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Original Article

Status of Learning Resources in Day Secondary Schools Located in Chepalungu Sub County in the Wake of Corona Virus Pandemic

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Education is a fundamental human right that ideally should be available to all. Currently, Kenya supports international advocacy for universal education for all school-going children. In this Republic, 8592 public secondary schools are ascribing to subsidized free day secondary education (FDSE) programs. This program was put in place to improve access to secondary school education. The Government supports the post-primary education program by providing funds for infrastructure, tuition materials, and employment of support staff. During the implementation of the education program, the Corona pandemic struck, thereby disrupting the education process. After a short break, normal school operations resumed. Therefore, this study intended to evaluate the coping strategies used by schools in Chepalungu to deal with the mandatory spacing rules put in place by the Ministry of Health to help control the spread of the virus. The study targeted 54-day schools from which a sample of 48 was selected. A cross-sectional survey design was employed whereby questionnaires were administered to principals in the study area. Key Informant interview was also conducted with two Education officers. The study established that the FDSE funds availed to the schools were inadequate to help erect additional learning spaces, which would help enforce the social distancing rule. Classes were congested and were operating above the required capacity. This study recommends that the FDSE funds should be increased so that learning can go on in an environment that responds to the guidelines put forth by the Ministry of Health as far as containing the spread of coronavirus is concerned. Out of the study, it was found that learning resources in day schools were inadequate, and students were learning in congested environments.

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INTRODUCTION

Globally, education is regarded as a basic human right that everyone has a right to access and should be accessible in the elementary and fundamental stages (Robinson et al., 2020). In Kenya, secondary schools operate under the Government's guidelines and policies through the Ministry of Education (MOE). In bid to ensure that the stipulations set forth by the Ministry of Education are met, the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) work hand in hand. The Teacher's Service Commission. The mission of the TSC is to regulate, maintain and manage the teaching service through sound policies and operational excellence for quality teaching and lifelong learning (Kenya, Republic of, 2024) On the other hand, the mission of KNEC is to assess learner abilities and achievements in conformity with global standards (KNEC, 2020).

Despite the presence of the stipulations set forth, many schools cannot complete the syllabus due to scarce facilities, hence weak performance in National exams (Isiye and Marani, 2015). The extent to which performance relates to available learning/teaching resources, if determined, may indicate a correlation. The range and diversity of materials used in learning influence exam performance because of exposure to different types of questions.

Lucas and Mbithi (2012) noted that the Free Primary Education program increased the number of students who completed primary school, spurred private school entry, and increased access for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Despite the gains made by the program, Otike and Kiruki (2011) pointed out challenges in implementing the program included: under staffing, poor working conditions and inadequate funding as major barriers faced by the program.

Despite the presence of these challenges, there has been a remarkable expansion in primary education, both in terms of the number of schools established and in the number of children enrolled, over the past years that is from the year 2003, this was after change of government when now they introduced free primary Education (Otike and Kiruki, 2011).

Against this backdrop, the Government of Kenya introduced Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) in 2008. Its aim was to improve the transition from primary to secondary. This was after free primary education had been in place since 2003. This implementation followed another government influence on free primary education, which had experienced some challenges. The implementation of FDSE has not been without challenges. The challenges range from inadequacy in learning resources to poor financial management skills.

Free Primary Education (FPE) was introduced in Kenya in January 2003 by the NARC government, which was elected in December 2002. This was the second attempt to introduce the Policy in post-colonial Kenya after the first attempt back in the 1970s failed to achieve much (Mulinya and Orodho, 2015). The FPE program helped to directly expand access to education as a top priority given that education, particularly primary education, was recognized as a basic human right in the 1948 United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (Adero and Otieno, 2023). Over the years, enrolment has been steadily rising from 5.9 million (boys 3 million, girls 2.9 million) in 2000 to 7.2 million (boys 3.7 million, girls 3.5 million) in 2005, to 9.4 million (boys 4.8 million, girls 4.6 million) in 2010. The steady increase, especially since 2003, can be partly attributed to strategies put in place by the Government of Kenya such as

the introduction of free primary education and the school infrastructure programme (Orodho, 2015).

Section 13(1) of the Children's Act 2022 supports this point by asserting, "Every child has the right to free and compulsory basic education in accordance with Article 53(1)(b) of the Constitution (Kenya, Republic of, 2022). It was because of this clause and the realization of the fact that education contributes directly to the growth of the national income and improvement of human welfare that the new Government of Kenya initiated the FPE policy (UNESCO, 2006). As the post-2015 goal-setting process continues, education has increasingly been discussed as a development goal in its own right and as a critical way of reaching other development goals (United Nations, 2013).

After implementing the Free Primary Education Program, the Free Secondary Program was implemented to deal with the high transition rates from primary to secondary school. The Free Day Secondary Program targeted students from low-income households. Olang'o et al. (2021) explain further the Government of Kenya officially launched the Free Secondary Education (FSE) program at the beginning of 2008 to address the plight of children from poor households who, upon completion of free primary education, could not get access to secondary school, primarily because of school fees. Through the FSE policy, the Government subsidizes Ksh. (Kenyan shillings) 10,625 per child per year in government secondary schools.

As the implementation of the FDSE continued, the Corona Pandemic struck and led to many dramatic disruptions. It can be truly said that the pandemic led to the worst crisis in education of the last century. At the peak of school closures in April 2020, 94 percent of students – or 1.6 billion children – were out of school worldwide (World Bank, 2021). Compounded by the pandemic, these challenges led to learning losses and deepened inequalities in education. Around 17 million students and more than 320,000 teachers were affected by the closure of 30,000 primary and secondary schools in 2020. Schools gradually

reopened from October 2020 to January 2021 (World Bank, 2022).

The Coronavirus (CoV) is a large family of viruses known to cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to acute respiratory tract infection. The severity of the infection may be visible as pneumonia, acute respiratory syndrome, and even death. Until the outbreak of SARS, this group of viruses was greatly overlooked. However, since the SARS and MERS outbreaks, these viruses have been studied in greater detail, propelling the vaccine research. On December 31, 2019, mysterious cases of pneumonia were detected in the city of Wuhan in China's Hubei Province. On January 7, 2020, the causative agent was identified as a new coronavirus (2019-nCoV), and the disease was later named COVID-19 by the WHO (Keni et al., 2020). The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) was declared a public health emergency worldwide by the World Health Organization (WHO). Increasing evidence has demonstrated human-to-human transmission that primarily affects the upper respiratory tract, followed by lower respiratory tract damage leading to severe pneumonia (Muralidar et al., 2020)

On the one hand, the various day schools experienced problems dealing with the high transition rates. On the other hand, the coronavirus spatial requirements exerted more pressure on learning resources. While explaining how the success of delivery of education hinges on availability of physical and material resources, Adedji and Owoeye (2002), indicated that resources such as classrooms, furniture, and teaching and learning materials are essential for academic achievements. In the context of this study, the FDSE program was a worthwhile venture by the Government since more learners had access to education. This study aimed to explore how the schools in Chepalungu dealt with the increased student population in light of the additional space requirements to help contain the spread of the coronavirus. The study also considered the layout of the existing classroom spaces viz the social distancing requirements

stipulated by the COVID 19 containment guidelines.

Social distancing, two words recently entering the global lexicon, is not new to cultural anthropologists. Over fifty years ago, Edward T. Hall coined the term *proxemics*, establishing that the relationship and distance of human bodies to each other determines the range of social behaviour (Mehta, 2020).

This study sought to evaluate the extent to which the presence of the pandemic impacted on schools in Chepalungu. On one hand the behaviour government had a standard funding criteria before the pandemic begun. UNESCO (2013) outlines the fact that the ultimate responsibility for financing education falls on the Government. One of the principles of providing basic education, as indicated in the Basic Education Act of 2013, is the provision of funds and related resources to meet every child's needs to acquire basic education (Republic of Kenya, 2013).

Kwamboka (2012) explains further that the initial Policy on disbursement of funds under the free day secondary program was that a school must have 40 to 45 students to receive funds. Under the secondary school program, authorities would pay schools about 130 dollars per pupil annually. At the start of the three school terms, this amount was to be allocated in lump sums. The monies were expected to cover the tuition and administration costs, school maintenance and improvements, co-curricular activities, and class activities.

Increased and prompt government funding is required to improve the quality of education. According to the research paper by Muganda et al. (2016), it was stated that the Education Sector requires a lot of funds to sustain itself, and they believe that the Government should increase the allocation towards FDSE. Through FSE policy, the Government was expected to provide funds to purchase textbooks and learning aids; the achievement to this effect ought to be determined. The trend in the release of the FSE funds may influence the quality and provision of learning resources in schools. Satisfaction levels of the

schools in the way the FDSE funds are released to schools and subsequent utility should constantly be evaluated. The national budget determines the allocation of funds towards the support of the FSE programs. Less funding could mean fewer staff members, fewer resources, and a lower number of services for students. Against this backdrop of the problems in the funding, schools in Chepalungu had to contend with the mandatory adherence to the additional space requirements required to be put in place to help contain the coronavirus pandemic. This study therefore evaluated the extent to which the schools in the study area handled the complications arising from the pandemic and the extent to which the Government provided an enabling environment for the same.

The emergence of the coronavirus obviously put a strain on the FDSE program due to the additional space requirements that accompany response to the presence of the virus. The underlying questions would be: did the presence of coronavirus affect the quality of education; which coping strategies were put in place by day schools regarding the mandatory spatial requirements of the novel coronavirus?

Monitoring of Programs

It is usually considered good practice to include monitoring mechanisms to ensure that a program achieves its objectives. Khan (2012) reveals that monitoring tracks changes in a program, project, or policy outcomes over time. It is the systematic and routine collection of information from policies, projects, and programs to learn from experiences, make necessary changes, and make outcome assessments in input-output use. This provides internal and external accountability of resources used, and the results obtained provide a basis to make informed decisions on the initiative's future or Policy. Given the observation proposed above, this study sought to examine the extent to which monitoring strategies of the FDSE program were responsive to the prevailing coronavirus pandemic regarding the need for additional spatial requirements.

Projects in public secondary schools arise out of the desire to satisfy demands, needs, and beneficiaries and try to achieve Vision 2030 (Kathongo and Kamau, 2018). Within the public schools, therefore, the question brought to the fore is whether issues of the pandemic were articulated and dealt with when planning for the needs of various schools in Chepalungu.

Monitoring a process is essential to institutions in many ways; how the process is done depends on the purpose and objectives of the institution. The influence of a monitoring style adopted in an institution affects how resources are utilized, affecting student's academic performance. Schmoker (2000) suggests that progress monitoring can be used in making a wide range of decisions, which includes identification of students at risk for school failure, placement in compensatory programs, instructional grouping, selecting/writing annual goals and short-term objectives, and monitoring progress toward achievement of goals and objectives.

Other than students' educational welfare in monitoring projects, this study sought to evaluate the presence of monitoring strategies employed across the schools in regard to the Covid 19 pandemic.

Objective of the Study

To evaluate the adequacy of the FDSE program in the wake of the Corona Virus mandatory guidelines for design of schools in Chepalungu Sub County.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This research used a cross-sectional survey design to collect primary data employing questionnaires

and interviews. Information about the total population of students in the Sub- County was obtained from the Sub-County Office of Education. Similarly, the number of day schools was obtained from statistics recorded by the Chepalungu Sub-County education office. The information obtained was used to determine the number of schools and the number of students and teachers targeted. The constituency is subdivided into five administrative units.

Permission to seek information from sampled schools was sought from Maseno University Ethics Review Committee and the Sub County Director of Education (Chepalungu). Once permission was granted, the researcher went and administered questionnaires to principals. Two different Key informant interviews were carried out with the following officials: Bomet KUPPET Executive Secretary and one TSC Sub County Director. The researchers also carried out observation on the school physical facilities. Other relevant information required in this study, like the number of schools, was collected from the records found in the Sub-County Education Office.

Sample Size

This study's sample size was determined using the Morgan and Krejcie table for sample size. The study area has five administrative wards, with schools in the ward distributed as shown. Schools were used as the unit of analysis. Within the schools, the following were targeted: Principals, Heads of Stratified random sampling is used to obtain the sample, as indicated in the table below.

Table 1: Sampling Frame

Ward	Number of day schools	% of population	Sample
Chebunyo	11	21%	10
Kongasis	11	21%	10
Siongiroi	12	22%	12
Sigor	10	18%	8
Nyangores	10	18%	8
Total	54	100%	48

From the sampled schools, the principals were issued with questionnaires.

RESULTS

Demographic Information of the Respondents

In this study, the respondents' demographic information included getting information on their

age, gender, and experience. The data collected focused on the implementation of free day secondary education. The respondents were the principals in day schools, sub-county education officials, sub-county TSC officials, and union officials (KUPPET). Data from the questionnaires administered to the principals has been presented herein.

Table 2: Gender of respondents

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	37	77%
Female	11	23%

More principals in the Sub-County were males (77%) than their female counterparts. This means more male teachers are qualified to head than female teachers. As to how it influences the effective implementation of the FDSE program, the relationship could not be commented on. The observation only shows that women and men have not attained equality in society in areas of management. Males are still dominant in most management opportunities within day schools in the Sub County.

Status of Learning /Teaching Resources

The respondents were asked to indicate the status of the following physical resources in their schools. The respondents could pick more than one response to highlight the school's problem areas. Responses to be chosen regarding evaluating the resources included adequate, inadequate, or missing. The responses were summarized in the table below:

Table 3: Evaluation of learning/teaching resources (multiple answers allowed)

Resource	Adequate		Inadequate		Missing	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Classrooms	7	16	37	84	0	0
Labs	4	9	32	73	8	18
Library	0	0	1	2	43	98
Computer rooms	0	0	21	46	23	52
Computers	0	0	10	23	34	77
Textbooks	36	82	8	18	0	0

Classrooms had the highest percentage of inadequate spaces (84%). Some schools had no laboratories (18%), libraries (98%), and computer rooms. The table given demonstrates that there is a limited number of learning resources in the school. Much of the adequate resources are the textbooks, having been positively responded to by 82% of the principals. It is expected that performance ought to have been better due to increased student accessibility to books. Though the textbooks are adequate, library space is inadequate (98%), as most respondents indicated they have insufficient library space. The library allows learners to research and further search for

details of learned content. When library space is missing, learners may not expand the knowledge achieved by their teachers. The library also provides storage of reference books that contain more incredible details than students' course books. Currently, high schools' library remains the primary source of information compared to any other source (Williams et al., 2013).

It is also alarming that 84% of classrooms and 73% of laboratories have been flagged as inadequate, yet these are the two main areas where active learning occurs.

Of the 44 respondents (principals), 35 indicated that most of their projects are financed by FDSE funds, while the rest suggested that they fund most of their projects through CDF and other sources. The FDSE funds were limited to tuition resources, maintenance, and running administrative functions. In the responses, there were classrooms and laboratories in most day schools, but they were not adequate for use by the learners. On the other hand, the computer rooms and libraries were missing in the schools. The textbooks used were being placed in bookstores as the libraries were missing. These resources that are missing are vital in the implementation of the school programs. Ignoring them, therefore, would have performance hampered.

The trend of the results points to a problem regarding the adequacy of FDSE funds. As a result, this would also impact the extent to which a school would entrench the additional spatial requirements required to control the spread of coronavirus.

A Key informant interview was held with the Bomet County KUPPET Executive Secretary on the prevailing conditions as far as the space requirements were concerned. The following were gathered from the interview: the FDSE program has been riddled with lots of delay in disbursement and this greatly affected the implementation of the program at the grassroots. As a result, schools were operating on a negative budget since the academic program was running on course as much as the financial support for the program was lagging. As a result, the overall quality of education was impacted upon negatively due to the inadequacy of funds. These findings are in agreement with what Mueni, Peter and Mulwa (2019) state that most public secondary schools were not able to adequately plan for the use of the tuition funds channelled to the schools. Consequently, this triggered a delay in purchase of curriculum support materials. Furthermore, teachers were not able to plan their classroom activities which further impacted their efficiency in teaching due to delayed purchase of teaching

materials. These consequently affected the rate of syllabus coverage.

The KUPPET Executive Secretary also lauded the teachers in the area of study for their commitment to delivery of education as much as they were operating in congested conditions and also had to contend with discrimination in pay. The official referred to a collective bargaining agreement which was being implemented by TSC, which unfortunately had been applied selectively. A KII Was also conducted with the TSC County Director who pinpointed out that a major hindrance to the FDSE was lack of adequate staff. Most classes in the study area were therefore congested since the teacher student ratio across the schools was not the ideal. As a result, the overall efficiency of the FDSE was compromised. The presence of the pandemic further served to complicate the whole education program.

This finding is in agreement with what Jonyo and Jonyo (2017) who stated that although the Teacher's Service Commission has over the years made a deliberate effort to bridge the gaps in teacher establishment across the country, there is still a deficit in excess of 85,000 teachers. This is occasioned by increasing enrolment in primary and post primary institutions, expansion of the existing schools and registration of new ones. This situation has resulted in high Pupil Teacher ratio which comprises the quality of education.

Resources Available in the Schools

Physical Resources

Principals were required to evaluate the class size in terms of whether the classes had students of up to 45. The responses have been highlighted below.

The responses on the utility of the resources indicate that only 16% of schools had classes that had a maximum of 45 students. 84% of classes and % of laboratories were congested. In Chepalungu, therefore, the learners per class are above the capacities of the classes in the schools and hence require extra classes. Overcrowding occurs when a school facility enrolls more students than it was assigned to accommodate. Large class

sizes contravene the spatial necessary requirements in enforcing the social distancing rule. The prevailing circumstances within the

schools would promote spread rather than curb the spread of the virus.

Table 4: State of Resources in the Schools

Resource	Underutilized		Full capacity		Congested		Missing Facilities	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Classroom	0	0	7	16	37	84	0	0
Lab	15	31	4	9	21	44	8	18
Library	0	0	1	2	0	0	47	98
Computer rooms	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	52

The findings from this study differ from what Scott (2020) observes, whereby it was noted that in the short term, the crisis will likely lead to widespread behavioural shifts in how we interact with and within places. Mehta (2020) also states that the relationship between health and place is now on all our minds as we learn to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. The crisis is likely to lead to widespread behavioural changes in how we interact with places in the short and long term.

Within the study area, the behavioural pattern regarding curricula delivery was the same before

and during the pandemic. The day schools still made use of congested classes in the delivery of content. One main reason for this anomaly was the lack of funds to implement programs to expand classrooms and laboratories.

Challenges Related to Demand for Physical Facilities and Resources

Available Classrooms

Number of classrooms in use varied from school to school and has been presented in *Table 5*.

Table 5: Distribution of classrooms

No. of classrooms in use	No	%
4 classrooms	25	57
6 classrooms	8	18
8 classrooms	6	14
Above 8 classrooms	5	11
Total	44	100

This demonstrates that the majority of the schools in the Sub County are single-streamed, and a few are triple-streamed. The students in the stated classrooms were over the standard class size. Attending student's individually by the teacher was impossible because the classes were congested. Methods of instruction where a classroom is overcrowded are limited to the lecture method. The lecture teaching method is

said to be teacher-centred and not viable for secondary school learners.

Classroom Shortage

Principals were required to project the additional rooms needed for classes to ensure effective learning on one hand and enforcement of the social distancing rule on the other hand. The responses have been presented herein.

Table 6: Classroom facilities needed

No. of classrooms required	No.	%
4	30	68%
6	10	23%
Not sure	4	9%
Total	44	100%

A greater number of respondents indicated they need an average of four classrooms (68%). This demand for classrooms by most of the schools indicates that students in day schools have increased significantly. However, class congestion leads to greater pressure on the available resources. Coping strategies in dealing

with congested facilities have been outlined below:

The respondents were supposed to respond by ticking among the given choices in order of rank, where 1 unlikely, 2 Rarely, and 3 Often

Table 7: Coping strategies for desk shortage

	Unlikely		Rarely		Often	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Crowded sitting	7	16%	0	0%	38	86%
Multi-shift teaching	0	0%	0	0%	3	7%
Others (specify)	0	0%	0	0%	5	11%

Most respondents prefer having crowded classes (86%) than applying the other alternatives. Those who stated the use of others preferred using plastic chairs and benches. Chairs used by learners must be designed appropriately to avoid learners' distraction through body strains. Effective learning takes place in an environment where distractions are highly minimized. If the seating tools are agents of distracters, then achievement by the learners will not be achieved. There were instances when two students could share one seat. This thereby became a distraction on the learner's part while also serving as a source of active virus spread.

The results from the study are similar to an observation made by Mehta (2020), who suggested that not everyone can partake in the new proxemics of social distancing. The social disparities are stark. The results in the study area differ from what Roses et al. (2021) stated, stating that an obvious potential consequence of COVID-19 is a generalized aversion to large crowds. The classes were largely congested within the school

setup, and both teacher and learner put up with this to continue with the learning process.

Muralidar et al. (2020) argue that increasing evidence has demonstrated human-to-human transmission that primarily affects the upper respiratory tract followed by the damage of the lower respiratory tract, leads to severe pneumonia. Within the study area, the school students' behaviour communicated that all students had a strong immune system. As a result, the human-to-human transmission was not something to be bothered about.

Such an arrangement does not, however, favour vulnerable groups. Scott (2020) cautions that reflecting on key public health advice concerning highly vulnerable groups is critical.

Existence of Monitoring Strategies and Programs

Respondents were required to explain whether there were strategies to be used for monitoring the FDSE program.

Table 8: Table on the existence of monitoring strategy on projects and programs (Multiple Responses)

Project	Yes		No	
	No	%	No	%
Classroom	44	100%	0	0
Lab	35	80%	9	20%
Library	8	18%	36	81%
Computer room	0	0	44	100%
Use of computer	0	0	44	100%
Use of textbooks	44	100%	0	0%

The monitoring activities stated were using class representatives to control classes and class activities, using log books during construction, using checklists, using inventory records in the laboratories, and issuing library cards for those in the library. This was an indicator that there was monitoring of the programs and activities of the schools. However, the focus of the monitoring strategies did not take cognizance of the changing

trends in terms of additional space requirements within the school compound.

External Monitoring of Day School by MOE

The table below shows the responses given where the respondents had been asked to state the number of times assessed by MOE and when MOE last assessed them.

Table 9: Monitoring of School Projects by External Bodies

Number of times assessed	No	%
Once	12	27
Twice	14	32
Thrice	10	23
Four	8	18
Never	0	0
Total	44	100

The MOE has assessed the majority of the schools. This could be the requirement before a school is registered as a public institution. The Ministry must first assess the quality and standards of the structures before the school goes

operational. Many respondents indicated they had been accessed twice in the five years. The distribution of the assessment is as given in the table below for the given years.

Table 10: Frequency of Monitoring

Year Last assessed	Frequency								Total	%
	Once	Twice	Thrice	Four						
2016	3	7%	4	9%	1	2%	2	5%	10	23
2017	2	5%	1	2%	2	5%	1	2%	6	14
2018	4	9%	2	5%	2	5%	2	5%	10	23
2019	1	2%	3	7%	3	7%	1	2%	8	18
2020	2	5%	4	9%	2	5%	2	5%	10	23
	12	27%	14	32%	10	23%	8	18%		

The table shows that assessment of learning /teaching in school is rarely done. The trend is that after every two years, there is a spike in monitoring, after which there is a lapse again. In 2019, the assessment by the external body across the day schools stood at 18%. This was the year when Corona Virus was discovered in Wuhan. In 2020, assessments stood at 23%.

accomplish the task. Schools have internal monitoring systems which are particularly executed under the management of the principals. These systems are expected to remedy the rarely done monitoring by the external systems of the Ministry of education because of inadequate personnel. Assessment of all schools within a year is not possible. Only a maximum of ten assessments were done in the year for the five years used. The year with the least number of assessments was 2017, which was six assessments in the whole year; this accounted for 14% of all assessments done in the schools for five consecutive years.

The Key Informant Interviews revealed that the assessment frequency was low because of the limited number of personnel supposed to monitor within the sub-county. Chepalungu Sub-County Education office had only four officers supervising the implementation of FDSE in 54-day schools. This number of staff was too few to

Given that schools had a mandate to monitor, the principals had a leeway to ensure that social distancing rules were enforced in schools. Effecting the mandatory spacing requirements however proved to be a challenge since in the first place, the finances to support the same were not disbursed. In the first place, the disbursement of the FDSE funds was lagging behind and the additional requirements put more strain on the project. By the time the pandemic struck, schools were operating beyond their capacities, having admitted more students than what was required. The “spirit” of the FDSE program was that all pupils who had transitioned from the primary phase had to be absorbed into secondary schools.

While commenting on implementing the Free Primary Education Program in Kenya, Mulinya and Orodho (2015) explained that there was a need to improve the physical facilities in public primary schools since the teaching and learning facilities available at the inception of FPE were overstretched. The study recommended that the Government and other stakeholders should take decisive measures to alleviate the situation through refurbishment and establishment of more physical facilities in the Primary schools. This study established that the admitted presence of inadequate facilities which pupils faced in Primary school was still experienced when they transitioned to the secondary schools

The assessment reports of the Ministry and Principals should form the basis for pushing for more allocation of funds towards the FDSE program. Additional learning facilities would help boost academic performance while also curbing the spread of the coronavirus by enforcing social distancing rules.

Mulinya and Orodho (2015) proposed that School Management Committees (SMCs) should be financially and legally empowered through an Act of Parliament to identify various school needs. This study established that this proposal is a practical proposition since the principles are on the ground and can easily and quickly assess and determine the most appropriate measures needed within the shortest time possible to enhance the

teaching-learning process for quality education. The study established further that the principals knew what they were required to do regarding the spacing requirements of the virus containment measures. What they lacked was the financial base to address the identified problems adequately.

Olang'o et al. (2021) recommend creating a vote, headed by the Ministry of Education, on physical facilities development to help address school congestion. Schmoker (2020) advocates for a standards movement. Despite its imperfections, the standards movement is already proving its value. Therefore, educators must critically examine any case against standards and accountability. Ironically, an analysis of the case against standards reveals its potential importance, especially for helping educators address profound gaps in the typical curriculum found in most schools. Although Schmoker's argument is based on the curriculum design, the suggestions can also be used in addressing the additional spatial requirements brought to the fore. Each school should critically examine where it stands and implement measures to address the identified anomaly.

On the other hand, Roses et al. (2021) suggest that how people will respond to large gatherings is likely to depend on contexts and the expectations about future outbreaks. The perceived risks associated with large gatherings are likely highly sensitive to cultural norms and heterogeneous across cities and regions. Within the study area of Chepalungu, it was established that the social distancing rules were held loosely due to congested facilities, of which the principals had to wait for extra capitation from the FDSE program to expand learning facilities.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings established that implementing FDSE is faced with myriad challenges, including the inadequacy of learning resources (classrooms, laboratories, and libraries) and the inadequacy of basic amenities that aid the learning and teaching process. In addition, the schools were operating in

congested conditions, contravening the social distancing requirement by the Ministry of Health.

The study also established that introduction of FDSE in day schools allowed more learners to access education but the quality of the learning went down due to the presence of inadequate facilities ranging from congested classrooms, absence of adequate laboratory and library spaces. congestion by the learners. The congested spaces further contravened the COVID 19 requirements.

The absence of inadequate facilities stemmed in a large part from the absence of a conducive financial support base since FDSE funds in most instances was disbursed late and in amounts not proportionate to what the Government undertook to disburse. School principals thereby had to make do with what they had at hand, in addition to seeking for support from the Constituency Development Fund.

Monitoring and evaluation strategies that were being applied to boost academic performance in day schools faced a great challenge due to limited number of staff, poor financial support to the monitoring and evaluation department and interference from the people the learners interacted with when they were away from the school setting. This study recommends that the Monitoring and evaluation policy ought to be designed by all stakeholders and not limited to the Ministry of Education and Teachers Service Commission. The process is an integral element of management of school programmes. The key function of a school is to produce academic excellence therefore monitoring and evaluation must be initiated and carried in bottom-up approach. There ought to be adequate financial support to the department of monitoring and evaluation and the department must be established with clearly defined roles.

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