

**FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LOW ACCESS AND
RETENTION OF PUPILS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOLS: EMBU NORTH DISTRICT KENYA.**

BY:

FRANCIS NYAGAH THAGICUH

REG NO:E37S110/02323

*A research project submitted in partial fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Award of a Bachelor of Education degree of Mt. Kenya
University.*

ABSTRACT

The major concern of this study was that despite the Kenyan Government re-introducing free primary education, some school age children are still locked out of school whereas dropout and repetition continue to be pervasive.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors contributing to low access and retention of pupils in public primary schools of Embu North District

The objectives of this study were to establish pupil's enrolment and retention rates in Embu north District primary schools in the period 2008-2012, to determine the school-based and pupils characteristics, socio-economic factors and socio-cultural factors contributing to low access and retention of pupils. The study also sought to establish measures that could be taken to improve access and retention in public primary education in Embu North District. The research was guided by the classical liberal theory of equal opportunity.

A descriptive survey technique was used to collect data from 10 head teachers, fifty three teachers, 300 pupils, 15 parents, the area chief DEO, the zonal quality and assurance office (ZQASO) and the districts children's office (DCO). The study used questionnaire for head teachers and teachers, interviews were conducted for parents/guardians and the key informants. Focus group discussion was used to collect information from students.

Schools, teachers, and parents were sampled using stratified random technique. The key informants were positively sampled. Students were sampled using Mugenda and Mugenda formula, class seven and eight pupils were purposely sampled.

Data were analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) windows. Data were taken then presented using frequency and bar graphs.

The study found that enrolment rate in public primary schools in Embu North District declined and dropout ratio was low. A problem of dropout affects girls more than boys most prominent causes of declining rates of access and retention of pupils in primary schools in the district are negative attitude towards education, teenage pregnancy, indiscipline and lack of responsibility among parent. There is also the preference to transfer pupils from public primary school to another and also to private academies. The findings show that there are social-economics, socio-cultural, and school based factors that pose a threat to achievement of UPE in the district. Therefore the government should enforce adherence of the laid down policies and procedures such as corporal punishment, repetition and extra tuition.