

**TO INVESTIGATE CHALLENGES FACING IMPLEMENTATION OF
FREE SECONDARY EDUCATION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
MURANG'A SOUTH SUB-COUNTY, KENYA**

By

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ABSTRACT

Rolling out the programme in January, President Mwai Kibaki said free education would ensure that children from poor homes acquired quality education.

His government introduced universal free primary education after he was first elected in 2002.

Under the programme, the government would pay tuition fees while parents covered boarding costs and bought uniforms.

But seven months after the programme was supposed to take off, the government has provided only a quarter of the funding schools need to make it work.

Some school administrators have been forced to run the institutions on a credit line while others have opted to reinstate tuition fees to avoid closing down.

The launch of Free Primary Education (FPE) in Kenya resulted to high enrolments of pupils in the primary schools. However only a small proportion of these pupils were able to access and complete their secondary education due to the cost implications of high school fees which was a burden to many parents. Towards this end the government of Kenya launched the Free Secondary Education (FSE) initiative in 2008 as a strategy to address the challenges brought about by the introduction of FPE.

Concerns have however been raised over the implementation of the FSE programme.

These concerns were not founded on any systematic studies or supported by empirical data. The purpose of this study therefore was to investigate the challenges facing the effective implementation of FSE in Murang'a South, Kenya in relation to adequacy of learning resources and funding to schools. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The target population was 536 respondents consisting of 40 head teachers, 487 teachers and 9 education officers in Murang'a South. The sample size was 126 respondents, made up of 9 head teachers, 108 teachers, one DEO and two Zonal Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (ZQASOs). Proportionate sampling was used to select the head teachers and teachers while purposive sampling was used to select the DEO and ZQASOs. Questionnaires were used as instruments for collecting data from the head teachers and teachers while interview schedules were administered to the DEO and the Zonal Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (ZQASOs). Validity of the instruments was done through experts in research and piloting. Reliability was tested by subjecting the instruments to a pilot study through the split-half technique and then Spearman Brown Prophecy formula was used to compute a reliability coefficient, which was established at 0.68. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics after data cleaning and coding. Quantitative data was analyzed using frequency counts, means and percentages while qualitative data was analyzed by tallying the numbers of similar responses. Results of data analysis were presented using frequency distribution tables, bar graphs and pie charts. The study established that more students were able to attend schools as a result of free secondary education though this stressed the available resources in schools. The study therefore recommends for

employment of more teachers to cater for the increasing students' population, and also to provide more funds as the quality of education is usually pegged on teacher effectiveness and adequacy of funds.

The findings of this study should stimulate continuous debate on FSE and also provide valuable insights that the government, stakeholders, scholars and researchers can rely on in their collective endeavour of addressing the challenges and making the FSE initiative a success.