

CHALLENGES FACING HEADTEACHERS IN IMPLEMENTING FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION IN SUBA EAST DIVISION, MIGORI DISTRICT, NYANZA PROVINCE OF KENYA

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ABSTRACT This research aimed at investigating the challenges facing headteachers in implementing Free Primary Education (FPE) in Suba East Division, Migori District. The study further sought to investigate on measures that could be employed to overcome these challenges. The research was developed after it was realized that there were complains from the community and other education stakeholders in Suba East Division of Migori District. Their complains centered on ineffectiveness of headteachers during implementation of FPE programmes. In chapter one, introduction, it was noted that education is a human right, therefore primary education should be free and compulsory. Kenya parliament enacted the children's Act 2001 that recognises education as a basic right for all children. In 2003, the government declared Free Primary Education. The aim had been attainment of Universal Primary Education by the year 2005 and Education For All by 2015. These are outstanding educational policies in development plans in Kenya. Chapter two covered literature review with emphasis on FPE policy in Kenya, implementation of FPE from 2003, management and administration of schools, roles/duties/responsibilities of headteachers in primary schools in Kenya, role of the headteachers in supervision of primary education, funding of FPE in Kenya, management of school finance and implementation of FPE, enrolment of FPE, hindrances of FPE implementation in Kenya and efforts to remedy the problematic areas in the implementation of FPE. Research and methodology was covered in chapter three. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and targeted all public primary schools in Suba East division. Questionnaires were used as the instruments of data collection. Headteachers, their deputies and senior teachers were the main respondents to the study. Chapters four and five present data analysis and interpretation. Results were presented in tables, figures and plates. In summary, this study revealed that the main challenges facing headteachers in Suba East Division in implementation of FPE policies were: - inadequate physical facilities, understaffing of teachers and non teaching staff, de-motivation, inadequate teaching and learning materials and dilapidated buildings. Majority of the respondents wanted the government to provide more funds. Apparently some schools were more in need than others. Headteachers have a challenge when it comes to asking parents to support school activities and programmes. The government should invest in programmes that can make stakeholders aware of the FPE policies. Parents have not understood their responsibilities in implementation of FPE programmes. Many parents believe their role is to send children to school. This problems is compounded by low interest in education by parents of this region. The MoEST in collaboration with the TSC should redefine the job description of primary school headteachers because they are overburdened with administrative responsibilities. Accountant clerks or group financial managers should be provided per zone. These officers would advise on financial management in the schools. The grading of headteachers should reflect their responsibilities. There were headteachers with higher academic qualification but in a lower grade than some teachers. Pupils of special needs such as orphans posed a unique challenge headteachers in this division. If an institutionalised lunch is put in place, it is likely to sustain orphans. Alternatively, model boarding primary schools can be constructed in the area to cater for them. This will solve the challenges they pose in their current schools. In conclusion, school administrators in Suba East Division have strived to implement FPE. The above-described challenges can be used by the stakeholders to improve the success of this programme in the Division.