while the government believes it has initiated an intervention to improve enrolment and completion rates in secondary schools, the approach is ineffective and worse, it has taken too long for corrective measures to be implemented. Due to this, the outstanding balance owed to secondary schools in the country stands at Kshs. 11 billion. Besides, many poor families have not been able to take children to secondary schools because of inability to raise the required fees. Based on this, one is tempted to believe that education is becoming a preserve for the few who are well placed members of the society. The danger with this is scenario is that the society may eventually be polarised between the educated and wealthy few against a mass of poorly-educated and poor citizens. A scenario such as this would be contradictory to the policy objectives of secondary education. More still, although families and schools have taken various measures to bridge the financing gap, have not born effective fruits due to a number of impediments such poor business environment, government policy and limited access to credit facilities that would enable expansion for greater profits. As a result, drop out is still very high, for instance, in 2005 alone, 30 schools in Nairobi Province lost at least 282 students and majority of the cases were attributed to lack of school fees.

Although decentralisation of the secondary school bursary scheme to the constituencies was a noble idea that was compatible with the development needs and aspirations of the country, it was effected without any consideration for a system of checks and balances to ensure transparency and accountability in utilization of the bursary resources. Worse still, the fact that the MoES&T was completely detached from the management of the fund at the local level was one of the serious loopholes than would require immediate attention for redress. Besides, the fact that the CBF was placed in the hands Members of Parliament, there is a high chance of manipulation to achieve political objectives rather than benefit the needy students. More still, formation of the management committee is politically driven, as there is no consultation of key stakeholders including the MoES&T. This study noted that the awarding process is marred by elements of corruption and tribalism. Further, it has been noted that in some areas the funds are delayed because some influential members of bursary

committees trade with the money to earn interests. There are also cases, where some children, whose parents are politically connected, are awarded excess funds to be extended to college training, while other needy cases are sent home for fees. In addition, there is no instituted mechanism for monitoring and reporting between the CBC and the MoES&T, a situation that provide ample room for misappropriation of the funds.

The CBF is an important intervention that has the potential to expand access to all eligible Kenyans irrespective of socio-economic status, gender, creed or political affiliation. However, the effectiveness of the existing system has been undermined by various loopholes, which could be addressed through programme design and effective administration. More still, even though the bursary scheme has been decentralised to the constituency level, the MoES&T still has a big role of providing direction on how the funds should be spent to ensure that the country does not derail from pursuing its vision of expanding access to secondary education for all. Involvement of the MoES&T in supervisory roles would also ensure that funds are not spent on less important issues such as maintenance of the CBF office, which was entitled to Kshs. 50,000 per year. Instead the money should be channelled to support the needy students.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the study findings, the study makes the following recommendations for policy action and further research to shade more light on secondary education financing to improve completion rates:

- Financing secondary education an important long-term investment that would enable the country achieve the MDGs, as well Vision, 2030.
- The MoES&T should take up its position as the key public institution responsible for the management and direction of all educational affairs in the country.
- There is need for an effective system for monitoring, evaluation and reporting between the MoES&T and the CBC. Besides, regular reporting is an indispensable component of an effective programme.
- The effectiveness and efficiency of the CBF could be improved by opening up to all education stakeholders in the district, which include NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, private sector, well/wishers, line ministries and departments, trade unions such as KUPPET and KNUT among others.
- The CBC should be given mandated and trained to spearhead mobilisation of additional financial resources from well-wishers and development partners nationally and internationally to boost their kitty.
- It is also important that CBC members be professionals in various fields, who should also serve as role models to the learners.
- There is need for comprehensive information about the distribution of needy students by geographical settings and gender.
- The communication channels between the CBC and the general public should be opened in both directions. It is essential that members of the public be informed about operations of the committee as well as emerging issues in management of the bursary funds.
- It is important that the MoES&T strengthen, modernize, and update its database on bursary allocation. This would ensure that decisions are made on the basis of factual information. At the constituency level, records enable CBCs to set performance targets.
- It is important that families be empowered economically to be able to play their part effectively in the secondary education financing equation. This could be done through implementation and strengthening policies that would expand the economy so that the unemployed parents can be mopped into the economy.
- It is imperative that schools instantiate IGAs that are suitable to their locality such as photocopying, cyber cafes, farming, cookery/bakery, and light industries among others to enable them meet their recurrent and fixed financial needs without worsening household poverty and sending children home.
- With proper resource mobilization, the CBF has the potential of venturing into post secondary education and training, especially to learners who fail to join public universities. This would ensure that learners are prepared for the job market, better earnings and improved living standards; and at the national level would fast-track achievement of the MDGs and goals of Vision 2030.

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