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**FACTORS INFLUENCING GIRLS' PARTICIPATION IN FREE PRIMARY
EDUCATION: A SURVEY OF SCHOOLS IN KAPENGURIA
DIVISION, WEST POKOT DISTRICT.**

BY

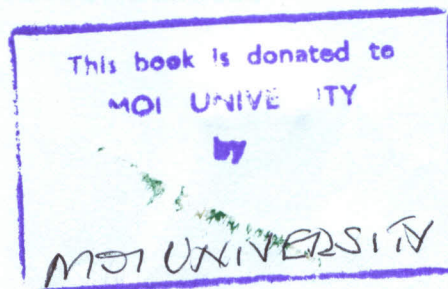


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ABSTRACT

When Free Primary Education was introduced in Kenya, there was an overall increase in enrolment. However, there exist gender and regional disparities to the disadvantage of girls yet the government is committed to providing primary education to all children. The purpose of this study was to investigate factors that influence girls' participation in Free Primary Education in Kapenguria Division of West Pokot District.

The study was guided by educational production function in which the inputs were economic background of parents, availability and condition of physical facilities in school, gender stereotyping in school and social-cultural factors while output was participation. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The target population was 40 public primary schools, 520 teachers and 1400 pupils. Stratified proportionate random sampling was used to select 18 public primary schools. These represented 45% of the study population. All headteachers and class teachers of the sampled schools were purposively selected while stratified sampling was used to select pupils from class seven and eight because of their ability and competence. A pilot study was done in two schools in the neighbouring Sigor Division to establish reliability of research instruments whereby test-retest method was used while their validity was ascertained by consulting lecturers from School of Education. A correlation coefficient of 0.71 was obtained. Data was collected by use of questionnaire and document analysis.

Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The former involved percentages, frequencies, means and standard deviation and the later employed one-way ANOVA. It was presented by tables and line graphs. Findings showed that there was an overall increase in enrolment of pupils in Kapenguria Division under Free Primary Education programme between 2003-2007, with boys' enrolment being higher than girls' in the five years. At the same time girls' dropout was higher than boys'. The factors that influenced participation of girls in FPE were established to be: inadequate and poor condition of physical facilities, low economic background of parents, gender stereotyping to the disadvantage of girls in school and negative social-cultural factors.

To increase girls' participation, recommendations made include government to be in partnership with donors to increase support to Free Primary Education to include provision of sanitary materials to adolescent girls. Building of more low cost boarding primary schools and revitalising feeding programme are necessary. There is also need to formulate policy on how parents and communities can provide physical facilities in school and widening awareness of parents on importance of girls' education. Database in primary schools also need to be improved.

It is expected that the findings of the study will be useful to policy makers and other stakeholders including parents, teachers, the community and Non-Governmental Organisations to review strategies in order to widen girls' access to and participation in Free Primary Education. Equally, findings may provide valuable information to other interested researchers.