

**An Investigation on Impacts of Drought on School Going Students in Kisasi Sub
County Kitui County**

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ABSTRACT

Even though the Kenya government has put much efforts to improve on school enrolment, completion, and school performance many learners in Kisasi Sub County always find themselves out of school recording poor national and school performance in almost in all levels of class learning . This has been documented that 4 out 10 of all children / learners in Kisasi sub county do not enroll in any school, do not complete school or performs poorly in school due to frequent drought related factors (NEMA, 2005) where Kisasi sub county recorded a prevalence of drought effects of 8% (APHIA, 2010) which affected the school attendance of learners, school completion of learners and diminishing of enrolment figures of learners. This study investigated the impacts of drought on students learning in Kisasi Sub County, impacts of drought on learning resources in Kisasi Sub County and also sought to document indigenous strategies of adopting to drought in Kisasi Sub county Kitui County. The main research objectives of the study was to determine the impacts of drought on students learning in semi arid region of Kisasi Sub County Kitui County, to investigate how drought affects learning resources in Kisasi sub county Kitui County. And also documented indigenous strategies to adapting to drought in Kisasi sub county Kitui County. The study was conducted in the newly created Kisasi sub county of Kitui County which is about 25 Kilometres south of Kitui Town along Kitui –Mutomo-Mombasa Highway. The researcher adopted a classical and social Darwinism theory of equal opportunity to lead the study. The research employed descriptive survey design whereby both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used in collecting data. The target population were all the school headteachers in Kisasi Sub County, all teachers in Kisasi Sub County , all the school going learners in Kisasi sub County, all the parents of learners in Kisasi Sub County and the Zonal Quality Assurance and Standard Officer Kisasi Sub County. A sample of 313 respondents was be considered whereby 12 headteachers, 12 schools, 196 teachers, 96 pupils, 96 parents and the zonal QASO. Data was collected systematically to each respondent and the instrument collected immediately after filling. The researcher employed questionnaire to Head teachers, teachers, and QASO since they were literate and each read for himself . A checklist was used to collect and record data observed from learners during learning process, signs and symptoms portrayed by learners from drought stricken families and interview schedules for parents and students. Data collected was analyzed by use of tables, graphs and pie - charts. A brief discussion was made under each table or graph and some comments put under it. It was expected that once the study was approved people dealing with education of children will have some indigenous knowledge on helping children in drought hit zones complete and succeed in education. It was reviewed that learners in Kisasi Sub county continued to perform poorly in both internal and external examinations. Learners of both gender kept on dropping out of school almostly in every school in Kisasi Sub county . Children were highly reported to be abused, neglected and cases of early marriages are common features in Kisasi Sub county .. Learning resources like classrooms had been left empty and only a few classes had few children which could hardly represent the total population of class and school enrolment. Education programmes kept on being disrupted by drought in kisasi Sub county and most parents were found to have had no school fees for their children due to death of their animals that left them poor. It is true that some people in Kisasi Sub county have been sensitized and have restored land by use of green manure and constructed dykes and planted trees along river banks. People in Kisasi have changed from keeping cattle to goats which are more drought tolerant. The government had introduced drought resistant crops though only a few people have accepted to plant them . Teachers and other educators agree that forests can reduce drought once planted and water conservator can be ensured. It was

recommended that community members should be encouraged to plant drought resistant crops and keep drought resistant animals that varied production periods and that will enable communities to exist from one season to another. Community members should do anything possible to arrest the good soil in Kisasi sub county from being washed away cutting terraces, planting trees and grass and constructing check up dams. The government should build at least one boarding school in each location for both boys and girls so that children can be fed from school, watered from school and provide learning facilitation and equipment so as to ensure school retention, completion and improve school performance. Kisasi community members were advised to destock animals when there is severe drought prediction by weather forecast department.