

The Impact of the Implementation of Free Education Policy on Secondary Education in Tanzania

Yusuph Lameck Mashala

Local Government Training Institute, P.O Box 1125, Dodoma-Tanzania.
m_lameck@yahoo.com

Abstract: *This study intends to analyze the impact of the implementation of the Free Education Policy on Secondary Education in Tanzania. The study collected secondary data from ministries and other government institutions. Data were statistically analyzed and presented. Four assumptions related to enrollment rate, number of teachers, students pass rates and dropout rates guided data collection, presentation, and discussion. The findings demonstrate that the government decision to implement free secondary education policy on secondary education is the wisest one. However, since its inception in 2015, the Free Education Policy in many areas has found to have a slight impact on secondary education in Tanzania. The study, however, informs the government to put more efforts to effectively implement the promises of the policy without compromising the quality of education.*

Keywords: Free Education Policy, Secondary Education, Tanzania.

1. INTRODUCTION

Many countries in the world are committed to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals. Within these goals, Education has been a major concern of United Nations member countries including Tanzania. It is the commitment of the United Nations Members in ensuring available skilled, competent and educated workforce to champion their socio-economic development, therefore making the world more secure, sustainable and interdependent (Becker & Becker, 2017). In line with the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal Number 4 (United Nations, 2015) which requires governments to ensure that everyone "completes free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education, Tanzania like other countries in East Africa Kenya (Khamati & Nyongesa, 2013; Muindi, 2011) and Uganda (Asankha & Yamano, 2011) has made tangible efforts and commitments on Secondary Education. One of the efforts include the development of the Education and Training Policy 2014 replacing the former Education and Training Policy of 1995. The 2014 Education and Training Policy was developed as a key policy for encouraging Universal Primary and Secondary Education conforming to the commitments made by countries as part of the Sustainable Development Agenda (Unesco, 2015). Implementation of this policy was strongly accelerated by the major general presidential campaign promises by the ruling party CCM in 2015, where Dr. John Pombe Magufuli, the CCM flag bearer and the current President of Tanzania, vowed to implement the policy (Twaweza East Africa, 2016). Subsequent steps were made after the launch of the national education policy in 2015, where the government made a commitment that from January 2016 pupils will enjoy compulsory 11 years free basic education from Standard 1 to Form 4. In this endeavour, the policy frees parents from any fees and contributions to secondary education.

Moreover, with respect to the implementation of the 2014 Education Policy, the government on November 27, 2015, issued circular number 5, which inter alia provides directives to all public bodies to ensure that secondary education is free for all children, including the removal of all forms of fees and contributions. The Circular states: "Provision of free education means pupils or students will not pay any fee or other contributions that were being provided by parents or guardians before the release of a new circular". In fact, the issuance of this circular has made Tanzania go many miles even beyond its constitutional obligation of providing free quality education (URT, 1977).

Despite the good intention of the government, the implementation of free secondary education needs government close eyes on its management because of unprecedented trickle-down effects. These include increased enrollment and attendance of pupils in secondary school, which should match with increased quality, quantity and motivated teachers, availability of textbooks, classrooms and laboratories. However, the question of whether the provision of free secondary education will improve the delivery of education prompts a discussion among Tanzanians. A majority believes that abolition of secondary school fees and denouncing of free education does not mean free education as parents still pay significant amounts of money for their children's education, such as school uniforms, school bags, shoes, food and medical care. As a result, dropout, absenteeism and lower grade progression still eminent in all levels. Still, there are inadequate number of desks, textbooks, classrooms, and teachers to match with the expected increase in student enrollment. This paper, therefore, discusses the impact of the implementation of Free Secondary education in Tanzania to provide suggestions on how effectively the policy can be implemented in a sustainable manner to avoid the possible pitfalls and ensuring that the policy delivers what it promises. The focus of the discussion centers around

four variables: Enrolment rate, Number of Teachers, Student pass rate, and dropout rate.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Education System in Tanzania

The education system in Tanzania traces back since the colonial period, which was characterized by different forms of racial segregations. After independence in 1961, Tanzania tried to reform its education system to focus on social, economic and political transformations. Since then, the government has championed different educational transitions and reforms based on the political and economic changes happening from time to time. The changes were geared towards achieving Education For All and Tanzanian Vision 2025 for ensuring high-quality human resources required to respond to national development challenges at all levels (URT, 2008). These can be categorized into four main phases; the first phase was immediately after independence from 1961 to 1967. The main focus of this phase was to abolish the colonial system and reforming the overall education system so as to relieve all forms of racial segregations and inequalities emphasized by the colonial education system among the people (Verwest, F. Sorel, N. Buitelaar, 2013).

The second phase started from 1967 to 1990 where the government decided to build the socialist state. In this phase, education policies were developed to reflect the socialist ideology adopted by the country. It is during this period where the education policies put emphasis on 'Education for Self-Reliance'. The emphasis on education for self-reliance necessitated the government to develop education policies laid under the ambit of Universal Primary Education (UPE). The attainment of this policy and its subsequent implementation strategies directed emphasis on engaging in massive enrolment, a rapid expansion of schools and the abolition of the racially based education system (TEN/MET, 2007). Conforming to socialistic ideology, it is during this period when the government took several actions to improve education system, including nationalize all private schools with the exception of few schools owned by the religious organizations. To fast-track the achievement of UPE, the government made the Universal Primary Education compulsory and all school fees were abolished, massive enrolment of children in the newly established and poorly resourced schools were recorded and Para-professional teachers were recruited to tackle the massive increase of pupils. Successful implementation of the UPE made Tanzania one of the countries with a high literacy rate of about 80 percent in sub-Saharan Africa.

The third phase covered the period from the 1990s to 2014; it is during this period where the government made major changes in its economic policies of socialist-oriented to free-market economy known as Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). SAPs resulted in various reforms in an educational system, including cut-down of government expenditures on social services, allowing private schools and universities and

re-introducing school fees to the public schools. Therefore, in order to reduce the impact of this transformation, the government decided to start a holistic Education Sector Development Program (ESDP). These initiatives led to the introduction of twin Education Development Programs PEDP and SEDP in 2001 and 2003 respectively. In 2002, the government re-introduced free and compulsory primary education resulting in huge increases in enrolment (Nguni, 2005; Ten/Met, 2007). The impact of these efforts resulted in massive student enrolments where net enrolment ratio rose to 97.3 percent in 2007 from 58 percent in 2000 in the primary schools (BEST, 2010). However, (Komba & Nkumbi, 2008) submitted that the quality of primary school declined due to overcrowded classes, high pupil-teacher ratio, para-professional teachers and insufficient school infrastructure and facilities.

The Fourth phase covers the period from 2014 to date. It is within this period where the government made significant changes to the education system by overhauling the education system and introducing free primary and Secondary Education. During this period, basic education will now run from Standard I to Form IV and all schools shift to using a single textbook for each subject. These changes are a result of the new Education and Training Policy (ETP) of 2014, which distinguishes itself as a vehicle for attaining Universal Primary and Secondary Education. The 2014 ETP has provided significant changes in primary and secondary education from the old formal educational. The old system was characterized by a (2+7+4+2+3+ years) meaning that 2 years a pupil spent in nursery/pre-school, and 7 years in primary school. Also a student spent 4 years in ordinary secondary, 2 years advanced secondary school and 3 years or more in higher/tertiary (ETP, 1995; Mangindaan et al., 2013; Komba & Nkumbi, 2008). The new system comprises 1+6+4+2+3+years. The ETP 2014 introduces 11 years of free basic education, including one compulsory year of pre-school. However, the recent elimination of school fees in basic education reflects Tanzania's commitments under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UNICEF, 2016). These four phases reflects the commitment of the government of Tanzania to ensuring that education sector makes a significant contribution to socio-economic development. Nevertheless, the major education transformation stages conform to government key strategic plans guiding the education sector in Tanzania. These include Sustainable Development Goals, Tanzania Development Vision 2025, Big Results Now, Five Years Development Plans (2016-2021), and Education Sector Strategic Plan.

2.2 Administration and Management of Education in Tanzania

The management and administration of the formal education system in Tanzania is vested to several ministries, non-governmental organizations, and communities. The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (METV) has the legal

mandate for policy formulation, coordination, monitoring, setting standards, quality assurance and quality control of the whole education system (UNESCO-WDE, 2011). It is also responsible for supervision of the higher education, teachers training, and management of teaching workforce; curriculum development, examination management and the school inspectorate (Woods, 2007).

The management of pre-primary, primary, secondary and out-of-school education is conferred under the control of the President's Office - Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG). PO-RALG oversees the work of the local authorities, which are responsible for day-to-day operations of primary and secondary schools such as resource mobilization, management of teachers, financing, and payment of school supplies (Woods, 2007:12). Moreover, the Local Government Authorities (districts, townships, municipal and city councils) under PO-RALG are responsible for the management and delivery of primary and secondary education services within their areas of jurisdiction. In addition, the ministry through its teachers'

training colleges is responsible for training, recruiting, deploying teachers in the public schools across the country. Teachers are employed on permanent pensionable basis receiving a monthly salary, according to fixed scales based on specific qualifications. Usually, there is annual salary increment and three years promotion subject to his/her job performance or/and career development (Woods, 2007).

2.3 Secondary Education in Tanzania

Secondary Education in Tanzania comprises of both private and government schools. Its management and administration runs under the joint efforts of the government and private institutions, but policy formulation, coordination, monitoring, setting standards, quality assurance and quality control of the whole education system and overseeing the day-to-day operation of secondary education falls under the Ministry of Education and Vocational Trainings and President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government. The main objectives of secondary education in Tanzania are summarized in table 1.

Table 1: Objectives of Secondary Education in Tanzania

Objectives	
1.	To consolidate and broaden the scope of baseline ideas, knowledge, skills, and principles acquired and developed at the primary education level;
2.	To enhance further development and appreciation of national unity, identity and ethics, personal integrity, respect for and readiness to work, human rights, cultural and moral values, customs, traditions and civic responsibilities and obligations;
3.	To promote the development of competency in linguistic ability and effective use of communication skills in Kiswahili and in at least one foreign language;
4.	To provide opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and understanding in prescribed or selected fields of study;
5.	To prepare students for tertiary and higher education, vocational, technical and professional training;
6.	To inculcate a sense and the ability for self-study, self-confidence and self- advancement in new frontiers of science and technology, academic and occupational knowledge, and skills;
7.	To prepare the student to join the world of work.

Source: MEVT, 2017.

The formal secondary education consists of two sequential cycles. The first cycle is a four-year programme of Ordinary Level (O-Level) secondary education. The second cycle is a two-year programme of Advanced Level (A-Level) secondary education. The O-Level secondary education cycle begins with Form 1 and ends with Form 4 whereby Form 1 selection and enrolment in Government and Non-Government secondary schools is subject to the performance in National Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE). The A-Level secondary education has Form 5 and 6. The Selection and enrolment in A-Level for Government and Non-Government secondary education are based on a prescribed performance level in the relevant A-Level subject combinations after attainment of appropriate credits in the Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (CSEE). Form 4 and Form 6 examinations, mark the completion of secondary education cycles and the results of these examinations are used for and selection of students for further formal education and training such as Colleges and

Universities. The management, administration, and delivery of secondary education in Tanzania has been changing over time. Following the establishment of Education Training Policy of 2014 and its subsequent inauguration in 2015, secondary education is now free of charge that parents are not supposed to pay any school fees or any other contributions that they were previously paying. However, the establishment of free secondary education policy has been received with different and mixed perceptions. The majority of Tanzanians believe it will enhance student's enrolment in schools. While others pose hesitations on the quality of education under this system. As pointed out in the introduction, this paper analyses the impact of the implementation of the Free Education Policy to Secondary education in relation enrolment rate, number of teachers, student pass rate and dropout rate.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030 and demand for socio-economic development requires available skilled, competent and educated workforce. Countries around the world have been compelled to develop education policies and strategies directed towards enabling all children to have access to basic education. In response to the implementation of SDG agenda 2030 and Tanzanian National Development Vision 2025 in 2014, Tanzania developed a new Education and Training Policy and its subsequent implementation under circular number 5 of 2015,

which incepts free education in secondary education. Circular number 5 of 2015 clarifies that Free Secondary Education means freeing parents to pay school fees and other contributions that they were paying. The key point here is to enable the majority of students to achieve the basic education. Henceforth, it is the intention of this paper to look at the impact of the Free Education Policy to Secondary Education in Tanzania as shown in figure 1 below.

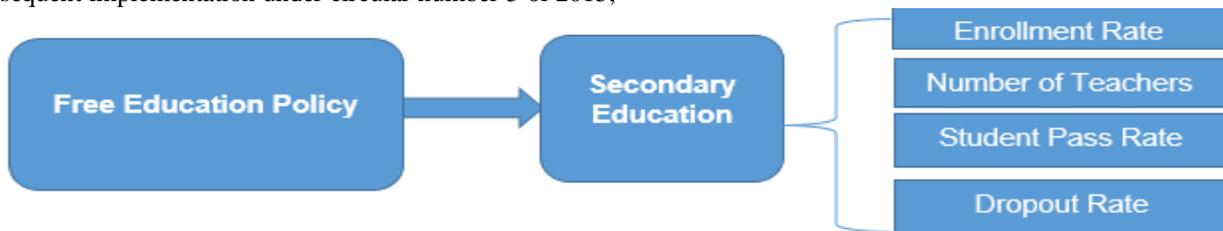


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

Figure 1 above, shows the relationship between the variables, in this respect, this paper presents the following assumptions:-

1. *Free Secondary Education has a direct impact on secondary school enrolment.*
2. *Free Secondary Education has a direct impact on the number of Teachers in secondary schools.*
3. *Free Secondary Education has a direct impact on the student Pass rate in secondary schools.*
4. *Free Secondary Education has a direct impact on Dropout rate in secondary schools.*

3. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the United Republic of Tanzania. Data were collected/filtered from secondary sources, mostly from the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, President’s Office, Regional Administration and Local Government Administration, National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA) and Tanzania Bureau of Statistics (NBS). Data collected were based on four variables: enrolment rate, number of teachers, student pass rate and dropout rate. A time series approach was conducted based on a set of observation of 17 years from 2000-2017 years. Similarly, findings, evidence and information were systematically extracted from the literature.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The focus of this study was to see the impact of the implementation of the Free Education Policy in secondary

education. Therefore, this part presents the results based on the four aspects: enrolment rate, number of teachers, student pass rate and dropout rate. The focus is to ascertain whether the implementation of the policy has any impact on the four key areas in Secondary Education in Tanzania.

4.1. Enrolment of Pupils

The basic assumption was that Free Education has a positive impact on student enrollment in secondary school. The preliminary findings show that enrollment of pupils in secondary education is of two categories. The first category is those enrolled to form one after successfully passing of their seven year examinations. The second group is that enrolled to join advanced level after successfully passing their form 4 examinations. Based on the implementation of the free secondary education, the study looked at the trends of enrolment of form I and form 5 pupils from 2000-2017 to track the trends of enrolment. Besides, the trend intends to ascertain the difference (impact) between the Education and Training Policies 1995, which guided the education sector under the cost-sharing system, and Free Education Policy 2015, which was launched to implement the new Education and Training Policy of 2014. Figure 2: Presents Pupils Enrollment Trends 2000-2017.

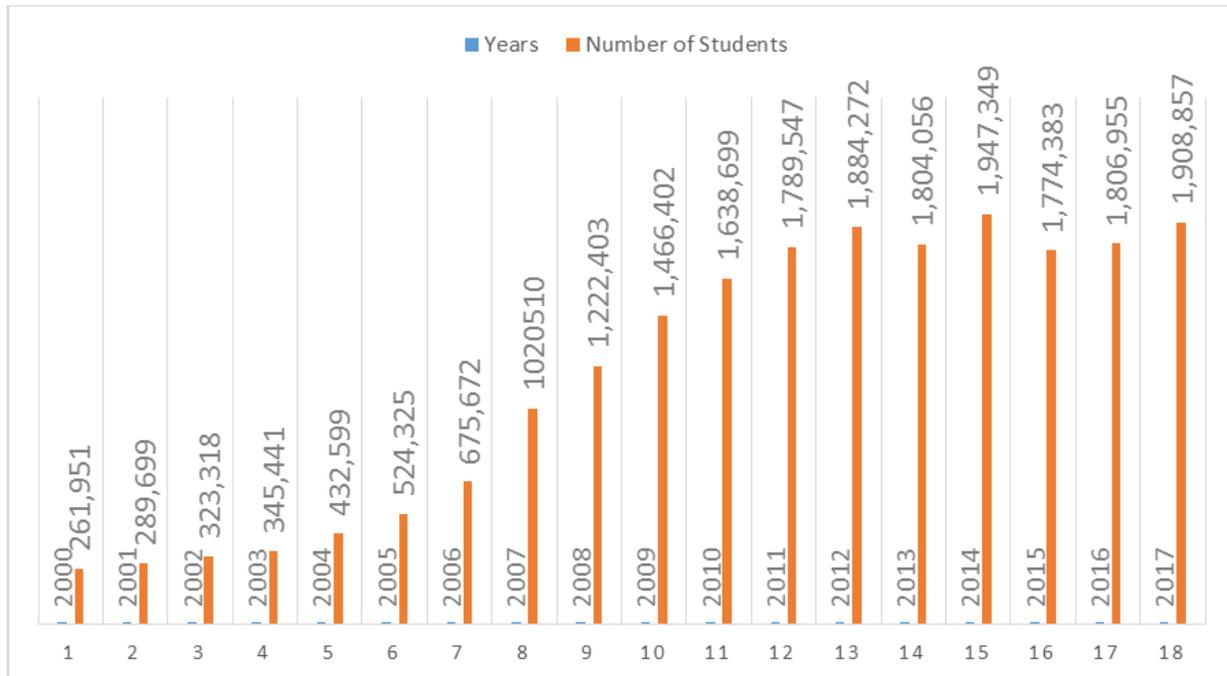


Figure 2: Enrollment Trends of Pupils in Secondary Schools 2000-2017

Source: PO-RALG- Pocket-Best 2017

The results show that enrollment of students in both government and non-government schools in Tanzania increased by a large percentage since 2000. However, figure 2 indicates that even before the launch of the Free Education Policy, enrolment increased manifold in 2014 compared to other years. The reason behind the increase was a result of the abolishment of school fees in primary education in 2012, which resulted in a large number of student enrolment in Form 1 in 2013 and 2014. However, the results show that the number of the student's enrolment dropped in 2015 and increased steadily in 2016 and 2017. This suggests that with

the implementation of Free Secondary Education Policy, there is little progress in student enrolment, still there is optimism to increase in subsequent years.

4.2. Number of Teachers

The number of students enrolled in secondary schools determines the number of teachers. This study intends to comprehend the impact of Free Education Policy on the quality and quantity of teachers in secondary schools. Table 2, and figure 3 show the number of teachers available in both government and non-government secondary schools from 2013 to 2017.

Table 2: Number of all Teachers in Secondary Schools 2013-2017

ITEM	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Government	58,028	65,390	75,127	89,554	89,475
Non-Government	15,379	15,139	19,471	19,042	20,688
Total	73,407	80,529	94,598	108,596	110,163

Source: PO-RALG- Pocket-Best 2017

Table 2: shows an increasing number of teachers in secondary schools from 73,407 in 2013 to 110,163 in 2017. The results suggest that the government is putting efforts in increasing the number of teachers to match with increasing number of pupils enrolled in secondary schools. The results also show a large number of teachers in government schools compared to Non-Government schools. The reason behind the difference is that the government has as many schools compared to Non-Government schools. According to Pre-

primary, Primary, Secondary and Non-formal Education Statistics in Brief (PO-RALG, 2017), Tanzania has a total number of 4,796 Secondary Schools, among which 3,604(75.1%) are government owned schools and 1,192(24.9) are non-government schools. However, figure 3 below shows the number of qualified teachers in Government and Non-Government Secondary Schools 2013-2017.

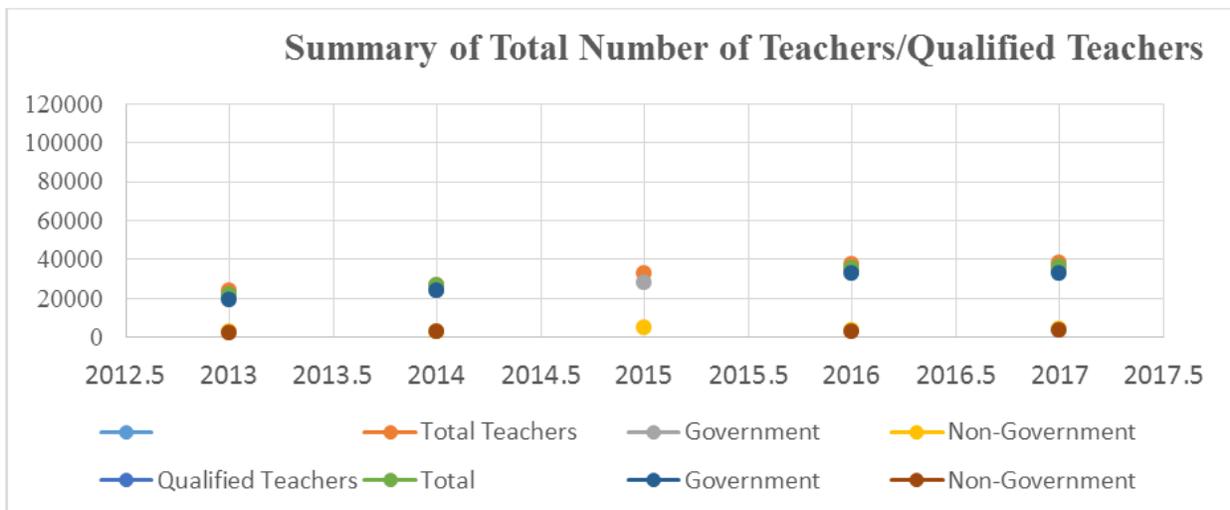


Figure 3: The number of Qualified Teachers in Government and Non-Government Schools, 2013-2017

Figure 3 above, shows that the total number of qualified teachers in both government and non-government schools is 65,513(2013), 80,099(2014), 92,439(2015), 100,636(2016), and 102,208(2017). Moreover, the total number of government qualified teachers 2013 is 53,484(81.7%) and 12,029(18.3) for non-government schools, 2014: 65,390(81.6%) and 14,709(18.4%), 2015: 74,168(80.2%) and 18,271(19.8%); 2016: 85,600(85.1%) and 15,036(14.9%), 2017: 85,333(83.5%) and 16,875(16.5%) respectively. Indeed, results suggest that increasing number of teachers are matched with the increasing student

enrolment rate, though extra efforts should be done to have an adequate supply of teachers in terms of numbers and quality to effectively cope with the intention of the Free Secondary Education Policy.

4.3 Student Pass Rate

The student pass rate was observed in Form 4 and Form 6 National Examination from 2011-2016. The pass rate for six years are categorized into four grades Division I, II, III, IV and Fail, as clearly shown in table 3 and figure 4.

Table 3: Ordinary Level (Form 4) Examination's Student Pass rate 2011-2016

Year	Division %				% Passed	% Failed	Total No. of Candidates Examined
	I	II	III	I-III			
2011	1.1	2.4	6.5	10.0	43.6	53.6	339,330
2012	0.9	2.8	5.9	9.5	33.5	43.1	397,222
2013	2.2	6.2	12.8	21.2	36.0	57.2	352,614
2014	3.1	10.5	17.2	30.8	39.0	69.8	240,310
2015	2.8	9.0	13.6	25.4	42.6	67.9	384,300
2016	2.7	9.3	15.6	27.6	4.8	97.9	64,861

Source: National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA) 2011-2016

The overall student pass rate in Form 4 examination as shown in table 3 reveals that majority of student pass. However, results show that the majority of students failed their examinations in 2012, and more pass witnessed in 2016. Moreover, the results show that the majority of students pass at Division IV, while very few passes with division II and I. This suggests that the majority of students do not meet the minimum entry qualification to join the Advanced Level Secondary Education, Form 5.

Advanced Level (Form 6) Examination's Student Pass rate 2006-2016

Figure 4 above shows that Form 6 results record the majority of students pass. Different from Form IV results, majority

Form 6 students pass with Division III. This suggests that many students get a chance to join tertiary education. Nevertheless, similar to Form 4 results, a small number of students pass with division 1. Based on the variations in the percentage of the number of students passed on each year these results fail to justify the contribution FEP to student pass rate. Besides, especially for Ordinary Level Education (Form IV) the results have multiple implications: perhaps, whether students are congested in classes, inadequate supply of textbooks, limited classrooms, or there is a small number and quality of teachers compared to the number of students.

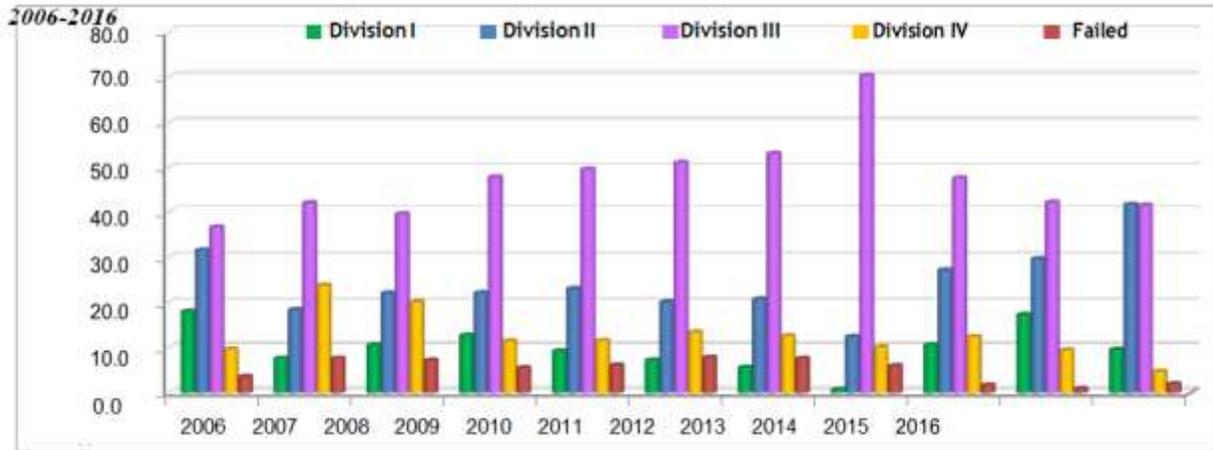


Figure 4: Pass Rates Summary of Form 6 Examination (ACSEE) in Government and Non-Government Schools, 2006-2016
Source: PO-RALG- Pocket-Best 2017

4.4. Dropout

Dropout is caused by a number of factors ranging from the inability of students to pay school fees, early pregnancies, Deaths, Truancy, and Indiscipline as shown in chart 4. One of the reasons for introducing a free secondary education was to eliminate dropout caused by the failure of students to

attend schools because of failure to pay school fees. One of the objective of this study to was determine the impact of free secondary education in reducing dropout. Table 4 and figure 5 shows the summary of dropout by reasons and grades.

Table 4: Number of Dropouts in Secondary Schools by Reasons, 2016

Ownership	Death	Pregnancy	Truancy	Indiscipline	Total
Government	682	4,299	54,749	1,102	60,832
Non-Government	107	143	2,094	727	3,071
Grand Total	789	4,442	56,843	1,829	63,903
%of Total Dropout	1.23	6.95	88.95	2.86	100

Table 4 shows that the great number of dropouts in secondary schools is caused by Truancy (88.95%). Pregnancy, also contributes significantly to drop out about (6.95%), Indiscipline the third (2.86%) and Death the least (1.23%). These results suggest that dropout is mostly caused

by controllable factors, (pregnancy, truancy and indiscipline). With Free Secondary Education Policy, it is the expectation of this study that dropout could have been decreased significantly.

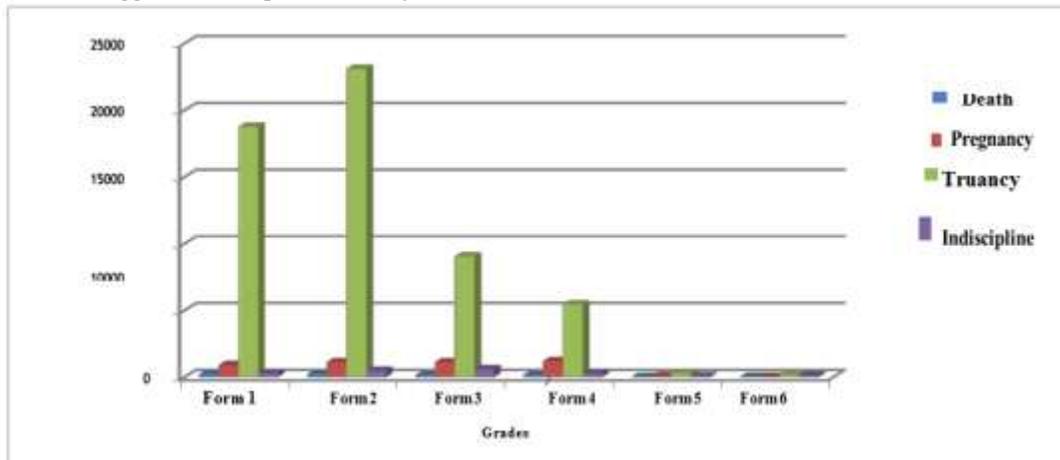


Figure 5: Number of Dropouts in Government and Non-Government Schools by Grade and Reasons, 2016
Source: PO-RALG- Pocket-Best 2017

According to figure 5, Truancy is a leading reason for student dropout, especially in ordinary level secondary education (Form I to Form IV). Pregnancy is as well severe in all levels. The overall results suggest that free secondary education has yet brought significant impact in reducing dropout, though the government is making efforts, especially in mitigation the problem of pregnancies and early child marriage by imposing stern measures including thirty years imprisonment for culprits.

It is important to note that the decision of the government to introduce Free Secondary Education Policy is a remedy for enrolment of students, reducing dropout and increasing interrelated activities. However, the general results suggest that students' enrolment, dropout, number of teachers and students pass rate progresses at low pace. Though, it may sound among Tanzanians that it is actually not free secondary education, but free-fee schooling as parents have to cover for other student's expenses, including school uniforms, books, transport charges and food, it is therefore, important to note that the government decision to introduce free secondary education is the wisest one. While enrollment is still a challenge, dropout is still alarming, teachers and teaching facilities are inadequate, implementation of Free Secondary Education, therefore, needs the support and commitment of all stakeholders.

5. FUTURE CHALLENGES

To broaden the scope of the implementation of the Free Secondary Education Policy in Tanzania, the results of this study have identified the following challenges to the effective administration and management of secondary education in Tanzania. The challenges if not addressed will defect the promises of the policy.

- i. **Challenge related Financing of Secondary Education.** Free Secondary Education requires government preparedness in terms of budget allocation. Since the launch of the free secondary education system, parents who mainly used to pay school fees and other contributions direct to schools have stopped. This means that the whole burden falls under the government as the main funder. The question to ask is how sustainable is Free Secondary Education in Tanzania? In this endeavor, it is the task of the government to secure extra funds from other sources to support the free secondary education now and then.
- ii. **The challenge related to Quality of Education.** Implementing Free Secondary Education has trickled down effects in the overall management systems of schools. The question is; does the government decision, consider the quality of education? With this policy, it is obvious that the enrollment of students will increase hence demand teachers that are more qualified and enough learning materials. It should not only be the number of students enrolled and accomplish their

Ordinary or advanced Secondary Education, but the quality they have after completing their secondary education is of critical importance.

- iii. **Challenge Related to schools infrastructures.** Does school infrastructures support Free Secondary Education? This question raises more concerns about the implementation of Free Secondary Education Policy, as it implies that the more the student enrolment in secondary schools, the more the required adequate learning infrastructures including classrooms, desks, tables, toilets, staff houses and offices.

6. CONCLUSION

The main objective of this study was to analyze the impact of the implementation of the Free Education Policy to Secondary education. 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. Dropout on the other hand is still alarming. However, 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. However, the Free Education Policy is expected to have positive impacts on secondary school enrolments, and reducing dropout, many efforts for improvement might be needed in terms of the quality of secondary education. Therefore, one possible area for future research is to examine how the Tanzanian government should deliver quality education under the ambit of Free Secondary Education.

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