

**INFLUENCE ECONOMIC CHALLENGES FACED BY THE BOY-CHILD IN  
SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN SAMETA SUB-COUNTY, KISII COUNTY,  
KENYA**

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**Abstract**

Recently, the boy child has been under several problems which mainly are as a result of the behaviours and traditions in the society. Here has been an extensive and broadening problem and numerous challenges facing the boy child in secondary schools in Kenya. According to the United Nations Organization's 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights, education is a basic right to all individuals who fall within member countries. However, there has been a lot of focus on girl child leading to marginalization of boy child. This is equally the case in the study area. The purpose of the study was to assess the economic challenges faced by the boy-child in secondary school education in Sameta Sub-County, Kisii County, Kenya. The study was based on A cross-sectional exploratory study design using qualitative data collection methods was used. Questionnaires were used as main methods. Data was analyzed by use of both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study established that economic challenges negatively and significantly influence access to education by the boy child. The study recommends that; the parents, the community, the government and other civil organization should not Marginalize and criminate boy child but consider them for financial support so as to enable them access education.

**Keywords:** *Economic Challenges, Boy-Child, Secondary Education*

**INTRODUCTION**

According to the United Nations Organization's 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights, education is a basic right to all individuals who fall within member countries. Not forgetting, Kenya is a party to the same, hence, all citizens are entitled to the education human right irrespective of their family background, age, sex, or ethnicity courtesy of the declaration. Additionally, Kenya is equally a signatory and close contributor to the success of the international protocol that was responsible for the establishment of Education for all (EFA) initiative in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990. It is equally worth amplifying that Kenya is also a signatory and part of the 2000 World Education Forum (WEF), an initiative that was implemented in Senegal to ensure that education is fostered between both the girl-child and boy-

child. Education is a fundamental entity as much as the development of Kenya's welfare is concerned. It empowers individuals and offers a nation the strength it requires to move forward. Additionally, education is a powerful and a unique equalizer, aiding many to get out of the poverty disease. In relation to the same, some of the government's eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) include education, specifically, universal primary completion as well as gender parity in both secondary and primary schools across the country. To add on, education has a direct, noble, and proven induction on a range of goals associated with child and reproductive health as well as environmental sustainability. As such, it is worth amplifying that education fosters national productivity, economic growth and empowerment, and values of social cohesion and democracy (Uger, (2007).

Uger, (2007) further argues that in Kenya, the boy-child faces many threats as he is abandoned and many of the rarely successfully complete their secondary school education. The situation is more worrying as (Uger, 2007) points out that some of those who manage completing their secondary schooling barely joining tertiary learning institutions due to financial, social, and political challenges, hence end up being wastes in the society. Even in the case of school dropout, the rate at which boys drop out of school is much higher as opposed to that of their female counterparts. The issue further escalates to street children in the country. A research conducted by (Tumwebaze, 2011) indicates that in every five street children out there, four of them are male. Robbery and crime is also an escalating factor that is affecting boy child education in secondary schools as the boys begin feeling that they should earn more income as opposed to when they complete their studies and secure themselves employment opportunities. According to Sameta Location area chief, the boys are at times forced and lured to join the criminal sphere as a result of being orphaned as well as being coerced into joining by their elder brothers as they are already established in the illegal gangs. These boys at last end up in dropping out of school in order to practise their new masters, hence losing their brilliant chances of attaining a good education and life later in life.

Recent statistics released by Tumwebaze (2011) depict that a range of public and private organizations currently champion for the girl-child's education while leaving the boy-child struggling with various difficulties and challenges in regard to accessing and completing secondary school education. As such, there is an urgent need to investigate and emulate the problems faced by the boy-child in regard with accessing secondary school education with a view of establishing a long-term solution.

It is noted that, some of the challenges affecting the boy-child education in secondary schools in Sameta Sub-County include but are not limited to robbery and crime, drug abuse, illiteracy, alcoholism, poverty and child labour, rape and defilement, stigmatization, and lack of social amenities. As stipulated in the 2009 Great Britain Parliament Report, drug abuse has been extensively practised due to the progressively increasing need to achieve supplementing and meeting family income. Ideally, Sameta Sub-County and Kisii County as a whole has often been termed as one of the regions which extensively practise local brewing and consumption of liquor for a very long period of time. This is irrespective of the continued efforts by the government through local administration to ensure that the latter is washed away for a future promising society. (Gachuhi, 1999) indicates that boys as young as eight years old associate themselves with drug abuse in the Sub-County with the worst happening among boys in secondary schools, hence making it difficult for them to either complete their secondary school education or to complete with flying colours. Apart from alcohol, bhang and Miraa are some of the most abused

drugs in the region. Further, the situation is worse as those who fell stressed and struggling with life have equally resolute in using the drugs in question to forget or slow the bitterness of life frustrations. With such drugs impeding and intoxicating their judgement, secondary school boys lose focus on the essence of going to school and end up becoming high school dropouts.

### **Problem Statement**

According to the United Nations Organization's 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights, education is a basic right to all individuals who fall within member countries. Not forgetting, Kenya is a party to the same, hence, all citizens are entitled to the education human right irrespective of their family background, age, sex, or ethnicity courtesy of the declaration. Additionally, Kenya is equally a signatory and close contributor to the success of the international protocol that was responsible for the establishment of Education for All (EFA) initiative in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990. However, there has been a lot of focus on girl child leading to marginalization of boy child. This is equally the case in the study area. Previous research conducted by Oxfam concentrated more on investigating the problems or challenges surrounding the girl-child's education hence alienating the challenges facing the boy-child's secondary school education. Additionally, Guchuhi (1999) together with Tumwebaze (2011)'s researched shed light that there are immense challenges facing the education sector in Kenya. However, much of their research is based on informal settlements hence creating a dearth of information in the rural areas. As a result, it was considered essential in this study to evaluate and emulate the shortcomings that hinder full realization of secondary education goals more so among the rural setting around Sameta Sub-County especially among boys which is the focal point of this study. In relation to this, the study will be guided by the following queries in the process of research:

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Aspects of the family context are important determinants of secondary school enrollment. Two key factors are parents' socioeconomic status and youth bonds or relationships to their parents. Consistent with human capital theories of family investment, youth from more advantaged families aspire to and attain higher levels of education (Becker & Tomes, 1979, 1986; Ma & Klinger, 2000; Mayer, 2001; Sewell, Haller, & Ohlendorf, 1970). Single parents make these same investments in youth education when they have high levels of educational attainment, occupational status, and income (Biblarz & Raftery, 1999; Bogguss, 1998). Higher levels of parental income in particular are strongly associated with boys secondary school attainment (Blanden & Gregg, 2004), and higher levels of parental education are also related to youth college attendance (Chenoweth & Galliher, 2004).

The relationship between the parent and child may mediate the relationship between parent's income and adolescent schooling. Also, the parent/adolescent relationship may have a direct effect on adolescent college enrollment. Having a bond with or an attachment to parents is important to development across the life span (Ainsworth, 1989; Rossi & Rossi, 1990), and affective bonds with parents continue to be important through adolescence (Greenberg, Siegel, & Leitch, 1983). Positive bonds or attachment to parents in adolescence include characteristics that allow for developing autonomy such as parents that accept their children's decisions and who will provide advice and support in the decision making process.

According to UNICEF, if the family is poverty stricken, then there will be not enough money to send the kids to secondary school and earn them a good living at the same time. Therefore, parents lure their kids to go looking for jobs so that their work load of bringing them up may be

lessened. Misunderstandings and separations are also other causes of child labour whereby the children are left with either of the parents who cannot manage to bring them up nicely. This will in the long run make the kids feel rejected and lacking basic needs thus turning into child labour as the only solution to their problems. Competition among different families also at times leads to child labour whereby a child will compare him or herself with another child from a certain family and see that his other parents are not providing the necessary facilities for leisure therefore they will sneak out of home to go and find somewhere where they can earn such luxuries. This in turn throws them into child labour and whoever gets such kids will always tend to exploit them.

According to UNICEF, 25,000 youths die each day due to poverty. A bigger percentage of these are children from the secondary school age bracket. Among these are boys who form a bigger percentage of the children population from the slums. These children in developing countries are estimated to be underweight or stunted. In Kenya, the areas that account for the bulk of the deficit rural based Sub-Counties. Some 1.1 billion individuals in developing countries have inadequate access to water, and an estimated 2.6 billion lack basic sanitation. Almost two in three people lacking access to clean water. Some 1.8 million children die each year as a result of diarrhoea. For the 1.9 billion children from the developing world, there are: 640 million without adequate shelter (1 in 3), 400 million with no access to safe water (1 in 5) and 270 million with no access to health services (1 in 7). 10.6 million Children died in 2003 before they reached the age of 5, 1.4 million die each year from lack of access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation. 2.2 million Children die each year because they are not immunized. This situation is not any different from Sameta Sub-County as poverty has set many secondary school students on parking.

Due to lack of livelihood option among families to support secondary school education, 25% of boys have engaged in work for pay (Melchiorre, 2004).. The main work that they engage in include jobs construction work or building (22 per cent of working boys), tradesmen such as carpenters, masons, plumbers, electricians (16 per cent), pottering or carrying heavy loads (16 per cent), or hawking foodstuffs or goods such as charcoal or used clothes (14 per cent). Under Kenya's Employment Act, the legal age for industrial work is 16. Under this act, there is no legal age for work in the agricultural sector or service sector, including domestic work, except when the work poses a danger to "life, health, or morals" (Melchiorre, 2004). Thirty-seven per cent of working young people started work before the legal age of 16. Boys were engaged in paid work for longer hours than girls; boys worked an average of 40 hours per week, compared to girls' 28 hours per week. In addition, boys were more likely to be able to decide how earnings were used.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by empowerment framework. Empowerment as a form of theory can be traced back to the Brazilian humanitarian and educator, Freire (1973), when he suggested a plan for liberating the oppressed people of the world through secondary school education. Empowerment was most commonly associated with alternative approaches to psychological or social development and the concern for local, grassroots community-based movements and initiatives (Parpart *et al.*, 2003). The notion of empowerment has had significant coverage in the social sciences, especially feminist literature albeit in varying degrees. In its minimalist version, it was defined as "bringing about equality between women and men in the control of production factors and the control of distribution of the benefits of development" (Sarah H. Longwe as cited in Osirim, 2001:168).

Therefore, both the process and components of empowerment, suggested in this framework, will evolve by coping with each type of powerlessness in a new environment in a new age. Individuals will be able to learn to cope with new forms of difficulties and problems as they develop (Wall et al., 2002). Since the aim of this study is to empower the boy-child, particularly with regard to secondary school education, the empowerment theory will give guidelines on ways in which the socio-cultural challenges facing the boy-child can be dealt with hence deemed relevant to guide the study process. Empowerment theory supposes that secondary school education is a liberating factor for the poor therefore an important aspect in understanding the challenges faced by boy-child cross the socio-cultural and economic spheres in the pursuit of education within Sameta Sub-County. The theory advocates for equality between men and women that is important in designing intervention programmes on behalf of boy-child education in the informal settlement.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This was based on a cross-sectional exploratory study using qualitative data collection methods. This study was conducted in Sameta Sub-County, Eastern Kisii County, approximately 15km from the County offices or Kisii town. The population included boys who have dropped out of school either at primary or secondary school level, those continuing with their secondary education, Sameta Sub-County. The sample size of the study comprised thirty (30) boys (school drop-outs secondary school going) drawn across the Sameta Sub-County. Purposive sampling was used to select boys who have dropped either from primary or secondary school or continuing with their secondary school education Sameta Sub-County. Questionnaires administered to 30 boys drawn from Sameta Sub-County where 10 boys were sampled from each of the three villages targeted for this study. During data analysis, qualitative and quantitative methods will be adopted. The analyzed data was presented by use of tables. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics and presented data using pie chart, histograms; and tables in the form of mean, percentages and standard deviation. Also, Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation was used. Content analysis was used to analyse qualitative data collected in respect to themes.

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **The influence of economic challenges facing the boy-child**

**Table 1: Economic challenges facing the boy-child**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
Boys from more advantaged families aspire to and attain higher levels of education	4.422	0.475
Higher levels of parental income in particular are strongly associated with boys secondary school attainment	4.231	0.233
Parents with higher levels of income tend to be more actively involved in their children's schooling,	4.215	0.465
Warm and supportive parent-adolescent bonds provide young adults with support needed when making important life decisions about educational and occupational goals	4.245	0.254
If the family is poverty stricken, then there will be not enough money to send the kids to secondary school and earn them a good living at the same time.	4.243	0.365
Due to lack of livelihood option among families to support secondary school education, 25% of boys have engaged in work for pay.	4.344	0.643

Key: SA = Strongly Agree-5; A = Agree-4 NS= Not Sure-3; D = Disagree-2; SD = Strongly Disagree-1

The results in table 3 above show that Boys from more advantaged families aspired to and attained higher levels of education; Higher levels of parental income in particular were strongly associated with boys secondary school attainment; Parents with higher levels of income tended to be more actively involved in their children's schooling; warm and supportive parent-adolescent bonds provided young adults with support needed when making important life decisions about educational and occupational goals; If the family was poverty stricken, there was not enough money to send the kids to secondary school to earn them a good living at the same time; Due to lack of livelihood option among families to support secondary school education, boys had engaged in work for pay.

**Table 2: Influence of economic challenges on access to education**

Economic challenges		Access to education			
		Retention rate	Dropout	Completion rate	
Spearman's rho	Poor Financial background	Correlation Coefficient	-.631**	-.385**	-.375**
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
		N	30	30	30
	Poverty	Correlation Coefficient	-.628**	-.657**	-.717**
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.567	.000
		N	30	30	30
	Lack of alternative livelihood options	Correlation Coefficient	-.434**	-.643**	-.433
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
		N	30	30	30

The results in table 2 show that poor financial background negatively and significantly influence access to education by a boy child in terms of retention rate, dropout and completion at ( $r = -.631^{**}$ ,  $P < .001$  significant level), ( $r = -.385^{**}$ ,  $P < .001$  significant level), and ( $r = -.375^{**}$ ,  $P < .001$  significant level) respectively.

Poverty negatively and significantly influence access to education in terms of retention rate, dropout and completion at ( $r = -.628^{**}$ ,  $P < .001$  significant level), ( $r = -.657^{**}$ ,  $P < .001$  significant level) and ( $r = -.717^{**}$ ,  $P < .001$  significant level) respectively.

Lack of alternative livelihood options negatively and significantly influence access to education in terms of retention rate, dropout and completion at ( $r = -.434^{**}$ ,  $P < .001$  significant level), ( $r = -.643^{**}$ ,  $P < .001$  significant level), and ( $r = -.433^{**}$ ,  $P < .001$  significant level), respectively.

The significant economic variables were merged to form economic factor and access to education variables were merged to form access to education factors using SPSS transformation technique and correlated between each other as shown in table 3.

**Table 3: Correlation between economic challenges and access to education**

		Access to education	
		Correlation Coefficient	-.801**
Spearman's rho	Economic challenges	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000
		N	30

The results in table 5 show that economic challenges negatively and significantly influence access to education by boy child at  $r=-.801^{**}$ ,  $p<.001$  significant level contributing 64% variability to access to education when other factors are held constant.

### **Discussion of the results**

The study established that Boys from more advantaged families aspired to and attained higher levels of education; Higher levels of parental income in particular were strongly associated with boys secondary school attainment; Parents with higher levels of income tended to be more actively involved in their children's schooling; warm and supportive parent-adolescent bonds provided young adults with support needed when making important life decisions about educational and occupational goals; If the family was poverty stricken, there was not enough money to send the kids to secondary school to earn them a good living at the same time; Due to lack of livelihood option among families to support secondary school education, boys had engaged in work for pay.

Correlation analysis revealed that poor financial background, Poverty and Lack of alternative livelihood options negatively and significantly influence access to education in terms of retention rate, dropout and completion. The significant economic variables were merged to form economic factor and access to education variables were merged to form access to education factors using SPSS transformation technique and correlated between each other. The analysis revealed that economic challenges negatively and significantly influence access to education by boy child. These findings are in agreement with many scholars. Many scholars argue that youth from more advantaged families aspire to and attain higher levels of education (Becker & Tomes, 1979, 1986; Ma & Klinger, 2000; Mayer, 2001; Sewell, Haller, & Ohlendorf, 1970)

Higher levels of parental income in particular are strongly associated with boys secondary school attainment (Blanden & Gregg, 2004). Parents with higher levels of income tend to be more actively involved in their children's schooling, which is also associated with later secondary school enrollment (Cabrera & LaNasa, 2001). Warm and supportive parent-adolescent bonds provide young adults with support needed when making important life decisions about educational and occupational goals (Hossler, Schmit, & Vesper, 1999; Kenny, Blustein, Chaves, Grossman, & Gallagher, 2003; Kenny at al., 2007; Rossi & Rossi, 1990). According to UNICEF, if the family is poverty stricken, then there will be not enough money to send the kids to secondary school and earn them a good living at the same time. Due to lack of livelihood option among families to support secondary school education, 25% of boys have engaged in work for pay (Melchiorre, 2004).

### **Conclusion**

The study established that economic challenges negatively and significantly influence access to education by the boy child. Poor financial background, Poverty negatively and lack of alternative livelihood options negatively and significantly influence access to education in terms of retention rate, dropout and completion. Higher levels of parental income were strongly associated with boys secondary school attainment; Parents being more actively involved in their children's schooling; warm and supportive parent-adolescent bonds provided young adults with support needed when making important life decisions about educational and occupational goals.

### **Recommendation**

The parents, the community, the government and other civil organization should not Marginalize and criminate boy child but consider them for financial support so as to enable them access education.

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