

This study was carried out to investigate factors affecting demand for secondary education in Tharaka Central Division of Tharaka District. Low enrolment rates in secondary school and low transitional rates of pupils from primary to secondary school as well as high non-schooling gap of secondary age-going group in Tharaka central were of great concern to the researcher. In order to address this phenomenon, a study of this nature was necessary. This was survey research that targeted 61 primary schools in Tharaka central division. 30 primary schools were randomly sampled. All headteachers from the sampled schools and 300 pupils from the same schools participated in this study. The main instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. Document analysis was also done at district offices, divisional and zonal offices. The analysis of data revealed several factors that affect demand for secondary education in Tharaka Central Division. These factors range from broad to specific factors. Among the broad factors include: • Household and community-based factors, • School-based factors • Educational policy factors. Within these broad factors, there are specific factors that affect demand for secondary education. Under the community and household-based factors, there are specific factors such as: • Parents' inability to pay school fees, • Parents not willing to enrol their pupils in secondary schools, • Cultural practices such as FGM, • Gender imbalances by parents preferring boys to girls, • Position of student in the family, • Labour market conditions • Child labour. Other specific factors under school based factors include; • Poor performance in K.C.P.E., • Lack of career guidance in schools, • Distance of school from household • Few secondary schools in the district. Within the Educational Policies, school uniform was termed as one of the specific factors that deny pupils a chance to access secondary education. The study also sought to investigate the strategies employed by headteachers to increase transition rate from primary to secondary. Among the strategies highlighted include, • Sensitising parents and pupils on direct and indirect benefits of education, • The headteachers organising harambees as well as aiding pupils to get sponsors, • Teachers giving career guidance in schools, • Headteachers advising parents on issues of school fees • Discouraging both early marriages and FGM. The study also investigated the role different educational stakeholder's play in reducing high wastage rate during the transition from primary to secondary. The study revealed that: • The government, private bodies, religious bodies and NGOs to build low-cost secondary schools in the area to increase access to secondary education. • Government to formalize career guidance in primary schools. • The headteachers and parents to discourage early marriages and other backward cultural practices such as FGM. • It is government's prerogative to give bursary funds to bright students especially the ones enrolling in form one. • Pupils maintaining discipline and working hard in order to pass examinations hence increasing their chances of getting admitted to secondary schools. • The government to take the responsibility of reducing school fees • Introducing free secondary education more particularly in ASAL areas. Finally, the study gives recommendations that will help to curb the problem and also offers suggestions for further research. The recommendations are: • Identifying the bright and needy students in class eight with the aim of giving bursaries and grants during time of admission. This would reduce the delay in admission. • The government, religious bodies, NGOs and private bodies should build lowcost secondary schools in the area that will be afforded by the majority. • Educational officers in the area, parents, religious bodies and NGOs should team up in bid to protect children from unlawful practices that prevents them from pursuing secondary education. Such practices include child labour, FGM and early marriages. • Entrenchment of career guidance in primary school curriculum . • Promotion of teachers who get deployed 111 primary schools after acquiring degrees. • Sensitizing parents and pupils

on direct and indirect benefits of education with the aim of influencing parents to enroll their children in secondary schools. • Government to educate the first two children from poor families and then pass burden of educating other children to parents. The suggestions for further study are: • Replicating the study using larger population of primary schools in the whole country to elicit a more accurate national perspective on factors affecting demand for secondary education. • Carry a study on what most pupils who did not join secondary school do in order to make them useful in the society. • Carry out a study on factors contributing to poor performance in K.C.P.E in the district in order to improve performance hence increasing transition rate from primary to secondary.