

Full Length Research Paper

Coping with quality assurance challenges faced by secondary schools' headteachers in Gucha district, Kenya

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Since independence, the Kenyan government has demonstrated its commitment to the provision of quality secondary school education through allocation of financial resources, provision of trained teachers and establishment of quality assurance department. However, despite the substantial allocation of resources, secondary schools still face major challenges. Some of these challenges are: financial constraints, shortage of teachers, lack of basic facilities, community interferences and irregular visits by quality assurance officers. The purpose of the current study was to examine ways on how head teachers can cope with these challenges in order to provide quality education. The study also investigated possible opportunities at the disposal of head-teachers which could be utilized for the improvement of quality education. The research design used was descriptive survey. The study population consisted of 120 public secondary schools with a total of 120 head-teachers and 120 curriculum masters. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select a sample of the study, whereby five girls' and four boys' schools were selected through saturated sampling technique and 37 co-educational schools were selected by using simple random sampling. Questionnaire, interview schedule and observations were used to obtain data. The findings of the study showed that head teachers employed untrained teachers to cover up for teachers' shortages, devised school income generating projects to improve on financial problems and improvised science facilities. The researchers concluded that ways of coping with the challenges faced by head-teachers were inadequate and insufficient for provision of quality education. The researchers recommended that school head-teachers should step-up/ improve fee collection so that they do not involve themselves in borrowing of finance and purchasing items on credit. They should also provide adequate and comprehensive information to financial sources, for example constituency development fund (CDF) and government bursaries so that the needy cases are adequately covered. Given the expansive and productive land in most schools, the study recommends that head-teachers should embark on horticultural farming where fast maturing farm products are produced to generate cumulatively more money and ensure self-sustenance of the schools in farm produce needs. Head-teachers needed support in form of finance, equipment, and facilities from the government and other stakeholders in order to improve the quality of education in their schools.

Key words: Quality education, challenges, opportunities, head-teachers, coping with, remedial teaching.

INTRODUCTION

Low quality of schools is widely recognized as a serious problem in the developing countries. There are substan-

tial evidence of decline in quality of education in many developing countries even at a time when donor assistance has been directed towards the improvement of education (Psacharopolous and Woodhall, 1985; Fuller, 1986; Carrier, 1990). Atkinson (1987) observes that the problem of poor performance in examinations is costly

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