



OVERCOMING DOMESTIC LABOUR AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This study was set to establish the impact of domestic labour on students' academic achievement in mixed day secondary schools in Kisii Central District, Kenya and formulate appropriate policy recommendations. A total of 119 boys and 100 girls were randomly selected from 14 mixed day secondary schools to participate in the study. Additionally, 14 parents and 14 teachers were purposively included. Interview schedules and questionnaires were used to gather relevant data. Holmes (1965) problem-solving approach, a scientific method of inquiry in comparative education, was used as a benchmark while formulating the relevant policy recommendations to mitigate against the involvement of students in domestic labour. The findings associated boys' and girls' engagement in domestic labour to weak academic achievement. In a bid to address the negative impact of domestic labour on students in mixed day secondary schools, the study provides the following policy recommendations: reducing the domestic workload, educating parents and the community on the need to attend and participate in civic affairs, offering tuition in the morning and evening, conducting guidance and counseling to the affected students, equipping mixed day secondary schools with the appropriate teaching and learning resources, providing lunch to students in schools and combining efforts to fight poverty.

Keywords: Academic achievement, Domestic labour, Gender, Impact, Mitigation, Policy recommendations.

Received: 16 August 2014/ **Revised:** 29 September 2014/ **Accepted:** 2 October 2014/ **Published:** 9 October 2014

Contribution/ Originality

This study adds knowledge to the existing literature on the impact of domestic labour on students' education, particularly at the secondary school cycle of learning. More importantly, it provides relevant policy recommendations to help enhance academic achievement among the affected students in mixed day secondary schools.

1. INTRODUCTION

The engagement of students in domestic labour, especially in poor households in developing countries has been linked to dismal learning achievement (Ayoo, 2002; UNESCO, 2003; UNICEF, 2004). As per ILO (1998), students are often involved in such work as caring for the young ones, cooking, collecting firewood, farm work, fetching water, cleaning houses, washing clothes, collecting and selling plastics as well as paper. Domestic labour is one of the main reasons given for non-attendance in schools (Ersado, 2003). Accordingly, some students skip school to generate income for poor households. There is widespread agreement that women and girls are generally excluded from access to, and control over both national and international resources and that this retards individual as well as national development (Snyder, 2000; World Bank, 2003). Accordingly, empowerment of both women and girls entails their active participation at all levels of education and training, the economy and politics. The Global Monitoring Report (2002) documents that girls, compared to boys, are more likely to miss school due to involvement in domestic labour. In particular, the report asserts that girls' education, psychological and physical development can be seriously compromised as a result of being engaged in hard physical labour which their bodies are not prepared for. However, in Ethiopia, domestic labour is a primary reason for keeping boys out of school (King and Hill, 1993). A study carried out in El Salvador found that domestic labour interferes with students' schooling as they do not have time to do their homework, fall asleep during class or miss lessons (Human Rights Watch, 2005). Indeed, several students explained that they often missed school to perform domestic labour. According to Guttman (2001) and Oxfam (1999), child farm workers who spend long hours in the fields do not have time to study, are often tired in class and are more likely to be tardy or absent. According to Republic of Kenya (ROK, 2003), 10.8% of children aged up to 17 years were found to be either doing domestic labour for more than four hours per day. Further, girls were found to be engaged more in domestic labour compared to the boys. Similar studies (Kadenyi and Kamunyu, 2006; Nairasiae, 2006; Yungungu and Kyalo, 2006) concur with this finding. One of the Education for All (EFA) targets as stated in the Jomtien Declaration is to enhance learning achievement (ROK, 2001). Notably, gathering gender-specific statistics is invaluable in highlighting disparities within disparities. A survey conducted by researchers in the Strengthening Mathematics and Science in Secondary Education (Strengthening Mathematics and Science in Secondary Education (SMASSE) Project, 2000) project among mixed day secondary schools in Kisii Central District established that students who were involved in domestic labour often slept late and had inadequate time for both school assignments as well as private study. However, the survey neither provided empirical data on the impact of domestic labour on students' academic achievement nor suggested possible mitigation measures, knowledge gap that this study made effort to fill.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

1. To establish the impact of domestic labour on academic achievement among boys and girls in mixed day secondary schools in Kisii Central District.
2. To formulate policy recommendations to mitigate domestic labour among students in mixed day secondary schools in Kisii Central District.

1.2. Theoretical Framework of the Study

In an attempt to better understand the impact of domestic labour on students' academic achievement as well as formulate relevant policy recommendations, [Holmes \(1965\)](#) problem-solving approach was used. This is a scientific method of inquiry in comparative education and holds that research begins with a problem ([Holmes, 1981](#)). Accordingly, the chief purpose of comparative education is to identify and analyze a problem so as to be able to make policy proposals aimed at improving education practice and predict the outcome of such proposals. Further, Holmes argues that comparative education should not only be reflective in nature but have both contemporary and speculative dimensions as well. The problem-solving approach involves four major steps. These include problem selection and analysis, formulation of policy proposals (possible solutions), identification of relevant factors and prediction ([Holmes, 1965](#)).

a) Problem selection and analysis: Here, the problem should be carefully chosen to ensure that quality research is done ([Holmes, 1965](#)). The experience and interest of the researcher should also be taken into account. Problem analysis or intellectualization aims at clarifying the problem so as to have a clear focus on the data to be collected. In addition, this step requires that classification of the problem on the basis of the major influencing factors including economic, political, social and demographic be done. This approach was relevant to this study. In particular, since domestic labour had been linked to poor academic achievement among students in mixed day secondary schools in Kisii Central District, there was need to avail empirical data concerning this problem. The major factors behind this scenario are social and economic in nature. Social factors include the norms, values and attitudes towards boys and girls in the Kisii community. On the other hand, poverty has driven students into domestic labour to earn a living.

b) Formulation of policy proposals (Possible solutions): This step involves the selection of a range of realistic policy choices considered as possible solutions ([Holmes, 1965](#); [Holmes, 1981](#)). For instance, a researcher examines practices in other countries to be able to propose solutions to the problem at home. This study proposed possible solutions to addressing domestic labour among students in mixed day secondary schools in Kisii Central District.

c) Identification of relevant factors: This step involves identifying, describing and evaluating relevant factors likely to influence the outcome of any of the proposals made ([Holmes, 1965](#)). The identification of the relevant factors is done at three levels:

- i.) Identification and analysis of initial conditions and or contextual determinants, for example, examining how an education system interacts with political, economic and socio- cultural factors.
- ii.) Selection of the determinants relevant to the particular problem being investigated.
- iii.) Weighting of the selected determinants in order to indicate their relative degree of influence to the proposed solutions.

Again, there is a three-fold analytical framework for addressing these determinants and include:

- i.) Ideological factors which focus on the analysis of patterns of norms, attitudes and values.
- ii.) Institutional factors which focus on the organizational structure and practices in context.
- iii.) Miscellaneous factors which focus on climate, terrain, availability of natural resources and other factors which are not directly under man's control.

The researcher assessed the factors likely to influence the outcome of the policy recommendations made regarding the impact of domestic labour on academic achievement as articulated in (Holmes, 1965) problem – solving approach.

d) Prediction: At this step, an attempt to predict the possible outcome of the proposed policies is made (Holmes, 1965). The researcher should also pay attention to both short-term and long-term consequences of the proposed policies. The greatest task here, is to device the criteria to aid the success of the proposed solutions. However, since prediction is concerned with probability, the proposed policies cannot be ultimate solutions to all problems. Thus, this is a weakness of the problem-solving approach.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study used the ex-post facto research design since it is useful in identifying the antecedents of a present condition (Cohen and Manion, 2000). Inferences were derived without the direct intervention of the independent variable, that is, domestic labour. Simple random as well as purposive sampling were employed to arrive at the sample size. Simple random sampling gave students equal and independent chances of being selected as a member of the sample (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). A sum of 119 boys and 100 girls were selected to participate in the study. In addition, 14 teachers, one from each school, were purposively selected. Similarly, 14 Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) parents were purposively included. While students and teachers filled questionnaires, interview schedules were used to interview parents in a bid to collect data relevant to this study. The objectives of the study were taken into account while validating these instruments. To further validate the instruments, a pilot test was conducted in one mixed day secondary school, but which was not involved in the actual study. The researcher collected the questionnaires once they were filled so that students could not discuss or modify their responses. The interviews were conducted after the questionnaires had been administered in order to gather additional data as well as seek clarification from the interviewees on matters that were perceived to receive inadequate attention. The data collected was categorized as per the

sources, namely: boys, girls, teachers and parents. The researcher then classified the data into purposeful as well as usable forms (Kothari, 2004). The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tables are mainly used to present the findings of the study. This is then followed by relevant interpretation as well as discussion.

3.1. Impact of Domestic Labour on Students' Academic Achievement

When the students were asked to state whether domestic labour had a negative impact on their academic achievement, majority of them agreed that it did as shown in Table 1.

Table-1. Students' responses on the impact of domestic labour on academic achievement.

Response	Gender of Respondents				Total	
	Boys		Girls			
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
No	24	45.3	29	54.7	53	100.0
Yes	95	57.2	71	42.8	166	100.0
Total	119	53.3	100	45.7	219	100.0

The data shown in table 1 illustrates that many students considered their involvement in domestic duties as contributing to low academic performance. Of the 219 students involved in the study, 166 of them agreed that participation in domestic labour hampered their academic performance. Out of this, 95 were boys and 71 girls, translating to 57.2% of the boys and 42.8% of the girls, respectively. From this finding, it emerges that although boys are normally thought to be less involved in domestic duties compared to the girls (Global Monitoring Report, 2002; Kadenyi and Kamunyu, 2006; Nairasiae, 2006; Yungungu and Kyalo, 2006), the latter seem to claim that their academic performance is less likely to be affected by their participation in domestic tasks. This is because from the responses above, 54.7% of the girls and 45.3% of the boys claimed that involvement in domestic labour did not affect their academic performance. However, this findings is in agreement with UNESCO (2003) which asserts that data on child labour do not always show girls as being more heavily engaged in work than boys.

Similar results were realized when the same question was posed to both the class teachers and PTA parents. Out of the 14 class teachers who responded to the questionnaire, 78.6% and 100% of them agreed that domestic duties affected boys' and girls' academic performance respectively, negatively. On the other hand, 42.9% of the 14 PTA parents interviewed felt that students' academic performance suffered due to their engagement in domestic labour. For the case of boys, tending livestock and preparing land were cited as the two domestic duties that contributed most to low academic performance while preparing both meals and land applied to the girls. These findings concur with studies (Sarah, 1993; Global Monitoring Report, 2002) which hold that girls' choice of roles as well as achievement is influenced by the perception of

what makes females good in relation to the stereotypes about abilities as determined by both family and even school backgrounds. Similarly, class teachers were asked to indicate how often students, by gender, were affected by domestic labour in specific cases. The cases considered were: inadequate time to do homework, sleeping late, scoring low marks in tests, waking up late and feeling tired and sleepy. Others included inadequate time for private study, taking a bad position in examinations and being punished for going to school late. Tables 2 and 3 present the mean values and standard deviations for each of the eight cases considered.

Table-2. Impact of boys' involvement in domestic labour

Response	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Inadequate time to do homework	14	1.00	4.00	2.2857	.82542
Sleeping late	14	1.00	4.00	2.7143	1.13873
Scoring low marks in tests	14	1.00	4.00	2.7857	.89258
Waking up late	14	1.00	4.00	2.2143	1.05090
Feeling tired and sleepy	14	1.00	5.00	3.5000	1.34450
Inadequate time for private study	14	2.00	4.00	2.8571	.66299
Taking a bad position in exams	14	1.00	4.00	2.871	.94926
Being punished for going to school late	14	1.00	5.00	3.1429	1.29241
Valid N (listwise)	14				

Table 2 reveals that the consequences of boys' frequent participation in domestic duties were likely to have a negative influence on their academic performance. For instance, the mean values in the table imply that boys often did not have enough time to do homework (2.2857) as well as for private study (2.8571) due to engagement in domestic duties. In addition, they often slept late (2.7143), woke up late (2.7143) as well as scoring low marks in the tests given by teachers (2.7857). Further, the table reveals that as a result of participating in domestic tasks such boys were sometimes punished for going to school late (3.1429), felt tired and sleepy both at school and home (3.5000). The above findings reinforce similar studies (Guttman, 2001; ILO/IPEC, 2003; UNESCO, 2003; Human Rights Watch, 2005) which established that students who were engaged in manual labour were most likely to register dismal academic performance. For example, according to the Human Rights Watch (2005), those students who were able to work and go to school in E1 Salvador felt that such work interfered with their schooling as they did not have enough time to do their homework, fell asleep during class or missed days of school. In particular, children who were involved in farm work did not often have time to study, were tired during class and were more likely to be tardy or absent. Similarly, according to ILO/IPEC (2003), students in Indonesia who worked in farms and attended school reported having difficulties with their studies either because they had missed days of class and found it hard to catch up or they were tired after working in the fields in the morning.

Table 3 indicates that just like the boys, some girls had inadequate time for private study (3.1429), scored low marks in the exams administered by teachers (2.3571), slept late (2.1429) and woke up late (2.4286) for being involved in domestic tasks. Similarly, sometimes such girls had inadequate time to do homework (3.5000), felt tired and sleepy both at home and school (2.7857).

Therefore, table 3 also shows that the frequent involvement of girls in domestic tasks could lead to low academic performance. Similarly, these findings are in agreement with previous studies (Oxfam, 1999; Guttman, 2001; Global Monitoring Report, 2002; ILO/IPEC, 2003; UNESCO, 2003; Human Rights Watch, 2005; Nairasiae, 2006) which found that students' involvement in manual labour sometimes hampered their schooling as they had inadequate time to study or do homework, were tired or even slept in class as well as missing school to work.

Table-3. Impact of girls' involvement in domestic labour

Response	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Inadequate time to do homework	14	2.00	5.00	3.5000	1.01905
Sleeping late	14	1.00	3.00	2.1429	.77033
Scoring low marks in tests	14	1.00	3.00	2.3571	.84190
Waking up late	14	2.00	3.00	2.4286	.51355
Feeling tired and sleepy	14	1.00	5.00	2.7857	1.36880
Inadequate time for private study	14	2.00	5.00	3.1429	1.09945
Taking a bad position in exams	14	1.00	5.00	2.9286	1.26881
Being punished for going to school late	14	1.00	4.00	2.6429	.92878
Valid N (listwise)					

These results also concur with assertions of Kadenyi and Kamunyu (2006) and Sarah (1993) that girls' involvement in domestic work could lead to poor scholastic performance.

3.2. Respondent's Proposals on Mitigating Domestic Labour

Apart from aiming at determining the impact of domestic labour on students' academic performance, the other objective of this study was to provide policy recommendations on how to mitigate the impact of domestic labour. Such policy proposals come in handy, especially since this study found out that students' participation could be the reason behind the dismal academic performance in mixed day secondary schools in Kisii Central District.

The class teachers, PTA parents and students involved in the study suggested a number of ways of handling domestic duties so as to boost students' academic performance.

Table-4.Class teachers' views on managing domestic labour

Suggestions	Frequency	Percentage
Hiring adult workers	5	35.7
Conduct morning and evening preps	2	14.3
Enlighten parents	8	57.1
Offer guidance and counseling	2	14.3
Give extra homework	1	7.1
Take lunch in school	1	7.1
Join boarding schools	1	7.1
Reduce poverty among households	4	28.6

3.3. Class Teachers' Suggestions

The 14 Form Three class teachers who participated in the study viewed the following as possible remedies to students' engagement in domestic labour: hiring an adult worker, conducting

morning and evening preps, enlightening parents on the significance of relieving children domestic tasks, offering guidance and counseling and giving extra homework to students.

Other suggestions included taking lunch in school, joining boarding schools and reducing poverty among households. Table 4 presents the frequencies and percentage of these suggestions.

Table 4 reveals that most teachers (57.1%) felt that there was need for parents to be enlightened on the importance of relieving children domestic duties. This was meant to create a conducive environment for the students to study. This could help improve the students' dismal academic performance. Further, others (35.7%) were of the idea that parents hire an adult worker at home to assist in domestic tasks. However, this proposal was not likely to be implemented given that some households were poor as could be inferred from some teachers (28.6%) who proposed that poverty among households needed to be reduced. Other suggestions included the need for students to take lunch at school (7.1%), attend boarding schools (7.1%), giving extra homework (7.1%), offering guidance and counseling to the affected students (14.3%) and having morning and evening preps (14.3%) to compensate for the time lost in doing domestic labour.

3.4. PTA Parents' Suggestions

In addition to what the form three class teachers proposed as intervention measures towards curbing the involvement of students in mixed day secondary schools in Kisii Central District in domestic chores, the PTA parents interviewed suggested that paraffin be availed in families to enable students conduct private studies in the evening or do school assignments after performing domestic tasks. The suggested means of handling domestic labour, their respective frequencies and percentages are contained in the following table.

Table-5. PTA parents' views on addressing domestic labour

Suggestions	Frequency	Percentage
Enlighten parents	7	50.0
Conduct morning and evening preps	3	21.1
Join boarding schools	2	14.3
Hire adult workers	2	14.3
Give extra homework	3	21.4
Provide paraffin	1	7.1

From Table 5, it can be noted that just like class teachers, half of the PTA parents (50.0%) felt there was reason for parents to be educated on the need to reduce the burden of domestic labour on their children. Others (14.3%), saw the need for workers to be employed at home as well as conducting preps both in the morning and evening(21.4%). The proposal that paraffin be provided by parents so that students could study at night after doing domestic duties implied that poverty levels among some households were high hence needed to be addressed by the government.

3.5. Students' Proposals on Mitigating Domestic Labour

Of all the respondents, students provided widest range of possible remedies to managing domestic labour so as to improve their academic performance. Other than those suggestions already made by both the class teachers and PTA parents, the students viewed the following as also being possible remedies to curbing their involvement in domestic labour: being exempted from doing domestic chores during school days, practicing less labour intensive farming techniques, sinking wells at home and avoiding doing domestic labour deliberately. Similarly, they felt that the government should punish those parents found overworking children, buying such pieces of equipment as wheelbarrows and carts to transport goods as well as selling excess animals to reduce the burden of domestic labour. The respective frequencies and percentages for these suggestions are contained in table 6.

Table-6.Students' views on addressing domestic labour.

Suggestions	Frequency	Percentage
Utilize time available at school well	20	9.1
Sharing work at home	17	7.8
Employ adult workers	124	56.6
Parents to relieve children of domestic work	119	54.3
Exempted from work during school days	24	11.0
Employ less labour intensive farming techniques	4	1.8
Join boarding schools	27	12.3
Sink a well at home	8	3.7
Avoid doing domestic labour deliberately	3	1.4
Reduce poverty in homes	15	6.8
Teach during holidays and weekends to compensate for time lost	9	4.1
Government to punish parents overworking children	14	6.4
Provide paraffin to study after domestic work	7	3.2
Parents to buy tools like wheel barrows and carts to ferry goods	2	0.9
Sell excess animals to ereduce burden of domestic labour	8	3.7

From Table 6, it can be observed that students concurred with both the class teachers and PTA members that workers needed to be employed (56.6%), joining boarding schools (12.3%), reducing poverty in households (6.8%), conducting tuition during preps, holidays and weekends (4.1%) and providing paraffin so as students can study after participating in domestic labour (3.2%). The proposal advanced by students of joining boarding schools would mean that they had poor attitude towards the respective mixed day secondary schools. This could partially explain their dismal academic performance. Indeed, it is not all schools that are better equipped compared to the day ones. Further, although the government's move to scrap tuition fees in public secondary schools since January, 2008 is welcome, still the public day secondary schools are more cheaper compared to the boarding ones. Although the public boarding secondary schools also benefit from this tuition waiver, they charge levies to cater for students' food and accommodation thereby requiring more money to remain operational as opposed to day schools. Those parents who cannot afford such extra fees are therefore most likely to take their children to the day secondary schools which are more affordable. Thus day secondary schools will remain fashionable

in the future. Even globally, both parents and children, more than ever before, now tend to prefer day schools to the boarding ones. In particular, such parents cite security, diet and need to offer guidance and counseling to their children as being the reasons for settling on day secondary schools. The suggestion by students that excess animals be sold to reduce burden of domestic labour could mean that some parents still cherished the outmoded belief that having many domestic animals is a sign of wealth. Such parents were most likely to assign domestic duties to children along strict gender lines as well, which could jeopardize their education. Similarly, proposals that less labour intensive farming methods be employed and that parents buy such pieces of equipment as wheelbarrows and carts to transport goods could mean that some students actually suffered substantially in undertaking domestic tasks.

On the other hand, the proposal that the government punishes those parents found overworking children implied that students knew well their rights. However, for as long as many households remain impoverished, rely on the meager income from small family enterprises, farming and related activities, they are likely to continue demanding for greater labour from children since it is cheaper and more flexible. Further, although the government enacted the children's Act in 2001, the efficacy of such legislation remains questionable. Thus, the elimination of children's involvement in domestic labour calls for government intervention. In particular, the laws and decrees need to be policed for implementation. Clearly, a mix of legislation to prevent the engagement of children in domestic labour as well provision of more incentives to attend school is necessary in addressing Kenya's educational and developmental challenges for the twenty first century. However, the suggestion to deliberately avoid participating in domestic labour by some students (1.4%) is likely to make their relationship sour with their parents, guardians and siblings. In particular, such students' behaviour is likely to be construed as disobedience and even irresponsibility. This scenario is bound to create an uncondusive environment for the children to study peacefully both at home as well as school. Instead, the involved parties should resolve any conflict emanating from performing domestic chores amicably. For instance, while there is need to enlighten the parents, guardians and siblings on the need to exempt students from undertaking some domestic tasks in order to study, children should learn to respect fellow members of the family and community. Among others, such children need to be guided and counseled so as to enable them gain meaningfully from their educational endeavors. The understanding among most students that it is important to be engaged in all types of work , including both intellectual and domestic is however, healthy as it makes them to be responsible people early in life. This also helps in discarding the retrogressive gender stereotypes regarding the various roles played by individuals in family and society.

4. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings that emerged from this study, the following policy recommendations were made and [Holmes \(1965\)](#) problem-solving approach highlighted earlier on, was used as a benchmark in formulating them. In particular, this study revealed that the participation of

students in domestic labour could be contributing to low academic performance in mixed day secondary schools in Kisii Central District. Thus, the provided policy proposals could rectify this scenario. These policy proposals are: reducing the domestic workload done by the students in day secondary schools, educating both the parents and community on the need to attend and actively participate in civic affairs as well as conducting tuition both in the morning and evening. Other recommendations include offering guidance and counseling to the affected students, equipping mixed day secondary schools well with the relevant teaching and learning facilities, providing lunch in schools and combining efforts in a bid to combat the high levels of poverty among households.

4.2. Reducing the Domestic Workload

A number of students miss going to school so as to help in domestic tasks at home. As this study found out, students in mixed day secondary schools in Kisii Central District spend many hours each day performing such household chores as preparing meals, digging the shamba, fetching water as well as firewood, harvesting crops, caring for siblings, the sick and the tending livestock. It is imperative therefore, that the burden of domestic labour among students be lowered so as to increase their participation in school. Thus where the parents or guardians themselves cannot manage such tasks, then employing or hiring adults as workers would be necessary so as to enable children attend school regularly. Similarly, where possible, purchasing of such pieces of equipment as hand and donkey carts for use at home could help reduce the domestic workload undertaken by students. Other relevant initiatives could include increased usage of herbicides to reduce the demand for weeding labour, introducing modern stoves that save energy, protect the environment as well as reducing the need for time-consuming fuel wood collection, introducing of simple farm technology such as better ploughs and practicing indoor livestock farming. Supplying communities with such items as barrels for water conservation or sinking wells can also decrease the amount of work to be done so that children can be freed to attend school. With proper planning and implementation, the Constituency Development Funds kitty can be used towards achieving this country wide. Apart from reducing children's workload, the creation of accessible water points would provide safe water for the community. This is also in line with the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of ensuring environmental sustainability whose target is to reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015 (UNICEF, 2003).

4.2. Educating both the Parents and Community on the Need to Attend and Participate in Civic Affairs

A majority of the teachers (57.1%) who participated in this study viewed enlightening of parents as one way of managing the problem of domestic labour among students. The government should therefore endeavour to provide civic education in order to enhance the capacity of both parents and the community to support children's development and ensure the

protection of their rights. Indeed, parents should be aware of their own rights as well as those of the children since ignorance is no excuse to violating the law as contained in the relevant legal documents and even decrees. It is the responsibility of the government, parents and the community to be aware of how children's education is affected by such factors as domestic labour, poverty and discrimination. It is worth noting that experimentation and careful monitoring are essential in any civic education programme to be adopted, as no simple or uniform prescriptions are possible. Since most civic education programmes in the developing countries are carried out jointly with either the donor agencies or non-governmental organizations, using a variety of approaches, there is always need to examine the conditions under which such approaches seem to succeed or fail. Thus, how the various players approach civic affairs should depend of the specific context, including the existing information or level of education, families' incomes and productive activities as well as the prevailing cultural and social norms. During this study, it was disheartening to learn that some parents did not even know the class their children had reached in school. Parents need to be serious with their children's education and always attend visiting and education days when held in schools to share with other stakeholders on the significance of education as well as how to address factors affecting academic performance like domestic labour. Parents and guardians should provide, among others, paraffin at home so that children can study and do school assignments after performing domestic tasks. Parental literacy and education can also be enhanced through such avenues as adult, open or distance learning offered within as well as without the country.

4.3. Conducting Tuition both In the Morning and Evening

In this study, a fraction of PTA parents (21.1%) suggested that tuition be offered in schools both in the morning and evening so as to reduce the amount of domestic labour or even compensate for the time students lose while doing domestic labour. This means learning taking place before as well as after the normal daily lessons. Indeed, offering tuition during such times will help in reducing students' chances of participating in domestic labour at home for long periods at the expense of education. Already, there is a public outcry that a number of public secondary schools are posting poor results in national examinations, a scenario that has been associated with a wide variety of factors, among them students' engagement in domestic labour. The situation is aggravated by the fact that teachers now have to contend with the increased enrolment among learners since the introduction of Free Primary Education in January, 2003 as well as the waiver on tuition fees in public secondary schools in January, 2008.

4.4. Offering Guidance and Counseling to the Affected Students

Some of the Form Three class teachers involved in this study (14.3%), suggested that guidance and counseling be offered to those students whose education is affected due to being engaged in domestic labour. Indeed, identifying and motivating such disadvantaged students will also help in checking wastage in the education system as well as improving academic

achievement. In particular, providing such services will help the students make appropriate adjustments both at home and even in schools in as far as involvement in domestic labour is concerned. Guidance and counseling will also help in communication within the school, home and community. Thus guidance and counseling departments need to be taken very seriously in mixed day secondary schools by providing the required facilities including time, physical facilities, trained counselors, guest speakers, among others. Further, although boys and girls in mixed day secondary schools are expected to relate cordially in the pursuit of education, cases of indiscipline are often experienced due to the adolescence crisis. Thus effective guidance and counseling come in handy, especially in addressing both educational and developmental challenges facing the youth.

4.5. Equipping Mixed Day Secondary Schools Well with the Relevant Teaching and Learning Resources.

A number of students (12.3%) involved in this study felt that joining boarding schools as opposed to day ones would help avoid being engaged in domestic labour hence improve on academic performance. Apart from the fact that students in mixed day secondary schools are most likely to be involved in domestic labour after leaving school in the evening and during weekends, it is possible that they consider it prestigious to be in boarding schools since they are normally associated with better physical facilities and academic performance. Improving the quality of education for every student in day secondary schools by providing books and instructional materials may accomplish much more in terms of academic achievement. There is evidence to show that children with text books, for example, learn more and that they stay in school longer. In addition, having the relevant text books has been found to matter more to girls than to boys if the former receive less attention from teachers as well as less instructional support at home and if domestic duties lead to absenteeism from school. Generally, improving the overall quality of education may be one of the most productive investment for attracting children to school and keeping them there. But only subsidizing the cost of education in an effort to attract students to schools or establishing alternative low quality educational institutions are measures that are unlikely to boost academic performance. Thus the government, parents and communities need to provide adequate teaching and learning facilities in day secondary schools to match those of the boarding ones. Meanwhile, those students who wish to learn in boarding schools need to be offered guidance and counseling to be able to view the former positively. Among others, mentioning those who have excelled from day secondary schools as role models can help them achieve this.

4.6. Providing Lunch to Students in Schools

This study revealed that some students were not having lunch at school either because their parents had not paid for it or the school was not running a lunch programme for students. Some of the parents failed to pay lunch fees which ranged from Kshs.500 to Kshs. 800. Ironically, such

parents provided money to their children daily to buy food from neighbouring kiosks (shops) which would amount up to four times the one they were expected to pay for similar lunch at school in a single term. Although the number of students affected was small, staying hungry is detrimental to students' education. Some of those heading home for lunch are likely to find nothing to eat, especially in impoverished families. Others could either be involved in preparing their own meal or coming late to school for afternoon lessons. Further, the situation is worsened by the fact that some students cover kilometres to and from home in order to have lunch. Another reason that some students in mixed schools may gain less education is that they are likely to be undernourished at home. Indeed, malnourished children have been known to be less active, less attentive, less motivated and less responsive than the better-nourished peers. They are also known to be absent from school and repeat classes more often. Providing quality lunch in schools to students is thus a means of reducing absenteeism as well as improving their ability to benefit from instruction by relieving hunger or even nutritional deficiencies. Thus, it is imperative that parents pay for their children to have lunch at school to avoid inconveniences and therefore boost their academic performance.

4.7. Combining Efforts to Combat Poverty

The wide spread poverty in the country needs to be addressed with the view to empowering citizens economically. Indeed, poverty in many households has been associated with the involvement of children in domestic labour and weak academic performance. Therefore, improving the lives of the majority poor and addressing government impediments to service quality and effectiveness would help solve the problem. Since children's survival depends on their parents' ability to support them, there is need therefore, to offer such parents an immediate opportunity to increase their income. These could include teaching them such skills as weaving, tailoring, embroidery and knitting. Another possible intervention measure could be by the government minimizing the involvement of children in domestic labour by providing impoverished families who have to rely on child labour, with credit for education purposes alongside developing safer, alternative income-generating strategies for the children themselves. This could include supervised, paid, training/apprenticeships that contribute to reducing future poverty through marketable skills.

Indeed, a more fruitful approach to increasing children's schooling may be a strategy directed not at children themselves but at their parents as well. Such a strategy would reduce the parents' dependence on the labour of the children and raise the education levels of the parents themselves. In particular, research shows that women's levels of education and command of resources are important factors in their ability to keep their children in school. According to [Chernichovsky \(1985\)](#), households headed by educated females are more likely to send girls as well as boys to school and to keep them there longer, than households headed by uneducated females or even males. Further, women's ability to support themselves and their children in part

depends on their own schooling, since education is usually what allows them to find job in the formal sector, with its higher and more dependable income stream.

5. CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to highlight the individual, family, community and even policy level factors affecting decisions about children's time use, especially with regard to schooling as well as participation in domestic labour. Among others, such insights are particularly important in formulating educational, national poverty reduction policies and the related MDG targets which are all geared towards the well being of all household members. Stakeholders in the field of education including the government, development partners, parents, communities, students, teachers, both national and international policy makers need to consider implementing these recommendations with a view to curbing engagement of students in mixed day secondary schools in domestic labour, in order to promote their academic achievement. Indeed, implementing these policy proposals will go a long way in addressing not only Kenya's educational challenges but also other developmental challenges being experienced in the 21st Century. However, while doing so, the criteria to ensure sustainability and successful implementation of these policy proposals should first be carefully devised in line with Holmes (1965) problem-solving approach.

Funding: This study received no specific financial support.

Competing Interests: The author declares that there are no conflicts of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

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