

# Examining Financial Sustainability of Fee-Free Secondary Education in Tanzania

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## Abstract

*This study was undertaken to examine financial sustainability in the provision of secondary education through a fee-free education policy in Tanzania. A concurrent embedded mixed research design was adopted. Data were collected from 421 respondents through stratified random, simple random and purposive sampling techniques using questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussion, and documentary review. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics analysis whereas qualitative data was analysed through thematic data analysis. Among others, the findings indicate that financial sustainability of fee-free secondary education relies on the national financial and strategic planning. As one survival strategy, this study recommends schools to establish various income generating projects.*

**Keywords:** *fee-free education, secondary education, sustainable education, Tanzania*

## Introduction

In its efforts to enhance the accessibility of primary and secondary education (basic education), Tanzania resumed the implementation of a fee-free education policy (henceforth FFE) in 2016, whereby the government provides capitation grants to schools instead of collecting fees from parents/guardians. FFE policy in Tanzania aims at making learning opportunities available to all school-aged children regardless of vulnerability, gender, disability, and family background. The urge to implement FFE has seen several governments around the world abolishing all fees and other forms of school contributions, whereby parents only incur indirect costs of schooling for their children (Anyango, Owino & Owuor, 2016). The governments

in developed countries have also invested heavily in educational policies that promote education for all. For instance, in the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the United Kingdom spent about £90 billion, which is equivalent to 4.3% of the national income to provide basic education for all and make education facilities available (Belfield, Farquharson & Sibieta, 2018). Similarly, Sweden has taken initiatives to join the global appeal in providing FFE by strengthening inclusiveness within the Swedish compulsory school system. In addition, children of school-going age are supposed to attend school to acquire the education that is fully funded by the government (Goransson, Nilholm & Karlsson, 2011).

The provision of fee-free education in African countries can be historically traced as far back as 1961 when African Heads of State convened a Conference on education in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The priority of these countries was placed on the expansion of secondary education to meet the required staffing, needed for taking over the state from departing colonial governments (Tilak, 2009). Unfortunately, FFE was halted when developing countries embraced a structural adjustment package that saw the governments' reduction of their involvement in financing social services. Of recent, it was once again realised that the majority of children in African countries do not make it to secondary schools. Statistics on gross enrolment rates show that two-thirds of all countries which had a secondary gross enrolment rate of 40% and below are in Africa. Current figures also depict that only a tiny minority participate in and finish secondary schooling, with most children coming from disadvantaged families; these children are unable to get access to education due to various obstacles, including economic poverty (Lewin & Calliods, 2003). To address such an unpleasant situation, most countries opted for FFE for instance, the provision of fee-free secondary education in Egypt aims at creating national security as well as eliminating financial and psychological burden among families to achieve the principles of justice, equality, and equal opportunity (Assaad & Krafft, 2015).

The primary sources of education funding in Egypt are agriculture, tourism, and petroleum export. However, it was noted that, although the budget allocated to education was higher than military expenses it remained inadequate to sustain all the requirements (Assaad & Krafft, 2015). In a similar vein in South Africa, the government decided to finance poor public secondary schools to provide secondary education to children from poor communities (Lumadi, 2020). In Kenya, upon the introduction of Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE), it was observed that the undertaking was not adequately planned and resourced and thus, culminated in poor funding. Additionally, even after the introduction of FFSE, enrolment rates remained low mainly due to inadequate financing and delayed disbursement of

funds (Wanjara & Ali, 2017). Studies in Malawi have revealed that the country was unable to accommodate the secondary school enrolment surge that came from FFE because of lack of financial resources resulting in severe deterioration of quality and low completion rates (Lewin & Calliods, 2003). Thus, a strong financial base is a prerequisite for sustaining fee-free secondary education.

Tanzania, like other countries in Africa, has responded to the global appeal by implementing fee-free secondary education. It is, however, not the first time to adopt the strategy because FFE has a long history in the country, dating back to the first post-independence decade. In 1963, the government decided to finance public education whereby, in public schools, secondary education was provided freely all over the country (Kazuzuru, 2020). The government's capacity to finance secondary education got into trouble in the early 1980s, due to various reasons including population increase, the collapse of the economy, oil crisis, drought, and low coffee prices. Therefore, low capacity in financing secondary education in the early 1990s contributed to the failure of the FFE policy, leading to the cost-sharing policy, whereby school fees and other contributions were introduced (Kazuzuru, 2020). This situation decreased access to secondary education for children from disadvantaged families to a great extent. To overcome the situation, the year 2016 marked the commencement of the current fee-free secondary education policy after its introduction in 2014 (Godida, 2018). The resumption of FFE came with several challenges which require the attention of the government and other educational stakeholders.

Despite the government's initiatives to introduce FFE, schools are yet to be adequately financed enough to cover all school needs such as furniture and stationery. Mashala (2019) has shown that despite the resumption of fee-free secondary education, a significant number of students had low academic achievement which was caused, among others, by poor financial muscles of families to manage indirect costs for their children. Moreover, the national certificate of secondary education examination (CSEE) results of 2016 indicated that most students passed with division IV (low academic performance), and very few passed with divisions I and II (high performance). Generally, observations made in the studies conducted in Tanzania and in other countries in Africa that provide fee-free secondary education suggest that policy implementation suffers from inadequate financing, which could impede its sustainability. This is partly because fee-free secondary education has triggered increased enrolment which overwhelms currently available school infrastructure and teachers, hence concerns over its sustainability. Although several previous studies have attempted to address this issue, their coverage is only partial. Therefore, this paper examines the financial sustainability of fee-free secondary education in Tanzania.

The study was guided by the Resource Dependence Theory (RDT), which was propounded by Pfeiffer & Salancik in 1978. RDT assumptions help in the understanding how internal and external resources affecting the effectiveness and efficiency of an organization. The key assumptions of the theory are that, organizational survival depends on its ability to acquire and maintain resources; internal resources of an organization are not enough; consequently, organizations need external resources to support their actions and ambitions and; too much dependence on external resources may restrict the attainment of organization objectives (Pfeiffer & Salancik, 1978). Based on such assumptions, deficiency in resources is perceived as the main force that drives organizations to initiate business projects to reduce doubt and risks of impoverishment. In this paper, RDT will aid the discussion of financial sustainability of the fee-free secondary education policy.

### **Financial Sustainability of Fee-free Secondary Education**

Fee-free secondary education has been among the top agenda in international multilateral agreements. Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) is the education goal which aims to ensure that the world governments provide inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities. SDG 4 and other treaties established an entitlement to free, compulsory primary and secondary education to rescue economic and social gaps within communities worldwide (Lyanga & Chen, 2020). Meanwhile, many governments have been obliged to increase investment in education to expand access to secondary education to poor and socially marginalized groups who face difficulties in accessing education. Therefore, introducing a fee-free secondary education policy was no longer optional but compulsory to narrow economic and social gaps (Wanjara & Ali, 2017).

Indeed, fee-free secondary education provides a room for enrolment of children from various socio-economic backgrounds because obstacles such as school fees and other contributions are substantially minimised. Nevertheless, experience from countries that provide fee-free secondary education shows that household costs of schooling still stand as a barrier to accessing secondary education and the financial sustainability of FFE was yet to be established (Maestry, 2020). Tanzania finances fee-free secondary education that aims to increase access to disadvantaged children who fail to join secondary education due to various reasons including poverty (Shukia, 2020).

### ***Planning to sustain fee-free secondary education***

Leon (2001) suggests that one of the possible ways for ensuring the financial sustainability of fee-free secondary education is financial planning which refers to policy formulation, allocation of financial resources, as well as adequate distribution and spending of funds. This is an important element for financial management (Lumadi, 2020) and thus, the government needs to have strong financial plans to ensure that sufficient funds are allocated to the implementation of fee-free secondary education. For instance, financial planning during the introduction and subsequent implementation of the policy on Free Day Secondary Education in 2008 in Kenya has substantially increased the education budget in the country over the years (Getange, Onkeo & Orodho, 2014). However, Orodho (2014) indicates that finance-related severe constraints affect the effective implementation of the policy. This makes the planning at the commencement of the policy implementation in Kenya questionable. Additionally, despite attaining universal secondary education milestones, Kenya still faces several finance-related challenges that negatively impact the provision of secondary education due to poor planning (Orodho, 2014). Under free secondary education programme, the government and development partners meet the cost of basic instructional materials and general purpose expenses while the parents meet other requirements. The Kenyan government allocates Ksh. 10,265/= for every child which was reported to be inadequate (Muindi, 2011). The government provided these subsidies as support funding for school fees and other operational costs to enable low-income and other disadvantaged families to access secondary education.

Similarly, the government of Tanzania committed a grant of Tsh. 25,000/= as capitation grant (CG) and Tsh. 20,000/= as fee compensation for each student for the provision of fee-free secondary education, but was observed to be inadequate (HakiElimu, 2017). However, as per Education Circular No.3 of 2016, parents are required to make contribution for their children's education. Parents must purchase uniforms for school and sports activities, exercise books and pens, mid-day meals for day students and for those in hostels, mattress, bedsheets and personal hygiene materials for boarding school students' and those staying in government owned hostels and pay for the medical expenses of their children. Moreover, for a stable educational sector financial planning, global recommendations suggest that countries are required to solicit funds and allocate between 15 and 20 per cent of the national budget or 4 to 6 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) (GPE, 2019) for basic education. Based on such evidence, it was important to establish the sustainability of financial planning of fee-free secondary education in Tanzania.

### ***Sources of funds for supporting fee-free secondary education***

Experience from several countries shows that financing education under the implementation of fee-free secondary education policy depends less on internal collections and more on donors. Such dependence on donors makes education financing unsustainable because any change in donors' decisions can induce a significant crisis. Arguably, at least 60% of an education sector's overall budget must come from sources such as national foundations, local corporations, and the government (Galabawa, 2007; Leon, 2001). Financial sources for education vary from one country to another, and involve a combination of public and private entities. In OECD countries, governments spend a large proportion of their national budgets to finance free education, at an average of 5.66% of their GDP. In the USA and Canada, for example, most financing sources are at the local fiscal level based on the grants-in-aid to schools, such as the state and local governments provide up to about 92% of school revenue (Galabawa, 2007).

In Kenya, there were various financing sources to supplement the provision of free secondary education, including the government, parents and teachers' association, donors, school income-generating activities and various sponsors (Getange, Onkeo & Orodho, 2014). Other funds are from the private sector, religious organizations, communities, NGOs and development partners (Orodho, 2014). This shows that household contribution and government funding are not sufficient enough to support free education without a boost from external sources, this makes FFE sustainability challenging. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to examine such undertaking in the financing of fee-free secondary education in Tanzania.

### ***Auditing and accountability***

One of the mechanisms to ensure appropriate handling of school financing is through auditing and accountability (Lumadi, 2020). Auditing and accountability are vital mechanisms that need to be put in place to effectively and efficiently spend the supplied resources to achieve sustainable fee-free secondary education. The criticality of auditing is in its purpose of checking schools' compliance with government directives. In this sense, funds can be misused without a precise mechanism of making people accountable. The funds sent to schools need high discipline and accountability to ensure rational spending. Rational expenditure of public funds is ensured when school leaders and management comply with rules, regulations, policies, procedures, ethical standards, and regular auditing (Babatunde, 2013).

It is essential to ensure that the funds allocated to education are appropriately and rationally spent, and this requires auditing and internal control. Lack of accountability may be caused by the government's weakness in enforcing its legal frameworks. Auditing reports from other countries reveal misuse of public funds resulting from oversight and unethical behaviours (Babatunde, 2013).

### ***Schools' efforts to support fee-free education***

The provision of capitation grants to schools to implement fee-free secondary education has not been enough to the extent that there are financial gaps that need additional funding. Schools in some countries are, therefore, obliged to have income generating activities that can enable them to supplement government funding. In other words, a school can generate unrestricted income to facilitate its spending for smooth running (Nyamwega, 2016). For instance, School's Income Generation Activities (SIGAs) that support the provision of free day secondary school in Kenya included the hiring of school facilities such as school buses, halls, tents, recreational sites, and house renting. Similarly, a study conducted in Ebony State in Nigeria by Nwakpa (2016) on the alternative sources of financing secondary education found out that parents' and teachers' association contribute to the improvement of school facilities.

A study conducted by Lasway (2012) on income-generating activities in public primary schools and their contribution to school funds in Tanzania, revealed that most public primary schools were engaging in sheep and poultry keeping, crop farming, vegetables, and fruits farming as their main SIGAs which enabled them to produce food for their pupils and teachers as well as generate funds for purchasing teaching and learning materials as well as sports and games facilities. However, the study conducted by Amos and Koda (2018) on the contribution of school-based income-generating activities to the provision of quality education in secondary schools managed by the Catholic Diocese of Moshi (CDM) in Tanzania revealed that funds earned from SIGAs were not enough for provision of quality education. The findings have further shown that SIGAs remain to be a very useful alternative way of generating additional funds as they enable the schools to address day-to-day petty financial needs.

## **Methodology**

This study employed a mixed-methods research approach that allowed the researcher to collect both numerical and non-numerical information through administering

questionnaires and holding interviews and documentary reviews to establish whether fee-free secondary education is financially sustainable in Tanzania. Survey questionnaires were used to collect data from grade 12 students and teachers from six secondary schools in three districts. Interviews were used to collect data from Heads of Schools, Ward Councillors, and other government officials, while Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with parents in groups of 8 parents each. Kiswahili, which is the language of the majority of people in Tanzania, was used for interviews and FGDs. Data was later on transcribed and translated into English.

The researcher reviewed the Education Sector Performance Report of 2018/2019, education sector analysis for Tanzania mainland of 2021, the school budget files, and cash books. The review of such documents enabled the researchers to obtain total government budget, share of education budget, government revenues, and the amount of capitation grants budgeted and received as well as financial performance for the provision of fee-free secondary education. Quantitative data was analysed with the aid of SPSS software version 16 and presented in tables and graphs whereby paired t-test was computed to establish if there was a significant difference between budget allocation and funds disbursement before and after fee-free secondary education. The transcribed qualitative data were uploaded to NVivo software version 12+ for further processing and analysis. Braun and Clarke's (2006) six stages of thematic data analysis were followed in organising the data into themes

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **Financial and strategic planning for fee-free secondary education**

It was found out that the central government in Tanzania consistently undertakes financial and strategic planning for providing fee-free secondary education every financial year. The review of education and training policy of 2014 section 3.6.1 reads: "...the government in collaboration with stakeholders shall continue to strengthen the structure for financing education and training including loans and grants so that it becomes sustainable with various sources." Moreover, the review of circular number 3 of 2016 revealed that "Each financial year, the President's office and local government administration will coordinate the preparation of plans and budget to get the national plans and budget which put into actual consideration the needs of fee-free education policy." Such planning is reflected in the government's expenditure as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: *Education Sector Budget Allocation as a Percent of Total Government Budget from 2014/2015 – 2018/2019*

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**Year Government Budget Education Sector Budget Education Sector as % of  
(In Million TZS) (In Million TZS) Total budget**

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2014/15	15, 294,770	3,465,101	22.7
2015/16	16, 098,898	3,870,178	24.0
2016/17	21,500,000	4,768,358	22.2
2017/18	22,239,864	4,706,362	21.2
2018/19	22,239,864	4,641,498	20.9

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Source: Education Sector Performance Report, 2018/2019

Data in Table 1 shows that the volume of the total education sector budget has increased from Tsh. 3,870, 178 million in 2015/16 to Tsh 4,641,498 million in 2018/19. The government sends to school the finances in terms of capitation grants to implement fee-free secondary education. Table 2 shows capitation grants released to secondary schools in 2018/2019.

Table 2: *Capitation Grants Released in Government Secondary Schools, 2018/2019*

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**Level Number of Required as per Approved Released % Released**

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**Students' policy Budgeted**

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Secondary	1,812,508	22, 656, 350,000	19,732,262,500	19,735,225,652.52	100.02
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Source: Education Sector Performance in Tanzania Mainland, 2018/2019

It can be seen from Table 2 that the capitation grants released to secondary schools in the financial year 2018/2019 are above the approved budget. The percentage of capitation grants released was 100.02% of the total approved budget. However, the approved budget is 7 percent less than the required budget as per policy. The researchers also conducted interview with the government officials on the financial

and strategic planning for fee-free secondary education. One of the interviewed government officials clarified:

We have the government budget expenditure priorities, or you can call them first charges use, which are government debts, government workers' salaries, fee-free education, medicines, and other priorities. Fee-free secondary education is one of the government's first charge expenditures. So, under all circumstances of tax collection, we have to send funds to schools so that we can continue to implement fee-free secondary education.

Thus, fee-free secondary education is among the very few government priorities that are financed through tax revenue collected by the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA). Explicitly, regardless of any condition, the government will always bear the costs of fee-free education because they are considered imperative. This is further reflected in the following statement from the interviewed government official.

Even in circumstances when TRA fails to reach its tax collection targets, money for fee-free secondary education must be sent to schools on a regular basis in the same way as government employees receive salaries regardless of whether or not the government has collected enough taxes; it is the same case that no school will miss its capitation grants that have been put in place to facilitate fee-free secondary education.

Participants also revealed that due to sound financial and strategic planning, the government has discouraged parents' financial contributions in secondary schools. This also makes parents and/or guardians able to incur the indirect costs of schooling. Findings further suggest that the volume of capitation grants (CG) disbursed by the government to secondary schools has not only increased but has been handled properly across years. Affirming this, teachers who were interviewed agreed that capitation grants flow to schools has improved, and schools receive capitation grants exactly according to the number of enrolled students, and the grants are adequate for running the schools. Moreover, through review of the surveyed secondary school documents, it was realized that unlike what was the case before the resumption of FFE, the budget allocated for fee-free education and fund disbursement kept an increasing pace to schools as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: *Budget Allocation and Fund Disbursement in the Surveyed Secondary Schools*

<b>Budget/Year</b>	<b>Budget Allocation</b>	<b>Fund Disbursement</b>	<b>% of fund Disbursement</b>
2012/13	39,380,000	13,389,000	34
2013/14	56,020,000	20,167,000	36
2014/15	56,800,000	17,608,000	31
Before FFSE	152,200,000	51,164,000	33.6
2015/16	63,780,000	59,645,166	93.5
2016/17	57,060,000	60,208,775	105.52
2017/18	66,860,000	63,514,167	95
2018/19	71,680,000	66,418,792	92.3
After FFSE	259,380,000	249,786,900	96.3

Source: Schools cash book in the surveyed secondary schools

As shown in Table 3, the surveyed secondary schools' budget for capitation grants as necessitated by fee-free secondary education in 2015/2016 was Tsh. 63.7 million and the actual disbursement was more than three times higher than the preceding disbursement. This was the time when the FFSE policy began. Since then, there was a sharp increase in the budget in the four financial years. This shows the government's commitment towards implementing its plans in sustaining the financing of fee-free secondary education. The trend of budget allocation and fund disbursement in the selected secondary schools is as depicted in Figure 1.

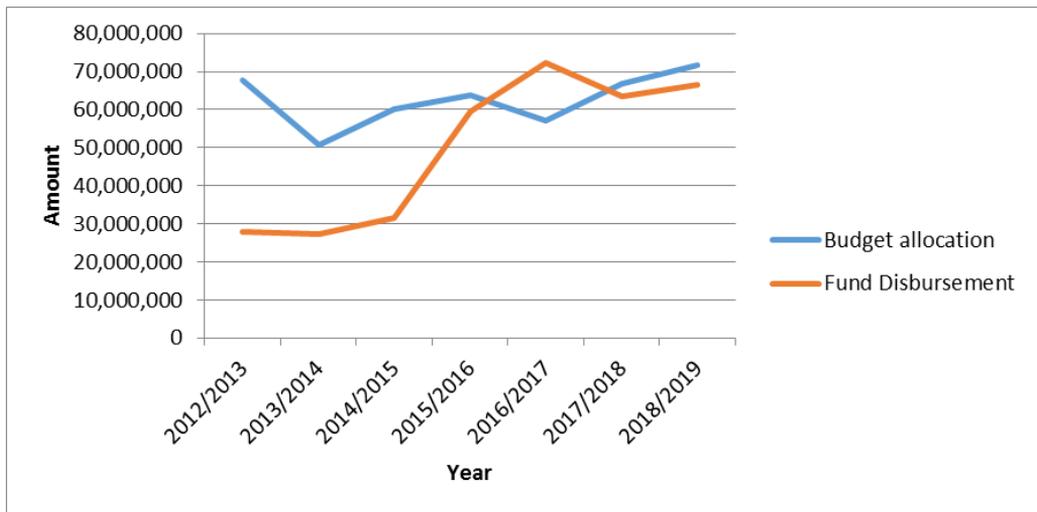


Figure 1: Tanzania's budget allocation and fund disbursement to secondary schools across years

Source: Field data (2020)

Figure 1 shows that in the financial years 2012/2013 and 2013/14, the budget allocated for secondary education decreased, but it increased in the financial years 2013/14 and 2015/16, which also increased the funds disbursed to the schools. The general trends of the budget allocated and the funds disbursed to school have been fluctuating from one financial year to another. These findings attracted the researchers to test the hypothesis using a t-test to see *if there was no statistically significant difference in budget allocation and the funds disbursed to secondary schools before and after fee-free secondary education*. The findings revealed that  $p > 0.05$  ( $t(3) = -0.130$ ,  $P = 0.905$ ). Therefore, there was a statistically significant difference; the budget has increased after fee-free secondary education.

The researchers further examined the trend of funds disbursement to schools in relation to students' enrollment before and after fee-free secondary education as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: *Capitation Grants Received by the Surveyed Secondary Schools from 2013/14 to 2018/2019*

Year	2013 /14	2014 /15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Number of Students	2,840	1,969	2,801	2,853	3,189	3,343
Capitation grants Amount per Students	20,167,000	7,608,000	59,645,166	60,208,775	63,514,167	66,418,792
	7,101	8,942	21,294	21,103	19,916	19,868

Source: Schools cash book

Data in Table 4 reveals that from 2015/2016 to 2018/2019 as students' enrolment increased, also capitation grants disbursed to schools under fee-free secondary education policy increased. Even though the amount per student of capitation grants received by the surveyed secondary schools fluctuated between Tsh. 21,294 in 2015/16 to Tsh. 19,868 in 2018/19, they were stable at an average of Tsh 20,545 per student. These findings do not show an accurate picture of the increasing trend. The general trend of increase in enrolment and funds disbursed to school is presented in Figures 2 and 3 respectively.

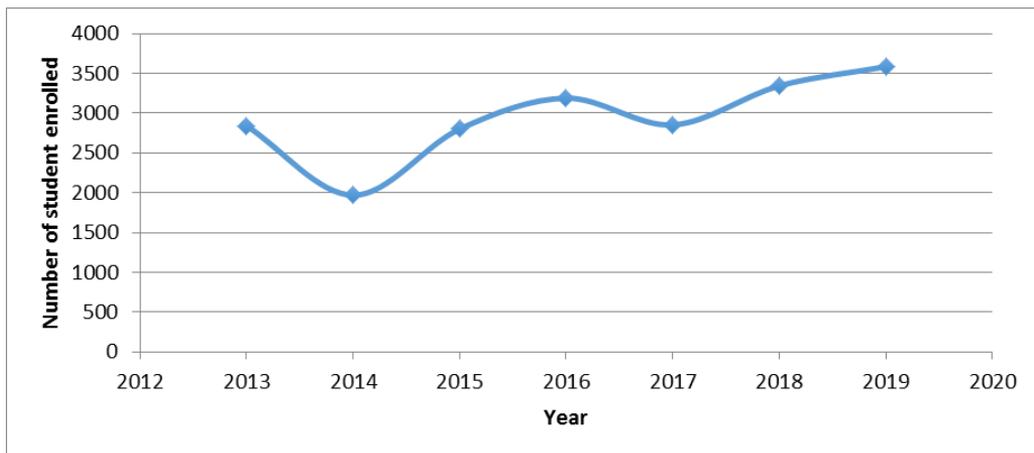


Figure 4.4: Trend of school enrolment in the surveyed secondary schools across years

Source: Field data (2020)

Figure 2 shows that by 2013 there was a gradual decrease in enrolment in the surveyed secondary schools, but from 2014 to 2015 enrolment increased. By 2016, the first year of the provision of fee-free education policy, enrolment increased, but in 2017, one year after FFE, there was a noticeable decrease in enrolment. From 2018 to 2019, there was a gradual increase in enrolment. Figure 3 shows funds provided to the surveyed secondary schools from 2013 to 2019.

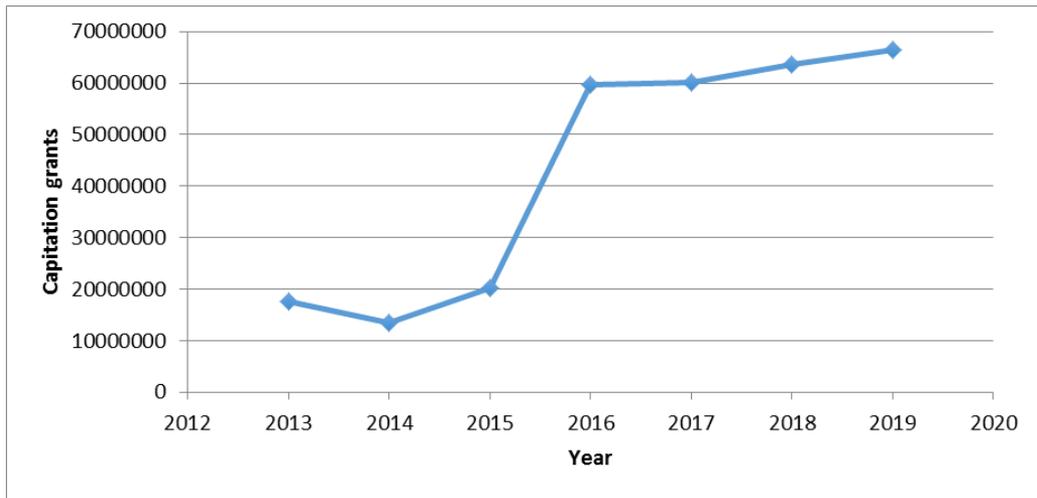


Figure 3: Funds provided to the surveyed secondary schools from 2013-2019

Source: Field Data (2020)

Figure 3 shows that funds provided to schools fluctuated between 2013 and 2015, which is before the resumption of FFE whereby in 2014, there was a decrease, but from 2016 to 2019, there was a gradual increase. To get the whole picture of the relationship between enrolment of students and capitation grants a correlation test was carried out. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Correlation Test of the Students' Enrolment and Capitation Grants Provided to the Surveyed Secondary Schools

		Number of tudents Enrolled	Funds Disbursed to School
Number of students	Pearson correlation	1	0.794
Enrolled	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.033	
	N	7	7
Funds disbursed to	Pearson Correlation	0.794 1	
School	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.033	
	N	7	7

Source: Field data (2021)

The data in Table 5 indicates that there is a very strong relationship between enrolment and capitation grants since the Pearson Correlation value is 0.794 and P values is less than 0.05 (Sig.= 0.033)

The findings indicate that the government of Tanzania still prioritizes the provision of secondary education in its financial and strategic planning. The fee-free secondary education budget has increased significantly from 2015/16 to 2018/19. Although the percentage of the education sector budget has been declining, on average they have remained above 20 percent from 2015/16 to 2018/19, which is a good sign for the stable fee-free secondary education provision as recommended by the global partnership for education to be between 15 to 20 percent of the total national budget (GPE, 2019). This is in line with the findings by Dibete & Pitokri (2018), that financial and strategic planning is important for financial management. It has been shown in this study that in the surveyed secondary schools, after fee-free secondary education provision, the overall budget in the four consecutive financial years increased to 96.3% of the total approved budget as compared to the period before fee-free secondary education which was 33.62%.

The findings of this study concur with those of Getange, Onkeo and Orodho (2014) in Kenya, that Free Day Secondary Education had increased the education sector budget in the country over the years since its adoption. The increase in budget provides a room for financial sustainability, contrary to that, is the collapse of fee-free secondary education provision. This confirms an earlier finding by Orodho (2014) that severe finance-related constraints affect the effective implementation of a fee-free secondary education policy due to poor financial and strategic planning. The volume of capitation grants released in the surveyed secondary schools to implement fee-free secondary education has increased from 59, 645,166 in 2015/16 to 66,418,792 in 2018/19. The increase and continuation of the release of capitation grants in relation to the students' enrolment in secondary schools is an evidence of government's commitment to sustaining fee-free secondary education.

### **Financial sources for fee-free secondary education**

It was found out that the government has undertaken various initiatives and commitments to finance secondary education through its own sources sustainably. The data collected through interviews with government officials revealed that financial sources for fee-free education were mainly government own sources through tax collection. At the time of this research, tax collection was reported to be promising, which meant that the government was reportedly doing better in

tax collection. Improvements in tax collection overtly meant that the government had more financial capacity to provide better services to the public, including fee-free secondary education. Furthermore, it is possible to sustain the fee-free secondary education in Tanzania if tax collection continues to be stable. Indeed, it was reported through interviews that the government could manage to fund fee-free secondary education in a sustainable manner. This was attested in the following assertion during interview by one government official.

Yes, the government can manage to finance secondary education and it can be sustainable. The government now collects more taxes than in previous years. The fifth phase government's tax collection has given hope for most of us, incredibly the least advantaged people that FFE will sustain because the government has money.

Moreover, the government spending and priorities may change in times of emergency, thereby affecting the budget for fee-free secondary education. Emergencies can be issues such as diseases, famine or war with neighboring countries or others as it happened with Uganda in the late 1970s. As such, the government will prioritize spending spend money to curb the immediate challenge facing the country instead of spending it to fund fee-free secondary education

Table 6: *Trends in Government Revenue in Tanzania Mainland from 2015/16 to 2019/20*

Year	Domestic Revenues			External Resources		% of GDP
	Total Domestic Revenues	GDP (Tsh bn)	Grant (bn)	Foreign Funds (bn)	Total Tsh (bn)	
2015/16	13,907.0	12.8	495.4	1,128.9	1,624.3	1.5
2016/17	16,639.8	14.0	1,092.5	1,705.0	2,797.5	2.4
2017/18	17,944.9	13.9	930.6	1,702.1	2,632.7	2.0
2018/19	18,527.3	13.2	461.2	1,191.8	1,653.0	1.2
2019/20	21,036.6	14.6	1,043.9	1,612	2,655.9	1.8

Source: Education Sector Analysis for Tanzania Mainland, 2021

Data in Table 6 indicates that tax collection has increased from 13,907.0 (bn) to 21,036.6(bn) between 2015/16 and 2019/20. A percentage of GDP domestic resources increased from 12.8 percent in 2015/2016 to 14.6 percent in 2019/20

while foreign GDP decreased from 2.4 percent in 2016/17 to 1.8 percent in 2019/20. These trends of domestic revenue collection confirm that the government has been able to collect tax to ensure the financial sustainability of fee-free secondary education. However, domestic revenue as a percentage of GDP slightly fluctuated between 2016/2017 and 2018/19. Therefore, it is still important to have other financing sources that can support in the case of emergency. The findings obtained revealed that the financial sources used to finance fee-free secondary education were government, parents' contribution in kind and School Internal Income Generating Activities (SIIGA). Table 7 shows the sources and the amount collected.

Table 7: *Financial Sources in Surveyed Secondary schools (2016-2019)*

Financial Sources	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19	
	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%
Government	59,645,166	82.43	72,355,878	99.45	63,514,167	97.63	66,418,792	97.08
Parents	12,343,177	17.06	0	0	920,000	1.41	1,200,000	1.75
SIIGA	370,000	0.51	386,000	0.53	620,000	0.95	800,000	1.17
Total	72,358,343		72,741,878		65,054,167		68,418,792	

Source: School cash book

It is evident that in 2015/16, the primary financial sources in secondary schools included the government (82.43%), followed by parents (17.06%), and school internal income sources (0.51%). The review showed that in 2016/17 and 2018/19 fiscal years, the contribution of the government increased. Other financial sources contributed a tiny percent in supporting fee-free secondary education. Therefore, from these findings, the financial sustainability of fee-free secondary education largely depended on government contribution.

Findings further indicate that between 2015/16 which is the commencement of fee-free secondary education to 2019/20, tax collections have increased, while foreign GDP contribution decreased. The efficiency in tax collection needs to be sustained because other financial sources in the surveyed secondary schools contributed a tiny per cent in supporting the provision of secondary education. The expenditure of the collected tax is based on the government priorities known as first charges: debtors, government workers' salaries, and others. Fee-free

secondary education is one among the very few government priorities which are financed through tax. Regardless of any condition, fee-free secondary education costs will always be paid by the government since tax is a more reliable source of government revenue than any other source.

These findings concur with Leon (2001) who observed that reliance on donor funding to supplement government resources negatively impacted financial sustainability, however, even if an organisation has 20 donors, it will remain highly unsustainable if a large proportion of the budget depends only on donors because any change in one donor’s decision can induce a significant crisis. Too much dependence on donors creates uncertainty on financial sustainability which threatens the existence of fee-free secondary education. Although tax is a reliable source for financing fee-free secondary education, further findings of this study revealed the need to have other financial sources that can support education in case of emergency. This is due to the fact that emergencies can drain the budget that was planned for FFE. So, having alternative funding can make the policy more sustainable. Galabawa (2007) suggests that at least 60% of the organisations’ overall budget must come from other various financing sources, such as national foundations, local corporations, and others. The availability of various financing sources can sustain the provision of fee-free secondary education.

### School internal income generating activities

The majority of respondents (97%) agreed that the contribution through SIIGAs support financing of fee-free secondary education. Evidence from documents revealed that poultry farming and tax from petty traders were the sources of income that generate fund to support the provision of fee-free secondary education in the surveyed schools. This is shown in Table 8.

Table 8: *SIIGA in the Surveyed Secondary Schools*

School Projects	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Farming	0	0	0	0
Poultry Keeping	0	0	0	200,000
Tax from small traders	370,000	386,000	620,000	600,000
Total	370,000	386,000	620,000	800,000

Source: School cash book

It is portrayed that in the fiscal years 2015/2016 and 2018/2019, the most significant source of school internal income in the surveyed secondary schools was tax from petty traders; and a small amount was from poultry farming. Based on these findings, it can be claimed that school projects provide additional funds to support fee-free secondary education. SIIGAs have played an important role to cater for other school needs such as study tour, prizes for the best students and workers, exercise books and other basic needs for children from poor families. Interviewees indicated that several school projects are initially created for generating income for the school. The projects include farming, poultry and levy from petty traders running business in school premises. One of the school heads justified the case as follows:

The school has planned to carry out projects for income generation such as poultry, shops, and agriculture where 3 acres are for students' food and 3 acres are for school income generation. We hope that the income obtained will help us to supplement the provision of fee-free education.

The responses indicate that schools are now looking for other ways to support fee-free secondary education. They engage in economic activities, and the money earned is used to solve challenges that are not covered by capitation grants. However, the study found that among many challenges facing school projects there is lack of markets for the produced goods. A head of school in one of the visited schools said:

We have a small collection from petty traders in the school which is one of the sources of money to supplement fee-free secondary education. The money we get is used to buy sugar for students' porridge. We expect to collect around 50,000/= per month.

The findings of this study reveal that school projects such as farming, poultry, and tax from petty traders doing business in school areas are used to generate extra income for respective schools. These internal income-generating activities are paramount in supporting fee-free secondary education; and the money can also be used to solve students' challenges that are not accommodated in the received fund such as food for students and teachers, as well as study tours and rewarding the best students and workers. The findings provide a lesson as recommended by Amos and Koda (2018) that, it is important that schools do not depend too much on external resources but rather they should have their own internal resources. These findings concur with those of the study conducted by Getange et al. (2014), who found that income-generating projects in the school generated funds but

were inadequate to sustain free-day secondary schools in Kenya. The implication of RDT in this finding is that most of surveyed secondary schools have initiated small business for SIIGA to collect funds to reduce uncertainty. As stated by Pfeiffer and Salancik (1978) schools are at the risk of survival if they fail to acquire and maintain resources. This idea is supported by Amos & Koda (2018) who state that although organizations have internal resources, most of them are not self-sufficient. Therefore, secondary schools are required to establish and maintain school internal income generating activities which will provide support to the provision of fee-free secondary education.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

It has been realised that the government has undertaken various initiatives and commitments to finance fee-free secondary education through tax collection. Tax is the primary source of government income that finances fee-free secondary education. Moreover, tax is a more reliable source of government revenue than any other sources. The extent of tax collection depends on the government in power and especially the personalities of individuals in power. Moreover, government spending and priorities may change in times of emergency just as they may change with changes in leadership. The change can affect the budget for fee-free secondary education. Therefore, the study recommends that it is still essential to have other internal sources of financing which can support secondary education in case of emergency and any other unforeseen circumstance. Also, school internal income-generating activities are essential for providing additional funds to support other school activities such as study tours, rewarding the best students and workers, exercise books and helping other basic needs to children from disadvantaged families.

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