

## Trend and Rate of Household and Government Contribution to Secondary Education Unit Cost in Kenya: A Case Study of Siaya District

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### ABSTRACT

Unit cost of secondary education has continued to rise both direct and indirect jeopardizing access to basic education. The debate has concentrated on whom is carrying the burden of secondary education. The descriptive and causal comparative designs were used in this study. The study sample comprised 85 headteachers', 765 teachers', 3349 students and one DEO. The findings of the study indicate that on average households and government contribution to secondary education grew by 3.45 and 4.3 times in absolute terms respectively while under constant terms, the household contribution was 23 times and 25 times for day and boarding schools respectively. The government contribution was 15 times over the same time period. It was concluded that the household carry heavy responsibility compared to the government and hence acquisition of secondary education is still a problem to most household.

**Key Words:** *Unit cost, Households, Trends, Rate*

### INTRODUCTION

Unit cost can be described as unit expenditure. Statistics on unit cost are an important guide to policy makers. The challenges facing policy makers is whether they should seek to hold unit cost constant, decrease them, or increase them (Mingat, 2003). The central question confronting educators in every society is how to provide quality secondary education when unit cost has continued to rise and resources are scarce. In recent years, stakeholders in education in both industrialized and developing countries increasingly demand effective secondary schooling for their disadvantaged youth (Watkins, Watt & Buston, 2001). Yet providing quality secondary education at lower unit cost is an overwhelming challenge to most governments, particularly those in developing countries (Atcharena & Hite, 2001).

Most stakeholders in education readily believe that adding more money to schools will improve the quality of education and thereby, schools' performance. However, production function studies in both industrialized and developing countries have produced findings that are inconsistent and mixed. Hanushek (1999) reported that in 12 studies on per pupil expenditure in developing countries, half were statistically significant, and the other half were found to be statistically insignificant. Whether secondary schools with greater access to more financial resources outperform others is still an issue demanding exploration in developing countries.

Different regions have used different models for investing in secondary schooling. In contrast to the investment in secondary education in developed and then developing countries, investment in secondary education in Sub-Saharan Africa continues to focus largely on

expanding enrolment rather than on higher per student spending, and the pupil teacher ratio, which had been declining, is now up to 40 pupils per teacher (UNESCO, 2002).

Falling revenues of secondary schools in many African countries led to the introduction of user fees as an ad hoc response to expenditure cuts-either imposed by falling government revenues. Throughout the 1980s and much of the 1990s the world bank especially pushed user fees on the grounds that low demand for poor quality services, rather than cost, was the principal barrier to expanding access. Poor parents often find it difficult to make a projection of the payoff of their children's education and cannot capture all the benefits of schooling, since these accrue across a child's lifetime and are difficult to access in the immediate or short term (Herz and Sperling, 2005).

According to World Bank (2005), eliminating user fees requires major front-end capital investment. These investments have highly significant implications for recurrent costs. In the medium term, expanding access in secondary will rise. It thus follows that governments will need to implement a cluster of policies which create an enabling environment for the expansion of secondary education. The financing of universal secondary education for low-income countries would not be possible without an immediate steep-change in the volume and quality of donor support. Whatever is done to mobilize internal resources at the country level, better quality, as well as more aid is urgently needed to achieve free primary and secondary education.

According to Ngware et al. (2006b), since the late 1980s household's investment to secondary education has risen considerably. Given that household contribution to physical facilities and instructional materials was meant to be optional, a growing proportion of households are making contributions below what is needed or are opting out of secondary education for their children - if they cannot afford the needed levies. Largely as a consequence, the majority of schools lack facilities (particularly for learning science) and instructional materials, and are thus, low quality institutions. A related development is the observable facts that the more affluent household strive to have their children enrolled in the few older and established schools that have managed to maintain a measure of quality. Consequently, there are too many primary school leavers chasing a few quality secondary schools, leaving the not so popular poor quality schools under-enrolled.

According to Manda, Mwabu and Kimanyi (2002), the government should always be the principal investor in education. Such a role cannot be left entirely to the private sectors because human resources development involves long-term planning and substantial financial resources mobilization. On the other hand, education, particularly post-primary education, can be treated as a profitable investment for individual graduates, who earn more than they would otherwise, and for the society, which is enriched not only by the knowledge of the educated people but also by the higher taxes paid by educated individuals. This benefit extends from the students present household, future household and to the economy as a whole.

Despite the relatively high expenditure on education in Kenya, the GER in secondary education was 31 percent in 2006 (UNESCO, 2008). Lewin (2007b) suggest that to achieve GERs 100 percent in primary, 100 percent in lower secondary and 50 percent in upper secondary, approximately 8.6 percent of GNP would be required for spending on education without any cost saving reforms; or 6.3 percent of GNP with cost savings reforms. With cost saving reforms, cost per pupils as a percentage of GNP per capita are calculated as 12 percent in primary, 20 percent in lower secondary education and 40 percent in upper secondary education, as compared with without cost saving reforms of 12 percent in primary, 30 percent in lower secondary and 60 percent in upper secondary education.

Di Gropello (2006) observes that low-income countries spent US\$289 for each enrolled student, and their total secondary education expenditure amounted to only 13 percent of the per capita income. A typical lower-middle-income country spent US\$1,038 per pupil, or 17 percent of its per capita income. Among upper-middle and high income countries, domestic education expenditure per pupil averaged US\$2,537, or almost a quarter of the GDP per capita. In regard to resource allocation, although middle and high income countries have significantly more success than the poorer countries in Latin America and East Asia, their secondary education sectors are still fairly underfunded compared to the OECD, in which each secondary school student on average received a quarter of personal income, or US\$ 6,688.

The unit cost burden of secondary schools in Kenya is borne by the government and household. Such cost target salaries for teaching and non-teaching staff, bursary allocation, capital investments, school fees, tuition and transport, among others. In 2003/04, estimated total recurrent unit cost for primary, secondary, technical and university education were Ksh.5,438, Ksh.22,381, Ksh.35,932 and Ksh.136,882, respectively (Ngware et al, 2006a) Secondary education received 4.1 times per student than the public unit cost of primary pupil, 1.6 times and 6.1 times public technical and university education unit expenditure, respectively. These ratios are high, especially considering that the figures do not include the fees charges. In absolute terms, secondary education unit cost increased from Ksh.14,262 in 1997/8 to Ksh.21,106 in 2004/5 an increase of 48 percent (Ngware et al, 2006a). Parents whose children were attending secondary schools were responsible for meeting up to Ksh.8,500 (US\$136) of charges in annum in national requirements. In addition, 'caution money' for new students, development funds' charges and 'lunch fees' could be charged to parents. In total, the guidelines suggest the maximum charges be Ksh.11,000 (US\$175).

Finding stable and reliable funds to close the gap in unit cost requires thinking carefully about means for funding, the budgeting process, the expenditure items, and the design of the fiscal system (Ngware et al, 2006a; Onsomu et al, 2006). The question is what financial mechanism reforms should Kenya adopt to enhance attainment of quality education in Kenya observed by good grades at the end of form four levels? This remains vital important question and is the gap that this study also seeks to fill. This is why this study set out to do an objective analysis of the trend and rate of household and government contribution to secondary education expenditure in Siaya district from 1997 to 2007. The following objectives guided the study:

- Determine the trends at which the government and households have been contributing to secondary education expenditure.
- Perform deviation analysis to determine the rate at which Household and Government have been contributing to secondary school expenditure.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The study was guided by arguments by Ranis and Stewart (2001) who clearly notes that education is important public good. The allocation of resources for human development is partly a function of relative size of public expenditure. The proportion of these expenditure flow to the human development sector is partly a function of how they allocated within each sector. This may be argued as a proof why the government and household invest in education. This study adopted descriptive (survey) and causal-comparative (ex-post facto) designs. In this study, stratified, systematic and purposive sampling methods were used. Systematic sampling was used in the selected schools to determine the teachers and students who would be given questionnaires and who would participate in the interview. To administer the questionnaires effectively a personal visit to all the schools selected in the sample was made. The study was carried out in Siaya District, Nyanza Province in Kenya. The district lies between latitude 00 26'

to 00 18' North and Latitude 330 58' East and 340 33' West (Republic of Kenya, 2003e). The population of the study comprised 85 head teachers', 749 teachers', 3210 form 4 students and one DEO. The data was coded for analysis.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

### Unit Cost from Government Sources

Table 1 shows unit cost derived from remuneration of teachers per annum, bursary per student and grants per student per annum giving overall unit government expenditure per student in Siaya district.

**Table 1: Unit Government Expenditure per Student (in Ksh.)**

Year	Teacher salary per student	Bursary per student	Grants per student	Unit government expenditure
2007	13,628	1,106	98	14,822
2006	13,183	996	167	14,346
2005	13,460	979	172	14,511
2004	12,494	655	96	13,149
2003	11,314	280	159	11,753
2002	11,029	265	-	11,294
2001	7,829	260	-	8,089
2000	6,459	246	-	6,704
1999	5,420	247	-	5,667
1998	4,900	232	-	5,132
1997	4,328	230	-	4,568

*Authors' Derivation*

Table 1 shows that in 1997, the unit cost was Ksh. 4,568 per student. It doubled to Ksh.8,089 in 2001 before tripling in 2004/05 period. It reached Ksh.14,822 in 2007. The graph shows an upward trend from a minimum of Ksh.4,568 in 1997 to Ksh.8,089 in 2001 before reaching Ksh.14,822 in 2007.

### Unit Cost from Household Sources

Table 2 shows fees parents paid to secondary schools in Siaya district. The fees represent unit cost levied on students annually for day scholars and borders.

**Table 2: Unit Cost Paid by Parents (in Ksh.)**

Year	Form 1		Form 2		Form 3		Form 4	
	Day	Board	Day	Board	Day	Board	Day	Board
2007	20,015	33,115	19,515	32,615	19,515	32,615	24,215	36,615
2006	19,450	31,450	18,950	30,950	18,950	30,950	23,650	34,950
2005	18,300	29,400	17,800	28,900	17,800	28,900	22,500	32,900
2004	17,800	28,000	17,300	27,500	17,300	27,500	22,000	31,500
2003	17,400	26,500	16,900	26,000	16,900	26,000	21,600	30,000
2002	16,475	24,475	15,975	23,975	15,975	23,975	20,675	27,975
2001	16,225	23,925	15,725	23,425	15,725	23,425	20,425	27,425
2000	15,325	22,825	14,825	22,325	14,825	22,325	19,525	26,325
1999	15,250	22,650	14,750	22,150	14,750	22,150	19,450	26,150
1998	14,950	21,950	14,450	21,450	14,450	21,450	19,150	25,450
1997	14,900	21,600	14,400	21,100	14,400	21,100	19,100	25,100

*Authors' Derivation*

### User Charges per Class

Table 3 shows consolidated unit cost paid by Form 1's in the period under review. It shows fees paid by day scholars and boarders. In 1997, day scholars unit cost was Ksh. 19,468 while boarders paid Ksh.26,168. It doubled in 2003 to Ksh.29,153 for days scholars and Ksh.38,253. In 2007, day scholars paid Ksh.34,837 while boarders paid Ksh.47,937.

**Table 3: Form 1 Consolidated Unit Cost (in Ksh.)**

Year	Category	Households	Government	Unit Cost
2007	Day	20,015	14,822	34,837
	Board	33,115	14,822	47,937
2006	Day	19,450	14,346	33,796
	Board	31,450	14,346	45,796
2005	Day	18,300	14,511	32,811
	Board	29,400	14,511	43,911
2004	Day	17,800	13,149	30,949
	Board	28,000	13,149	41,149
2003	Day	17,400	11,753	29,153
	Board	26,500	11,753	38,253
2002	Day	16,475	11,294	27,769
	Board	24,475	11,294	35,769
2001	Day	16,225	8,089	24,314
	Board	23,975	8,089	32,064
2000	Day	15,325	6,704	22,029
	Board	22,825	6,704	29,529
1999	Day	15,250	5,667	20,917
	Board	22,650	5,667	28,317
1998	Day	14,950	5,132	20,082
	Board	21,950	5,132	27,082
1997	Day	14,900	4,568	19,468
	Board	21,600	4,568	26,168

*Authors' Derivation*

Table 4 shows consolidated unit cost paid by Form 2's and 3's in the period under review for both day scholars and boarders. In 1997, day scholars paid Ksh.18,968 while boarders paid Ksh.25,668. The fees went up to Ksh.37,753 for boarders and Ksh.28,653 for day scholars in 2003. In 2007, day scholars paid Ksh.34,337 while boarders paid Ksh.47,437. In either case, the fees never doubled but were rising steadily.

**Table 4: Form 2&3 Consolidated Unit Cost (in Ksh.)**

Year	Category	Households	Government	Unit Cost
2007	day	19,515	14,822	34,337
	Board	32,615	14,822	47,437
2006	Day	18,950	14,346	33,296
	Board	30,950	14,346	45,296
2005	Day	17,800	14,511	32,311
	Board	28,900	14,511	43,411
2004	Day	17,300	13,149	30,449
	Board	27,500	13,149	40,649
2003	Day	16,900	11,753	28,653
	Board	26,000	11,753	37,753
2002	Day	15,975	11,294	27,269
	Board	23,975	11,294	35,269
2001	Day	15,725	8,089	23,814
	Board	23,325	8,089	31,414
2000	Day	14,825	6,704	21,529
	Board	22,325	6,704	29,029
1999	Day	14,750	5,667	20,417
	Board	22,150	5,677	27,827
1998	Day	14,450	5,132	19,582
	Board	21,450	5,132	26,582
1997	Day	14,400	4,568	18,968
	Board	21,100	4,568	25,668

*Authors' Derivation*

Table 5 shows consolidated unit cost paid by Form 4 students. It shows fees paid by day scholars and boarders. In 1997, the consolidated fees paid by day scholars was Ksh. 23,668 while boarders paid Ksh. 29,668. The amount charged increased steadily to Ksh.33,353 and Ksh.41,753 respectively in 2003. In 2007, day scholars paid Ksh.39,037 while boarders paid Ksh.51,437.

**Table 5: Form 4 Consolidated Unit Cost (in Ksh.)**

Year	Category	Households	Government	Unit Cost
2007	Day	24,215	14,822	39037
	Board	36,615	14,822	51,437
2006	Day	23,650	14,346	37,996
	Board	34,950	14,346	49,296
2005	Day	22,500	14,511	37,011
	Board	32,900	14,511	47,411
2004	Day	22,000	13,149	35,149
	Board	31,500	13,149	44,649
2003	Day	21,600	11,753	33,353
	Board	30,000	11,753	41,753
2002	Day	20,675	11,294	31,969
	Board	27,975	11,294	39,269
2001	Day	20,975	8,089	29,064
	Board	27,425	8,089	35,514
2000	Day	19,525	6,704	26,229
	Board	26,325	6,704	33,029
1999	Day	19,450	5,667	25,117
	Board	26,150	5,667	31,817
1998	Day	19,150	5,132	24,817
	Board	25,450	5,132	30,582
1997	Day	19,100	4,568	23,668
	Board	25,100	4,568	29,668

*Authors' Derivation*

### Consolidated Unit Cost

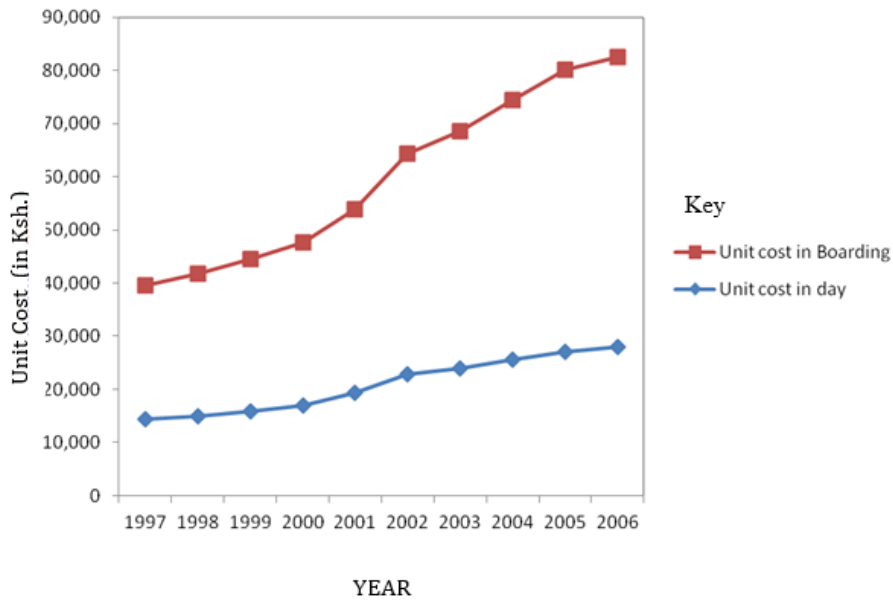
Table 6 shows average unit cost in day and boarding secondary schools in Siaya district. The table shows that day secondary schools were cheaper than boarding secondary schools. In 1997 boarding schools charges increased from Ksh.25,236 to Ksh.44,506 in 2003 and to Ksh.57,259 in 2007. In day secondary schools, fees increased from Ksh.14,358 in 1997 to Ksh.23,991 in 2003 and to Ksh.28,938 in 2007. In day and boarding secondary schools the charges in 2007 doubled the 1997.

**Table 6: Unit Cost in Day and Boarding Secondary Schools (in Ksh.)**

Year	Household – cost per student in day	Household- cost per student in boarding	Government- Cost per student	Unit cost in day	Unit cost in boarding
2007	27,837	42,437	14,822	28,938	57,259
2006	26,796	40,296	14,346	27,946	54,642
2005	25,811	38,411	14,511	27,154	52,922
2004	23,949	35,649	13,149	25,635	48,798
2003	22,153	32,753	11,753	23,991	44,506
2002	20,769	30,269	11,294	22,770	41,563
2001	17,314	26,414	8,089	19,314	34,503
2000	15,029	24,029	6,704	16,944	30,733
1999	13,917	22,827	5,667	15,921	28,494
1998	13,082	21,582	5,132	15,032	26,714
1997	12,468	20,668	4,568	14,358	25,236

*Authors' Derivation*

Figure 2 shows upward trend for both unit cost of day and boarding secondary schools. However, the boarding secondary schools enjoy higher upward trend than day secondary schools. The elasticity of day secondary school curve was 1536 units while boarding secondary schools was 2177 units. The implication was that boarding cost was rising faster than day secondary schools.



**Figure 2: Unit Cost of Day and Boarding Secondary Schools**

**Table 7: Absolute and Constant Analysis of Unit Cost (in Ksh.)**

Year	Absolute analysis unit cost (day)	Absolute analysis unit cost (board)	Constant analysis unit cost (day)	Constant analysis unit cost (board)
2007	992	2617	14580	32023
2006	792	1720	13588	29406
2005	1519	4124	12796	27686
2004	1644	4292	11277	23562
2003	1221	2943	9633	19270
2002	3456	7060	8412	16327
2001	2370	3770	4956	9267
2000	1023	2239	2586	5497
1999	889	1780	1563	3258
1998	674	1478	674	1478
1997	0	0	0	0

*Authors' Derivation*

### Deviation Analysis

Table 7 shows the deviation of unit cost in current and constant growth (index) over the time series period 1997/98 to 2006/07.

#### Absolute Deviation Analysis

The absolute deviation analysis in Table 7 shows that the unit cost in day secondary schools rose from 674 units in 1997 to 3456 in 2002 then dropped to 1,221 units in 2003 and dropped further to 992 units in 2007. In boarding secondary schools, the unit costs rose from 1478 in 1997 to 7,060 in 2002 before fluctuating between 2003 and 2007 where unit cost fell to 1,720 in 2006 and rose to 2,617 in 2007. The overall picture presented for the unit cost on absolute deviation analysis generally reflects fluctuations in overall allocation to secondary education as shown in Figure 3. The implication of such fluctuation is that unit cost can rise and fall depending on the prevailing market situation dictated by inflationary rates and therefore parents are faced with unpredictable fee regime dictated by the institutions and prevailing circumstances.

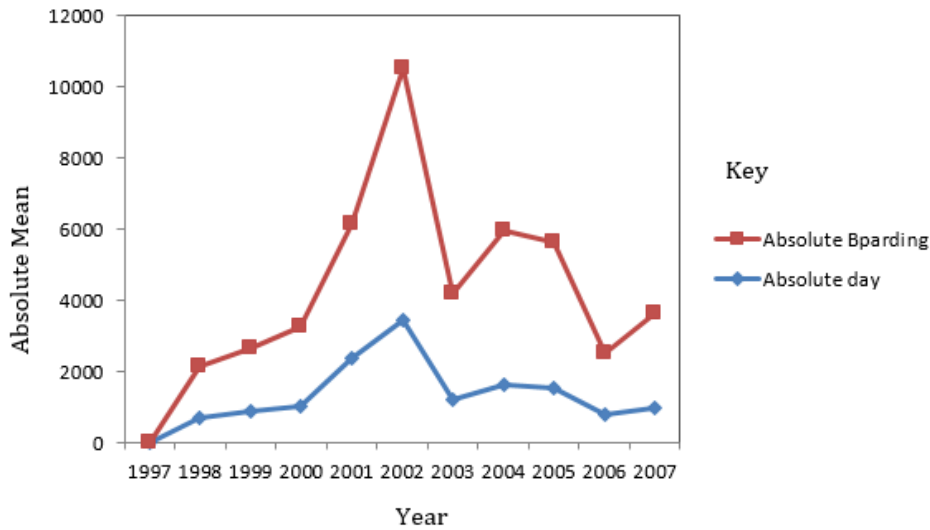


Figure 3: Absolute Analysis Graph

**Constant Deviation Analysis**

The base year for the constant analysis was the year 1997. The base year was chosen for it was the beginning of study period.

**Unit Cost**

In terms of constant analysis and using 1997 as the base year, the unit cost in day secondary show an upward trend from 674 units in 1998 to a maximum of 14,580 units in 2007. In boarding secondary schools the unit cost rose from 1,478 in 1998 to 32,023 in 2007. The Figure 4 shows the nature of average unit cost curve over the period 1997 to 2007.

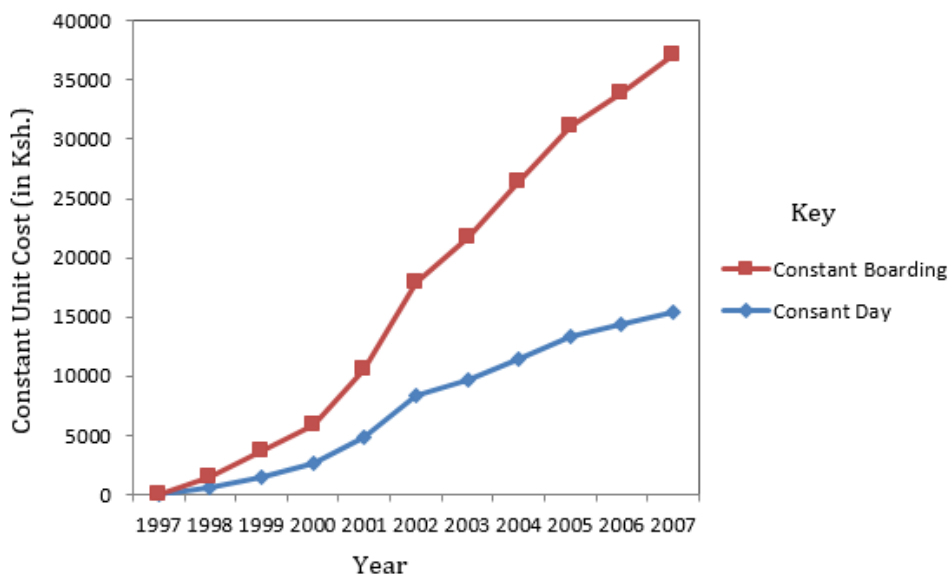


Figure 4: Constant Unit Cost Analysis

The constant analysis show that unit cost has been rising steadily for both day and boarding secondary schools. The absolute deviation analysis in Figure 3 shows fluctuations and therefore constant analysis in Figure 4 is a better measure of the trend of unit cost.



## SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The results of the findings show that:

- Remuneration of teachers in various grades reflects that by 2003 secondary teacher's salary had doubled the 1997 figures and by 2008, it had tripled the 1997 figures.
- Bursary and grants to secondary schools in the district picked up in 2003. The period 2004 to 2007 indicated a dramatic rise of the government funding at the constituency level to the tune of Ksh.12,570,102 from Ksh. 8,717,730. Bursary per student averaged Ksh.248 in the period 1997/2003 and Ksh.693 in the period 2004/2007. The implication is that bursary per student is on the rise in the district. However, the amount allocated per student is insufficient to sustain students in school.
- Grants showed a marked increase from Ksh. 1,859,757 in 2003/04 to Ksh. 2,021,830. The implication is that government allocation to laboratory and equipment grant is on the rise. This is attributed to the government resolve to strengthen mathematics and sciences in secondary education in line with sessional paper No. 1 of 2005 (Republic of Kenya, 2005).
- The household expenditure on fees is on upward trend with elasticity of Ksh. 1,537 per year in day schools, while in boarding schools the elasticity is Ksh.2,177 per annum. The average annual household contribution is Ksh.19,920 for day secondary schools and Ksh.30,920 for boarding schools
- The government contribution to unit cost of secondary education is on upward trend with elasticity of Ksh. 1,025 per annum. Increasing from Ksh.4,458 in 1997 to over Ksh.11,294 in 2002 before reaching Ksh.14,822 in 2007. The rate of government contribution averages Ksh. 10,003 per annum.
- Households contribution grew equally with the government in absolute terms at about 5.6 between 1997 to 2002. Fluctuations dominated the period between 2003 and 2007 with household averaging 1.3 times while government averaging 3times.

## CONCLUSION

The average contribution of household grew by 3.45 in absolute terms in the period 1997 to 2007 while the government contribution averaged 4.3 times. Considering 1997 as the base year, the households contribution to secondary school expenditure is 23 times and 25 times for day and boarding respectively while the government contribution is 15 times. Therefore households have genuine concerns.

## RECOMMENDATION

Financing secondary education remains a threat to accessibility and enrolment. From the study, household contribute a high amount in comparison to the government and hence bear heavy responsibility towards secondary education financing. To reduce the burden on household, there is need to find stable and reliable sources of funds to close the gap in unit cost. Careful thinking is required to find means for funding, the budgeting process, the expenditure items, and the design of the fiscal system. To fund secondary education, the government could expand public funds, exchange contribution from the private sector, or ask the international community for assistance.

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