

Factors Affecting the Access of Free Primary Education by Gender in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Countries world over have endeavoured to achieve gender equality in education given that education is central in empowering people and propelling national growth and development. Kenya, in its efforts to attain gender parity and increased access to education, the government in 2003 implemented the Free Primary Education (FPE). There was a positive impact on Net Enrolment Ratios (NER) which increased from 67.8% in 2000 to 82.1% in 2003. This study was occasioned by the fact that despite FPE being in place there are some children who are still at home in Kenya and have not accessed the FPE due to a number of reasons. This paper investigates the factors influencing the access of FPE by gender in Matete and Lugari divisions.

The target population for the study was all the public primary head teachers, teachers, pupils and education officers in Matete and Lugari divisions. Stratified sampling technique was used to get the sample schools in the two divisions and random sampling done to get the schools at the zonal level. Purposive sampling was done to get the education officers. A sample of 20 head teachers, 200 pupils (100 boys and 100 girls) and 3 education officers were used. The main tools for data

collection were questionnaires and interview schedules. Document analysis was also used in the study. Data was analysed by the use of frequency distribution tables, percentages and graphs. The findings of the study showed that increased access as a result of FPE showed increased cases of class congestion, shortage of teachers and dropouts in Matete division as compared to Lugari division.

Key words: Access, Free Primary Education, Gender