

**CHALLENGES FACING ACCESS TO SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN
ARID AND SEMI ARID AREAS: A CASE OF CENTRAL DIVISION OF
WAJIR EAST DISTRICT KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

The transition rate from primary to secondary school is currently 30 per cent in ASAL regions compared to 50 per cent nationally (Digolo, 2003). Therefore the purpose of this study is to assess the challenges facing access to secondary education in arid and semi arid areas in Central division of Wajir East district. This study was guided by Human Capital Theory which was postulated by Becker (1964). This study adopted a case study research design. The study adopted stratified, purposive and simple random sampling techniques. The strata's were Barwaqo and Township locations. This gave rise to three sub-locations with a total population household of: Barwaqo (580) – Barwaqo location, Township (956) – Township location, Alimaou (674) – Township location. The study then used simple random sampling to select 10% of the total households in each sub-location. In total, the study sample size comprised of 221 household heads. In addition, interview schedules were issued to the three head teachers in the three secondary schools. Descriptive methods were employed in and data presented in the form of frequency distribution tables, graphs and pie charts that facilitated description and explanation of the study findings. The study findings indicate that majority 135 (61.9%) of the household heads had an annual average income of less than 10,000 shillings. This implies that majority of the respondents survive on less than a dollar per day which is the minimum income recommended by the United Nations. The regression had a correlation coefficient (R^2) of about 0.6084 and an adjusted R^2 of 0.56. This means that Level of poverty, Education level of parents, Distance from home to school and socio-cultural factors contributes 56 percent of the variations in access to secondary school education. The F-value of 4.31 with a probability of 0.00 at 5% significance level is significant indicated that the joint contribution of the independent variables was significant in predicting the dependent variable. The Durbin Watson value of 2.09 indicated lack of serial correlation within the model (Neuman, 2000). It is clear that the high illiteracy rates and weak schooling system are problems in arid and semi arid areas. Better education will help increase incomes, but it cannot bring an instant reduction in poverty. There has been a rapid expansion of education, but it will take time for the average years of schooling for the number of educated local community members to increase. Breaking the inter-generational transmission of poverty in arid and semi arid areas which require far-reaching actions in the education sector; access is one such critical component. The researcher recommends the establishment of a legitimate institutional framework for rural development at the national, district and sub-district levels. The institutions thus created should facilitate engagement between government, civil society, private sector and other stakeholders and ensure participation of poor and marginalized that will enhance access to secondary school education.