

ABSTRACT

Kenya government has made tremendous gains in increasing female participation in education since 1960's. These gains have been achieved through measures such as harambee's, free primary and secondary education by expanding access and cost of education. Despite these efforts the gains have not been matched by gains in girls' academic performance nor retention. The concern of this study is that whereas government's heavy investment in education sector has realized high initial enrolment in secondary schools, girls' academic performance has remained low. Consequently, the low academic performance by girls in Kenya National Examinations is undermining the empowerment pace of female gender. The focus of this study was to establish the role of selected socio economic factors play in influencing academic performance among girls in public mixed secondary schools in Ainamoi Division, Kericho County. The study used survey research design. The accessible population was 924 form three girls, 260 teachers, 14 principals, and 49 teacher counselors from the fourteen secondary schools in the division. A sample comprising of 6 principals, 60 teachers, 11 teacher counselors and 218 girls was selected using simple random sampling technique. The sample was used to investigate the influence of selected socio economic factors on academic performance among girls in public mixed secondary schools. The research instruments were four sets of questionnaires, which were administered to the respondents. The instruments were piloted in two schools in Kipkelion Division and its reliability tested using Cronbach Alpha formula. The data collected was subjected to qualitative analysis with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. Frequency distribution tables and percentages were used to present data. The findings showed that girls' academic performance in the examination has been declining due to social economic factors that cut across the family environment, school and individual characteristics. The study showed that the secondary school girls are distracted by issues encountered from their families, the society they belong and the learning institutions they attend. The findings call for a lot of effort from the girls with the help of guidance and counseling in the schools to improve on their academic performance with the aim of passing their national examinations. The study also recommends that government should equip all secondary schools to give equal chances for females and males in order to address the imbalances that have existed in academic performance over the years. An improvement in academic performance among girls will have a positive contribution to the affirmative action

era of addressing imbalances between boys and girls that have long existed in our society due to history, traditions and customs.