ABSTRACT

In the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands of Kenya (ASALs), one of the major enablers of economic development that is lacking is education. This is evidenced by low primary and secondary school enrollment and retention rates, high teacher-pupil ratio and poor educational infrastructure among others. This educational marginalisation has reduced the people’s capacity to make development choices and therefore led to high poverty incidence compared to other regions in Kenya.

This study has tried to explain the high poverty incidence in the ASALs using education and assuming all other influencing factors are held constant. Most of the theoretical and empirical literature presented in this study shows a strong relationship between individual income levels and levels of education (literacy rates). These two tend to have a strong positive relationship.

An attempt has been made in this study to econometrically investigate the influence of educational levels and literacy rates on poverty incidence in the ASALs. The independent variables, which have explained poverty incidence in a negative way, include percentile distribution of poor adults with primary, secondary and higher education and the general literacy rates of the poor in the ASALs. Data that is used consists of cross-sectional data of 24 Districts sampled from the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands in Kenya while trying to maintain the accuracy and consistency of the data.