

ABSTRACT

The Subsidized Secondary Education (SSE) was introduced in 2008 as part of Kenya's effort to attain Education for All (EFA) by 2015 as indicated in the Sessional Paper no. 1 of 2005. The Subsidized Secondary Education was implemented in February, 2008 by the Coalition Government to reduce the cost of education for parents, increase access to education, increase academic performance, increase class attendance and increase transition rates from primary to secondary school in line with the United Nations aim to achieve Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. However, the effect of the government subsidizing secondary education on enrollment, retention and quality of education has never been documented in Rongai Sub-County, Nakuru County. Therefore, this study sought to bridge the gap by determining the effect of subsidized secondary education on enrollment, retention and quality of education in Rongai Sub-County, Nakuru County. This study was guided by classical liberal theory of equal opportunity. The study used Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods research design. This involved collecting both qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously. The study population involved 39 principals each representing their school, 2 teachers from each of the 39 public secondary schools as well as the education officer of Rongai Sub-County. Purposive sampling was used to select two teachers from each school and the principal of each school in Rongai Sub-County. Data were collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. To ensure validity of the instruments, the research instruments were given to the research supervisors for expert judgement to cross check and evaluate content validity. Piloting of questionnaires was done in two schools from Nakuru Town West Sub-County. Cronbach's alpha was used to test reliability of the questionnaires that were used in the study and a correlation coefficient 0.823 obtained thus was considered acceptable. Data entry was conducted using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency tables and percentages were also used. Quantitative data obtained were then analyzed using paired sample t-test. Hypotheses were tested at 5% level of significance while qualitative data obtained by interview were analyzed through thematic approach. The results obtained from public secondary schools in Rongai Sub-County revealed that there was a statistically significant effect of SSE on student enrollment rates in public secondary schools in Rongai Sub-County. There also appeared to be no statistically significant effect of SSE on student retention rates in public secondary schools in Rongai Sub-County. It also came out that there are a number of socio cultural factors that affect the enrolment and retention of students and quality of education after the introduction of SSE policy. The findings from this study inform the National and County government of Nakuru and Kenya at large, on the need to; employ more teachers to reduce the workload and ease the burden on parents paying for B.O.G teachers, formulate policies that will require schools to come up with alternative sources of financing secondary education in order to break the over-dependence on Subsidized Secondary funding that does not seem to be sustainable from the findings of the study and need to put in place mechanisms to ensure that each school is given a condition of raising a minimum threshold of income for financing secondary education, before it qualifies for the free day secondary funding among others.

Keywords

Subsidized secondary education policy