

Abstract

Education is an important determinant of individuals' income, health as well as the capacity to interact and communicate with others. In spite of this view, there is considerable evidence of inequalities of opportunity in education in most developing countries. Differences abound with respect to sex of the head of the household, rural and urban areas heads, across population groups defined by parental education, region of residence and wealth. The probability that the household head is uneducated is higher than average when she is a woman and in general; household heads are more likely to have no education when they are in rural areas than in urban areas.

Achievements by children in school vary considerably depending on the wealth of their household, their place of residence, the education of their mother and that of their father.

From the foregoing, the overall policy goal for the Kenyan Government is therefore to provide every Kenyan the right to education and training no matter his/her socio-economic status through the provision of all-inclusive quality education that is accessible and relevant. This vision is guided by the understanding that quality education and training contributes significantly to economic growth and the expansion of employment opportunities. The vision is in tandem with the Government's plan as articulated in the Economic Recovery Strategy Paper which provides the rationale for major reforms in the current education system in order to enable all Kenyans to have access to quality lifelong education and training.

For the above reasons, the Kenyan Government has, over the years, demonstrated its commitment to the development of education and training through sustained allocation of resources to the sector. However, despite the substantial allocation of resources and notable achievements attained, the sector still faces major challenges related to access, equity, quality, relevance, efficiency in the management of educational resources, cost and financing of education, gender and regional disparities, and teacher quality and teacher utilization.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to discuss some of inequalities that still exist within the Kenyan education system despite the Government's efforts and at the same time suggest some policy issues and strategies thereof. The paper looks at the background to inequalities in education, education with respect to employment and national development, impact of free primary education, inequalities in education, an analysis of education expenditure and ends with a discussion on several strategies that must be implemented in order to reverse the current inequalities in education in Kenya.