

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Equity in the distribution of bursary to secondary school students in Busia district, Kenya

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**This study sought to find out the opinion of the head teachers on equity of the established criteria in bursary support for the needy. It was done in the District's 27 secondary schools with the total student enrolment of 5780. All the 190 students (3.3% of the total enrolment) who had received bursaries from 1999 - 2002 in the district were included in the study. Another saturated sample of 27 head teachers was included in the study. Data was collected using questionnaires, in-depth interview schedules and document analysis. The study used Lorenz curves and Gini coefficients to measure equity in bursary distribution. Findings show that bursary allocations in the district were inequitably distributed for all the years studied. It further reveals that the bursary award criteria were largely not effective in identifying and benefiting the most needy students. It recommended that there is need to review the criteria for the selection of the students with financial need. The study further recommends mounting of workshops and seminars for stakeholders to educate those in charge of disbursements on key items within the disbursement process so as to eliminate ambiguities in the criteria.**

**Key words:** Access to secondary school education, equity, bursary, Lorenz curve, Gini coefficient.

## INTRODUCTION

Kenya is in the category of countries, which have chosen a capitalist path to development, but at the same time, subscribing in its policy statements commitments to socialist principals. The Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 (Republic of Kenya, 1965), which provides guidelines about the aims of Kenyan society, point out the most systematic policy statements on Kenyan egalitarian principles to be pursued within the framework of African Socialism. In the Development Plan of 1979 - 1983, the government stated that during this period the educational opportunities would have to be substantially improved to reach target groups such as the pastoralists, small scale farmers, landless rural workers and urban poor (Republic of Kenya, 1979).

According to Gravenir (1991), the amount of money allocated for recurrent expenditure in education in 1987/1988 was 55 times what it was in 1963/1964, and that for development expenditure in education during the

same year it was 72 times. According to the government's estimates of 1987/1988 financial year, education took over 40% of the total government expenditure (Republic of Kenya, 1989). Such scenario is of concern as stated in the National Development Plan of 1989-1993 where it was posited that if this claim of the educational sector on national resources was allowed to continue along the same trend, it would seriously reduce the resources available to meet the growth targets set out in the plan (Republic of Kenya, 1989).

However, as the budgetary allocation to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology continued to increase, there was a general observation that access and participation levels in secondary schools by the needy had not kept pace (Kinyanjui, 1991). Claims have been advanced that although government expenditures on education are high; it rarely benefits the most needy and that most students with exemplary performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education Examination are unable to proceed to secondary schools because their poor parents can hardly afford the required fees (Odaló, 2000) required fees (Odaló, 2000). Government of Ken-

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