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Funding Secondary Education in Kenya

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A B S T R A C T

Secondary education in Kenya plays a critical role in national development, bridging the gap between basic education and tertiary-level training. However, funding remains a persistent challenge. While the government introduced Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) in 2008 to enhance access, issues such as inadequate infrastructure, teacher shortages, hidden costs, and disparities in resource allocation continue to hinder quality and equity. Moreover, the increasing student population strains available resources, and reliance on public funding leaves many schools underfinanced.

Keywords: Secondary Education, Funding, Resources Allocation

1. INTRODUCTION

The commitment by government of Kenya to have public resources used for the intended purposes effectively and economically cannot be over emphasized (Ngigi & Tanui, 2019; Abdulla, 2009). The government channels its funds to schools through FDSE, CDF, County Development Fund and other government grants. Parents cater for boarding costs, uniform and lunch. This calls for accountability and transparency. The constitution of Kenya reiterates the importance of prudent and responsible use of public funds by all public officers. The schools principals fall under the public officers who by virtue of office have the responsibility of mobilizing and utilizing finances in a prudent manner (GOK 2010). According to Oboegbulem and Kalu (2013), financial management is such a sensitive issue as it attracts a lot of interest from both the government and the public who are eager to know how funds are planned, controlled and utilized in order to achieve the set goals. Budgeting becomes a crucial process to effective financial management in any functional organization the school notwithstanding which is a prerequisite for enhanced learner academic achievement (Waweru & Orodho, 2013).

Through budgeting wastage and reckless spending of public funds is not only controlled but also informs the education stakeholders on the projected income and expenditure for various educational services (ibid, 2013). The MOE has given guidelines providing for the maximum fees that parents may be charged in each category of schools.

2. POLICY ON FUNDING SECONDARY EDUCATION IN KENYA

In Kenya, the government has played a fundamental role through annual budgetary allocation to fund public secondary schools (Ngigi & Tanui, 2019). From the time Kenya gained its independence in 1963, providing quality training and education has been a major concern for the policy formulators. At independence, secondary schools were categorized in three categories namely Government funded, Private and Harambee schools. Government schools were further subdivided into district, Provincial and National schools. Schools that were funded by the government were fully catered for in terms of finances, materials and human resource requirements. The Harambee schools relied on the community for funding though with some government assistance. The private schools were funded by private organizations and individuals. All stakeholders were passionate towards the development of education, (Ngware, Onsomu & Muthaka, 2007)

Currently Kenya has private and public school as the main categories of secondary schools. The government gives some subsidy to public secondary whereas other funding comes from parents and other stakeholders. Following the new constitution's promulgation, public secondary schools were divided into National, Extra-county, County schools and Sub County schools based on the selection of Form One students. There is also a category of special schools which cater for students with special needs. The private schools are solely funded by the private entities. World Bank (2002) views the funding of education as a great challenge to education in secondary schools amongst others. However, all countries spend a big fraction of the national resources on education. Many countries continue to charge Secondary school fees which are sometimes high leading to inaccessibility to secondary education by the poor, (EFA, Global monitoring Report 2012). It is therefore necessary to abolish fees to improve the numbers of children accessing education from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Regarding provision of secondary education in Kenya, pressure from the World Bank and IMF through Structured Adjustment Programme (SAPs) compelled the Kenyan Government to introduce cost sharing policy in funding secondary education, (Achoka & Ogenga, 2008). Kamunge Report of

1988, focused on funding quality and relevant education. Following, this report the government came up with Sessional paper No.6 on Education and Training for the Next Decade and Beyond which officially ushered in the policy of cost sharing since the Government could not shoulder the whole burden of funding education. Under this policy the financing of education was to be undertaken through partnership of the public sector, NGOs, communities, individuals and private sector. Prior to cost sharing the government shouldered the whole burden of funding education. With the implementation of the policy, the government stopped the procurement of text books and shifted this role to the parents (Rotich, 2004). The government took over the role of hiring and remunerating teachers, providing teacher professional development, school infrastructure, administration and management of bursaries and scholarships. Other partners had a responsibility of providing physical infrastructure, maintenance, examination fees, tuition fees, accommodation fees and students personal expenses (GOK, 1988).

According to Wambugu and Mokoena (2013) and the Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (2003), cost sharing created a heavy burden on households. However, the government introduced some safety measures such as bursaries to cushion the poor and the vulnerable. The government intervention was inadequate to cater for all needy students. Other challenges included weak administrative systems as observed in the delays in communicating bursary awards to the beneficiaries (Njeru & Orodho, 2003). The Koech Commission on education (1999) recommended that efforts be made by all stakeholders in the education sector to increase levels of funding by broadening the resource base. In spite of this policy shift the demand for education kept on increasing although the sources of finance remained a challenge. After the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 and the adaptation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education for All (EFA), there was increased enrolment in primary schools that led to higher enrolment in secondary schools making funding a major challenge. The demand for quality education has been taken a step further beyond that of Millennium development Goals by the sustainable development goals. According to the sustainable goal 4, a nation that plans for inclusive education endears itself towards realizing upward social mobility and ending poverty amongst its citizen. It is fundamental for self-respect that unlocks the creativity of mind and ends up liberating the intellect. In line with this, the Government of Kenya has been making effort to make education affordable through paying tuition fees for all learners in public secondary school. By so doing the government looks forward to ensuring that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education that results in learners gain relevant and effective learning outcomes. Effective outcomes can only be attained if the available funds can be put to relevant and appropriate procurement of appropriate resources. This study sought to provide a guide towards this end as there is hardly any guide on how to a portion funds to resource in an informed way for attaining the best academic achievement. The integration of secondary education within basic education in line with the session paper No 1 of 2005 exacerbated the challenge of funding to cater for all primary graduates. During the 2007 election campaigns, major political parties namely Party of National Unity, Orange Democratic Movement-Kenya and Orange Democratic Movement had promised free secondary education.

In 2008, the Free Secondary Education was launched by the government of Kenya as an initiative to achieve Education for All (EFA). This was mainly to cater for Day secondary education. This meant that free tuition was guaranteed. This has been seen as a major policy reform where the government was targeting the poor and vulnerable groups to access secondary education. According to Munda and Odebero (2014), "introduction of free tuition in secondary schools was aimed at providing the economically disadvantaged with an opportunity to benefit from government sponsored education provision". The government allocated each student in public Secondary schools Ksh. 10,265. The funds were to be disbursed to schools in three tranches in January, April and August at the rate of 50%, 20% and 30% respectively. Schools were supposed to open two accounts to facilitate operations of the funds. One account was to cater for the general administration of the school while the second account was for the acquisition of the instructional resources. Parents were to continue meeting costs such as schools uniform, boarding costs, and lunch for day scholars and participate in the expansion of infrastructure. At the end of the day, parents with children in boarding schools were to pay 18,635 extra. Table 1 shows the distribution of the Government capitation per the recognized vote heads in public secondary in Kenya as per the 2007 circular.

Table 1: Allocation of the free Day Secondary Education

S/N	Vote head	Amount (Kshs.)
1.	Tuition	3,600
2.	Repairs, maintenance and improvement	400
3.	Local travel and transport	400
4.	Administrative costs	500
5.	Electricity, water and conservancy	500
6.	Activity	600
7.	Personal emolument	3,965
8.	Medical	300
	Total	**10,265**

Source: Ministry of education (2007)

Despite this guidelines there were cases reported in the media of parents indicating that some schools especially National schools did charge up to ksh. 100,000/= (Kenya shillings one hundred thousands) during the period. Many schools then had their own policies as regards to fee payment in secondary schools.

Parents were therefore supposed to shoulder approximately up to 60% of secondary education total cost. In as much as the government continued to allocate money for the Constituency Bursary Fund, the burden of fees to the parents remained heavy. The near success of Free Primary Education (FPE) has made funding of secondary education to continue being a big challenge due to increased enrolment. According to the policy of FDSE, there is encouragement for community initiatives to finance expansion of physical facilities, transport and any other essential services. However development and improvement funds have to be agreed upon between the school's management and Board of Management who engage the parents. Hence FDSE was meant to promote joint responsibilities between parents, the government, sponsors and private initiatives in the spirit of partnership. The government had no clear provision for other stakeholders such as the N.G.O.S, C.B.O.S and private sectors to participate in the funding. This research therefore looked at the role of these stakeholders in funding secondary education. Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) and Constituency Development Fund (CDF) were expected to supplement government funding especially in putting up physical facilities in schools.

Initially the government policy on raising funds by schools gave much free hand to principals on the educational levies that they would call on parents to support. Most of the levies were instituted with little consideration of the parent's ability to pay (1 per policy Brief Volume 9, issue 3, 2003). Kenya's Vision 2030 is anchored on social, political and economic processes in the country. Under the social pillar, education and training is aimed at providing internationally competitive training, quality education and research which are the basis for realization of the vision, (Kenya vision 2030). The vision is a long term development strategy covering the period between 2008 and 2030. Under this plan, education as a social pillar should drive the country into a middle level economy. This can only be achieved through increased funding of the education sector by the government while involving the private sector. The second medium term plan of vision 2030 whose implementation commenced in 2013 had an aim of promoting wide use of ICT as an instrument of instruction and training in schools. In addition there were plans to lower student teacher ratio and provide more text books and equipment to schools (GOK, 2010).

In the year 2015 the government of Kenya increased funding of Free Day Secondary Education from Ksh 10265 to Ksh 12870. The Government through the Kenya Gazette Notice dated 9th march 2015, come up with a new fee structure as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: 2015 FSDE vote amount allocation

Vote heads	Boarding schools (KES)			Day schools (KES)			Special needs schools (KES)		
	Government	Parent	Total	Government	Parent	Total	Government	Parent	Total
Teaching learning materials and exams	4792	00	4792	4792	00	4792	4792	00	4792
BES and Meals / lunch	00	32385	32385	00	00	00	00	26790	26790
Repairs Maintenance and Improvement	800	2392	3192	800	1086	1886	800	800	1600
Local Travel Transport	800	1621	2421	800	1033	1833	800	800	1600
Administration costs	800	2516	3316	800	772	1572	800	600	1400
EWC	1500	6302	7802	1500	1651	3151	1500	1000	2500
Medical	278	508	786	278	411	689	278	860	1138
Activity fee	600	798	1398	600	656	1256	600	500	1100
Personal emolument	2700	5972	8672	2700	3056	5755	2700	5000	7700
Approved PTA development projects	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
Insurance (medical and property)	600	1060	1660	600	710	1310	600	860	1460
Top up	00	00	00	00	00	00	19730	00	19730
Total School Fees	12870	53554	66424	12870	9374	22244	32600	37210	69810

Source: The Kenya Gazette No. Vol. CXVII-23 (2015)

The government of Kenya through the gazette notice No. 1555 of March 2015 on public secondary schools fee guidelines set a ceiling on the maximum fees charged to parents in each category of schools. Public secondary schools could only lower the fee if they so wished but could not go beyond the recommended ceiling (GOK, 2015). The recommendation of the government was that the fee be spread across the three terms in the ratio of 50:30:20. According to the fee policy, schools in agreement with the PTA had a leeway in deciding the amount charged per student to cater for lunch and PTA project. According to FDSE policy, the money given fell under tuition and operation vote heads. The government also provided same budgetary allocations for every cent given to all public schools. FDSE funds are in two accounts namely operational funding and tuition funding. The operational funding which forms the bulk of the money caters for a school's administrative costs whereas the tuition account caters for learning resources.

The government of Kenya also embarked on payment of National examination levies for all candidates in public secondary education from the year 2015. The ultimate goal was to increase access and quality in education. A task force on secondary school fees chaired by Dr. Kilemi Mwiria had recommended free quality secondary education by 2015. Secondary education was to be made available to all learners by establishing realistic unit costs. In response to the report, President Uhuru Kenyatta pointed out that basic education must be accessible to every child. For this to be achieved there was need for the government to partner with other stake holders, (Wanyama, 2014). The beginning of 2018 witnessed the actualization of the government's commitment to shoulder all tuition fees and leaving the parents and guardians with the role of providing school uniform, personal effects and boarding fee for children in boarding schools. The government scrapped ksh 9378 which each student had been required to pay in order to complement the FSDE. Table 3 shows the fully implemented FDSE.

Table 3: FDSE day school allocation

Vote Heads	Parents obligation	GOK
Teaching/Learning materials and exams	Ksh 0	Ksh 4792
Repairs, Maintenance and Improvement	Ksh 0	Ksh 2886
Local Travel and Transport	Ksh 0	Ksh 1833
Administration Costs	Ksh 0	Ksh 1572
Electricity water and Conservancy	Ksh 0	Ksh 2151
Activity Fees	Ksh 0	Ksh 1256
Personnel Emolument	Ksh 0	Ksh 5755
Medical and Insurance	Ksh 0	Ksh 1999
Top Up	Ksh 0	Ksh.0
Total School Fees	Ksh 0	Ksh 22244

Source MOE (2017)

According to the Kenyan Government directive of the year 2017, parents/guardians with learners who are day scholars were not to pay any extra levy on top of the government's capitation of Ksh. 22,244, but cater for their children's lunch, school uniform and other needs outside the school (GOK, 2017).

Table 4: FDSE category A boarding school allocation

Vote Heads	GOK	Parent	Total
Teaching Learning Materials and Exams	Ksh 4792	Ksh 0	Ksh 4792
Boarding Equipment & Stores	Ksh 0	Ksh 32385	Ksh 32385
Repairs, Maintenance & improvement	Ksh 1886	Ksh 2960	Ksh 4846
Local Travel & Transport	Ksh 1833	Ksh 1621	Ksh 3454
Administrative Costs	Ksh 1572	Ksh 3516	Ksh 5088
Electricity, Water &conservancy	Ksh 3151	Ksh 6302	Ksh 9453
Activity fees	Ksh 1256	Ksh 798	Ksh 2054
Personnel Emolument	Ksh 5755	Ksh 5972	Ksh 11727
Medical Insurance	Ksh 1999	Ksh 0	Ksh 1999
Total fees	Ksh 22244	Ksh 53554	Ksh 75798

According to the government's policy, category A schools comprise of all National schools and Extra County schools situated in towns of Nairobi, Mombasa, Nakuru, Kisumu and Eldoret (MOE, 2017). In these schools, parents/guardians have to to top up on some of the vote heads catered for by the government and also cater for boarding facilities. In total, parents/guardians are required to pay ksh 53,554 as school fees.

Table 5: FDSE category B boarding school allocation

Vote Heads	GOK	Parent	Total
Teaching Learning Materials & Exams	Ksh 4792	Ksh 0	Ksh 4792
Boarding Equipment & Stores	Ksh 0	Ksh 27385	Ksh 27385
Repairs, Maintenance & improvement	Ksh 1886	Ksh 2400	Ksh 4286
Local Travel & Transport	Ksh 1833	Ksh 650	Ksh 2483
Administrative Costs	Ksh 1572	Ksh 1850	Ksh 3422
Electricity, Water &conservancy	Ksh 3151	Ksh 4900	Ksh 8051
Activity fees	Ksh 1256	Ksh 150	Ksh1406
Personnel Emolument	Ksh 5755	Ksh 3100	Ksh 8855
Medical Insurance	Ksh 1999	Ksh 0	Ksh 1999
Total fees	Ksh 22244	Ksh 40535	Ksh 62779

Source: MoE 2017

Category B schools comprise of Boarding schools which are either Extra county schools, County schools or Sub County schools situated in other areas of Kenya. Apart from ksh 22,244 from government capitation, these schools are required to charge each parent/guardian, a maximum of ksh 40,535 for boarding related expenses. Just like in the case of category A schools, students in these schools are required to top up on some vote heads catered for by the government.

Table 6: Special Needs Education schools fees structure

Vote heads	GOK	parent	Total
Teaching Learning Materials & Exams	Ksh4792	Ksh 0	Ksh 4792
Boarding Equipment & Stores	Ksh 23220	Ksh 10790	Ksh 34010
Repairs, Maintenance & improvement	Ksh 1886	Ksh 0	Ksh 1886
Local Travel & Transport	Ksh 1833	Ksh 0	Ksh 1833
Administrative Costs	Ksh 1572	Ksh 0	Ksh 1572
Electricity, Water &conservancy	Ksh 3151	Ksh 0	Ksh 3151
Activity fees	Ksh 1256	Ksh 0	Ksh 1256
Personnel Emolument	Ksh 5755	Ksh 0	Ksh 5755
Medical Insurance	Ksh 1999	Ksh 0	Ksh 1999
Top up	Ksh 12510	Ksh 0	Ksh 12510
Total Fees	Ksh 57974	Ksh 10790	Ksh 68764

Source: MoE 2017

According to the National Special Needs Education Policy Framework, Special Needs Education Schools refers to schools set aside to offer education to learners with special needs based on their respective disabilities (MoE, 2017). Special Needs Education schools receive the highest amount of money from the government. Whereas other categories of schools receive ksh 22,244 from government capitation, Special Needs Education schools receive a capitation of ksh 57, 974. Parents/Guardians pay a maximum of ksh 10,790 to supplement the Boarding, Equipment and stores Vote head.

3. WAY FORWARD

- To sustainably fund and improve secondary education in Kenya, a multifaceted approach is needed:

- Increase Government Allocation: Prioritize education in national budgets with specific increments for secondary schools.
- Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs): Encourage collaboration with private sector and NGOs to build infrastructure, supply learning materials, and support needy students.
- Revise Capitation Grants: Adjust the per-student government funding to reflect inflation and actual school costs.
- Strengthen School Management: Improve financial oversight and accountability mechanisms to ensure efficient use of resources.
- Introduce Innovative Financing Models: Explore education bonds, community-based funding, and ICT-driven crowdfunding solutions.
- Targeted Support for Marginalized Areas: Allocate more resources to arid, semi-arid, and slum regions to bridge the equity gap.

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