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An analysis of policy guidelines and predominant issues facing teacher supply and demand in old kajiado district in Kenya

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Old Kajiado District in Kenya.

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ABSTRACT

The issue of teacher supply and demand amidst the call to meet Universal Primary Education (UPE) remains one of the critical issues facing developing countries today. The problem is compounded by a number of factors that vary from region to region. The main purpose of this study was to examine the factors influencing teacher supply and demand in Old Kajiado District in Kenya. The study employed survey research design. Stratified simple random sampling procedure was used to arrive at forty two (42) schools and head teachers respectively, one hundred and seventy one (171) teachers and nine (9) staffing officers. Questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect data. Data were analysed with the help of SPSS version 16.5 for windows. The study revealed that there a number of key factors that influenced teacher supply and demand in the District. These included policy related issues on staffing, deployment and transfers. Other particular issues were hardships in terms of harsh climatic conditions, poor infrastructure, poor teacher facilities and cultural related issues like perception of women professionals. The study suggests participatory approach in addressing the problem of teacher supply and demand which may differ from one place to another.

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Introduction

Background of the Study

The number of primary school teachers needed to maintain the existing numbers and to meet Universal Primary Education (UPE) varies from region to region. According to a report by UIS (2006), in Sub-Saharan Africa 1.6 million additional primary school teachers are required. Chad for instance, will need almost four times as many primary teachers in 2015, from 16,000 to 61,000. This implies that the country will need to expand its current teaching force by almost 13% per year, which is the highest rate in the world. There are other countries as noted in the report that stand in dire need of teachers. For instance, countries like Burkina Faso, Congo and Niger, Ethiopia will need a high number of teachers to reach universal primary education (UPE).

According to the report, other regions also have critical challenges: 450,000 new teachers are required across the Arab States, and an additional 325,000 teachers in South and East Asia, primarily in Afghanistan. Table 1.1 shows the primary teacher stocks, flows and additional teachers needed to reach UPE by 2015 (in thousands).

Teacher shortages in Kenya seem to be associated with a set of factors that reduce supply and increase demand. The most commonly cited factors include decline of the overall attractiveness of the teaching career, relative to other careers. This decline is closely associated with the teacher's salaries, which have remained low, relative to those of other occupation (Santiago, 2002). Another factor explaining the development of teacher shortages is associated with increased retirement tales. Studies have shown that many countries have aged and aging teaching force (Eurydice, 2002). The situation is similar in Kenya where teacher recruitment has been minimal despite the increase in supply of teacher graduating from teacher training

colleges and the ever-spiraling need for primary teachers occasioned by increasing enrolment levels.

One of the major challenges facing the education system in Kenya is the need for more teachers against a constrained budget. Currently, the teacher wage bill absorbs eighty four per cent of the MOEST budget (MOEST, 2005). This has led to calls for containment or reduction of the wage bill so that savings can be made and used in funding other essential educational inputs. This factor led to the freeze of employment of teachers by the TSC between 1998 and 2000. Prior to 1998 the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) had been recruiting teachers from colleges and posting them to various schools in the country. However the government changed this practice of automatic recruitment of all teachers with effect from 1st July 1998. This was done in line with the civil service reform programme, which aimed at staff reduction in the civil and the teaching services (GoK, 1999). From 2001 the government implemented change in the teacher recruitment policy, where teachers in primary schools are recruited on the basis of vacancies in various primary schools and the ability of the Government to pay. The current staffing norm in primary schools in Kenya was brought about by a major policy reform implemented in 1984 leading to the use of Curriculum Based Establishment (CBE), which specified a minimum teaching load of 40 lessons per week. Based on the current norm, there is an estimated teacher shortage of about 32,568 teachers (MOEST, 2006) in primary schools in Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

Besides the influence of government factor in the teacher supply and demand, the rationale behind taking this study in Kajiado County was based on its very geographical location. The County is primarily classified as semi-arid. It experiences

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constant droughts, where rainfall is typical of the semi-arid areas and ranges between 450-800 mm with an average of 600 mm (EWEMP, 2001). Further, poor transport network adds to the hardships that those working in the County may encounter. The County lacks access roads, although tracks are found in most parts of the county that are used to carry construction materials. Animals like donkeys and other means like bicycles are also used for transport (Leyland, 1994). Thus, it may prove rather hard for any one working and living in the area. This may contribute largely to one's willingness to work and live in the District.

The issue of teacher supply and demand goes beyond the District; it is a global issue, far much so in developing countries. It is one area that has attracted a number of studies. However, despite the huge body of literature, there are still gaps in terms of policy guidelines and other underlying factors that are peculiar to each location. Thus, this study attempted to examine the policy guidelines and predominant issues facing the teacher supply and demand in Old Kajiado District in Kenya.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following Research Questions:

- i) How do teachers and local school administrators perceive various policy guidelines on teacher supply and demand?
- ii) What are the predominant issues facing teacher supply and demand in the Old Kajiado District?

Methodology

The study employed survey research design since it would enable to collect data from a large sample in the vast Old Kajiado District. In this study, the target population included all the 228 public primary schools and head teachers respectively along with 1343 Teachers in the District. The study also targeted all the 9 staffing officers in the District.

Stratified random sampling procedure was used to sample the schools. The schools were clustered into seven (7) divisions. From each of the division, six (6) schools were selected giving a total of 42 public primary schools. Simple random sampling procedure was used to select a representative sample of teachers from each of the sampled schools from the seven (7) divisions in the District. From the 42 schools, 192 teachers were selected with one hundred and seventy one (171) responding to the questionnaires. All the Head Teachers from the selected schools took part in the study. Deputy Head teacher were involved in the study in situation where the head teacher was not available. All the nine (9) staffing officers in the Old Kajiado District participated in the study.

Questionnaire and interview guides were used to collect data. The questionnaires were used since that are held to be straightforward, reach many respondents and are less time consuming for both the researcher and the participants. Further they are very cost effective as compared to face-to-face interviews. Interview method was used to collect data from the head teachers and staffing officers. Ethical considerations were made by explaining the purpose of the study assuring the participants of confidentiality of the information provided. In order to protect the privacy of the participants, confidentiality was guaranteed by assuring them that the information provided would only be used for academic purpose.

Data gathered from the respondents was organized, coded and analyzed with the help of statistical packages for social science (SPSS) program. Both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. Descriptive statistics made use of the frequencies and percentages of each

response. Inferential statistics on the other hand was used to test hypotheses.

Results

The results of the study are presented according to the key themes derived from the objectives except the first part which presents the background characteristics. The themes include the formulation and implementation of policy guidelines on teacher supply and demand and the challenges facing the issue of teacher supply and demand.

Background Characteristics

The majority of the teachers who took part in the study [93 (54%)] were male while the female respondents were 78 (46%). Many of the teachers who participated in the study [81 (47.4%)] belonged to age bracket of 31-40, and slightly less than half [49 (28.7%)] belonged to age bracket of 21-30, while 34 (19.9%) belonged to age bracket of 41-50. There were 6 (3.5%) who were above 50 years and only 1(0.6%) below 20 years. Married teachers were 132 (72.2%) while 35 (20.5%) were single. There were 2 (1.2%) separated while only 1 (0.6%) was widowed and religious.

The majority of them [89 (52%)] had acquired P1; 23 (13.5%) had diploma(s); 22 (12.9%) had acquired P2; 16 (9.4%) were approved; 9 (5.3%) had a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree or its equivalent; 6 (3.5%) had Early Childhood Development diploma; 5 (2.9 %) had other qualifications, while only 1 had a Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree or its equivalent. In terms of experience, the majority of the teachers [76 (44.4%)] had taught for 10 years and above. This shows that they had enough experience in the teaching profession.

The majority of the head teachers 34 (89%) on the other hand, were male while only 4 (11%) were females. Almost all [36 (94.7%)] of them were married. Only two were not married i.e. one single (never married) and the other one was separated. The two main age sets were those aged between 31-40 years and 41-50 years. In regard to their level of education, half of them [19 (50%)] had acquired P1; 10 (26.3%) were approved teachers; 6 (15.8%) had a diploma and only 3 (7.9%) had B.Ed. or its equivalent. Almost a third of them [11 (28.9%)] had served for a period of between 1 and 3 years. The rest had served for 4 years and above, an indication of good teaching experience.

There were six staffing officers: five (5) were male and only one (1) was a female. In regard to their professional qualification, all of them were approved teachers which means that all of them had attained merit promotions rather than direct degree qualifications from universities. In terms of experience, two had worked as AEO for a period of 1 year and the other four had worked for 20 years.

Policy Guidelines Overview and Teacher Supply and Demand

Most of the teachers are not aware about the policy guidelines regarding teacher demand and supply. Slightly more than half of them (87, 50.2%) indicated that they were not aware of the guidelines, 106 (62%) not aware of deployment and 92 (53.8) were not aware of retention policies.

Majority of teachers (62%) indicated that teacher policies are faced with the limitation of discrimination, thus they are not all inclusive.

Most of the teachers in the study felt that the transfer policy is was not fair. This was attributed to its guidelines. For instance, the guideline that newly recruited teachers should not be transferred before 5 years.

Majority of the teachers in the indicated that there was no

sound teacher recruitment policy. Slightly over a third of head teachers 13 (34.2%) indicated that recruitment from the District failed to ensure equity in teacher distribution.

Most of teachers indicated that new teachers are not deployed where there is teacher shortage. This could be due to recruitment policy guideline which only replaces teachers based on the need and not shortage as such.

The study further revealed that the staffing officers are not involved in policy formulation. Thus, implementation becomes rather tricky. They also indicated that they lacked mechanism to enforce the implementation of teacher policies. One of them explained that policies are in place, but there are no sound mechanisms to implement them.

Predominant Issues Facing Teacher Supply and Demand

Most of the head teachers (13) indicated that they were faced with inadequate personnel, eleven (11) pointed towards poor policies, for instance deployment and transfers. Other particular challenges included heavy workload, gender inequality, and uncooperative heads of education, parental negligence of their duties and delay of funds. The main challenge that emerged were related to policies: staffing / recruitment policies, deployment and transfers policies among others. The challenge of gender inequality also emerged.

Cultural Barriers also emerged as key factors that interfered with the availability of teachers in the District. These included forced early marriages, moranism and nomadism, female genital mutilation. Regarding how a career woman is looked at by the community in the District, there were mixed reactions from the head teachers. Some (8) head teachers indicated that women in the teaching profession, more especially those holding administrative post were looked at as inferior to men. They went further to indicate that women are considered to be mainly home care takers and subordinate to men.

When the head teachers were asked to cite other factors that they thought contributed to teacher shortages in the District, various factors emerged as the key ones: external transfers, that is teachers asking for transfers to teach in other areas outside the District especially when those who get out of the District are not immediately replaced, poor deployment of teachers; hardships in terms of harsh climatic conditions or droughts, poor infrastructure and teacher facilities such as housing, water and electricity.

Discussion

The study revealed that there deep policy issues on the question of teacher supply and demand. Majority of the respondents (teachers, head teachers and staffing officers) had issues with the teacher recruitment, deployment, retention and transfers guidelines. This is consistent with what Kimani (1998) noted that there is a policy gap in regard to teacher employment in Kenya. A large number of teachers are trained every year yet no proper employment policy is put in place. Although the training of teachers is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (MoE), their employment is the responsibility of TSC. Therefore these two institutions should co-operate in the training and employment of teachers. Unfortunately, it is hardly possible to say that there is a stable employment policy for teaching candidates in Kenya. While employment of teachers is as important as their training, current employment policy by the TSC is far from satisfying the expectations of the teaching candidates and the current conditions of the country.

The study showed that there are a number of challenging facing the issue of teacher demand and supply. The major

challenge is government oriented. Ensuring an adequate supply of qualified teachers requires monetary resources that many governments in developing countries do not presently have and they are unlikely to get in the near future. Thus achieving the equilibrium of teacher supply and demand may be but a dream. Countries like Kenya therefore will need to make better and more creative use of the resources that are already available to meet the rising demand of education.

According to the study, teacher supply and demand is also influenced by other factors. In Kajiado, hardship factor has its role in influencing the teacher supply and demand curve. A number of teachers, especially the female teachers and the sick may find it hard to work in the District. Other factors include gender issues in education, where female teachers are few in administration jobs. In this study, among the staffing officers, only one (1) was a female. Female teachers and head teachers are critical to the expansion and improvement of education systems. Female teachers are important in encouraging the access and retention of female learners. Females in leadership positions within schools provide good role models for female students and encourage female student retention (Mulkeen, Chapman, DeJaeghere and Leu, 2007).

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

The following conclusions were arrived at:

Lack of awareness, consultation and involvement at high level in policy formulation among the key stakeholders like teachers could be due to the failure from the part of the school administration, government or even playing of ignorance among the teachers. Some of the limitations facing teacher policies may be attributed to the lack of involvement of teachers and other key players in the formulation and implementation process.

The problem of teacher supply and demand in the Old Kajiado District can not be attributed to poor policy formulation and implementation. There are other underlying factors like harsh climatic conditions,

Addressing the challenges facing the issue of teacher supply and demand requires participatory approach. Over-reliance on the intervention of government may not be the answer to the problem. Wider consultation and involvement is sure tool towards addressing the issue of teacher supply and demand, not only in Kajiado but also in the country.

Recommendations

The following recommendations directed to various stakeholders in education: policy makers, school administrators, teachers and community are offered for consideration:

- i) That the government, though the MOE assign a high priority to teacher education in all of its college funding programs,
- ii) That the Ministry of Education, teachers, education institutions, and school boards develop sound policy guidelines on recruitment, financial support, administrations and candidate academic support programs to address the issue of the gender imbalance in school administration,
- iii) That the Ministry of Education provide funding support to school boards to enable incentives and opportunities to be established to encourage appropriate redeployment of teachers into areas of critical need where shortage exists. That this funding include not only financial incentives to the teachers choosing to undertake such careers shift but also curricular support and other resources to ensure effective teaching in the new area,

iv) Although teachers universally request higher salaries, evidence suggests that increased salaries alone would be unlikely to improve teacher supply and demand. Increase salaries only in special circumstances, such as through the provision of bonuses for service in rural areas or hardship areas. Government should also consider developing a career structure where advancement and salary are dependent on good quality of performance,

v) Community participation and decentralization. Although the TSC has decentralized the teachers' issues to districts, there is a lot of influence from the Headquarters. Community participation in teacher management is essential, but needs to be carefully delimited. The capacity of parents and other local stakeholders to take responsibility for school management needs to be considerably strengthened.

Suggestion for Further Research

The study suggests the following for further investigation

a) Strategies towards addressing the issue of teacher supply and demand in Kenya

b) An investigation into the role of local international community in addressing the issue of teacher supply and demand in developing countries.

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Table 1: Primary teacher stocks, flows and additional teachers needed to reach UPE by 2015

Country/ territory	Primary teacher stocks 2004	Primary teacher flows 2004-2015 2015	Difference	Teachers to fill vacancies due to attrition	Total number of teachers needed for UPE
Kenya	150	191	41.6	120.1	161.7
Burundi	19	46	27	20.9	47.9
Congo	7	26	19.3	9.9	29.2
Eritrea	8	22	13.7	9.4	23.1
Ethiopia	111	263	152.5	116.4	268.9
Botswana	13	11	2.0	6.4	8.4
Chad	16	61	45.0	22.8	67.8
Bukina Faso	23	77	53.1	30.4	83.5
Cameroon	55	78	22.7	46.4	69.1