

Progress towards attainment of Education for All (EFA) among Nomadic Pastoralist: Do Home-based Variables make a Difference in Kenya?

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyze home-based factors inhibiting access and participation in basic education among vulnerable groups in Garissa County, Kenya. The study was framed by a household production function approach that typically assumes that postulates that household schooling decisions are explained by the interaction of social, cultural, and economic factors working through power relations within the household. The study used a sample of 45 students selected by convenience sampling from undergraduate and postgraduate students undertaking their school-based studies at Kenyatta and Mount Kenya universities residing or teaching in Carissa County, Kenya during the 2012/203 academic year. The study used mixed methods to collect and analyze the data. It was found that despite the gains in access and equity since the launch of FPE and FDSE in Kenya at the national level, there still remain pockets within Kenyan communities, especially Carissa County which has remained unreached for a host of reason including home-based factors. The major reasons were the low educational level of the heads of households, household poverty, retrogressive cultural practices, and low premium attached to education. It is concluded that home-based factors make a significant difference in efforts to achieve EFA among nomadic pastoralists .It is recommended that :all other user charges that have been sneaked into the current FPE and FDSE should be removed; enhance the school security by advocating for peaceful conflict resolution; create a conducive learning environment through peace education and education in emergency; reverse most of the retrogressive socio-cultural practices through civic education as well as mass advocacy and appropriate legal measures as stipulated in the Basic Education Act 2013; amongst others.

Key words: Home-based factors, Access, Participation, equity, and quality of Basic Education, Nomadic pastoralists, multiple approaches; Education for All.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Background to the Study

Over a decade has passed since the international community adopted the six Educations for All (EFA) goals at the World Forum held in Dakar, Senegal in April 2000, as well as the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 that call for increased access to quality basic education and training which have been domesticated in Kenya (World Education Forum, 2000; Republic of Kenya/UNESCO, 2012). This broad Vision of education and the holistic approach to sector development was fully embraced by Kenya as a critical vehicle for realizing Vision 2030, the road map for development (Odhiambo, 2010; Gikondi et.al, 2010; Republic of Keya/UNESCO, 2012). The Constitution of Kenya 2010 unequivocally promises all Kenyans unprecedented opportunity to capitalize on the progress made thus far in order to exploit the full potential of education for each and every child, youth and adult in the nation (Republic of Kenya, 2010, 2012). In addition, the Basic Education Act 2013 reiterates the fact that basic education which has been made free and compulsory in Kenya should be operationalized through the legal framework enshrined in the Act (Republic of Kenya, 2012a). Both the Constitution 2010 and Basic Education Act 2013 guarantees and provides legal mechanisms of ensuring that every Kenyan citizen gets access to basic education and other economic and social rights that hinge upon the citizens access to, and performance in, education, as much as on the application of knowledge , attitude and skills gained through the educational experience(Republic of Kenya, 2010a 2010b, Republic of Kenya/UNESCO, 2012; UNESCO, 2012 ; World Banks, 2012; Republic of Kenya,2013).

As the post-2015 goal-setting process continues, education has increasingly been discussed as not only a development goal in its own right, but also as a key way of reaching other development goals (United Nations, 2013). And for good reason: a country that provides free access to quality education for all its citizens is far more likely to reduce poverty, promote economic growth , lower child and maternal mortality and achieve social inclusion(Rose, 2013; United Nations, 2013). The importance of education and learning is adroitly highlighted in the Recent Draft Executive Summary for the United Nations World We Want Post-2015 Global Consultation

on Education positions education as both a human right and the foundation for development (United Nations, 2013).

Nonetheless, given the fast approaching deadline of 2015 and 2030 for meeting the internationally agreed goals and commitments related to education as stipulated by Education for All (EFA), and Vision 2030, respectively, governments that are signatory to these commitments seem to be panicking as they are expected by their citizens to take stock of their progress as part of accountability concerns regarding their promises (United Nations, 2013). In response to these concerns, the first ever EFA assessment undertaken jointly by the Government of Kenya and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in May 2010 revealed mixed results regarding Kenya's attainment of the internationally agreed commitments and targets. On the positive side, it was established that strong political will and commitments, coupled with substantial and sustained allocation of the state budget to education sector, have translated into the development and implementation of major policies and programmatic interventions enabling the country to record progressive expansion of the sector (Republic of Kenya/UNESCO, 2012).

The major reforms and innovations in the education sector include: the implementation of Free Primary Education (FPE) and Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE), which have accelerated enrollment of students in both primary and secondary schools in the country (Republic of Kenya, 2012). There is little doubt that these innovations have led to the improvement of access, retention, equity, quality, relevance, and overall efficiency of the education sector at national level (Odhiambo, 2010, Republic of Kenya/UNESCO, 2012). Hopefully, at the national level, it can be concluded that Kenya is on track, and the achievement of EFA is within reach (Republic of Kenya/UNESCO, 2012).

On the other hand, the report also paints a negative picture as it laments that there still exist numerous challenges that need to be overcome in order to attain quality education for all children, youth and adults (Republic of Kenya/UNESCO, 2012). These include significant geographical disparities in access and achievement amongst the marginalized groups that constitute those living in informal urban settlements and ASAL regions; and absence of clear definition of life skills and lifelong learning, among others (Republic of Kenya/UNESCO, 2012). The negative finding touching on the geographic disparities in access and achievement among marginalized communities prompted this study. In the present study, therefore, we investigated the state of educational access and quality in a view to soliciting plausible reasons to explain the strategies being applied to cope with the current state.

1.1.2 State of the Art Review

Household characteristics are important determinants of schooling decisions and outcomes (Dryden-Peterson & Sarah, 2011; Brookings Institute, 2013; Ngware, Oketch, Ezech & Mudege, 2008; Ngware, Oketch, Ezech, & Mudenge, 2009;). The household production function approach developed by Baker (1965) is often used to by researchers in economics of education to show that household characteristics such as income and levels of parental education determine whether a child enrolls in school, stays in school, learns and makes progress to higher levels of education (Oketch & Ngware, 2012). It is also used in economics of education to model other household schooling decisions such as the type of school that a child attends (Kingdom, 2007, Ngware, et.al., 2012). In Africa, studies that use the household production function approach usually differentiate between rural and urban households. Rural households are often portrayed as disadvantaged in terms of having lower income and lower levels of education and therefore being associated with disadvantaged schooling decisions and outcomes compared with urban areas (Jones, 2005, McMahon, 2005, Mugisha, 2006; Walque, 2005).

Cross-country studies on school participation show the demand for schooling is an important factor in overall schooling outcomes (Griffins, 2010; McMahon, 2005; Oketch & Ngware, 2012; United Nations, 2013). A study in rural Peru found that mothers' education has a bearing on their children's school attendance, particularly in low-income households (Behrman & Rosennzweig, 2002; Reche, Riunguet, et al., 2012). This finding is replicated in Africa (Sibanda, 2004, Onsomu, Kosimbei & Ngware, 2006, Walque, 2005). The studies by Ngware et al. (2012) and Wright (2009) demonstrated that school attendance for low income and for female children is more strongly affected by changes in school fees. In Kenya, this is notable that Nairobi Province, with 60 percent of its population living in informal settlements, has the second lowest primary school enrollment rate out of eight provinces (Republic of Kenya; 2012; Warrar, 2008; Wasanga, Ogle & Wambua, 2011a, 2011b).

In South Africa, Sibanda (2004) found that both individual and household level attributes are important determinants of dropping out of primary and secondary school. The study by Sibanda indicates that ethnicity, household size, female household headship and the household heads level of education are school predictors of

school withdrawal. The selection process for staying in primary or secondary school seems to favour children from upper income groups compared to their low income counterparts in Kenya and South Africa (Njeru & Orodho, 2003; OECD, 2013; Okech & Ngware, 2012; Sibanda, 2004). In Rwanda, following the genocide during which many children were orphaned, a study controlling for the schooling of biological parents and the child's relationship to the head of the an adoptive household found that education of the most educate female adult in the new household had a positive and significant influence on the schooling of the adopted child (Kinyanjui, 2011; Walque, 2005). The magnitude of the effect was similar to the effect on a biological mother-child relationship. For the most educated adult male in the adopting household, the effect was smaller to the effect on a biological father-child relationship, but remained positive and significant. Walque (2005) concluded that the nurture component of the intergenerational transmission of human capital is important with respect to both parents. This is contrary to literature that indicates mothers education have no environmental (nurture) impact on child's schooling (Plug, 2004; Republic of Kenya/UNESCO, 2012). According to Walque (2005), mothers' education matters more for girls and fathers' education is more important for boys (Wang & Yang, 2010; UNESCO, 2013).

In Kenya, among the pastoralist communities, gender inequality and social bias against girls, operate in association with other factors (Njeru & Orodho, 2003, Makau, et.al. 2000; UNESCO, 2011, 2012). Three factors have been mentioned again and again in Wajir are poverty, gender bias and the mobility of pastoralist families (Kingdom, 2007; Kinyanjui, 2011; Makau, et.al, 2000; Republic of Kenya/UNESCO, 2012). Given that attendance at school for over three decades has required payment of school fees and a variety of other charges and levies, the depth, extent and severity of poverty means that few households can educate all their children. Choices have to be made, and dominant values mean that parents are less likely to send their daughters to school (Republic of Kenya, 2012; United Nations, 2011a, 2011b; Woodridge, 2002). Another reason that is invariably offered to explain why girls are not in school is the contribution that they make to the running of the household. In a social context in which girls have been ascribed the role of providing domestic labour and child care, the contribution of girls to the household economy is often deemed too valuable to lose (Njeru & Orodho, 2003 World Bank, 2008; Woodridge, 2002).

1.1.3 Education as a basic Right in Kenya

The foregoing trends are seen against the fact that education is seen as the primary means of social mobility, national cohesion and socioeconomic development. Since independence the Government of Kenya has been committed to the provision of education to her citizens. Kenya like other parts of the world has experienced the impact of globalization, increasing inter-dependence between and within states and the need for people to become responsible citizens both nationally and internationally (Republic of Kenya, 2005, 2012, 2013). Similarly, trade and communications have been revolutionized, while a human capital requirement, especially as a result of the ICT revolution, has experienced rapid growth. Consequently, the government has continued to reform the education and training sector to respond to these emerging challenges thus ensuring that the country's goals and aspirations are realized.

The Constitution of Kenya (2010) has the Bill of Rights at its core while the Kenya Vision 2030, acknowledges the need to reform the education and training to create a sector fit for purpose (Republic of Kenya, 2012). This has led to the policy provisions embodied in this document which address the constitutional requirements and national aspirations as well as offer direction in modernizing and re-branding the country's education and training system (Republic of Kenya, 2013).

The Constitution of Kenya (2010) articles 43(1)(XO), 53(1)(b) and 55(a) makes education a right of every Kenyan while the Kenya Vision 2030 underscores the importance of education in ensuring relevant human and social capital for sustainable development. In particular, the Constitution guarantees every child to free and compulsory basic education. Sub-article 53W (b) of the Constitution further provides for access to affordable tertiary education, training and skills development (Republic of Kenya, 2001, 2010a). The reform in education and training seems to have shifted emphasis from knowledge-reproduction to knowledge-production.

According to the Bill of Rights, basic education is a fundamental human right. This implies that citizens can hold the state accountable for ensuring that every child aged 4 to 17 years is in school and receiving quality education. This is consistent with the international education commitments and other international conventions to which Kenya is a signatory. For example, the African Charter on the Human and Peoples' Rights, Article 17, provides that every individual shall have a right to education; the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Article 11, articulates detailed provisions on the right to free and compulsory basic education for the child and, state's obligation towards that right; while the United Nations International Convention on Social and Economic Rights, Article 13, declares the recognition of the right of all to education and the objectives thereof (Republic of Kenya, 2010a). The Convention on the Rights of the Child, Articles 28, 29 and 30, secure the rights of a child to

free and compulsory basic education. Kenya is also a signatory to the Jomtien Protocols (1990) and the Accra Accord (2002), which established the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and modalities for assessing progress thereof (Republic of Kenya, 2010a, 2010b).

The Bill of Rights affirms the right of all Kenyans to education. Article 21 recognizes the fundamental duty of the State and every state organ to observe, respect, protect, promote and fulfill the rights and fundamental freedoms. The specific strategies are:

First, the obligations to education include both duties and obligations, which are to be realized immediately and those which are subject to progressive realization. The immediate obligation is to ensure free and compulsory basic education and the prohibition of discrimination in education; and second, while the detailed implications of this Rights Approach to free and compulsory education and related services will need to be determined, it is clear that citizens will increasingly demand their rights through a more empowered citizenry. The provisions of Article 46 (1 a,b) are also important as they grant consumers the right to goods and services of reasonable quality. Education as a service must meet minimum quality standards, which suggest there will be an increase in pressure for improved education service delivery (Republic of Kenya, 2010a).

1.1.4 The technical Justification

In pursuance of the two education MDGs, i.e. Universal primary education (UPE) and eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary schools at all levels by 2015, The Government of Kenya is conscious of the fact that the same will remain a mirage unless the nomadic communities, which have been marginalized for a long time, are especially targeted (Republic of Kenya, 2005a, 2005b, 2009a). Notwithstanding the Free Primary Education (FPE) programmes, statistics indicate that children from nomadic communities face multiple barriers in accessing and completing basic education. The Government of the republic of Kenya through the policy framework acknowledges this fact in the following words:

We recognize the fact that the needs of nomadic communities are generally complex and that those relating to the provision of education require special attention due to the many challenges facing the children and the communities. We all appreciate that education cannot be provided to nomadic communities without taking their socio-cultural and other development concerns into consideration. It is also important to note that the provision of education to nomadic pastoralists cannot be achieved through a single delivery approach (Republic of Kenya, 2009a:1). The Republic of Kenya (2009a), through the Ministry of education, in its efforts to achieve EFA and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), has worked in partnership with stakeholders to develop the Policy Framework for Nomadic Education in Kenya. The overall goal of the Policy is to enable Kenya's nomadic communities realize the goal of universal access to basic education and training (Republic of Kenya, 2009a).

In May 2009, the Ministry of Education put in place another Policy for Alternative Provision of Basic Education and Training (Republic of Kenya, 2009b). The main aim of the alternative provision of education is to provide education and training, and related services to all learners who are outside the formal education system (Republic of Kenya, 2009b). The framework has four distinct services; namely: a) Alternative provision of primary education for school age children aged 6-14 years (NFS) primary; b) Alternative basic education and training that covers basic literacy and skills training for learners aged 11 to 17 years (NFEC); c) Alternative provision for adult and continuing education and training for learners aged over 18 years (ACE); and d) Alternative provision of secondary education for school aged children and youth aged over 14 years (NFS secondary) to the citizens of Kenya (MOEST/UNESCO, 2005; Republic of Kenya, 2009b). Thus, this policy is meant to provide guidelines to streamline the development and management of alternative channels that provide education and training to needy Kenyans (Republic of Kenya, 2009b).

1.1.3 The Problem Statement

Credible documents of the Republic of Kenya underscore the fact that despite the many innovative policies and noticeable gains in access and equity since the launch of FPE and FDSE, there still remains pockets within Kenyan communities which have remained unreached for a host of reasons; economic, social, geographical, environmental and political (Republic of Kenya, 2013: 45). This is being experienced against the background that Kenya has put in place policy and legislative documents to ensure that no part of the country is left behind in an effort to achieve EFA and the MDG goal related to Universal Primary Education (UPE). As a consequence, the problem of this study, posed in an interrogative form is: Are there critical home-based factors hindering the

attainment of EFA given that the Kenya Government has put in place elaborate policies at institutional level? Do home-based variables make a contribution to the problems that have bewildered the development of education among the nomadic pastoralists in Kenya? The purpose of this study was, therefore, to analyze the house-based factors inhibiting access and participation in basic education among the nomadic pastoralists within the study locale of Garissa County, Kenya, and suggest possible intervention strategies to alleviate the problem.

1.2 The Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the household production function advanced by Becker (1965) which contends that household decisions are explained by the interaction of social, cultural, and economic factors working through power relations within the household. In the literature, household production function approach typically assumes that a combined household utility function is maximized and that resource allocation decisions are made by the household head either unilaterally or in consultation with other household members (Al-Samarrai & Peasgood, 1998). Households make the decision to send a child to school as an investment with expected future returns. Earnings will however only occur in the future. The future orientation of decision-making means that for some families the opportunity cost of schooling can be high even with FPE (Ngware, Oketch, Ezech & Mudenge, 2009:45). This could be explained by the loss of family earnings from child labour. The household is also faced with two constraints; first, scarcity of education resources and second owing to other competing basic needs for household income including expenditure on food, health, clothing and water among others (Ngware. et al., 2012). Under such constraints, free schooling would be attractive to such a household.

In the analytical model, school decision-making is conceptualized as a function of household characteristics as well as individual child characteristics. In specifying the analytical model, the approach used by Woodridge (2002) is followed, where a binary response model is defined according to a conditional maximum likelihood theory. The binary response is broken down into two components, V and ϵ such that:

$$Y_{ih} = (V_{ih} + \epsilon_{ih}) \dots \dots \dots \text{equation 1}$$

Where

Y_{ij} is the overall utility of decision I for household h

V_{ih} is the systematic measurable utility in a function X_h and I for household h and decision i .

ϵ_{ih} includes idiosyncrasies and taste variations, combined with measurements or observation errors and is the random utility component. The decision maker h (household) chooses the alternative from which it derives the maximum utility. In the binomial or two alternative case (for example to enroll or not to enroll; or attend public school and not attend public school), the decision-maker makes decision 1 if and only if :

$$Y_{ih} \geq U_{ih} \dots \dots \dots \text{Equation 2}$$

Assuming a normal distribution, the equation gives rise to an estimable probit school decision model.

Research Design and Methodology

A cross-sectional status study (survey) of the perception of Kenya's primary and secondary school teachers on the levels of challenges introduced by the FPE and FDSE initiative as well as the resultant effects of Home-based factors was conducted using a semi-structured questionnaire. The target population for this study included all public primary school teachers in Kenya. A convenient sample of 45 undergraduate and postgraduate teachers undertaking the school-based bachelor of education and masters of education degrees at Kenyatta University and Mount Kenya University was selected for the study. Only teachers from public primary schools were included after isolating those from secondary schools and private schools. The overall sample of 45 comprised 32 males and 13 females.

The semi-structured questionnaire included items for measuring the various variables. Part one of the instrument had statements to elicit the main home-based factors inhibiting effective implementation of basic education in schools located in nomadic pastoralist locations. A few open-ended items were included to tap detailed qualitative information to supplement the quantitative survey. This instrument was pilot tested among eight primary school teachers undertaking their school based studies at Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA). Based on the split-half technique, a reliability coefficient of .85 was obtained, and accordingly declared the questionnaire reliable (Brook, 2013).

2.0 Results and Discussion

2.1 Access and Participation in Education in Garissa County

In absolute terms, the Basic Education sector in Kenya has experienced massive expansion in enrolment since independence in 1963. According to the Ministry's Education Management Institute Information System (EMIS), the number of public and private primary schools increased from 6,058 in 1963 to 27,489 in 2010, while the number of secondary schools has increased from 151 to 7308 over the same period (Republic of Kenya,

2012:11). Enrolment in primary education has grown from 892,000 pupils in 1963 to about 9.4 million pupils in 2010, while enrolment in secondary education has grown from around 30,000 students in 1963 to 1.7 million students in 2010 (Republic of Kenya, 2013). The increase has been accelerated by the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) and Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) programmes in 2003 and 2008 respectively (Republic of Kenya, 2003, 2008 Republic of Kenya/UNESCO, 2012).

While these statistics portray a success story at the national level, the situation is disappointing when these data are unpacked at county level by gender. For instance, in 2013 enrolment in Early Childhood Development (ECD), primary and secondary by gender was quite low with deep rooted gender disparity in access to Basic Education. Table 1 shows the primary school enrolment rate in primary schools by gender in Garissa County in 2013.

Table 1: Primary School enrolment rate by District/Sub-County and gender in Garissa County

District/ Sub-County	School Going Age			Current Primary Enrolment			Enrolment Rate (%)		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	TOTAL
Garissa/ Balambala	32,399	27,180	59,579	23,350	17,025	40,375	72.1	62.64	67.78
Fafi	16,893	13,926	30,819	6,239	3,903	10,142	36.93	28.03	32.91
Ijara/Hulugho	19,053	15,291	34,344	8,897	6,199	15,096	46.70	40.54	43.98
Lagdera/Dadaab	47,567	37,855	89,422	10,235	12,608	22,843	21.52	33.31	26.74
Total	115,912	94,252	210,164	48,721	39,735	88,456	42.03	42.16	42.09

Source: Garissa County Education Office, 2013

As shown in Table 1, the enrolment rate in primary school in Garissa county stands at 42.09 (constituting 42.02 boys and 42.16 % girls) meaning that 58% of school going age children are out of school. When these statistics are unpacked and examined at sub-county level and using a gender lens, then serious disparities by sub-county and gender emerge. At sub-county level, the enrolment rate for Lagdera and Dadaab is quite low and stands at 26.74% comprising of 21.52% boys and 33.31% girls. This implies that in Lagdera and Dadaab sub-counties, over 73% of school going age children comprising 78% boys and 66% girls were not attending school as of 2013. In Fafi sub-county, over 67% of children, consisting 63% boys and 72% girls of school going age were not attending primary education in 2013. The transition to secondary school stood at 71.26% comprising of 79.68% girls and 67.11% boys in Garissa County as of 2013(Garissa County Education,2013).

The enrolment in ECD, primary and secondary by district and gender in Garissa County similarly portrays alarming trends. Within Garissa County, enrolment in ECD stood at 56.5% boys and 43.5% girls, showing a slight gender disparity at the disadvantage of the girl-child. In primary school, the percentage of boys to girls stood at 60.2% and 39.8% respectively, portraying a widening gender gap at the disadvantage of girls. In secondary schools, the gender gap widened slightly and stood at 66.3% boys and 33.7% girls. When these statistics are unpacked at district level by gender, deeper disparities emerge. For example, in Holugho sub-county, enrolment in ECD stood at 59.2% boys and 40.8% girls; in primary, the gap widened and stood at 63.3% boys and 36.7 girls and jumped to 80.6% boys and 19.4 girls in secondary education. This trend was nearly similar in Balambala Sub-county where enrolment in ECD stood at 63.9% boys and 36.1% girls, in primary schools, the boys enrolment stood at 50.6% boys while girls represented 49.4%. The trend widened in secondary schools and stood at 85.7% boys and 14.3% girls. The overall picture is that a part from the low enrolment in absolute terms, there is a wide gender disparity at the disadvantage of girls especially in Holugho and Balambala (Garissa County Education, 2013).

In 2010, 357,488 candidates sat for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) and 97,137 (27.2%) obtained the minimum requirement for university admission at C+. In the study County of Garissa, the performance in Kenya Certificate of primary Education (KCPE) was below the national mean of 245.2 out of possible 500 marks (County Education Office, 2013).

In fact, the county performance in 2012 KCPE was below average with all districts in the county scoring below the National mean of 245.2. The districts within Garissa County which posted the worst results were Dadaab District with a mean score of 163 out of 500 and ranked 286 out of 288, followed by Lagdera which scored a mean score of 174 and ranked 284 out of 288 (Garissa County Education, 2013).

In 2012, 2878 candidates sat for KCSE in Garissa County and the general performance was below the National average. The main features of the performance were: (a) out of 2878 candidates, only 194 (6.8%) scored the minimum university entry grade of C+ and above; (b) Out of 194, only 19 (0.66%) qualified to the government sponsored university admission (Joint Admission Board-JAB); (c) The wastage grades of D+ and below were very high and alarming with 353 candidates getting E, (d) The number of irregularities was very high with about 369 candidates getting Y (Garissa County Education, 2013).

Table 3: Garissa County KCSE Analysis, 2012

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	Other X/Y/Z
f	0	5	14	38	48	89	125	217	328	489	644	353	528
cf	0	5	19	57	105	194	319	536	864	1353	1997	2350	2878
%	0	.17	.49	1.32	1.67	3.09	4.34	7.54	11.39	16.99	22.37	12.27	18.36
Cm %	0	.17	.66	1.98	3.65	6.74	11.08	18.62	30.01	47.00	69.37	81.64	100.0

Source: Garissa County Education Office, 2013

The message portrayed by Table 3 is that over 93% of the candidates who sat KCSE in 2012 failed to get the minimum requirement of grade C+ for admission to public universities in Kenya. The sorry state was aggravated by the fact that out of the 194 candidates who scored C+ and above, only 19 (0.66%) qualified for the government sponsored university admissions (Joint Admissions Board, JAB).The wastage grade C+ and below was high and alarming with 353 candidates getting grade E.

2.2 Factors causing regional disparities in education in Garissa County

The foregoing revelations indicate that although the Kenya Government has taken bold steps to launch FPE and FDSE, that has resulted in accelerated enrollment and retention in both primary and secondary schools nationally, there are serious but hopefully surmountable challenges related to geographical disparities in educational provision, especially in maintaining quality. There were specific home-based factors that tended to retard the pace of educational provision, especially in terms of access, equity and quality. Figure 1 carries information on the home-based factors that inhibit effective implementation of FPE and FDSE in Garissa County as perceived by the teachers sampled for the study.

2.2.1 Poverty at the household level

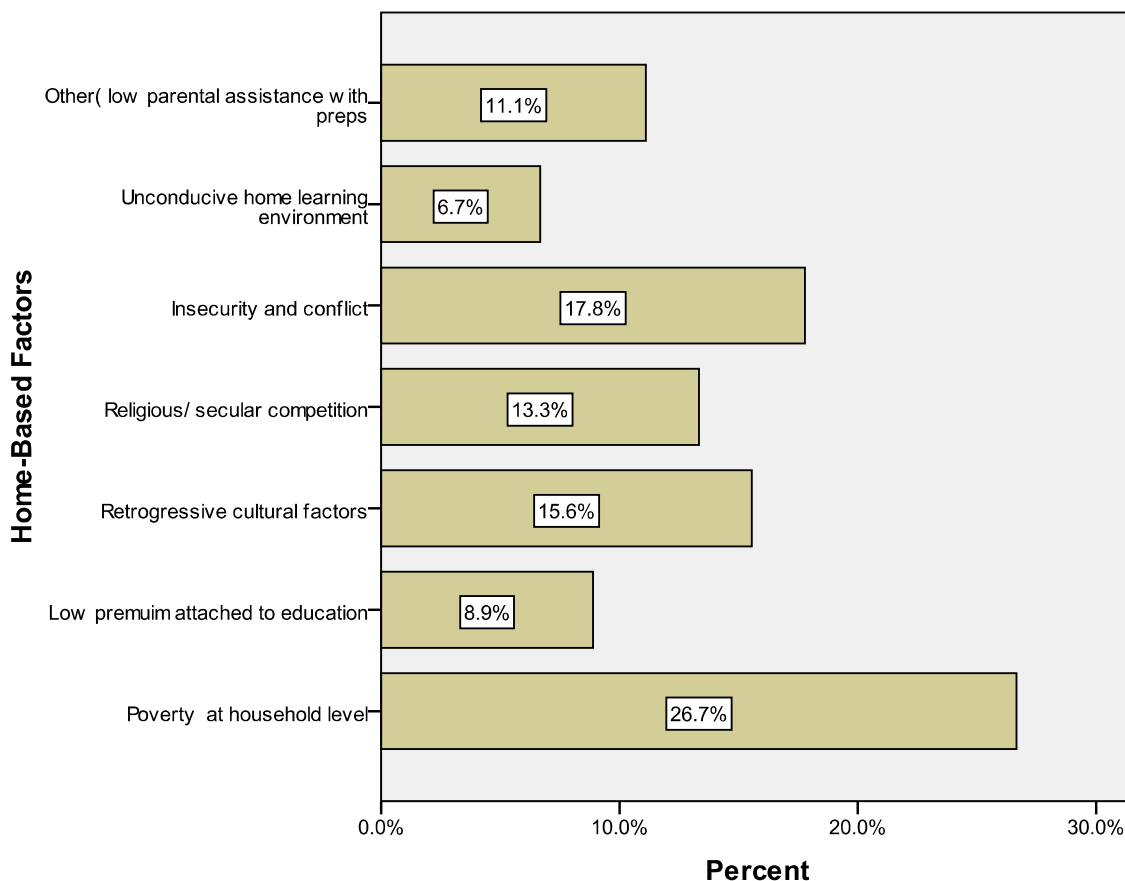
The first critical reason cited by over a quarter of respondents (26.7 %) of was poverty at household level. The challenge of poverty and financing of education has been a long tradition of cost-sharing in education in Kenya, epitomized by the phenomenon of harambee (or self-help) schools. During the 1970s, the nominal commitment to providing free education sat uncomfortably with the practice of harambee collections, but in 1988 this contradiction was resolved when cost-sharing was formally made the basis of education financing. It is arguable that if education financing is conditional on the payment of fees of various kinds, it ceases to be a right, an entitlement of citizenship, but becomes instead a commodity that is available only to those with the money to buy it. In fact, even with the current FPE and FDSE in Kenya, the latent cost of education in terms of buying uniforms, building fund and transport becomes a real burden. And in a region as poor as Garissa County, a policy that makes parents responsible for maintaining the nations primary and secondary schools infrastructure as well as meeting the other hidden cost of education is bound to lead to falling enrollments and low quality of

educational attainment as has been observed in the un-packed enrollment and participation rates within the sub-counties of Garissa County. As a result, the PFE and FDSE do not seem to be meeting the intended goals due to the high latent cost of education.

The teachers interviewed, therefore described the latent cost of education, in all its manifestations, as the biggest single house-hold problem that limited children’s access and participation in education. The teachers argued that the removal of all fees and all user-charges would be essential if participation were to be significantly increased in areas with noted poverty levels such as Garissa County.

As consequence of the high poverty level that has become grave given the devastating consequences of the drought that ravaged most parts of the NEP, child labour has manifested itself in high proportions. A big number of children are used as income earners to the household. They are engaged as domestic servants (maids, especially in urban and pre-urban areas), commercial activities especially across the border, while others especially those perceived to be more responsible are retained to herd livestock.

Others, especially girls, are engaged in petty business in the market selling milk and foodstuff in market stalls. In most pastoralist communities, families do not view their livestock in monetary terms and are therefore reluctant to sell them for education purposes. Above all, large herds are viewed as a symbol of prestige that cannot be sold to purchase education (e.g. pay fees, and to cater for boarding expenses).



In Kenya, and especially in Garissa County, the incidence of poverty was highest for larger family sizes as those observed in polygamous households of North Eastern Province. The depth and severity of poverty is highest as household size increases. This aspect also explains the low educational level being pegged to poverty (Republic of Kenya, 2007:81). Larger households are associated with lower household per capita expenditure and unable to meet the latent school levies despite FPE and FDSE. This in effect reduces the school resources available to children in larger households. In such communities, when a boy or girl must benefit, the boy is given preference over the girl (but not the very bright ones who often assist their parents with livestock management). This is

explained by the fact that larger households have to share the resources among more members; hence, decreasing resources are available to pay education inputs not provided by FPE and FDSE.

2.2.2 Insecurity, conflict and lack of Education in emergency initiatives

The second problem cited by 17.8 percent of respondents was insecurity, lack of safety, and occasional conflict and lack of education in emergency initiatives to resettle those affected with frequent displacements in the study locale. Invariably, physical insecurity, income vulnerability and injustice provoke violence, and violence propels communities further into impoverishment (United Nations, 2013). Children are particularly more vulnerable in situations of conflict (World Development Report, 2011, WHO, 2012). Without peace; there can be no development (United Nations, 2013). Without development, there can be no enduring peace-yet peace and justice are prerequisites for progress. We must acknowledge a principal lesson of the MDGs that peace and access to justice are not only fundamental human aspirations but cornerstones of sustainable development (United Nations, 2013). Without peace, children cannot go to school or access health clinics (United Nations, 2013).

The Government is cognizant of the safety of our school children, at all times, and everywhere cannot be over-emphasized. It is in this respect that the Government of Kenya developed a Safety Standards Manual which is both timely and invaluable. It underscores the Government's commitment to the safety and overall welfare of our learners and especially children. In fact, the safety of the learner is central to the provision of quality education in any country. While this is true for learners at all levels of education, it is particularly critical for learners at the basic education level in view of their relatively tender ages. Children of this early age are very vulnerable to threats such as bullying by their older colleagues, intimidation, verbal and physical abuse and all manner of harassments (Republic of Kenya, 2008; 2013b).

The Ministry of education is currently advocating for more efforts to be directed towards education in emergencies, which is perceived to be the provision equality education opportunities that meet the physical protection, psychological development, and cognitive needs of people, which can be both life-sustaining and life-saving. In this, they perceive education as a fundamental right to all and in emergencies, children and other learners can be denied the right. Similarly, it is critical to provide a safe environment and provide life-saving and sustaining skills and support (Save the children, 2013; WHO, 2012).

Apart from personal threats, insecurity for children can emanate from inappropriate school facilities and infrastructure. These may include poorly constructed classrooms and playing grounds, insufficient and broken-down toilet facilities, gender insensitive location of toilet and bathroom facilities, and inadequate and inappropriate desks and other furniture (Republic of Kenya, 2013b). It was envisaged that, successful implementation of measures proposed in the manual would require partnerships with various stakeholders, among them learners, schools, parents, local communities, NGOs, religious organizations and other Community based organizations (CBOs). My sincere appeal to all stakeholders is that we should work together with focus and commitment to assure our schools, and particularly the children, adequate safety. It is apparent that the safety measures have not been implemented in primary and secondary schools in Garissa County.

2.2.3 Retrogressive socio-cultural practices

The third factor cited by 15.6 percent of the respondents was the retrogressive socio-cultural practices. They reported that the North Eastern Province (NEP) is largely composed of Somalis who are a patriarchal society. In such a societal setup, women and girls are accorded lower status. The community generally views girls as belonging to other people and not their families. For example, one teacher from Holugho Sub-County observed that educating a girl is viewed as watering somebody else's flower. The girls, therefore, are viewed as a form of investment to the family, hence to be married off before they are spoiled (read, educated). The girls are used to help fund education for their brothers. Girls who have acquired high levels of education are considered to be entrusted (read alienated), and therefore not preferred for marriage. This mentality can be seen to be critical in explaining the current gender disparity in access to education at the disadvantage of females.

In addition, the Somali tradition dictates that a girl, from tender age, should be protected and trained to be a good wife and mother for the family. The immediate consequence of this, in NEP, is the high occurrence of early marriages, especially among the Somali communities. The young girl is, therefore, considered as useful source of work and income. It is clear that parents do not see much potential in their daughters. In fact, a common belief in many pastoralist communities is that the boy is the pillar of the family, and would take care of his parents and parent's livestock in their old age. Thus, when parents decide to invest their meager resources in education, the boy is given priority. Even then, the boy who actually goes to school is the one considered to be less intelligent

and irresponsible. The bright boys are used to look after livestock because they can count them accurately and look after them keenly.

The other retrogressive cultural practice cited was early marriage and the accompanying bride-wealth is often justified under the umbrella of culture and maintaining family honour. A certain prospective restriction is accorded to the girls to the extent that they are barred from school under the pretext that schools cannot be trusted to protect the girls to remain virgins. As explained by the informant:

Girls should not greet a man who is not a member of the close family due to natural body chemistry of the females. The implication is that culture is telling us that this girl cannot be with any other person except the father, the mother, the husband or the grave she goes into.... This girl cannot be trusted elsewhere because they believe that she might bring something bad like having a child out of wedlock.

The above cultural bondage on girls is extended to other retrogressive cultural practices especially female genital mutilation (FGM). The FGM targets girls from age 8 years onwards but before puberty. This process is perceived to curtail/inhibit the sexual urge of females hence restricts them to one husband. After the process, the girl views herself as mature and ready for marriage. This is an age where the girl is supposed to be in school, and therefore interferes with her academic progression, health notwithstanding.

The final cultural practice is the fragility of family life. The Somalis are primary Muslims, and Islam allows polygamy. Many women today are victims of divorce and hence head of households. They are expected to fend for themselves as well as for their children whose number may be fairly large. This may be difficult given that most women have no qualifications or experience to enable them to get jobs. Indeed, with the current high illiteracy rate, women are shut out of the modern economy. They are equally shunted out of the pastoral economy as this is a male domain. There is thus, lack of role models, especially for girls among pastoralist communities in Garissa County. In particular, there are very few female teachers in most primary and secondary schools in the rural areas, majority without a single female teacher. The girls, therefore, have nobody to emulate or people they can confide in, especially on feminine issues.

2.2.4 Conflict between religious and secular education systems

The fourth challenge cited by about 13.3 percent of the respondents indicated that there is the conflict between the religious and secular schools. The two compete for the same learners' time especially at ECD and lower primary. Since the community holds religious education much higher than secular education, the child is first given the religious education (Duksi School) before going for secular education at a later age (about 9 years). However, both religious and secular educations are necessary for holistic development of a child. There are cases where a child attends both, but this puts too much pressure on a child. Sometimes, the learner foregoes secular education completely in favour of Madrasa (Arabic system of education) studies.

2.2.5 Low parental assistance with homework for children

Fifth challenge, cited by 11.3 percent of the respondents, was lack of parental support given to children to do school homework. They argued that parents in Garissa have neither the capacity nor the time to follow up on their children's progress due to their low level of formal schooling. This finding is consistent with study by Walques in Rwanda, which revealed that education of the most educated adopting female adult household had a positive and significant effect on the education of the child (Walque, 2005). The magnitude of the effect was similar to that of biological mother-child relationship. For the most educated adult male in the adopting household, the effect was smaller than in the biological father-child relationship, but remained positive and significant. Walque (2005) concluded that mother's education matters more for girls, while father's education was important for boys (Walque, 2005). This confirms the need to ensure that the education development in Garissa should target both the adults and their children since there appears to be a reinforcing relationship when parents are equally educated. The decisions to take children to school also seem to depend to a great extent on the educational level of the head of the household. The study by Sibanda (2008) in South Africa and Walque (2005) in Rwanda seem to show a sizeable intra-house difference between the way in which household characteristics affect outcomes for boys and girls, and between the effects on schooling outcomes of mothers and fathers influence over school resource decisions. The study shows that, married mothers' education can increase the probability of girls enrolling in secondary school by 9.9 percent for primary education and a further 17.6 percent for secondary, while having no significant effect on the enrollment of boys. The lessons learned from these findings are that it is likely to reduce the current gender disparity in enrollment and performance of female learners by targeting and educating the female adults who are the mothers of these children.

2.2.5 Low premium attached to education

Finally, there is low premium attached to education caused by very high illiteracy level among the general population in NEP, especially in Garissa County. Yet, education lays the foundation of and expedites the process of development of a region / country. Development in all other fields or sectors such as industry, agriculture, livestock, politics etc depends on skilled human resource and a well-informed citizenry provided by the educational establishment. On the other hand, illiteracy as a common phenomenon blocks economic and social progress, affects other areas of economic growth, and negates population control and improvement in health and sanitation. Most illiterate people do not see the need of education. The illiterate majority are the mothers who are most of the time with children and should be accorded their full range of rights. They hardly provide assistance to their children to do homework as the literate mothers give their children. With a large number of illiterate mothers, there is bound to be a vicious cycle of illiteracy. The end result of mass illiteracy will be to militate against the efforts being put in place to elevate the socio-economic status of communities.

2.2.6 Un-conducive Learning home Environment

Finally was the un-conducive home environment resulting from the nomadic and the pastoralist mode of living was perceived by about 6.7 percent of the respondents to have direct negative impact on education. As pointed out earlier, movement is integral to pastoralist and is determined by the diminishing grazing pastures and water. When children migrate with their families, they miss out of school. As the families keep moving from place to place, they disrupt the academic progress of children who may be in school since parents can't leave their children behind. Besides, there are no mechanisms of absorbing the children into schools where they migrate to since there may be no schools on those new areas. Further, there is no particular pattern of movement by which intervention measures can be planned to accommodate migrating children e.g. putting up schools along the routes. The current mobile schools seem not to be working well and producing the expected results.

3.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

It is concluded that despite the gains in access and equity since the launch of FPE and FDSE in Kenya at the national level, there still remain pockets within Kenyan communities, especially Carissa County which has remained unreached for a host of reason including home-based factors. The major reasons were the low educational level of the heads of households, household poverty, retrogressive cultural practices, and low premium attached to education. Thus, the legislative and other policy innovations have not put in place affirmative action oriented programmes designated to enhance access and participation of the marginalized nomadic communities into education. The current education practices and processes are not cognizant of the socio-economic, cultural and school based constraints that decelerate the development of education that is appropriate and responsive to the needs of the nomadic pastoralist.

The reality is that Kenya is ranked 9th globally among the countries with most out-of-school children, with 1.0 million children out of school (UNESCO EFA, 2012). Natural and man-made disasters such as floods and conflict contribute to deny access to learning for many children in Kenya every year. Crises such as conflict and floods lead to destruction of infrastructure and interruption of learning, therefore denying the right to education for children in affected areas.

It is also evident that education managers at county and school levels have not yet taken advantage of the New Policy Framework for Nomadic Education as well as the Policy for Alternative Provision of Basic Education and Training that counsel that effective provision of education to nomadic pastoralist should not be done through a single delivery approach.

It is, thus, recommended that effective development of basic education among nomadic pastoralist should not only concentrate on school-based factors but should sharply focus on some critical home-based variables. The specific concern should be the removal of all other user charges that have been sneaked into the current FPE and FDSE, enhance the school security and peaceful conflict resolution; creation of a conducive learning environment through peace education and education in emergency; reverse most of the retrogressive socio-cultural practices through civic education as well as mass advocacy and appropriate legal measures as stipulated in the Basic Education Act 2013, amongst others.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the primary and secondary school teachers undertaking school-based undergraduate teacher education studies during the 2011/2012 academic year at Kenyatta University, School of Education, provided the data used in this study. The authors would also like to acknowledge the input of my

three doctorate (PhD) students from Kenyatta University and Mount Kenya University who assisted in the data analysis and report writing that resulted into this report. They are being mentored and are hence recognized as co-authors of this paper.

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