

## **Reconsidering Education for All at a time of Change: Influence of Economic Factors on access to Secondary Education in Narok County, Kenya**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper sought to determine economic factors that influence access to secondary educational opportunities in Narok County, Kenya and to suggest strategies to help raise the transition rates of learners from primary to secondary schools. The study employed descriptive survey research design involving both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Study participants comprised head teachers, teachers and students in both primary and secondary schools. Stratified sampling technique was used to select twenty-four (24) primary school head teachers, forty-eight (48) primary school teachers and eight (8) secondary school principals. A total of 68 class eight pupils and 44 form one students were selected using simple random sampling from the sampled schools. Data were collected using questionnaires and an interview schedule. Pilot testing was done with questionnaires to test reliability and validity. To obtain the reliability the test-retest method was employed. Pearson Product Moment was employed to compute the correlation coefficient. A correlation co-efficient of 0.77 was obtained. Qualitative data were analysed inductively through content analysis while SPSS was used to analyse quantitative data. Results were presented in form of tables, figures, frequencies and percentages. It was established that household poverty and opportunity costs of education have influences on completion rates and lead to dropouts from basic schooling. The study recommends the need for the government and private sector employing a long term strategy in expanding secondary education in Kenya. This could include poverty mitigation and reduction in cost of secondary schooling and improvement of basic infrastructure, improvement of the quality of education in the country in order to reduce the opportunity costs and also through provision of more subsidies to improve the level of enrollment in basic education.*

**Key Words:** Change, Demand-side financing, Drop out, Opportunity costs, Transition

### **1. Background of the Study**

The rapid growth that the world has witnessed in the education sector is reflected in the degree of state and parental interest in the sector, in pressure on children to succeed at school and in the priority it receives in family expenditure (Starr, 2012). Kenya recognizes the immense role of education in poverty reduction and economic growth considering it as a key determinant of earnings hence an important exit route from poverty (Republic of Kenya, 2005; MoEST, 2005). The Country's Constitution in Article 53 states clearly the government commitment in providing free and compulsory basic education to every child in the Republic in accordance with Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Republic of Kenya, 2010). This is reinforced by the Children's Act 2001 which places that responsibility in the hands of the government and parents (Republic of Kenya, 2002). A dream such as this was once envisioned by Horace Mann (1796-1859)

who desired “a school that would be ‘the great equalizer’, available and equal for all, part of the birthright of every American child, to be for the rich and the poor alike” (Gonzalez, 2001). It is however unclear, or may be doubtful whether the dream of providing equal and open access to education will be realized any time soon in the modern African economies including Kenya, characterized by ‘wastage in primary education, poor retention rates of students from one standard to the next, chronic repetition and high dropout rates’, (Republic of Kenya, 1988), all which affect the internal efficiency in education provision.

The four-year secondary education is meant to, among other issues, provide for an all-round mental, moral and spiritual development and lay a firm foundation for further education training and work and lead to the acquisition of positive attitudes and values towards the wellbeing of society (Republic of Kenya, 1988). Despite the overarching benefits of secondary education new data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) show that the global number of children and young adolescents not enrolled in school is rising despite the international community’s efforts in setting new sustainable development goals that include universal secondary education (UNESCO, 2015). In Sub-Saharan Africa access, quality and relevance of this sector remain inadequate as the proportion of children progressing to secondary school remains at less than 25% (Libby & Daan, 2012). Failure in the efforts to curb low transition to secondary schools and escalating school dropout cases is bound to have dire consequences in the modern economy, more especially to Kenya which is slowly settling down to establishing basic tenets of a devolved system of governance.

In order to improve the number of children attending secondary school in Kenya it is important to reduce the dropout rates of those enrolled in primary school and ensure that children are able to complete this level of education. This is because in Kenya alone, the dropout, largely made up of children who enrolled but have subsequently dropped out is around 16% (Libby & Daan, 2012). School dropout, whether in primary or in secondary school has personal and societal costs and impacts economic development efforts in terms of reduced earnings for the individual, reduced tax revenues and increased costs associated with unemployment, crime and dependency on assistance programs (Injendi, 2014). Research by Janosz, et al (1997 as in Dart, 2003) found out that dropout often occurs at critical transition points, such as the transition from middle school to high school (8th grade to 9th grade). The trickle effect from this, as Injendi, (2014) noted in his study, was that potential dropouts felt disengaged from school, developed behavioral and psychological problems and were arrested more frequently.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Kenya, like other countries round the globe has continued to use education to develop quality human resource which is central to attaining goals for industrial development and reducing economic inequalities. This focus to achieve universal primary and secondary education unfortunately has not come without issues and challenges including those relating to access, quality and relevance of education with as many as an estimated 1.5 million children still remaining out of school (Wango, 2011; Republic of Kenya, 2005). Although a new timeline has been drawn and massive expenditure factored in budgets to achieve the much anticipated education for all, not much may be realized unless policy makers in the education sector tackle the high rate of drop out experienced from the education system. An increased production of skilled labour for sustainable growth and development undoubtedly depends on the level of investment in this key sector in any given economy. It is therefore important to point out that resources, whether material or human, invested in educating students who end up as dropouts from the education system are considered wasted and no justification can be enough to explain that state of affairs. More worrisome could be the fact that there is a positive correlation between the dropouts and crime (Injendi, 2014). As the dropout of students was on a steady rise in a related study, the crime cases and incarcerations were also on a steady rise (Dart, 2003). This puts to question the efficiency in the system and the

likelihood of education achieving her intended goals. Undoubtedly there are a number of factors that could contribute to the massive number of students, others probably with special needs staying out of school or dropping out of the education system. A possible contribution of economic factors to this is what the study aimed to investigate.

### **3. Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study were to:

- i. Determine the economic factors that influence pupils' access to secondary schools in Narok county.
- ii. Suggest strategies to help raise the transition rates of learners from primary to secondary schools in Narok county.

### **4. Literature Review**

#### **4.1: Global View of Secondary School Access**

UNESCO (2010) reported that there are large regional disparities in participation in secondary school in most developed countries while transition economies are almost nearing universal secondary education. On the other hand, secondary net enrolment rate (NER) for Sub-Saharan Africa is just 25% implying that nearly 78 million children of the relevant age group are not enrolled in secondary school. The transition point of primary school to secondary school is marked by high levels of dropout in many countries (UNESCO, 2010). This study agrees with the findings in UNESCO report particularly considering the high illiteracy levels, increasing school dropout rates and low transition rates from standard eight to form one in Narok North district as in Narok North District Development Plan 2008-2012. The global gross lower secondary enrolment ratio according to the EFA Global Monitoring Report is almost 100% in Europe. North America, East Asia and Oceania exceed 90% (UNESCO, 2010). For these regions, universal participation in lower secondary education is within reach. In west Asia, lower secondary pupils represent 69% of the age population. The lowest level of lower secondary participation is observed in Africa where the lower secondary ratio is close to 51% (UNESCO, 2010). This indicates that quite a big number of pupils who finish standard eight (or seven in some countries) do not proceed on to acquire secondary education.

#### **4.2 Economic Factors Influencing Transition**

Transition is influenced by household poverty and the opportunity costs that are incurred as a result of an education programme.

##### **4.2.1 Poverty**

School enrolment rates for secondary education are directly related to family income hence the poorer a child's household, the less likely the child is to attend secondary school (UNICEF, 2007; Otieno & Colclough, 2009). A number of researchers have conducted studies in this aspect and have come up with different findings. According to findings by Levin (1976) in Western Europe, the family's socio-economic status was identified as a determinant of children's academic achievement. When family income is inadequate especially among the lower class families, performance of learners is hindered and any chances of continuity in education are hampered. This finding agrees with that of Westaway, Barrat and Seeley (2009) conducted to explore the challenges to access, motivation and aspirations of parents and children on formal education in three fishing

communities in Uganda. The findings revealed that of the limited number of children passing The Primary School Leaving Examination (P.L.E), many fail to make transition between primary and secondary because of education costs. As noted by the APHRC (2007) the biggest challenge to education lies in transforming the secondary education system in African countries which is skewed in favour of the rich minority to ensure that it benefits the poor who form the majority in these countries.

In Kenya the arid and semi-arid land (ASALs) cover over 75% of the 582,646 Km<sup>2</sup> of Kenya's total area, home to 30% of the total population and nearly half of the country's livestock population. A study was conducted by Abdi (2010) to investigate challenges inhibiting nomads from accessing formal education. According to the findings, poverty, among other factors, featured as an inhibiting factor to participation in education by nomads. Oxfam's Report (2006, as in Abdi, 2010), states that such areas are ecologically fragile and susceptible to frequent drought making pastoralism the only form of productive land use. The school-age population is widely scattered and nomadic, meaning that only a few are able to access educational facilities and to make any progress as a result of high cost of education which many parents cannot afford.

#### **4.4.2 Opportunity Costs of Education**

In deciding to send their children to school parents face a trade-off between household consumption now and children's expected future income. In his study on demand-side education funding mechanisms, Patrinos (2007) outlined family income and the opportunity costs of schooling (foregone earnings while enrolled in school) as the main barriers to school attendance, and that the demand for schooling is often influenced by economic, political, social and cultural factors. Abagi and Odipo (1997) in their study to examine efficiency in the primary level education in Kenya had a related finding. They noted that child labour, as a household factor affects completion rates in education. When parents are faced with limited resources and reduced returns from education they are not only unable but also unmotivated to educate their children, a trend which in the end has negative effects on children's participation. As poverty level rises, child labour has become crucial for family survival and is increasingly employed in domestic activities, agriculture and petty trade in rural and urban Kenya. As a result parents have continued to send their children particularly daughters, into the labour market—mainly as domestic workers in urban centers. Koring'ura (2004) agrees with these findings and adds that, girls engage in child care and housework and almost 100% boys engage in cattle rearing and farm activities.

A study by Lloyd and Blanc (1996, as cited in Chimombo, 2005) noted that even when schools are accessible and affordable, families have to see a net advantage to themselves and to their children from forgoing children's full time participation in domestic and economic activities. In Malawi the study revealed that children often began working at very early ages on estate farms in the family fields and were not enrolled in school. Similarly, Onyango (2000) noted that the demand for education is governed by a number of socio-economic factors within the family thus making family characteristics important in determining the Child's participation in education.

Although formal schooling has been cited as a deterrent for child labour, studies still indicate that it is rampant and continues to keep many children out of school. Studies by Kipserem, Mugo, Ruto, and Angwenyi (2009); Nyawara (2007), all concur that activities like fishing and *boda boda* activities hinder participation in regions along the lake and the coastal regions as a result of the youth engaging in commercial sex work, *jua kali* activities, hawking and work as beach boys.

Psacharopoulos (1985) pointed out that the level of family income is one of the powerful influences on demand for education both in developed and the developing world. This means that 'free' education is never free considering the substantial financial burden through foregone earnings and other costs that parents have to incur.

This in essence means that transition cannot be increased without reducing educational expenses which further results in a reduction in the provision of quality secondary education. In low income families, demand for education shall invariably be low while high family income attracts a higher demand for education. According to the economists' model of human behavior, no investment can be chosen unless the benefits and other expected returns anticipated from this investment are higher than the expected costs-including 'opportunity cost'. Chimombo (2005), states this by quoting a study by Rosati which revealed that the reduction of child labour in Vietnam between 1992 and 1998 can be attributed in part to the increase in returns to education that occurred over the period considered. A different point of view to this debate however, is brought by The Probe Report (1999, as cited in Hunt, 2008). It suggests that children work because they are unable to go to school, as opposed to dropping out of school in order to work. These differing points of view called for such a study which was conducted in Narok County to find out to what extent opportunity costs hinder transition to and participation of learners in secondary education.

## **5. Methodology**

The study employed the cross sectional survey design to obtain the research data. Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009) note that the design allows the researcher to get a snapshot of the current behaviours, attitudes, opinions and beliefs in the population. This design was found appropriate because as supported by Orodho (2004) it describes the nature of existing conditions, identifies the standards against which such conditions can be compared and determines the relationship that exists between specific events.

The study targeted pupils in primary schools, students in secondary schools, primary school head teachers, teachers and secondary school principals in Narok County. Narok North Sub-County was purposively sampled due to its cosmopolitan nature. The Study sample consisted of 192 respondents from 24 primary and 8 secondary schools, comprising; 24 head teachers, 48 teachers, 8 principals and 112 students, selected through both purposive and simple random sampling. Ten percent (10%) of the entire standard eight pupils and form one students population in the schools for each group was selected for proportional representation as proposed by Gay et al. (2009:133) for an acceptable study sample. The study used questionnaires to get data from students, head teachers and teachers while interview schedules were administered to the secondary school principals. Questionnaires are considered appropriate for the study since many subjects who can read independently are able to be reached (Orodho, 2004:157).

Pilot testing of the instruments was conducted in five schools following the one to ten percent (1%-10%) of sampled size as recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda (1999). The five schools used for pilot testing were later excluded from the actual study. Given that content validity is determined by expert judgment (Gay et al. 2009:169), the researcher consulted experienced personnel in research from Maasai Mara University and the County QASO offices whose feedback was carefully included in revising the instruments. To establish the reliability the test-retest method was employed. Pearson Product Moment was employed to compute the correlation coefficient between the two sets of questionnaires. A correlation co-efficient of 0.77 was obtained. This was enough to judge the tools as appropriate for the study as recommended by Orodho (2004) who noted that a correlation co-efficient of 0.75 is an appropriate reliability. Qualitative data were analysed inductively through content analysis while SPSS was used to analyse quantitative data. Results were presented in form of tables, figures, frequencies and percentages (which have been indicated in brackets).

## **6. Results**

### **6.1 Demographic Data of the Pupils and the Students**



The demographic data for primary school pupils and the secondary school students was considered crucial in understanding the economic situation in the area. Characteristics of the respondent learners that were considered were; gender, age, type of school and the number of siblings in the respondent’s family. Table 1 presents the results.

**Table 1: Demographic Distribution of the Pupils and the Students**

Category	Primary school pupils’ responses	Secondary school students’ responses
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	34(72.3)	13(27.7)
Male	29(55.8)	23(44.2)
<b>Age bracket</b>		
10-12	6(9.5)	--
13-15	47(74.6)	21(58.3)
16-20	10(15.9)	15(41.7)
<b>Type of School</b>		
Boarding	13(13.1)	25(25.3)
Day	50(50.5)	11(11.1)
<b>Number of Siblings in family</b>		
1-3	13(20.6)	1(2.8)
4-6	18(28.6)	15(41.6)
7-10	21(33.3)	9(25.0)
<b>More than 10</b>	<b>11(17.5)</b>	<b>11(30.6)</b>

Table 1 indicates that 52(52.5%) of male pupils and students participated in the study where 29(55.8%) were in primary school while 23(44.2%) were from secondary school. It was further established that a total of 47(47.5%) female respondents participated in the study; 34(72.3%) were from primary school and 13(27.7%) were from secondary school. This indicates gender representativeness in the study hence reducing the level of biasness that could have arisen during analysis. The results also show that more responses were obtained from the girls than boys enrolled in primary schools while in secondary schools there were more boys than girls who responded pointing to a disparity in gender enrolment in the schools.

Concerning age, majority 68(81.8%) of respondents were in the age bracket of 13-15 years, of which 47(74.6%) were primary school pupils and 21(58.3%) were secondary school students. Other respondents were in the age bracket of 16-20 years and most of them 15(41.7%) were in secondary school while the rest 10(15.9%) were in primary school. This clearly indicates that some over-age pupils were still in standard eight while they were of the secondary school age.

On the type of school, majority of the pupils 50(50.5%) who participated in the study were from day schools while only 13(13.1%) were in boarding schools. Majority of the respondents in secondary school, 25(25.3%) were in boarding schools while 11(11.1%) were in day schools. This is an indication that there were more pupils enrolled in day schools than in boarding schools probably as a result of more levies to be paid in primary boarding than in primary day schools.

It was clear that most of the families of primary school pupils 21(33.3%) had between 7 to 10 siblings, 18(28.6%) had between 4-6 siblings; 13(20.6%) had between 1-3 and only 11(17.5%) of the families had more than 10 siblings. Among the secondary school students’ family’s majority 15(41.6%) had between 4-6 siblings; 11(30.6%) had families with more than 10 siblings. This was an indication that most of the families were large with more than 7 siblings per family. This could be due to the area embracing the features of both an urban and a rural setting.

**6.2: Responses of Pupils and Students on their Siblings’ School Completion**

The study also sought to establish the frequency at which the siblings of the respondents had completed schools or dropped out of schools. Table 2 presented the results obtained.

**Table 2: School Completion Rate of the Respondents’ Siblings**

	Gender	Completed Primary School			Completed Secondary School			Dropped out of School		
		Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
<b>Primary</b>	Boys	18	10	28	17	11	28	18	10	28
	Girls	19	16	35	8	27	35	25	10	35
	Total	37	26	63	25	38	63	43	20	63
<b>Secondary</b>	Boys	13	7	20	5	15	20	4	16	20
	Girls	11	5	16	6	10	16	3	13	16
	Total	24	12	36	11	25	36	7	29	36
<b>Total</b>	Boys	31	17	48	22	26	48	22	26	48
	Girls	30	21	51	14	37	51	28	23	51
	Total	61	38	99	36	63	99	50	49	99

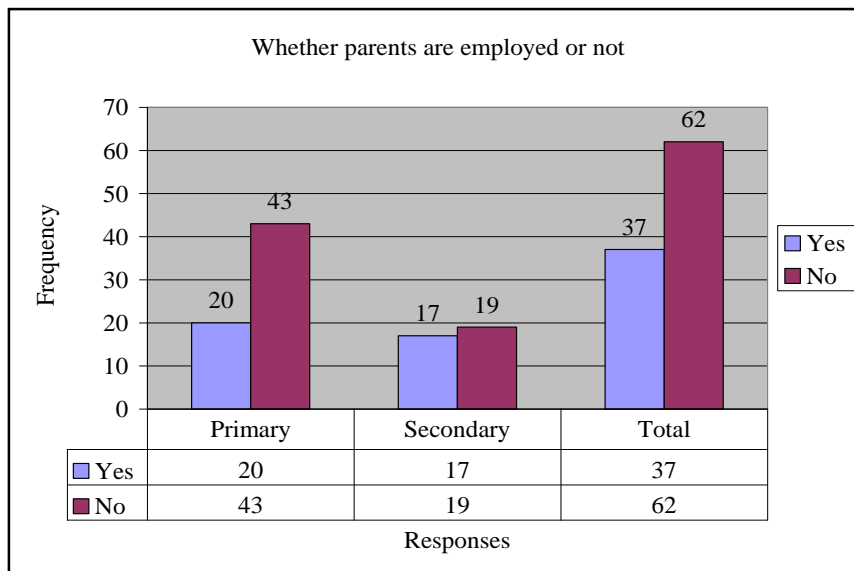
Table 2 shows that among the primary school respondents, 37(58.7%) indicated that their siblings had completed primary school, among them 18(48.6%) were boys and the rest 19(51.4%) were girls, only 26(41.3%) of the respondents indicated that some of their siblings had not completed primary school. On the other hand, 25(39.7%) of the respondents indicated that their siblings had completed their secondary school education against 38(68.3%) who said some of their siblings had not. In total, majority 43(68.3%) said that they knew pupils who had dropped out of school against 20(31.7%) who indicated they never knew such. This indicated that there were more boys than girls completing both primary and secondary education in the District probably due to the differences in perception attached to education of both the boys and girls by the community.

Among the form one student respondents 24(66.7%) of their siblings had completed primary school while 12(33.3%) had dropped out of school. On the other hand they indicated that 11(30.6%) of their siblings had completed secondary school against 25(69.4%) who had dropped out from secondary school. In total 61(61.6%) of the respondents said that among their families the siblings had completed primary school against 38(38.4%) who said they had not, while only 36(36.4%) of the respondents indicated that their siblings had completed secondary school. Majority 63 (63.6%) had not completed the secondary school. This shows that there was a higher dropout rate at secondary school level compared to the primary school. This indicates that majority of the students were able to complete their primary school but were not in a position to proceed to secondary school, meaning that the transition rates from primary to secondary schools are affected by the rate of drop out of pupils at primary school level.

The study established that the majority of the pupils who had dropped out of school did so in order to engage in income generating activities such as motorcycle transport (*boda boda*), playing pool, baby sitting, making beads and the Maasai *kangas*, and working at the quarry among others. These findings concur with those of Nyawara (2007) who established that in the lake side region, the students who dropped out of school engaged in economic activities which included *boda boda*, commercial sex work and *jua kali* activities.

### 6.3 Pupils’ and Students’ Responses on the Occupation of their Parents

The study considered such factors as; parents’ occupation, ability to pay fees, availability of food both at school and at home and assisting the parents at home to generate more income. The section first considered the responses of the learners then discussed the responses from the head teachers, teachers and the principals. Figure 1 below indicates responses whether the parents were employed or not.



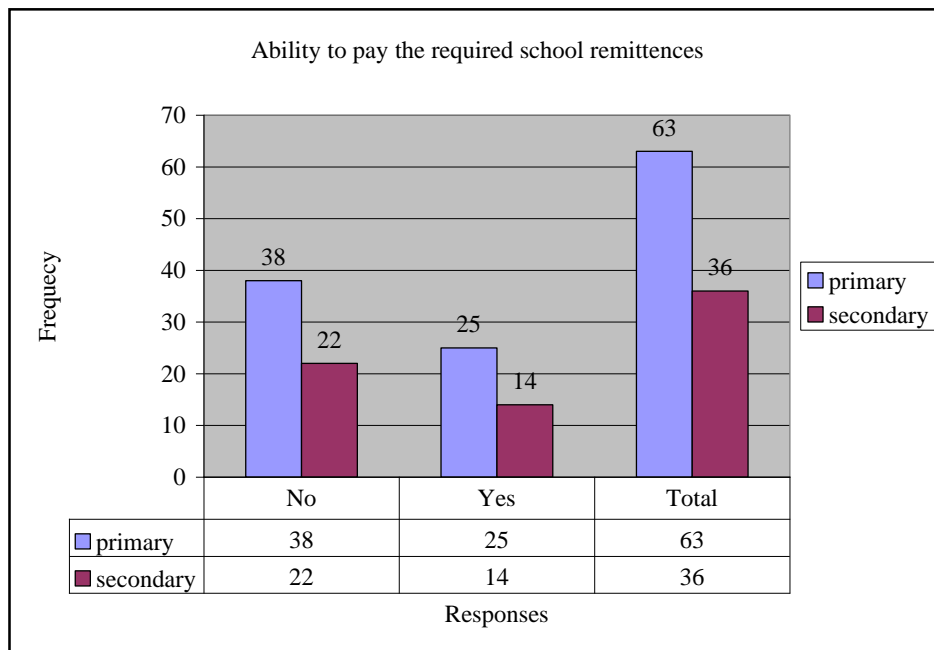
**Figure 1: Occupation of the parents.**

It is clear from figure 1 that majority of the learners 62(62.6 %) indicated that their parents were not employed, of which 43(43.4%) of the respondents were primary school pupils and 19(19.2%) were secondary school students. On the other hand 37(37.4%) of the total respondents indicated that their parents were employed. This constituted the 20(20.2%) of pupils and 17(17.2%) of the secondary school students. Although the study did not go further to enquire whether both or one of the parents was employed the findings could mean that some parents were poor, probably depending on low-income self employment, a situation that could likely limit their ability and willingness to enroll children in school or to sustain their stay towards secondary education. This finding matches that of The Narok North District Development Plan 2008-2012 which states that 47.99 % of population in the District lives below the poverty line (Republic of Kenya, 2009).

### 6.4 Responses of Pupils and Students on Ability to Pay School Fees/ Remittances

The study assumed that primary education is free in all public schools hence there is no payment of school fees while charges in public secondary schools are subsidized. In order to establish the link between direct and indirect school charges in form of school levies the study sought whether the class eight pupils were able to pay any other form of remittances to the school and whether form one students were able to pay the required fees to schools. The results were presented in figure 2.





**Figure 2: Pupils and student’s responses on the ability to pay school remittances**

Figure 2 indicates that majority of the pupils and form one students 60(60.6%) had problems paying school fees and remittances of whom 38(38.4%) were primary school pupils and 22(22.2%) were in secondary school. On the other hand 39(39.4%) of the respondents said that they had had no problems in meeting the costs, of whom 25(25.3%) were primary school pupils and 14(14.1%) were secondary school students. This is a factor that could lead to low level of transition and may be attributed to the fact that the parents of these pupils and students lack the necessary financial support due to lack of employment.

**6.5 Availability of Food both in School and at Home**

It was also important to seek responses from the learners to establish the availability of food both at home and in school as this plays a major role in retaining the learners in schools and may have a role in sustaining them in an education programme hence giving them the desire to continue schooling. The results are presented in table 3.

**Table 3: Availability of Food in School and at Home**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	55	55.6
No	44	44.4
Total	99	100.0

The results presented on table 3 shows that majority of the learners who participated in the study 55(55.6 %) said that food was available against 44(44.4%) who said that food was not available both at school and at home. The study however did not go into details of whether home or school is affected more with the food scarcity. The implication of this finding is that learning could be hampered by hunger when learners fail to get enough food at home, in school or both. This indicates that food situation may be a factor affecting the rate of transition from primary to secondary schools in the County.

### 6.6: Pupils’ and Students’ Responses on their Assistance to Parents at Home

This study further sought to establish whether the pupils’ work load at home made them drop out of school. The pupils and students were asked to indicate whether they assisted their parents or not. The response was shown in table 4.

**Table 4: Whether the Pupils and Students Assist their Parents at Home**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	84	84.8
No	15	15.2
Total	99	100.0

It was established that majority of the pupils 84(84.8%) assisted their parents at home while only 15(15.2%) said that they did not assist their parents. Among the various duties they listed and which was common to both the primary and secondary girls and boys were; grazing animals, working on the family farm, looking after the young siblings, working in the family business and working to get money to support the family. The level of participation in some of these practices could affect consistency in school attendance and further affect performance which is crucial in the transition process of pupils from primary to secondary school level.

### 6.7 Effect of Economic Factors on Rate of Transition of Pupils from Primary to Secondary School

This section presented the views of the head teachers, teachers and principals of secondary schools on whether economic factors in the community had an effect on the transition rates of pupils from primary to secondary schools in the area. Among the issues discussed were the poverty level of the parents, child labour, the cost of living, the school remittances and fees charged.

### 6.8 Head Teacher’s Views on Whether Economic Factors Affect the Rate of Transition of Pupils from Primary to Secondary Schools

The study sought to establish the head teacher’s views on economic factors affecting the rate of transition of pupils from primary to secondary school in the District. The results were presented in table 5.

**Table 5: Head teachers’ Responses on Economic Factors Influencing Transition**

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Parents in the area are poor to take their children through schools effectively.	3(12.5)	13(54.2)	--	4(16.7)	4(16.7)
Because of poverty, children drop out to seek employment to supplement the family income.	4(16.7)	9(37.5)	--	6(25)	5 (20.8)
Pupils keep away from school to work on family farms to generate income.	2(8.3)	6(25)	2(8.3)	10(41.7)	4(16.7)

The high cost of living makes it difficult for children to attend school.	3(12.5)	14(58.3)	--	5(20.8)	2(8.3)
Most parents cannot afford School remittances and fees charged.	4(16.7)	13(54.2)	--	4(16.7)	3(12.5)
Pupils keep away from school for fear of lack of job opportunities in the future.	1(4.2)	3(12.5)	4(16.7)	8(33.3)	8(33.3)

Table 5 indicates that most of the primary school head teachers 14(58.4%) disagreed with the statement that pupils were forced to work on family farms hence failed to attend school, only 8(33.3%) agreed. An average 16(66.6%) indicated disagreement with the statement that fear of lack of future employment could hinder transition to secondary schools with only 4(16.7%) agreeing. For the rest of the statements; parents’ poverty level in the area, poverty causing children to drop out from school, the high cost of living and the high fees charged by the schools, the head teachers agreed that they had an effect on the transition of the pupils from primary to secondary school in the following magnitudes; 16(66.7%), 13(54.2%), 17(70.8%) and 17(70.9%) respectively. This gives an indication that the head teachers were conversant with the economic situation in the region and how this could impact on education matters and more so, transition of pupils to secondary schools.

**6.9: Primary School Teachers’ views on Economic Factors Affecting the Rate of Transition of Pupils from Primary to Secondary School.**

This was supposed to assist in obtaining the response of teachers who participated in the study by indicating their level of agreement to the responses. The results are as presented in table 6.

**Table 6: Teachers’ Views on Economic Factors Influencing Transition**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Not sure</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
Poverty in the area limits children’s school attendance	3(6.3)	13(27.1)	2(4.2)	25(52.0)	5(10.4)
Children drop out to seek employment for the family	5(10.4)	18(37.5)	2(4.2)	11(22.9)	12(25.0)
Pupils miss school to work on family farms for income	--	14(29.2)	4(8.3)	12(25.0)	18(37.5)
High cost of living limits children school attendance	10(20.8)	12(25.0)	5(10.4)	16(33.3)	5(10.4)
Schools charge high fees	9(18.8)	13(27.1)	4(8.3)	3(6.2)	19(39.6)
Fear of lack of job opportunities in the future scare away learners from school	--	15(31.3)	8(16.7)	13(27.1)	12(25.0)
Average	5(9.4)	14(29.5)	4(8.7)	13(27.8)	12(24.7)

The results indicate teachers’ disagreement with the fact that parents in the area are generally poor to take their children to school at 30(62.4%), only 16(33.4%) of the teachers agreed with the statement. On the other hand there was a similar response on the fact that poverty made children drop out of school where there was 23(47.9%) agreement and the same magnitude disagreed. Only 2(4.2%) were not sure of the statement. Majority of the teachers 30(62.5%) went further to indicate disagreement with the statement that the pupils were forced to work on the family farm and hence this affected their transition, only 14(29.2%) agreed with the statement.

There was a very slight difference between the respondents on the statement about the high cost of living as having a contributing effect on the transition rate with a response rate of 22(45.8%) agreeing and 21(43.7%) disagreeing. On the issue that school fees was high for many parents to afford, there was a divided opinion among the teachers where 22(45.9%) agreed while a closer margin of 22(45.8%) disagreed with the statement. A total of 25(52.1%) of the teachers disagreed that children keep away from schools for fear of missing job opportunities in the future while 15(31.3%) agreed. This could be as a result of the different locations of the schools selected for the study, some from urban while others were from rural settings.

An interview with the eight principals indicated a balanced response with half 4(50%) of the principals agreeing and the other half disagreeing that the parents were generally poor and therefore might not be in a position to take their children to school or enable them proceed to secondary school. On whether poverty in the area determined transition rate from primary to secondary school 2(25%) agreed while 6(75%) disagreed meaning that poverty, in the principals' views, might not be a major factor affecting the transition rate. There was a 100% disagreement from the principals that pupils were forced to work or assist their families. Majority 6(75%) of the principals however agreed that fear of failure to secure job opportunities in future might keep children away from schools.

## **7. Conclusion**

In investigating economic factors influencing access to secondary education, the study, apart from the demographic profile of the students, considered such factors as, parents' occupation, problems with fees payment, availability of food both at school and at home and assisting the parents at home to generate more income. The study revealed that majority 62(62.6%) of the class eight pupils and form one students came from large families but where one or both of the parents were not employed hence most of them were not able to afford school fees for their children at the secondary school level and also ensure steady family food provision. The study also revealed gender imbalance in school enrolment in favour of boys indicated by the level of completion of both primary and secondary schools. The perception of the primary school head teachers indicated that poor economic situation forced the children not to transit and join secondary schools. The teachers and the secondary school principals had a different perspective on the economic position of the parents. They disagreed with most statements defining whether the parents in the County were generally poor and therefore not able to take their children to school or make them proceed to the next level after primary school. This portrays a slight contrast between the response of the head teachers and the pupils on one side and that of the principals and teachers on the other.

However, based on the demographic profile of the students, the responses obtained and supported by information from the relevant government departments it can therefore be concluded that economic factors as determined by family income have an effect on the transition rate of pupils to secondary schools in the County. This agrees with the findings of other studies including; UNICEF (2007); Otieno & Colclough, (2009) who noted that school enrolment rates for secondary education are directly related to family income hence the poorer a child's household, the less likely the child is to attend secondary school. Poverty, as Abdi (2010), noted among other factors, might be an inhibiting factor to participation in education in Narok County, majorly inhabited by nomadic pastoralists.

## **8: Recommendations**

It appears that the government, parents and the communities continue to share costs in ensuring that education opportunities are availed to all children. However, the level of poverty in the country constrains such parents

from effectively playing their active role in education provision. The government and private sector therefore require a long term strategy in expanding secondary education in Kenya. This could include poverty mitigation and targeting measures, reduction in cost of secondary schooling and improvement of basic infrastructure that has continued to put the cost burden on parents, majority who are poor. The government should further make effort to make formal education more attractive to people who continue to abandon it in favour of other cultural practices. This can be through improvement on the quality of education in the country in order to reduce the opportunity costs and also provision of more subsidies hence improve the level of enrollment in basic education.

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