

**CHALLENGES FACING FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION IN THE
MANAGEMENT OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MBEERE SOUTH SUB
COUNTY, EMBU COUNTY, KENYA.**

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**A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Education, Arts and sciences in Partial
Fulfillment of the requirement for the Conferment of Master of Education at
Leadership Management of Kenya Methodist University.**

DECEMBER, 2014

ABSTRACT

The establishment of Free Primary Education (F.P.E) in January 2003 by the Government of Kenya with an intention to do away with the tuition fees, building funds and activity fees that was paid in public primary schools. F.P.E increased in enrolment to over a million pupils across the country. The purpose of the study was therefore to investigate these challenges facing the implementation of the FPE in Mbeere South Sub-County. The primary schools literature review looks at F.P.E around the world, Africa, East Africa and Kenya. The study also looked at the task areas of a school head. The study was carried out in 36 public schools selected through random sampling targeting 10 head teachers; 20 teachers who hold the position of curriculum coordinators, the District Education Officer (D.E.O) and District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (DQASO). The sample size was 1% of the target population for pilot study. The study employed three tools of data collection, a questionnaire for headteachers, an interview schedule for the teachers and interview schedule for the District Education Officers and the DQASO. The content validity of the instruments was assessed using expert judgement by two faculty academic staff in the Department of Education. Piloting was carried out to test for reliability by administering questionnaires to respondents who did not take part in the study but had similar characteristics. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages presented in tables and bar graphs. The analysis was facilitated by SPSS version 17 a computer software. The results have provided insight for the government and other researchers on what can be done to make the programme a success. The nature of challenges on the management disclosed may be helpful to educational planners in identifying areas that require more attention or even changing systems or mechanism of management in the primary schools so as to have the full realization of all the benefits of F.P.E.