

## Challenges Facing Stakeholders in Implementing Fee Free Secondary Education in Tanzania

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### Abstract

This article focus on assessing challenges facing stakeholders in implementing fee free secondary education in Iringa municipality. The study employed purposive sampling and probability sampling to identify the respondents who were the parents, teachers, head teachers and the officers from the education department of the Iringa Municipal council. Data was collected through interviews, questionnaires and literature review of government documents regarding fee free education policy in Tanzania. Qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed using a mixed method which allowed the use of triangulation and guaranteed reliability and validity of the data collection tools. Findings from this study show that increased in teaching load, shortage and delays of capitation fund, diminished parent cooperation with school, decrease in the quality of education and high number of enrolment. Findings further reveal information gap between the government and the public on the practicability of the fee free education policy in ward secondary schools in Iringa municipality. The study has recommended for awareness creation to the public on the practicability of fee free education so as to avoid the misunderstandings before the government and the public on how fee free education works.

**Keywords:** Education, Fee Free Education, Policy, Stakeholders and Challenges.

### Introduction

One of the roles of the government in developing countries is to develop education policy. Through this development the country undergoes several changes in order to plan and promote the growth of education sector. The plan for educational development was one of the strategies employed by the African countries in order to fight poverty and illiteracy among its citizens (Mashala, 2019). This was in line with the global plans and strategies that created an environment enabling every child to attend school and obtain better education source. Education for all had a significant

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impact on the increased enrolment rates in sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2017). This pushed the African countries to implement a fee free education policy following the international commitments.

Since independence, Tanzania has made several changes to ensure the development of education in all parts of the country. Among the changes made by the government of Tanzania to ensure every citizen has access to education is the introduction of fee free education policy (Daven, 2008). The Tanzanian government introduced fee free education policy for the first time in 1963. The fee free education policy aims at enhancing equal chance of getting education to all people. The government financed the education system and provided free education from primary school to university education in Tanzania (HakiElimu, 2017). In 1980s the global economic crisis affected fee free education provision and hence cost sharing education policy was introduced in 1990s (UNESCO, 2009).

In 2014 the fees at primary education were abolished following the implementation of the primary education development Plan which aimed to improve access and quality of education in the country. Education and training policy version of 2014 extends the removal of fees from primary to lower secondary education- basic education. The policy has been put into action following the education circulars (number 5 of 2015 and 6 of 2016) which directed the implementation of Free Basic Education implement in Tanzania. The circulars made clear that the government is financing textbooks, lab chemicals and equipment, furniture, sports gear, repair of machines, construction and repair of school infrastructure, provision of meals in boarding schools and subsidies to each student.

Khamis (2017) conducted a study on the challenges facing heads of school in implementing fee free primary education in Zanzibar showed shortage of funds, delays in capitation grant and materials, lack of training to school heads as well as public misconception of the fee free policy as the main challenges facing school heads in implementing a fee free education policy in primary schools in the West District in Unguja. Mwakabungila in 2017 in Mafinga reveal that, public primary schools in Tanzania face a lot of challenges including inadequate funds, overcrowded classes, shortage of teachers, delay in disbursement of funds and poor knowledge of parents towards the policy. This led to poor performance of the pupils and hence the researcher recommended for stakeholders' sensitization on their role towards fee free education policy in their local communities. This study intend to assess challenges facing stakeholders in implementing fee free secondary education in Iringa municipality specifically in ward secondary schools.

### **Methodology and Material**

This article focus on assessing challenges facing stakeholders in implementing fee free secondary education in Iringa municipality. The study employed purposive sampling and probability sampling to identify the respondents who were the parents, teachers, head teachers and the officers from the education department of the Iringa

Municipal Council. Data was collected through interviews, questionnaires and literature review of government documents regarding fee free education policy in Tanzania. In this study, the respondents were teachers, parents and municipal education officer, who were selected from six wards and one municipal education officer from the Municipal. Sample of seventy nine (79) respondents were selected to be employed include forty two (42) teachers, thirty (30) parents and one (1) municipal educational officer. Qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed using a mixed method which allowed the use of triangulation and guaranteed reliability and validity of the data collection tools.

### **Data Presentation and Results Analysis**

Data presentations and analysis on the challenges facing stakeholders in implementing fee free secondary education in Iringa municipality specifically in ward secondary schools. The findings reveal the following.

#### **Increased in Teaching Load**

After the introduction of fee free education policy, the enrolment rate were pile up in all wards secondary schools in Iringa municipality. Due to the decrease of burden to the parents where by many students fail to attend school because of the fee, but now the cost is upon to the government. This encourage the parents to send their children to schools (Brayman, 2001). The enrolment rate of the students after the introduction of the policy leads to the increase of teaching load to the teachers during teaching and learning process. Findings from teachers who were administered using rating scale, 66.7% strong agree and 33.3% agreed that the increased enrolment which has increased the teaching log. Before the introduction of the fee free education policy the number of student were not extremely high compared to current enrolment, after this policy the class size ratio increased from 1:40 up to 1:60 which become too hard in making follow-up of individual student during teaching and learning process. Through this high number of enrolled student in schools it may increase the teaching log to the teachers. A teacher from school M state that:

Now days it is very hard to we teachers to make follow-up during the teaching and learning process as the lesson plan need. Most of us we teach and at the end of the lesson we provide exercises to the student, due to the large number of students in the class it is hard even to mark the exercise (Head Teacher 1, School B: February 14, 2021).

One head of school blame on the teaching load to the teachers during teaching and learning process by commented that:

Immediately after the introduction of fee free education policy, the teaching load are increased twice, this make teacher to be too busy on teaching and leave other activities of administrating to the school head

,the thing which make hardness on supervision to us school heads alone(Head Teacher 2, School A: February 14, 2021).

Refer data obtained from admission book from different schools has shown the enrolment rates of form one students before and after the introduction of the fee free education policy as follows:

**Table 1:** Students Enrolment from 2013 to 2020

Year	School L	School M	School N	School O	School P	School Q
2013	245	116	114	173	168	190
2014	196	102	122	137	170	154
2015	121	151	125	131	196	134
2016	215	117	184	168	213	230
2017	217	153	247	191	200	213
2018	246	211	195	136	198	200
2019	201	190	155	255	225	199
2020	281	177	103	93	230	205

**Source:** Field data, February, 2021.

The findings show that since its inception in 2015, the Free Secondary Policy has recorded some improvements in secondary education. Some of them include increased enrolment rate, increased number of teachers, but students pass rate is still very low in government schools. Drop out on the other hand is still alarming. Since the government has made a decision to deliver free education, including abolishing school fees and other contributions, then it must offset the need for funds at the school level including providing sufficient and timely capitation grants. It is imperative for the government to provide all necessary support, fund, qualified teachers and ensure conducive learning environments for students to reduce dropout and improve performance of students (Mashala, 2019). One possible area for future research is to examine how the Tanzanian government should deliver quality education under the umbrella of free secondary education.

### **Insufficient and Delays of Capitation Fund**

School as educational institution need fund in order to fulfill its needs into various aspect like buying stationeries and rehabilitation of buildings, with regard of high number of students even the demand of stationeries is high and destruction of infrastructure also high. In six ward within Iringa municipality among of the head of school blame on insufficient of capitation fund compare to the demand of the school. Some school head report that the grants from the government were delaying and it make hardship in running the school especially in urgent issues. 100% of responding head teachers highlighted that there has been delays in capitation funds allocated to the schools. The allocated capitation fund has been insufficient as compared to the school needs. One of the responding head teacher added that:

Fee free education has helped much on school administration but as the enrolment rate has gone higher, the allocated capitation fund is insufficient. This has made schools to fail to implement some of the activities that need immediate funding (Head Teacher 3, School N: February 18, 2021).

At school 'N' the head teacher showed two doors which were broken for more than a month and the funds to repair the doors were neither allocated nor received. This shows how delays in funds hinder implementation of different activities at school. The fund from government come with guideline on how to spend the money, it will be very difficult on the problem which arise on school and not appear on the manual guideline from the government. This make hardness to school head in to running school. The main factors that appear to undermine the success of effective assisting classroom teachers are inadequate of facilities, insufficient resource materials and shortage of teachers. It was apparent that while the national government directives of free educational policy gave an opportunity for all school aged children to receive formal education these are the setbacks that impede effective implementation of this policy in secondary schools.

The implication suggests that, as specialized teachers, class rooms need to be assisted in managing class in overcrowded class room (Abady, 2017). In order for the school to function properly facilities need to be available and enough because they are the education by enhancing the level of motivation and academic performance of secondary school students. Schools facilities are likely to motivate a student learning outcome, the buildings, classroom, library, laboratories and toilet facilities. Schools without library and laboratory, the students are more like to be less motivated and perform poorly. In most schools, physical facilities which are germane to effective learning and academic performance are not sufficient and those available are not of any quality standard and even lack maintenance while some are in dilapidated condition (Akomofe & Adesue, 2016).

### **Diminished Parent Cooperation with Schools**

This was highly influenced by parents not paying school fee a thing that makes them less responsible. Before the introduction of fee free education policy parents were really active in following up with school on their children's development. After the introduction of the policy, parents have been less caring about the schools and their children's education as they don't pay anything to the school. Result show that 83.7% of parents agreed that the introduction of fee free policy in ward secondary schools may reduce the parents cooperation with school especially on academic matter. One head of school from school L commented that:

When you call parents to come to school in solving a certain problem concerning their children they refuse, they believe teachers and school head are responsible for each and everything which is going on in school (Head Teacher 4, School L: February 18, 2021).

This indicates that the diminished parent cooperation with school and make the caring of student became difficult because the teachers supposed to carry the all burden of teaching and caring the student which is not easy task. The findings indicate that female parents were more willing to assist children in homework. Parents limited assistance in areas such as reading, writing and solving difficult sums. Parental involvement in homework positively rather than school academic performance (Echaune, 2015).

### **Pile Up and Continuity of Contributions**

The government cover the fee costs per each students. Other contribution were proceed as usually but depend much on the agreement of school board members within the schools. The contribution helps in facilitating some activities in schools. Majority of parents they blame on the continuation of costs while the government covers some costs. Pile up and continuity of contribution were extremely exceeded to the secondary ward schools in Iringa municipality, this make parents to suffer and blame on the continuation of contribution. Findings show that through interview with parents 100% agreed with pile up and continuity of contribution immediately after the introduction of the fee free education policy.

The findings revealed that the school board members have the mandate to introduce new contribution if they were agreed, this mandate create room for the presence of many contribution in school especially in ward secondary schools, one parent comment that:

Now days there are too many contribution in school N,we don't understand the reason behind, wonderful enough all these contribution pile up after abolition of school fees, every year we contribute for rehabilitation of toilets, is it real every year there is the same problem which need contribution from us? (Parent 1, School N: February 24, 2021).

In school L every month we contribute for the monthly examinations, be very student contribute five thousand Tanzanian shillings every month. If you may totalize per year it exceed to the amount of school fees which were abolished by the government, this is the burden to us (Parent 2, School L: February 24, 2021).

Parents also pointed out the increase in cost of stationeries and school uniforms following the introduction of fee free education in secondary school. Also, through the interview with Municipal Secondary Education Officer indicate that, the contribution on schools still exists in order to reduce the load carried by the government on the implementation of fee free, the Municipal Secondary Education Officer commented that:

Fee free education is not self-driven by the government at 100% there is still a need for parents to contribute where necessary so as to cover the deficiency in other areas that the government is

not able to fund (Secondary Education Officer 1: February 23, 2021).

Findings were given out on whether or not primary education is free and equally accessible. The thesis identifies the main costs and restraints to access and also brings forward the children's perception on these restraints (Daven, 2008).

### **Parents Aren't Informed Enough on the Policy**

Information is taken as the bridge between two sides if it needs to reach a certain goal. In implementation of fee free education policy the information is highly needed in order to link the stakeholders so as to simplify the implementation of the policy. If the information it is missing even the success will be difficult to be attained. The respondents who were parents they point out that after introduction of fee free education policy in Tanzania they were not well informed about the policy on how it is supposed to be implemented as well as its boundaries after being implemented. Findings revealed lack of knowledge on fee free education among the parents which resulted from lack of information and hinder to a great extent the practicability of the policy. As commented by one parent during the interview, one parent said that:

The government emphasize that education is free, why some teachers in school especially school M told our children to go with security fees and electricity fees while government insist education is free (Parent 3, School M: February 28, 2021).

On the same point another parent comment that:

Some of us think that the government is supposed to cover all the school requirements. When we are asked to voluntarily contribute fund to solve some challenges facing schools. We always blame the government of Tanzania for not fulfilling the promise outlined in fee-free education policy." (Parent 4, School M: February 28, 2021).

This indicated that the majority of parent there have little understand on the policy that's why they believe fee free education is free for everything while the government abolish fee only. If they were knowledgeable and well informed on the policy it can reduce ambiguity on its implication. Through semi structured interview which were conducted with municipal education officer, the public misconceptions what fee free is and what is entails of fee free education that's why it become too difficult on the supervision of the implementation of the policy to the majority every one understand on its own meaning. The municipal education officer commented that citizen misunderstood the president when he said that education will be free.

Findings from the study showed lack of training to school heads as well as public misconception of the fee free policy as the main challenges facing school heads in implementing a fee free education policy in primary schools in the west district in

Unguja (Juma, 2017). Awareness about the fee free education and right to education was very low among rural parents. The study proposed for an intervention to improve the awareness level in the community (Mukannavar and Joshi, 2018). The need for awareness creation on the aim and meaning of fee free education to the community as there is an information gap between what the policy paper says and what the communities understand. The study recommended a continuous stakeholder engagement in order to create conducive environment for implementation of fee free education policy in Sub-Saharan Africa.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Basing on the findings from this study which sought to investigate on the challenges facing stakeholders in implementing fee free secondary education in Iringa municipality. The study revealed that, increase teaching log, insufficient and delays in capitation funds, diminished parent cooperation with schools. Increased enrolment rate as opposed to the resources to support the students, pile up and continuity of contribution as well as parents aren't informed well about the policy are the main challenges faced stakeholders on the implementation of fee free education policy in ward secondary schools. Findings revealed that public awareness and understanding of the policy is crucial for the successful implementation of not only the fee free education policy but also for any other policy the government introduces. The study recommends for awareness creation to the public on the practicability of fee free education so as to avoid the misunderstandings before the government and the public on how fee free education works.

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