



ASSESSMENT OF ALLOCATION OF CONSTITUENCY BURSARY FUNDS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA, A CASE OF BUMULA CONSTITUENCY, BUNGOMA COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract:

Secondary school education is very critical in any education system because of the crucial role it plays in catalyzing national development. Consequently, maintaining a high student enrolment at this level should be a priority for all countries. The Constituency Bursary Fund (CBF) was established by the government of Kenya through an act of parliament in 2003 to ensure that the needy students have access to secondary education. This fund provides for the involvement of community members in identifying the bursary recipients. With the communal involvement in decision-making, it was anticipated that there would be fairness and efficiency in the bursary allocation process. Contrary to the high expectations however, cases of complaints about the implementation of the constituency bursary fund are many. The purpose of the study was to determine adherence to the established criteria in allocating bursaries influences retention in secondary school. This study was guided by the following objectives namely: To examine the criteria used by the constituency bursary fund committee to allocate bursaries to the recipients in the constituency; To determine the level of inequality in the allocation of bursaries to recipients in the constituency.; To establish how constituency bursary fund influenced students' retention in secondary school, To find out the problems encountered by the bursary allocation committee when allocating bursaries to the recipients. This study adopted descriptive survey design using mixed approach methodology. This study was guided by the theory of socialist economics of education. The target population for this study comprised of the 1 DEO, 30 school

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principals, 120 class teachers, 14 CBF committee members and 1500 form three students. The study adopted both probability and non-probability samplings design to determine sample size. Quantitative data was collected through questionnaire and qualitative data through interview and document analysis. The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. (Pearson Correlation Coefficient) Qualitative data was thematically classified and arranged before they were reported in narrations and quotations. Constituency Bursary Committee officials indicated that the total amount of bursary is distributed equally between the 19 wards in the constituency. There is a significant relationship between Adequacy of CBF and Retention in Secondary Schools. Among the challenges faced in the provision of CDF bursaries is the high geographical mobility of urban dwellers which lead to lack of detailed information about them.

Keywords: access, bursary, constituency bursary funds, retention

1. Introduction

At the beginning of 1990s, several international conferences emphasizing the importance of education were held. Notably was the Jomtien world conference of Education For All (EFA) where most developing countries reaffirmed their commitment to providing to their school age children universal access to the first cycle of education. Following this declaration enrolment expansion at the primary school level throughout the developing world increased. Unfortunately, the Jomtien conference paid little attention to the consequences of enrolment expansion at the primary school level in relation to the resources needed for secondary schools. However, it was clear then that in many developing countries, secondary school participation rates could not grow rapidly without changes in the structure and the nature of funding (Lewin, 2001). That made many government bodies in the world to review how secondary education was going to benefit the poor hence bursaries and scholarships were availed.

In Singapore, the government through the Ministry of education has a bursary scheme in place known as Edusave Merit Bursary that is meant for students whose household income is less than \$4000 a month. They provide \$300 for secondary 1 to 5. Eligibility is for students who are already in secondary school and whose performance is good that is 25% in a stream (MOE, 2012). This goes a long way to retain students who could have otherwise dropped due to lack of school fees.

In UK, a key priority of the Government is to eliminate the gap in attainment between those from poorer and more affluent backgrounds, and to ensure every young person participates in and benefits from a place in 16-19 education and training known

as YPLA Bursary Scheme. The Government provides funding to tackle the disadvantaged both through the YPLA's funding formula and through support to help young people meet the costs of participating in education and training post 16-19 (YPLA, 2012). This further helps students to be retained in schools.

In Zambia and Malawi, studies show that close to 70% of secondary school students are entitled to bursary schemes which are supposed to cover 75% tuition fees for most beneficiaries and up to 100% for vulnerable groups such as double orphans. Bursary schemes are also favored to improve retention of girls in the schools (World Bank, 2006). Even though bursary schemes are designed to improve retention of students in public secondary schools some students drop out of school because of extreme poverty levels which the scheme does not address like provision of uniform and other personal effects.

In Kenya, the Constituency Development Bursary Fund (CDBF), which was formally referred to as Secondary School Education Bursary Fund (SEBF), was introduced by the government for secondary schools during 1993/1994 financial year, with an initial allocation of Ksh. 25 Million. By the 2002 /03 Financial Year, total allocation had reached KES 548 million. At the inception of the scheme, funds were disbursed directly to secondary schools from the Ministry of Education (MOE) headquarters, based on the school's student enrolment. Schools were expected to distribute the bursary funds in accordance with guidelines issued by MOE. The bursary targeted the vulnerable groups namely; orphans, girls, children from slums and the poor in high potential areas and in arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) districts (Republic of Kenya, 2005).

The secondary schools bursary scheme was introduced by the government in the 1993/94 financial year to enhance access, ensure retention and reduce disparities and inequalities in the provision of secondary school education. In particular the bursaries are targeted at students from underprivileged families, those in slum areas, those living under difficult circumstances, those from pockets of poverty in high potential areas, districts in arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL), orphans and girl-child (GOK, 2003; 2005). At inception of the fund, funds were disbursed directly to secondary schools from the ministry of education headquarters. Due to lack of clear guidelines to schools on how to identify needy students for bursary awards, beneficiaries were identified through different ways. However, in most cases the head teachers ultimately decided on who was to be awarded the bursary and the amounts to be allocated. In 2003, the fund was modified in line with government policy on decentralization and to respond to complaints of mismanagement and lack of impact. The bursaries also known as

constituency bursary funds (CBF) are channeled to various schools through constituencies.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Secondary school education is critical in every country for a number of reasons. First and foremost, it is central to development because it provides insights, skills and competencies that are needed for economic growth and national development. Secondly, it is at this level that youngsters consolidate their basic knowledge gained in primary school and acquire the common culture that will allow them to be useful citizens in a peaceful society.

The government of Kenya introduced the Constituency Bursary Fund in 2003 so as to enhance students' access to and retention in secondary schools, by supporting the needy and bright cases (GoK, 2003). Through this scheme, the exchequer allocates money annually to each constituency to fund secondary education. At its inception, hopes were high that the most deserving students would be rightly identified by the bursary committees for financial support. The general thinking was that, the initiative would enhance the participation of the needy students in secondary education. However, contrary to this expectation; there are complaints and doubts about the fund with regard to realizing its objective. In view of the aforementioned, an empirical study was conceived with a focus of establishing adherence to the established criteria in allocating bursaries influences access and retention in secondary school.

The major aim of constituency bursary fund was to enhance access, retention, participation and equity to cushion the poor and vulnerable groups against the adverse effects of cost-sharing in education (GoK, 2003, Wachiye & Nasongo, 2010, Saina, 2012; Mukirae, 2012). This fund provided for the involvement of the community members in identifying the bursary receipts with communal involvement of the community members in identifying the bursary recipients with communal involvement. It was anticipated that there would be fairness and efficiency in the bursary allocation process (Wachiye & Nasongo, 2010) the constituency bursary fund was established by the government of Kenya through an act of parliament in 2003 to ensure that the needy students have access to secondary education. However, records available at Bumula District planning office shows that retention rate in secondary schools is 2.8%, dropout rate 69.0% while the poverty index is 57.34%. A few studies on effects of CBF on access and retention have been conducted in the neighbouring districts (Odebero, *et al.*, 2007; Nasongo, 2010, Wachiye & Nasongo, 2010). But none has so far been conducted in Bumula Constituency. It's against this background that the study investigated the influence of constituency bursary funds on access and retention in secondary schools in

Bumula constituency Bungoma County with an aim of improving the provision of CBF and access and retention.

1.3 Purpose/objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the administration of Constituency bursary Funds in secondary school in Bumula Constituency

1. To examine criteria used by the constituency bursary fund committee to allocate bursaries to the recipients in the constituency
- 1) To determine the level of inequality in the allocation of bursaries to recipients in the constituency.
- 2) To establish how constituency bursary fund influenced students' retention in secondary school.
- 3) To find out the problems encountered by the bursary allocation committee when allocating bursaries to the recipients.

1.4 Null Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between adequacy of constituency bursary funds and retention in secondary schools in Bumula constituency.

1.5 Theoretical framework

This study was guided by the theory of socialist economics of education, a theory that was propounded by a French writer and historian called Louis Blanc. The theory underscores the need to create an economy that redistributes income from the rich to the poor so as to create equality of wellbeing (Selowsky, 1979). The socialist economics theory forms the basis of the Lorenz curve, which is the geometric representation of the distribution of income among families in a given country, at a given time (Baumol and Blinder, 1979). The Lorenz curve measures the cumulative percentage of families from the poorest to the richest on the horizontal axis, while the cumulative percentage of income is put on the vertical axis.

In the present study, the cumulative percentages were described in terms of quintiles. When quintiles are used, the population is divided into five equal portions. The measures are then used to compare the relative share going to specific groups such as the top quintile or the bottom quintile. A diagonal line represents a perfect allotment of income. If there is any discrimination at all, the poorest 20% of the families will get less than 20% of all the income. Discrimination in allotment of income corresponds to points below the parity line such as D, E, F and G.

According to the socialist economics of education theory, bursary allocation can help enhance equity in access to secondary schools. Otherwise, if education were offered without bursaries only those who can afford to pay school fees and other related costs would enroll in school. Under such circumstances, inequalities would be perpetuated. In this particular study, if the recipients are identified impartially based on their parentage, academic performance and socio economic status, the Lorenz curve will not show a lot of sagging, an implication of equity in bursary allocations.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a schematic or a diagrammatic presentation of the theory which is presented as a model where research variables and the relationship between them are translated into visual picture to illustrate the inter-connections between the independent and dependent variables (Oso & Onen, 2008).

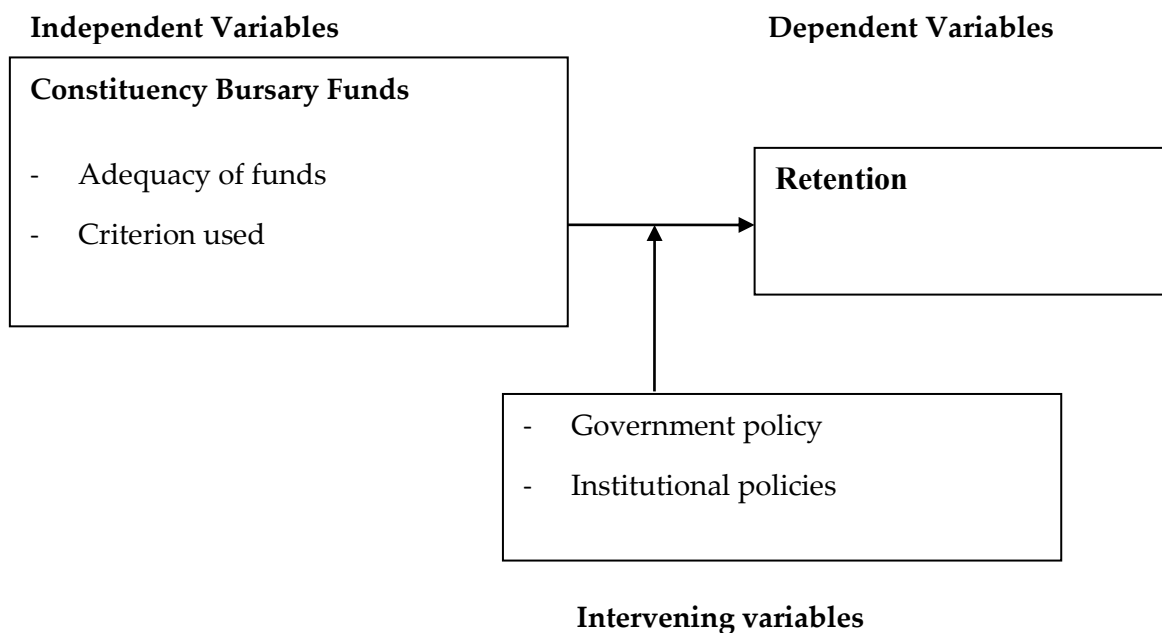


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Variable is a concept (mental abstract) which can take on different quantitative values, if one variable depends upon or is a consequence of the other variable its termed as a dependent variable, and the variable that is antecedent to the dependent variable is termed as an independent variable, extraneous variables, these are independent variables that are not related to the purpose of the study, but they may affect the dependent variable of the study (Kothari, 2008). The study was guided by independent variables which are Adequacy of funds, Timeliness of funds, Influence of politicians, and the Influence of communication awareness to achieve the objective of the study

which is the dependent variable, retention in Bumula Constituency. The study could have been affected by the extraneous variables, of the study which are the Institutional Policies and Government policy. This study integrated these variables in the study to minimize their influence on the study findings.

1.7 Significance of the Study

First, findings are expected to be of significance to policy makers in the Ministry of Education. They will use the findings to establish how the constituency bursary fund is administered in regard to financing secondary education in Kenya. Secondly, it is hoped that documented results will provide policy makers, educational professionals and practitioners with much needed information on the current loopholes in constituency bursary allocation mechanism with a view of redefining strategies to curb them.

1.8 Scope of the Study

The study was carried out at secondary school level, in Bumula Constituency, Bungoma County. Aspects covered were the influence of constituency bursary funds on retention at secondary school. The study was conducted among class teachers and students between the months of January and April 2016 when schools were on session.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

Some respondents might have been reluctant to release information being solicited. This could be a limitation in relation to accuracy of data. The attitude and limited source of information was delimited by assuring the informants of the confidentiality of their responses. The accuracy of our findings was dependent on the data collected from sample schools in Bumula Constituency. However, what was available was good enough for the study.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

Research design is a plan and the procedure for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2006). The research design adopted for this study was mixed methods leaning towards quantitative design. The study was mixed methods in a single research which allows for pragmatism. The blending of qualitative and quantitative methods in this study neutralized bias, sought convergence of results and produced final product

which highlighted the significant contribution of both approaches, where both, therefore used numeric and word data easily.

2.2 Target Population, sampling design and sample size

The study population comprised of 80 students, four form cohort, who had benefited from the bursary fund over a period of three consecutive years. In addition, there were 28 class teachers of the bursary recipients and 13 committee members of the constituency bursary fund. This data is tabulated in Table 1.

Table 1: Study Population

Category	Bursary recipients	Class teacher	Committee members
Size	80	28	13

Table 2: Sample Size

Category	Bursary recipients	Class teacher	Committee members
Size	67	14	7

2.3 Samples and sampling procedure

The samples of the study comprised of 67 form bursary recipients, 14 class teachers and 7 committee members of the constituency bursary fund. The sample size of the bursary recipients was determined using a formula recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda (1999). This formula is expressed as shown below:

$$nf = \frac{n}{1 + n/N}$$

Where; nf = sample size (when the population is less than 10,000). n = Sample size (when the population is more than 10,000). This figure is taken to be 384. N = Size of the study population which in this case is 80. The foregoing values were substituted into the equation

Therefore, the sample size of the bursary recipients was established as 67 through simple random sampling design which is a probability sampling approach. However, the sample sizes of the class teachers and committee members were determined by purposive sampling technique which is a non-probability sampling approach. This technique enables the researcher to handpick subjects who are informative or who possess the required characteristics. The sample sizes of the different categories of the respondents are shown in Table 2.

2.4 Research Instruments

The main data collection instruments included questionnaire and in-depth interview schedules. Document analysis was also used. Quantitative data was collected through questionnaire and qualitative data through interview and document analysis

2.5 Questionnaire for Students and Teachers

Kothari (2008), noted that questionnaires are usually free from the interview bias as the answers are in respondent own words. Respondents also have adequate time to give well thought out answers. Questionnaires also save time and information can be collected from a very large sample. Structured questionnaires were administered to students and teachers in public secondary schools in Bumula Constituency. The questionnaires contained four sections with section one covering the demographic description of the respondents involved in the study. Section two covered the adequacy of constituency bursary funds in enhancing students' access and retention at secondary schools and section three was on the adherence to the established criteria in allocating bursaries while the last section covered the challenges faced in the disbursement of constituency bursary funds to recipients in Bumula Constituency.

2.6 Interview Schedules

Orodho (2009) postulate that many people are willing to communicate orally than in writing and they would provide data more readily and fully than on a questionnaire. An investigator is able to encourage subjects and probe them deeply into a problem. In this principals, CDF committee members and the DEO were interviewed. The interview schedule designed was meant for to collect qualitative information on adequacy of constituency bursary funds, adherence to the established criteria and challenges faced in the disbursement of constituency.

2.7 Reliability of the Research Instruments

To determine the reliability of the instrument, student questionnaire was piloted on a small sample of bursary beneficiaries in Sirisia constituencies under study who were not part of this research study. Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was used to test on the reliability of the instruments. A correlation coefficient of 0.77 was obtained indicating that the instrument was reliable and acceptable. Validity of the Research Instruments Validity refers to the accuracy, correctness, meaningfulness of inferences and soundness of results of conclusion, which are based on the research findings (Kothari, 2008; Dane 1990; Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The researcher sought expert opinion on content and construct validity. Comments solicited from them were used to improve the

research instrument before commencing data collection. Moreover, the instrument was also piloted to a selected sample of bursary beneficiaries who were not part of the study in Nairobi County. This piloting improved the validity of the instrument. Piloting is important to establish the content validity of the instrument and to improve questions, formats and scales. To test the validity of the instruments used in the study, the questionnaire was availed to supervisors together with a panel experienced researchers to review the instruments. The results from the piloting together with the comments from the experts were incorporated in the final instrument revisions and improved its validity.

2.8 Data Analysis Procedures

The researcher employed statistical procedures to organize mass of data that was collected from the field into some sensible and manageable form easy to understand. This is necessary in order to bring out clearly the characteristics of the data to facilitate description, interpretation and generalization to be made. The quantitative data from the questionnaire was first subjected to preliminary processing through validation, coding and tabulation in readiness for analysis with the help of the statistical package for social science (SPSS) computer package. Frequencies, percentages, means and Standard deviation were used to analyze quantitative data. Data analysed was presented by use of tables and figures. Pearson Correlation Coefficient was employed to determine relationship that exists between the adequacy of constituency bursary funds and secondary school access and retention in Bumula constituency. Qualitative data from interview schedules, observation and document analysis was thematically classified and arranged before they were reported in narrations and quotations as per the research.

3. Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1 Identification criteria of bursary recipients

This study examined parentage and students' retention as criteria for bursary allocation.

3.1.1 Parentage and bursary allocation

According to Table 3, 66.7% of the bursary recipients in the population sample were orphaned. Only 33.3% of the recipients had all their parents alive. This implies that, the Constituency Bursary Fund Committee (KCBFC) considered orphans to be needier than applicants whose parents were both alive. Besides stating their parentage, the bursary

recipients were also required to state whoever provided additional financial support to pay for their fees. The data that was obtained is tabulated in Table 4. Table 4 shows 43.3% of the bursary recipients received additional financial support from their mothers to help pay their fees. As compared to 23.3% who received paternal support. Guardians gave the second highest financial support to the bursary recipients, while other sources only assisted 5% of the recipients. On the whole, 76.7% of the bursary recipients received assistance from mothers, guardians and other sources other than their fathers. The results imply that, students who are supported by mothers and guardians were considered to be needier and therefore deserved financial support.

Table 3: Parentage of the bursary recipients

Parentage	Orphaned	Not orphaned	Total
Number	40	20	60
Percentage	66.7	33.3	100

Table 4: The source of additional support to the bursary recipients

Source	Farther	Mother	Guardian	Others	Total
Number	14	26	17	3	60
Parentage	23.3	43.3	28.4	5.0	100

3.1.2 Levels of inequality in bursary allocation to the recipients

The respondents were ranked on a socio-economic status (S.E.S) scale that ranged from twenty (20) points for the neediest students, to one hundred and fourteen (114) points for the least needy. The bursary allocation for their last three years; namely; 2005, 2006 and 2007 were recorded. According to this table, the socio-economic statuses of the constituency bursary fund recipients ranged from twenty one (21) points to forty one (41) points. The majority of the bursary recipients occupied a socioeconomic status of twenty eight (28) points. The highest amount of bursary given to a recipient in any one year of the three years was Ksh. 10, 000. Two students received the highest bursary allocation Ksh.26, 000 over the three years and their socio-economic statuses were twenty seven (27) points and thirty three (33) points respectively.

3.1.3. Effects of constituency bursary fund on students' Retention

Table 5: Effects of constituency bursary fund on students' Retention

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Has raised retention by over 75%	0	0.00
Has raised retention by 50-74%	1	11.8
Has raised retention by 25-49%	10	64.7
Has raised retention by below 25%	3	23.5
Has not had any impact on retention	0	0.00
Total	14	100

The table shows that 64.7% of the respondents indicated that the bursary scheme had raised retention by 25% - 49%, 23.5% of the respondents indicated below 25% while 11.8% of the respondents indicated that it had raised retention by 50-74%. This depicts that a big number of class teachers had noted that the bursary had raised retention by 25-49%. This implies that the bursary scheme slightly improved secondary school retention rates, which shows that the funds may not be enough to help the students as needed. The findings agree with Muriuki (2011) who established that bursary schemes slightly improved secondary school retention rates, which means that there may be other factors affecting retention rates other than the availability of funds.

One respondent indicated that: *"I can say that the impact of CDF on retention of students is low because not all needy cases benefit from the funds given that the funds disbursed is little and the number of needy students is high."*

3.1.4 Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis of this study stated that: There is no significant relationship between adequacy of constituency bursary funds and secondary school retention in Bumula constituency. This hypothesis was tested using Spearman's correlation coefficient at 95% confidence level. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Relationship between Adequacy of CBF and Retention in Secondary Schools

Variables	Adequacy of CBF
Retention	$r = 0.782^{**}$ $p = .000$

Table 5 shows that the adequacy of constituency bursary funds had a positive and significant relationship with retention ($r = 0.782$; $p = .000$) of students in secondary schools. This shows that the adequacy of Constituency Bursary Fund significantly retention of students in secondary schools in Bumula Constituency thus the null hypothesis is rejected. This was found to concur with Mwangi, (2006) who cited that the bursary fund level is too low to cover the entire tuition fee for the poor.

4. Conclusions

Following the findings of this study, a number of conclusions were drawn. It was observed that orphans and good performers were the majority of the bursary recipients, leading to the confirmation that the constituency bursary fund committee determined the recipients based on their parentage and academic performance. The Gini coefficient value of 0.01 for the bursary allocation to the recipients implied that, the allocations were done equitably in the constituency.

As a matter of fact, 80% of the recipients noted that, the criteria used by the committee to identify beneficiaries were fair enough. The equity in allocations can be attributed to; the fairness demonstrated in the criteria for identifying the bursary recipients and the uniformity in the bursary amounts.

It was concluded that CDBF was recognized as an important source of fund to ensure retention in secondary schools and that lack of awareness about CDBF and procedure for applying for bursaries to some group of students was a major hindrance towards them benefiting from CDBF and consequently access and completion of students in education. The bursary scheme slightly improved secondary school retention rates, which shows that the funds may not be enough to help the students as needed. Further, the study concluded that the impact of CDBF was low because not all needy cases benefit from the funds.

5. Recommendations for Practice

The following recommendations were made from the foregoing discussions in the light of the findings;

- a) The amount allocated for the CDF bursary scheme should be increased so that more students can benefit as well as enough money to be given to deserving students to enable them clear their fees. All bursaries available from the Government such as CDF and LATF should be harmonized to enhance equitable distribution of fund to needy students. Efforts should be made by the government to disburse the funds to constituency bursaries committee that which is enough to meet the growing demand as well as finance the beneficiaries. It is better to finance a few beneficiaries and give them enough funds than dividing the money tiny amount that is insignificant. Similarly, the government should allocate more funds to this project to improve its affordability in reducing the school fees balance.

- b) The CBC should provide bursary allocations in time and in line with the school term calendar to enable beneficiaries to maximize their time in school to study instead of staying at home to look for additional funds. Similarly, the beneficiaries should be guaranteed continuous funding. On the other hand if followed perhaps the recommendation by the Republic of Kenya (1999;-259) that the ministry strengthens monitoring and supervision of the management of funds in CBCs through measures such as annual audits and impromptu audit inspection exercises this would ensure efficiency and transparency in the allocation of bursaries as it would go a long way in supplementing secondary education because it would enhance affordability hence continuity.
- c) The public should be adequately sensitized on the existence of the CDF bursary fund and when it is released to ensure that more students are able to apply for it. The Ministry of Education should establish standards in regard to continuous funding of the orphaned and vulnerable beneficiaries throughout their study period in secondary school. This can only be bridged once there is verification or establishment that the status of the beneficiaries has changed. This will enable many students who could have otherwise dropped to be retained in school. Moreover, through the ministry of education schools should adhere to the unit costs established for secondary education.
- d) The government should keep on sensitizing the public on accessibility of this government initiated bursary schemes and how it can supplement students' school fees. More awareness should be done over the internet, radios and even road shows for the very illiterate. Similarly, political interference to be avoided especially at the CBCs where bursaries are awarded. The officials should be appointed based on appropriate vetting order free from favoritism and biasness based on who knows the political big wig. The appointees should have sound academic record and experience in education set up or a similar scenario.

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