

# Educational Institutional Factors That Influence Implementation Of Free Primary Education In Marigat Sub County, Kenya

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**Abstract:** The aim of this study was to investigate the Educational institutional factors that influence the implementation of Free Primary Education in Marigat Sub County, Kenya. The research question that guided the study was; what are the School institutional factors that influence the implementation of Free Primary Education? The researcher adopted a descriptive survey research design. Data was collected using questionnaires. A pilot study was conducted before the actual administration of the research instrument to test the reliability and validity of the instruments. A reliability coefficient of .5 was obtained from the questionnaires. The population comprised of 80 public primary schools. A total of 66 school principals constituted the sample size. Stratified sampling technique was used to select a representative sample from the population. Data collected was analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques.

The findings indicated that physical and human resources impacted negatively on management of pupil personnel and curriculum and instruction. The study recommended that the government should provide more funds to primary school managers to use for putting up physical facilities such as classrooms, toilets libraries and be able to equip them with relevant facilities. In conclusion, it was established that the understaffing and insufficient physical facilities in form of classes, toilets and space greatly impeded head teachers ability to implement free primary education.

**Keywords:** Free Primary Education, School institutional factors, school Principals, Implementation

## I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Provision of free primary education (FPE) was ranked among the top agenda for the government of Kenya since independence. It was the Kenya African National Union (KANU), the independence political party, manifesto of 1963 that set the pace for the provision of free Primary Education in Kenya. However, this was not realized until 2002 when the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government (2002) came to power. In a move towards the achievement of Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2005 and Education for all (EFA) by 2015, the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government (2002 – 2013) pledged to introduce Free primary education in 2003. The introduction of free primary education was received with mixed reaction across the country. While others hailed the move as long overdue, some citizens were skeptical about its implementation as it would entail huge budgetary allocations which were not feasible to a struggling economy at the time. However, the proposal by the

government to introduce free primary education was a welcomed by many as it was seen as a measure to not only increase access to education by many children but would also give many families the opportunity to emancipate themselves from the vicious circle of poverty, diseases and ignorance.

Free primary education can be traced back to 1948 after the inception of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Education was prioritized as one of the basic human rights and it was agreed to be made accessible to all the people regardless of their abilities, disabilities, race or religion (UNDP report, 2005). The attainment of literacy and provision of Education For All (EFA) as a basic human right has been a key theme throughout the world. This global emphasis on education has been deliberate because studies have shown that uneducated children or adults are a great liability to the society (World Bank 2005). In particular, educated people tend to lead better lives because of health awareness, ability to get more positively engaged in civic activities besides being aware of the possible avenues of improving their lifestyles.

Free primary Education (FPE) has been the Government of Kenya's education objectives since 1963. This is reflected in Seasonal Paper No. 10 of 1965, which advocated for the provision of universal primary education (UPE). For instance, in 1973, the Government of Kenya declared free primary education from standard one to standard four. Despite some challenges, FPE has made tremendous gains relative indirect costs notwithstanding. In 1985, with the help of the donors, cost - sharing was introduced in all the government sectors including education (Kamunge report, 1988).

In light of the above, there was need to establish the principal factors that influence in implementation of free primary education (FPE) with respect to Marigat Sub County, Kenya.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A number of challenges have been documented by UNESCO (2005), as affecting the primary school principals in the implementation of free Primary Education since it's in 2003. This includes children jamming classrooms beyond capacity and a strain on physical facilities such as desks, toilets and overcrowded environment. Although FPE has been hailed by World Bank as a successful, several challenges bedevil the programme, ranging from congestion in classrooms, Insufficient desks, toilets, training of adult pupils, lack of know how in financial management.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

The study was guided by the research questions; what are the School institutional factors that influence the implementation of Free Primary Education

## THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

### SYSTEMS THEORY

The study adopted the systems theory as espoused by Chester Bernard and Ludwig Von Bertalanffy (2007). Systems theory presumes that organizations operate as systems within a supra system. In the case of a school it operates within a broad framework of the Ministry of education, which is governed by the existing political, economic and social regulatory framework. From the foregoing, the institutional and head teachers factors that influence their implementation of Free Primary Education (FPE) is a product of the political decisions made in regard to free Primary Education. Although the Government made a decision to implement Free Primary education, there were institutional factors like number of students, available physical and learning facilities, and the resources that affected the implementation of Free Primary Education.

## III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

Provision of Free Primary Education (FPE) ranked among the top agenda for independent Kenya. It was in the KANU

manifesto of 1963 to provide FPE with the aim of attaining UPE, Republic of Kenya (1964). In a move towards the UPE by 2005 and Education For All (EFA) by 2015, the Kenya government introduced FPE in 2003. According to MOEST (2003), FPE led to abolition of fees and other levies for tuition in primary education. The government gave Kenya shillings 1,020/= per child. Parents were expected to meet examination fees for their children who are candidates, provide school uniforms, meals, transport to and from school, health and boarding facilities.

The government pledged to continue to support parents' effort in managing low cost boarding schools and school feeding programme. Over age children were to be enabled to attend school by establishing one class to serve them and primary schools to enroll all children of school age without discrimination whatsoever.

The government's intervention to provide FPE meant that parents and communities were not to build new schools, but rather improve and refurbish and use the existing facilities. All the above measures were meant to relieve parents of additional costs in meeting their children's primary school education. Many parents saw a chance to take their children to school for "free" education. Pupils' enrolment sharply rose resulting into trained use of resources (Republic of Kenya, 2004). To the parents, primary education meant that there was no other expenditure or cost of educating their children. This was indeed an illusion since they were expected to cater for their children's needs such as uniforms, national examination fee, and transport to and from school MOEST, 2003).

The enactment of the children's Act 2001 has laid a base for introducing FPE; it states that the government and the parents have a responsibility to provide education to child. Every child shall be entitled to free basic education, which shall be compulsory in accordance with article 28 of the United Nations Convention of the rights of the child. According to the children's Act 2001, every child has a right to religious education subject to appropriate parental guidance, should be protected from economic exploitation and or to interfere with the child's education. With introduction of free primary education enrolments in public primary schools increased significantly from 5.9 million in 2002 to 6.9 million in 2003 giving 17 percent increase and representing a gross enrolment rate (GER) of 99 percent (102 percent increase for girls and 97 percent increase for boys). The government provides funds for both the school instructional materials (IM) and the General Purpose Account (GPA) to Procure needs based materials and improve on some infrastructure thereby raising the quality of education. The amount given by the Government is Kenya shillings 1,020/=. That is Kenya shillings 650/- for instructional materials and Kenya shillings 370/- for General-purpose account.

In spite of the government financial assistance, primary education continues to experience a number of challenges such as overcrowding facilities, overcrowding in schools especially those in urban slums, arid and semi - arid lands (ASAL) and pockets of poverty, high pupil teacher ratios high cost of special equipment for children with special needs, diminishes support by communities., gender and regional disparities increased orphan; in and out of school as result of HIV/AIDS. Addition most parents are under the impression

that it is the government exclusive responsibility to provide all the necessary resources to support the primary education. This misunderstanding needs to be addressed (UNDP report 2005).

#### PHYSICAL FACILITY

Mbiti (1974) argue that the head teachers should pay attention to such details as managing and maintaining school building grounds, equipment and facilities. The same views are held by Onyango (2001). Okumbe (2001) reiterated that attractive facilities portray a positive image on the part of the head teacher and therefore is concerned with the diligent sitting of the school plant, maintenance and repair; school cleanliness, safety precaution and ensuring the equipment and furniture are available in the school.

#### FINANCE MANAGEMENT

Effective management of financial resources is an important task for the school principals. Without adequate financial resources, institution cannot carry out their defined tasks effectively. Money must be available to run the different departments of the school. The head teacher in managing school finance is concerned with understanding the sources of revenues for the school, preparation of the school budget, monitoring expenditure, management of services of non-certified personnel and staff development, Baraza (2007).

According to Olembo, Wanga and Karagu (1992) head teachers are vested with the responsibilities of managing and controlling finance. As a financial controller, the head teachers must ensure proper budgeting and accounting is done with the school bursar and accounts clerk. He is accountable for all the expenditure and must ensure that books of accounts are kept up to date and be audited professionally.

### IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted a descriptive survey research design. According to Borg and Gall (1989), descriptive survey attempts to describe characteristics of subjects, phenomena, opinions, and attitudes to the research. It also aims at obtaining information from a selected population out of which the researcher will present the findings as being representatives of the whole (Bell, 1993).

The research study was conducted in Marigat Sub County, Kenya. The sub county has 80 public primary schools. With such large area and number of schools to be covered, the researcher selected 66 primary schools through stratifying the zones and selected 66 school principals to constitute the sample size.

Zones	Number Of Head Teachers
Zone A	22
Zone B	19
Zone C	10
Zone D	29
Total	80

Table 1: Primary Schools in Marigat Sub County per zone

#### SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

Stratified sampling techniques were used to select a representative sample from the population. The following mathematical formulae developed by Taro Yamane (1970) were used.  $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$  where  $n$  = total sample,  $N$  = Total population,  $e$  = desired margin error i.e 0.05. Therefore,  $n = \frac{80}{1 + 80(0.05)^2} = 66$  The sample size for this research therefore was sixty six head teachers from public primary schools in Marigat District. The researcher sampled the schools as shown below.

zones	No of schools	Sampled schools	No of principals
A	22	18	18
B	19	16	16
C	10	8	8
D	29	24	24
Total	80	66	66

Table 2: The population of schools sampled

In order to arrive at the unbiased sample size of 66 head teachers, simple random sampling procedures was used.. The random sampling ensured that in each successful drawing each of the remaining populations had the same chance of being selected.

#### RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The researcher collected the data using questionnaires which he developed. The questionnaires had questions only addressed to the following areas.

- ✓ The head teachers' demographic information on their preparedness for the implementation of free Primary Education (FPE). A five point Linker scale indicating most serious, serious, moderate, least serious and not serious ratings was used in determining the institutional and head teacher's factors that influence the implementation of free primary education (FPE).

#### VALIDITY OF THE INSTRUMENTS

The researcher conducted a pilot study before the actual administration of the instrument. This was done in order to test the reliability and validity of the instruments. Mulusa (1990) states that the aim of pilot study is to determine the clarity of the wordings of the questions in the instruments so that items that fail to meet the anticipated data could be discarded or modified.

#### DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The researcher sought permission from the National council for science and Technology in order to collect data from the field. The researcher visited the sample schools in order to administer the questionnaires. After introducing himself to the head teachers of the sampled schools, the researcher gave the introduction letter to individual head teachers (respondents) to respond to the questions in the questionnaires.

## V. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The most serious challenge captured by the researcher in this study was under staffing of the schools. The study found out that the most serious factor that influences the curriculum and institution was inadequacy of teaching staff as indicated by twenty percent of the respondents. In 1998 the government frozen teachers employment arguing that there were already too many teachers in the field As a result, understaffed schools resort to employ teachers in order to meet their staffing needs. This factor was also rated as a serious problem as indicated by thirteen point three of those who responded as a serious challenge. This is shown in the Table 3 below.

Challenges	Most serious No.	Frequency %	Serious	Frequency %
Sufficiency of teaching staff	12	20	8	13.33
Sharing of duties and responsibilities	4	6.66	14	23.33
Monitoring and evaluation of curricular and instruction	6	10	12	20
Timely preparation of time table	1	1.66	3	5
Checking and marking pupils' work	4	6.66	5	8.33
Adequacy of pupils' stationery	5	10	6	10
Adequacy of wall charts and maps	6	10	4	6.66

Table 3: Curriculum and instruction

Monitoring and evaluation of curriculum was also rated as the most serious challenge as shown by ten percent of the respondents. This was as a result of efficient quality assurance officers and also as a result of over enrolment hence a - overload to the school managers. Ten percent of the respondents rated adequacy of wall maps as a most serious factor that influence the implementation of free primary education while the same percentage also reported as the most serious challenge. Adequacy of pupils' pens and pencils was also rated as most serious challenge as indicated by ten percent.

Checking and marking pupils work was also reported as a most serious challenge as indicated by 6.6 and 8.3 percent respectively. Three point three percent rated as most serious factor influencing the implementation of free primary education while the same percentage also reported as serious challenge,

Others such as preparation of time tables was rated the least serious challenge, this is due to the fact that there was understaffing in the schools and that each teacher was

allocated as many as forty lesson per week of which it is not workable.

	Most serious Frequency	%	Serious Frequency	%
Pupils' enrolment	4	6.33	8	13.33
Discipline of pupils	4	6.66	4	6.66
Provision of lunch	6	10	4	6.66
Involvement in choosing prefects	10	6.66	10	16.66
Pupils teacher ratio	4	6.66	10	16.66
Promotion of teachers	15	25	7	13.33
Teachers employment	15	25	8	13.33

Table 4: other factors

These findings indicate that pupils' enrolment was the most serious factors that influence the implementation of free primary Education (FPE). This is due to the fact that there was a sharp Pupils population increase as compared to physical and human resource hence pupil enrolment was a serious challenge. Discipline of the students was reported to be a most serious challenge in the schools as indicated by 6.6 percent of the respondents. This may be due to the fact that the Government Acted upon the children's Act and subsequently banning of the use of corporal punishment. Provision of lunch in schools was also rated as most serious and serious challenge. Other serious challenges noted were involvement of pupils in choosing prefects, Pupil teacher ratio and promotion of teachers.

On oral discussion with some of head teachers they revealed that most teachers retire with the same grade they were employed with unless those who decide to go for further studies. Teachers employment was also rated as a most serious factor as indicated by twenty five percent of the respondents as most serious challenge and thirteen point three as a serious challenge this is due to the fact that teachers employed was freed since 1997 and that the government is only employing teachers to replace those who retire, quite the profession or those who leave due to attrition. An attempt was also done to assess the enrolment of the pupils from 2001 to 2009 as shown in table 5.

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
2001	2933	2558	6491
2002	4035	3830	7865
2003	4419	4604	9023
2004	5379	5278	10657
2005	5464	5644	1108
2006	5636	6010	11646
2007	6302	6765	13067
2008	6939	6818	13757
2009	8215	7360	15575
Total	49322	48867	99189
Year	Boys	Girls	TOTAL

Table 5: Indicate the pupils enrolment for 2001-2009

The researcher noted a sharp increase of the pupils' population from the year 2001 to 2009 hence an impact on staffing. For instance, most of the respondents indicated that there is an acute shortage of teachers in most of the schools. This is due to the fact that teachers' employment was frozen since 1997 and the government is only employing teachers to replace those who retire quit the profession or those who leave due to attrition.

Another challenge in the management of pupil personnel was with regard to offering an integrated curriculum for children with special needs. The study sought to establish factors that influence implementation of free primary education in the management of pupil and staff personnel. One of the goals of free primary education was to achieve universal primary education (UPE) by 2005 and Education for all by 2015.

In order to achieve this goal, the Kenya government introduced free primary education to enhance equal access of education for all children with special needs without discrimination (MOE 2003), (Children Act 2001). The study findings revealed the various challenges that head teachers faced in offering an integrated curriculum for children with special needs. The respondents cited lack of trained teachers to cater for curriculum needs of children with special needs, lack of equipment and learning and other facilities such as resource rooms was also mentioned.

Other challenges that were given are reluctance of parents to identify children with special needs on admission and children themselves are reluctant to be identified. This is because; both parents and children fear that any such identification may lead to victimization by teachers or isolation by the peers.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The study sought to establish institutional and head teachers' factors that influenced implementation of Free Primary Education. It was established that understaffing and insufficient physical facilities in form of classes, toilets and space greatly impeded head teachers' ability to implement Free Primary Education.

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