

DRAWBACKS OF COST SHARING IN SECONDARY EDUCATION IN SEMI ARID AREAS IN TANZANIA: EXPERIENCE FROM MANYONI AND DODOMA RURAL DISTRICTS

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the cost sharing status of secondary education in Tanzania and its impact on curriculum implementation. It also explores possible financing options in the long term. The study was based on fieldwork and it used secondary data obtained from policy documents, education trend statistics and academic literature concerning financing and education provision. Fieldwork was carried out in predominantly semi arid areas in Manyoni and Dodoma rural districts in Tanzania.

The findings revealed that secondary schools face budgetary constraints to meet the running costs. With the implementation of Secondary Education Development Program (SEDP), the government expenditure on education is likely to increase even more. Thus, the study suggests strategies on the sustainability of educational fund.

Key Words: *Financial Challenges, Cost Sharing, Secondary Education and SEDP*

1. Introduction

Education is a strategic agent for mindset transformation and for the creation of a well-educated nation, sufficiently equipped with the knowledge needed to competently and competitively solve the development challenges which face the nation (Oluoch, 2006). Education is viewed as the root source of human, social, cultural, and economic capital and it is perceived as legitimate in terms of both individual and collective good, resulting into explosive growth both in national and global arenas (Galabawa, 2004)

Experiences from Kang (2004) show that education is an investment in human capital. It is through training and professional development that all types of capital such as social, physical and financial can increase. Nowadays, people realized that education is the key to the future success of an individual or of a nation and many nations have made their choices to allocate more resources to finance education as part of human resource development (Oluoch, 2006).

At family level, education is considered to increase social and human capitals in a society in which people live (Mlaki, 2011). Education can also be an investment producing an outcome which places

a person at a certain level in the society. Hence, every family likes to see its children progress in future ought to send them to good schools to enable them obtain a university degree and compete with others in the market. Globally education helps in knowledge creation, innovation and adaptability which are crucial for economic survival.

Provision of good quality secondary education is a critical tool in generating opportunities and benefits of social and economic development (World Bank Report, 2005). Educating people at secondary school level means putting opportunities into their hands and it is recognized as one of the best anti-poverty strategies. It is also one of the best ways of ensuring a country's economic prosperity and competitiveness. It is estimated that average earnings increase by 11% with each additional year of education in Tanzania. Each additional year of maternal education reduces childhood mortality by about 8% (World Bank, 2005).

Within this perspective, the government of Tanzania has made significant efforts to increase education access for all, resulting in a huge enrollment expansion over the last 10 years. Over the same period of time quality of education has been reported to drop significantly. Education system has gone through irregular fluctuations in terms of inadequate funds, dissatisfaction of citizens on quality of education both on academic performance and mastery of content and skills among primary, secondary and tertiary graduates (Fumpuni, 2008).

Tanzania's education is financed from various sources, depending on the types of the educational institutions. The government-maintained institutions are financed by the Government out of funds voted by the national Parliament each year. Secondary schools prepare their annual budgets which are forwarded to the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training through their respective District Educational Officers.

An analysis of the Tanzanian government funding reveals that the education sector has over the years taken the largest proportion of the government budget. Since the turn of the 21st century, the recurrent expenditure on education has accounted for about 35 percent of the overall annual government recurrent budget (Mushi, 2009).

When the government failed to shoulder all the necessary resources of education system as the cost increased due to expansion of enrollments, teachers' salaries, teaching and learning materials, it decided to change the financing policy of education. A number of reforms were put in including involving individuals and communities in financing of education (cost sharing) and encouraging private and Non-Governmental Organizations to chip in to invest in the sector (Galabawa, 2004).

Following the implementation of cost sharing in education, the government is no longer the only agency responsible for sustaining the quality of teaching and learning resources. The government to a large extent is not in the position to cover all educational expenditure and supervision (Fumpuni, 2008). Further, given the true status of impetus outcry of pupils and students in all levels of education demanding quality education, heavy financial investment in education is significantly needed. The study finds a need for educational administrators to explore other alternative sources of financing secondary education in Tanzania especially in the rural areas with the aim of achieving educational development.

2. The study

The aim of the study was to assess the general status of cost sharing in secondary education in semi arid areas in Tanzania. The study objectives were to: (i) explore the challenges facing educational cost sharing and (ii) examine possible financing options in the long term.

The study was conducted in Manyoni and Chamwino districts in Singida and Dodoma regions, respectively. A cross-sectional design was used. The study employed mixed paradigm in which both qualitative and quantitative research approaches were employed. Methods used in data collection were documentary analysis, questionnaires and interviews. Systematic random and purposive sampling techniques were used for sampling. A sample size had a total of 52 respondents of whom 20 were head teachers, 30 were parents and 2 were educational officials (school inspectors). Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed by using thematic and descriptive statistics.

3. Study findings

3.1 The general status of financing secondary school education

The investigation was conducted through documentary reviews and interviews to heads of schools. Table 1 below summarizes the findings for the first research objective.

Table 1: Challenges in financing education

Challenge	Percent %
Inadequate and untimely release of capitation grants	48
Poor contribution from parents and community	40
Political interference	39
Inability to upkeep teachers in hard to reach areas	25
Support for Science subjects	18

Source: Field data 2014

3.1.1 Inadequate and untimely capitation grants

From the study findings in Table 1 above, the major challenges facing financing of secondary school education based on the highest percent were inadequate and untimely release of capitation grants (48%), poor contribution from parents and community (40%) and political interference (39%).

Information from heads of schools showed that they received capitation grants on average of 10,000 Tanzania shillings per student between January and December 2013. This amount is equivalent to 40% of the total amount that was proportioned for disbursement. Besides the fact that the amount disbursed was clearly too small to enable any meaningful investment in student learning, the money did not even reach schools in time. The school heads further complained that due to unreliable capitation grants from the MoEVT and that they solely depended on school fees which even though is always not reliable.

The present findings contradict with URT (2011) in SEDP II program document which stipulates that the government provides capitation grant for all government schools at a rate of 25,000 Tanzanian shillings per student in a year for spending by the schools on text books, teaching materials, etc., and that these resources are disbursed timely and monitored effectively.

The interviews held with parents revealed that, they were challenged by unreliable rains which led to inability to meet their aspirations to pay school fees. They depended on seasonal rains for production of food crops. This growing season is interrupted by prolonged period of drought which accounts for poor crop yields and sometimes complete crop failures.

The economic condition of the study areas reflects the typical characteristics of rural semi arid settings in Tanzania in terms of occupation. The major households' resources for their livelihoods are land and livestock whose use to support their life is mainly at subsistence level. These economic characteristics indicate that parents in the study areas are relatively poor to support their children's education.

Ellis (2000), supports that whenever parents could not share education cost due to poverty, schools lacked basic infrastructure such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries and staff houses. Most of parents in rural areas are faced with competing social needs where a household has to make a choice at various levels of consumption. First, in most poor families, education comes a distance fourth after basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing. Second, in Sub-Saharan Africa, large family sizes are common. Households are therefore faced with a choice between paying school fees for younger children or older children and a choice between education for boys or girls. Third, households have to choose between different levels of education. While primary education appears to be a preferred choice due to its low cost and heavy public subsidy, access to post-primary education for low income families is limited by their meager disposable income, provision of bursaries, poor family support and unreliable expected returns of such kind of education to the immediate family.

3.1.2 Political interference

In explaining about political interference to educational issues, it was argued that some politicians prevent parents from paying school fees and other contributions in order to fulfill their political interest. It is well known that political leaders have great influence to people. It was found in the present study that in education sector working together as a team is much needed. All educational stakeholders should work together regardless their political differences; the option that is likely to improve the management of the schools

These findings concur with the study conducted by Njunwa (2010) on community participation in primary education development in Morogoro, Tanzania which discovered that there were several factors that limited effective community involvement in school activities including political interferences. With political interferences people are discouraged from participating in school activities through money contribution by being told that education is free and that it is the role of the government to provide education to its citizens.

3.1.3 Challenges in the motivation of teachers in hard to reach areas

Several schools in hard to reach areas lack teachers or have difficulties maintaining high quality teachers mainly because many teachers are not ready to live in the harsh conditions found in these areas, and consequently become de-motivated and request for transfer. This de-motivation also results from the poor school facilities, including teachers’ housing (Mlaki, 2011).

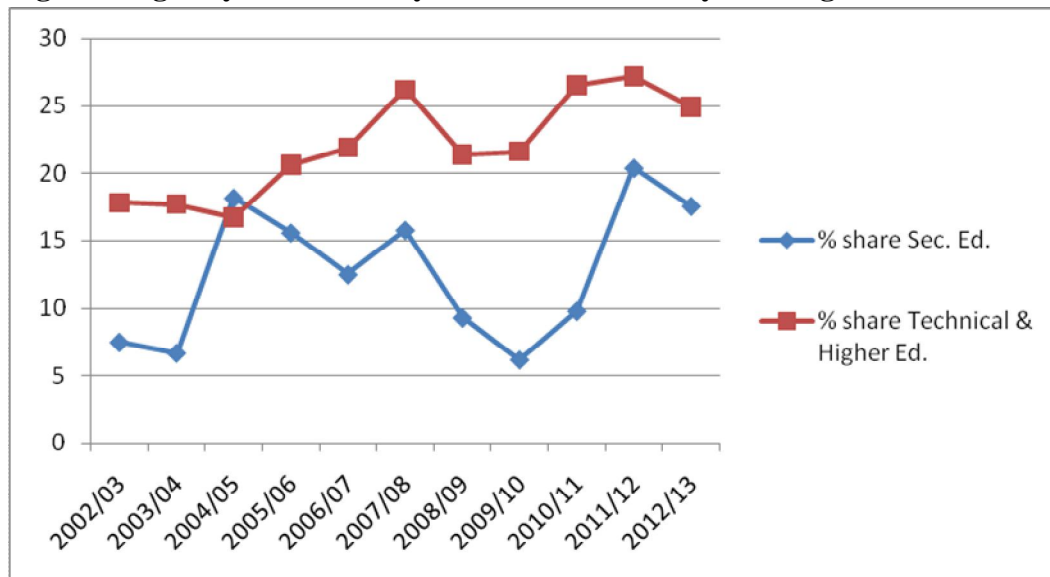
This was the case in the study area. In semi arid areas, many teachers do not have houses and those who live in houses, the houses are often in serious need of repair and most schools are in very poor physical environment. The challenges of school improvement in rural areas are associated with the absence of enough funds, but many rural schools in Tanzania like other countries have great difficulty attracting and retaining qualified teachers.

These findings are in line with Olouch (2011) who contends that the working environment in rural areas does not attract teachers especially those with high qualifications to work in very remote areas. There is a great shortage of staff houses and there are no good houses in rural areas for teachers to rent. Due to this situation, highly qualified teachers are either in urban or semi-urban areas.

In contrast, the Kenyan government has a policy of topping up salaries of civil servants and teachers working in hardship areas, most of which are Arid and Semi Arid Lands (ASAL). This has gone a long way towards attracting teachers to formerly poorly staffed areas (Carr-Hill et al., 2005). The impact of this is to help in tapping the problem of teachers’ unavailability and attract children to join in schools due to trust they put in the presence of the teachers.

The government of Tanzania has good intentions to motivate teachers but the main problem is scarcity of resources including meager budget in education sector as it is reflected in Figure 1 below.

Fig 1: Budgetary Allocation by Share for Secondary and Higher Education



Looking at Figure 1 above it can be argued that there has been an increase in budget in education sector within a period of ten years. However, the budget accorded to secondary education sector is lower than that of technical and higher education. The implication of this is that much of financial deficit in primary and secondary education is left to the schools which fail to provide good education to pupils and retention of teaches especially in rural areas becomes difficult.

Following the implementation of Secondary Education Development program (SEDP), adequate fund was allocated to support building schools and buying text books, although there were no resources allocated for building teachers' houses and increasing their salaries (Oluch, 2006; Haki Elimu, 2009; URT,2011).

3.1.4 Support for science subjects

Moreover, in the studied areas there is a big shortage of laboratories and technicians. This hinders the development of education sector and the nation at large. The government of Tanzania has succeeded to build a number of secondary schools in both rural and urban areas but most of these schools lacked laboratories, laboratory technicians and teachers for science subjects like Physics, Biology and Chemistry particularly in rural secondary schools. Even the National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA) does not realize that rural areas have problems that affect performance of science subjects and sets the same examination to all candidates including practical examinations in science subjects as it is to urban schools. This creates biases in terms of examination performance. Therefore, the government should solve this in order to ensure success in educational sector through Big Results Now (Oluoch, 2006).

Nyirenda (2013) is also in support with the present study findings who argued that who argued in some African countries today, secondary education is in a state of crisis. While quality, access and curricular reforms continue to serve as an ongoing source of public policy debate, educational policy makers are confronting increasing constraints in allocating scarce educational resources. Due to limited budget, the few classrooms and laboratories which have been built are overcrowded and the situation is worse in rural areas (ibid).

3.1.5 Contribution from parents and community

Another challenge mentioned was lack of feedback and information about management of secondary schools. The parents who were interviewed argued that they were not getting feedback from ward leaders and school administration about the progress of their schools. One parent said that ward leaders gave information to parents only when they needed money and other school contributions but they rejected to give feedback of what has been done after contributions. These findings contradict with those of Harold and Heinz (2004) which contend that management requires feedback and good communication for better role implementation. Effective implementation of management roles needs regular feedback to be given to people so that actual performance may be compared with the set objectives.

The findings further revealed that the educational administrators were only communicating with parents whenever they needed parents' contributions. This might be a contributory factor to ineffective implementation of school activities. It was therefore found that two-way communication was needed between school administration, ward leaders and parents. In supporting this, Babyegeya (2002) argues that two-way communication provides opportunity for immediate feedback. This implies feedback from ward leaders and school administration about the progress of the school activities can be a strong tool to motivate parents in implementing their roles and encourage them to participate in the management of their schools effectively.

Poor students' academic performance was also mentioned as one of the challenges that were facing parents in the implementation of their roles in financing education. Parents do not see the difference between secondary school and primary school leavers because all of them remain at home after completing their studies. Due to poor performance most of them are not selected to join further studies. In crosschecking what was said by the respondent, the researcher decided to review the National form four students' academic performance of one from the year 2005 to 2012. The summary is as shown on Table 2 below.

TABLE 2: STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN FORM FOUR NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS (CSEE) FOR SCHOOL "B" FOR EIGHT YEARS (2005-2012)

Year	Total students	Divisions					
		I-III	%	IV	%	Zero	%
2005	15	1	6.67	12	80.00	2	13.33
2006	24	7	29.17	14	58.33	3	12.50
2007	39	8	20.51	30	76.92	1	2.56
2008	32	8	25.00	21	65.62	3	9.38
2009	68	11	16.18	33	47.83	24	35.29
2010	48	3	6.25	17	35.42	28	58.33
2011	26	1	3.85	16	61.54	9	34.62
2012	40	1	2.50	10	25.00	29	72.50
Total	292	40	13.70	153	52.40	99	33.90

(Source: URT, 2012)

Key: % = Frequency

The findings on Table 2 show that the average pass rate of students who got division IV (52.40%) and zero (33.90%) was bigger than those who got division I-III (13.70%). These findings resemble the study of six Sub-Sahara African countries by Leu and Byren (2005) which reveals that there is a serious problem of poor performance in examinations in public schools.

Based on the findings above on students' academic performance it was found that this problem might be a big challenge that faces not only the government but also the parents and it is likely to be a proof for the poor financial contribution.

This scenario has also been observed by TADREG (1993) which found that parents were not generally against the idea of paying for education but they complained bitterly that they were not

getting the value for their money. Their contributions tend to disappear into schools and local government offices without reliable inputs on the quality of educational services.

3.2 Implication of the study for sustainable supports of secondary education

Poor cost sharing for studied schools was attributed to poor parents' economic conditions as their income depends on seasonal selling of crops due to unreliable rainfall. Thus, the present study has the following implication in education sector:

3.2.1 Since contributions in cash are burden to the majority due to poverty and very low cash income, this requires the community and parents to commit non-monetary resources such as labor power and other materials such as gravels, stones and sand. Parents should understand that secondary schools are investment for their children.

3.2.2 Similarly, the government has to ensure that adequate financing is provided to public secondary schools for the purchase of teaching and learning materials (currently at 25,000 Tanzanian shillings per student) and that these resources are disbursed timely and monitored effectively.

3.2.3 Finally, partnerships with non-government providers should be explored to see what contribution they can make to support secondary education.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Provision of quality secondary education is important in generating opportunities and benefits of social and economic development as envisaged in Tanzania Vision 2025. One way of helping mitigate this problem is through sustainable support of rural and semi arid areas, where there are communities which are too poor to cost share. The government should provide teaching and learning resources and pay for school running costs for poor communities to make secondary education equitable and affordable to all communities. Timely release of capitation grants is key to provide necessary teaching and learning materials to students and schools.

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