

**THE IMPACT OF FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION ON QUALITY OF PRIMARY
EDUCATION IN NAKURU EAST SUB COUNTY,
NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of the Free Primary Education on quality of primary education in Nakuru East Sub- County of Nakuru County, Kenya. The specific objectives of the study were to investigate the impact of Free Primary Education on teaching and learning facilities, to identify the effect of funds for Free Primary Education on the quality of education and to determine the influence of pupils' enrolment on the academic achievement of pupils under the Free Primary Education programme. It was concluded that teaching and learning facilities negatively affected the implementation of FPE leading to poor quality of education due to the inadequacy of the teaching and learning materials. The level of funding affected the quality of education either because it was delayed or unavailable

Keywords: free primary education, facilities, funding, enrolment

1.1 Background of the Study

Free Primary Education in Kenya is a relatively old policy which traces its roots to the late 1960s. Under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), education is stated as one of the basic rights. In this regard, therefore, regardless of political, social or economic

standing, every individual is entitled to a basic level of knowledge. Governments worldwide are concerned with providing Universal education. In 1948, the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed that education, especially elementary education, was a fundamental human right (Oluchukwu, 2000). At the beginning of the 1960s the Government of Kenya did not want a delay in the growth of the economy since the Europeans were preparing to go back to their country after Kenya attained her independence in 1963. The Government was concerned about how to get rid of poverty, ignorance and diseases that had adversely affected the entire nation during and after the colonial regime left the country.

After many Countries in Africa gained independence, education became a top development priority for the newly independent countries (Oluchukwu, 2000). This is because education is key and is used as a drive to steer development, since after independence many countries and more so Kenya, most collar jobs were for the Europeans and thus, Kenyans had to be grounded well in education in order to take over the responsibilities and to avoid gaps and stagnation after the British left country.

In the run-up to the 2002 general elections, Free Primary Education (FPE) was a key pillar of the manifesto of the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) party (NARC, 2002). The NARC Government introduced Free Primary Education in January 2003. As expected, there was enormous support for the program based on the fact that before then many schools going children were not in school. In many of the schools, school administrators were faced with high enrolment rates that far exceeded the existing capacity of infrastructure and were forced to turn many prospective students away (RoK, 2004). This did not deter a parent from moving from school to school trying to secure admission for their children. Furthermore, the government had not issued any directive on enrolment age for new learners, which led to otherwise 'over-age' learners being enrolled, which made the situation further strained. Free Primary Education was the provision of primary level education to all children of school

going age (6-15 years) and grownups (above 15 years) that never had the chance to access education (RoK, 2009). Age is thus an issue as it is much beyond enrolment whereby learners at times who may not have had the opportunity to go through early childhood education and ended up not having a good foundation. This lowers education quality as learners transits to next class, not knowing how to read and in this case, repetition is not allowed by educational policies.

To realize quality, the necessary resources and facilities are supposed to be provided by the to allow Kenyans to enroll and complete the primary education cycle. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) launched the Free Primary Education to fulfil NARC's election pledge. The main objective of Free Primary Education articulate the basic right to education for all children as highlighted in the Children's Act of 2001 (RoK, 2003). At the onset of Free Primary Education in 2003, the paramount task for the Government was to provide basic learning and teaching materials such as textbooks and chalk. Furthermore, the abolishment of the various fees that used to be levied by the schools, which for a long time were a stumbling block that kept learners outside classrooms for decades. The introduction of "Free" Primary Education in 2003 was, understandably, praised and appreciated by many Kenyans. Immediately the programme was initiated, enrolment rose from 0.969 million in 2002 to 1.312 million in 2003, which was an increase of 35% (Nyokabi, 2009). Subsequent intakes over the years reduced minimally, though as of the year 2005, the figures were about 20% higher than the previous years before the introduction of the FPE program. The total number of KCPE candidates almost doubled, from 481,111 in 2003 to 727,045 in 2009. However, statistics released for the KCPE2009 results showed that improvement in examination performance had slowed down at a reduced rate in 2003 than 2004, 2005 and 2006, a sign that increasingly, a clear the indicator that the massive investment by the government was not leading to expected results.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There is an increasing body of first-hand evidence that shows that universal primary education is an important factor towards eradicating poverty, achieving social justice and increasing the space for individuals to make choices that are informed (RoK, 2003). Since the introduction of Free Primary Education in 2003, there has been an increase of research that seeks to evaluate the success, failures and implications of the FPE in the Kenyan education sector, especially on the populations that were targeted by the program. A study conducted by a Civic Initiative in 2006 revealed that although the Free Primary Education improved access to education, it also brought about problems in learning such as classroom congestion, above average teacher-student ratio, inadequate learning and teaching facilities. There was, in addition, inadequate pedagogical and instructional preparation by the teachers educate a varied group of learners, and increased the responsibilities of school administrators and head teachers in allot the FPE funds adequate financial management training. These factors directly or indirectly affected the education quality within public primary schools. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to investigate the impact of Free Primary Education on quality of primary education in Nakuru Sub-County of Nakuru County, Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the school factors that contribute to the academic under-achievement of pupils under the FPE programme in Nakuru East Sub County of Nakuru County.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Concept of Free Primary Education

Free Primary Education refers to education that is funded through taxation, or charitable organizations to cover pupils tuition fees. This means that the government or charitable

organizations provide all necessary funds to ensure learning and teaching takes place without involving parents to pay for the tuition fees. In Kenya, free primary education was initially introduced in 1963 after Kenya attained its independence, but it was not executed due to factors, primarily the lack of adequate funds to roll out the program. It was not until the year 2003, when the new NARC administration that the programme was finally rolled out in the country. During their campaign rallies, NARC assured voters that it would roll out FPE across all public primary schools. And keeping true to its word, after formation of the Government in December 2002, the NARC Government introduced FPE in January 2003.

As was predictable, due to the fact that many children were out of schools, the reaction was overwhelming. In majority of schools, demand far outstripped the available capacity in terms of teachers, learning facilities and other resources. Due to this, many would be learners were turned away, but this did not deter parents from moving from school to school looking to have their children enrolled. Prior to the execution of the Free and Compulsory Primary Education, enrolment rate in primary schools was below 50% of the school going children. Despite the fact that enrolments shot up with the introduction of FPE, cases of children not attending school were still being reported. This triggered the Government to announce that parents who did not take their children to school would face prosecution. However, it must be noted that many people are not aware of the extra fundamental factors led to the children not being able to attend school. The introduction of FPE by the Government was an important step towards ensuring that primary education is accessible to all children. However, transition from one class to the next at lower primary did not seem to reflect the effect of preschool on academic performance. Of the pupils enrolled in class one in 2004, 23.85% could not be accounted for in class three, while in 2007 an additional 8.5% could not be accounted for, either because they had repeated the lower classes or dropped out due to inability to cope with the school demands (Theuri, 2004). At the inception of Free Primary Education in 2003

many parents overlooked preschool education and enrolled their children directly into class one. The perception amongst the stakeholders about the value of primary education on academic performance and an understanding that it is developmentally appropriate for children as they enter lower primary was overlooked. This may explain the increase in Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) in primary education that rose from 58.8% in 2006 to 59.3 % in 2007. Generally teachers are in agreement quality pre-schooling is imperative for a child's mental and logical development, which ultimately allows him/her, settle well in school thereafter in employment.

Another concern was the fact that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) aimed to ensure that the year 2015, children worldwide would be able to finish the complete primary learning cycle. 2015 came and although there was good progress in the attainment of MDGs, there was still much more to be done. Consequently, MDGs were replaced by the Sustainable Development Goals. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were sponsored by the United Nations and were aimed at creating a common set of development goals for all societies in every country by the year 2030 (RoK, 2007). It was created to succeed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) so that it could sustain progress already made and steer development globally. In Kenya, education is one of the main pillars that are believed to make Kenya be an industrialized country that embraces technology and attain its Vision 2030. Through this, levels of poverty would be highly reduced. This is the reason why Kenyan Government is investing heavily in education by improving access to all children. Various fees and other levies for primary education were eliminated due to the fact the Government and other International Development partners were footing the cost of the basic teaching and learning materials, as well as, salaries for important non-teaching staff and co-curricular activities (MoEST, 2003). This led to a rise in admission rates in public primary schools in Kenya. In January 2003, it was estimated that the enrolment rates in primary

schools increased 6,314,726 to 7,614,326 by end year, representing a 22.3% increase in national enrolment rates (MoEST, 2003). Kenya has 28,358 primary schools. Nakuru County has 714 Primary Schools and Nakuru East Sub County has 122 primary schools. Nakuru County of Kenya is a heavily populated area, hence, the impact of Free Primary Education on increased enrolment rates significantly felt. The Government of Kenya knows that primary education is one of the key cycles of education, which will lay a firm, solid foundation for children throughout their formative years (GoK, 1992).

2.1.2 Teachers' Role in Free Primary Education Design and Implementation

The teachers, along with the pupil, play an important role in the educational process because one cannot function without the other. "The empowerment of teachers will facilitate the empowerment of pupils, (Short and Greer, 2002)." The empowerment of teachers takes many forms towards providing the teachers with an enhanced role in making decisions, enhanced control of their work environment, opportunities and conditions so that they can serve in a wide range of professional roles (Short & Greer, 2002). As a stakeholder, the teacher is expected to have the necessary instructional and professional information to lead the pupils in instruction. Furthermore, the teacher can be a mentor to the pupil's and also to their fellow teachers. Supervision is an omnipresent aspect of a teacher's responsibilities on a day to day basis, and furthermore their role as a counsellor can be deployed towards offering academic advice to learners and also the school advisory committees. The factors that motivate teachers associated with the impact of their roles in moulding persons who are a strength to the local community. "The ends of education have to do with such things as providing the society with a culturally literate citizenry, a world-class workforce and people who can think and reason (Schlechty, 2001). A motivated teacher seeks to fulfil his/her role with a clear understanding of the importance of teachers in any society. Without teachers, many societies would not be able to compete globally, and thus the teachers should ensure they uphold high

professional standards at all times so that the set education objectives and goals are achieved through the learning process. This will ensure that the educational process is improved and sustained. Teacher's role is critical in that they are the direct implementers of the educational policies and are actively involved in curriculum delivery. Learners are the consumers of the services offered by the teachers. In reference to this, their advisory role is of paramount importance so that their input is considered for effective teaching, thus addition of value to quality of education.

2.2.2 Parental Involvement in Free Primary Education Policy

Parents' primary expectation is the pledge that their children will receive quality education that will allow them to lead fruitful and satisfying lives as adults (Cotton & Wikelund, 2001). Parents understand their children and they bring value to their experience in education and thus can meaningfully influence the behaviour of pupils, including the management of time management, study habits, feeding habits, and their personal safety and welfare. Parents, as educational stakeholders, also offer extra resources for the school towards promoting the academic achievement of the pupils while enhancing the pride of the community, which may be important in the general achievement of the school. For instance, parents involvement with their children's educational process through attending school functions, taking part in the decision making process, inspiring pupils to utilize their communal and academic time astutely, and demonstrating required behaviour towards their children, signify a valued resource for schools across this nation (Cotton and Wikelund, 2001). In addition, parents have the right and the responsibility to be involved in their children's educational process (Department for Education and Children's Services, 1996). Legislation such as Public Law 93-380 encourages and enhances parents' involvement in their children's education (Essex, 2005). Parents are very significant participants to the educational decision making process. As advocated by Essex (2005), many parents' decisions on educational matters are

pointedly predisposed by their standards and principles, rather than by the school law. In addition, each geographic area is subject to diverse opinions and principles. Consequently, the parent's position may be dependent on his or her values or the area he or she resides. Above all, parents should point areas they have observed, that need improvement since their children are direct consumers of education and support other stakeholders to improve and sustain quality of education.

2.1.3 Funding for FPE and Pupils Achievement

In order to enhance the quality of education under the FPE system, it was necessary that there was adequate funding when the system was introduced in 2003. Table 2.1 indicates how the Kenya Government released funds for the system between 2005 and 2012. The table reflects that since its re-introduction, the initiative for FPE has been robustly supported by the local and international donor community. Despite the fact that the Government of Kenya has improved the budgetary provision for education to approximately 17% of the recurrent national budget from 2003 to date, the FPE programme still heavily funded by the donor community. The UK, World Bank, Canada and UNICEF continue to 'pool' their funding directly through the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP). The UK pledged UK£ 88.8 million equivalent to Kshs 6.75 billion over a five-year period from 2005, while the US pledged US\$ 7 million (Kshs 532 million). The United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DfID) offered support worth UK£ 55 million (Kshs 7 billion) over a five-year period (2005-2010) to KESSP. An additional grant of Kshs 582 million was agreed upon in 2009 to specifically target the improvement of water and sanitation facilities for the poorest schools. Between 2005 and 2008, Kenya received US\$ 21 million (Kshs 1.6 billion) through the Fast Track Initiative (FTI). Catalytic Fund Grants, a World Bank basket fund, The World Food Programme (US\$ 13.9 million) and OPEC (US\$ 9.9 million) have contributed to making the programme a success (KEPPS, 2005-2010). The heavy reliance on

donor aid to sustain the FPE program in Kenya is a cause of major concern among education stakeholders. The budget of providing FPE is well outside the scope of the national educational budget, the economic performance of the country has not been very encouraging, while donor finance is many times a short-term measure that isn't sustainable in the long run. According to the MoEST (2004), the Government of Kenya increased funds so as to sustain the education sector.

Table 2.1: Indicative Financing Gaps (KSH Million)

2005/06	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Net GoK Recurrent Funding	86,792.0	91,131.6	95,688.2	99,515.7
GoK Development Funding (Net)	842.0	842.0	842.0	842.0
Total GoK Funding	87,634.0	91,973.6	96,530.2	100,357.7
Total Donor Funding	6,979.1	6,546.5	4,557.7	2,350.0
Total Funding Available	94,613.1	98,520.1	101,087.9	102,707.7
Total Proposed Investment	96,544.9	105,338.0	112,628.5	113,343.0
Financing Gap	1,931.9	6,817.9	11,540.5	10,635.3

Source: Government of Kenya: MOEST, KSSP

World Bank (Daily Nation, 2011) announced that it had suspended funding worth US\$ 80 million (Kshs. 6 billion) to the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP 2005-2010). In December 2009, the UK also suspended its education aid to Kenya. This was followed by the United States of America who at the beginning of 2010 suspended disbursement of about \$7 million (Kshs. 532 million) in funding to Kenya's Primary

Education Programme (KESSP,2005-2010).These holdups were as a result of accusations of graft. No funding has been disbursed received from development partners after the Government of Kenya publicized unearthing of fraud in September 2009. The Free Primary Education scandal has also caused a change in donor backing in the education sector. In February 2010, the British Government announced that it would stop funding Kenya's FPE Programme through the country's Education Ministry due to allegations of the graft (Standard News Paper 2011). This variation in the mode of education financing the donor community dealt a serious blow to free primary education programme, which was already vulnerable due to the worsening quality of education occasioned by the high pupil-teacher ratio projected at 80:1, which is way above the suggested ratio of 40:1; an acute shortage of substructures such as classrooms, toilets and offices; lack of qualified teachers, particularly in the informal settlements found within big cities and rural areas; and inadequate teaching and learning materials to cater for the high number of enrolment. Misappropriation of funds and fraud caused a shortage of funds that were meant to improve FPE, resulting in poor performance consequently affecting the quality of education.

3.1 Location of the Study

The study was carried out in Nakuru East Sub-County in Nakuru County of Kenya and targeted all the 40 public primary schools within the Sub-County. The area was ideal for such a study because it had a wide network of public primary schools located both within the urban and the rural settings.

3.2 Research Design

Since the relationship between the main variables (independent and dependent variables) already existed, *ex-post facto* study design was considered appropriate for the research. Kothari (2003) argues that the main characteristics of the causal comparative design is that the researcher has no control over the variables but can only report what has happened or

what is happening. Consequently, this study examined the existing relationships regarding, the effects of Free Primary Education on quality of primary education. The researcher had no control of influences of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

3.3 Target Population

The study targeted the 41 public primary schools in the Sub-County. In particular the pupils in the public primary schools, teachers and headteachers, the parents of the pupils in the public primary schools in the Sub-County all having a total target population of 40,226.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Procedures

Since according to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) 10% of the target population is a good representative sample, a random sample of 10% of the total population was justified as a representative of the schools. However, if the 10% would have to be used to the selected headteachers the number (4) would have been too small. The researcher therefore, decided to use 20% for the selection of all the subjects. This yielded to 8 headteachers, 240 teachers, 3,600 parents and 4,400 pupils.

4.1 Research Findings

4.1.1 Impact of Teaching and Learning Resources on Pupils Academic Performance

Teaching and learning materials are very important because they increase the interaction between pupils and the teachers and more so the pupils and the materials (Bitamazire, 2005). In terms of communication process, these resources promote the process in terms of what the pupils can see and handle. The latter is very significant in promoting creativity amongst the pupils. Consequently, teachers and pupils were requested to respond on the adequacy of teaching and learning resources. The responses to this request are indicated on Table 4.8.

Table 4.1: Adequacy of Teaching and Learning Facilities

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
(Teachers and Pupils)		
Adequate	64	32
Inadequate	136	68
Total	200	100

Table 4.1 indicates the adequacy of teaching and learning facilities. Both the teachers and learners concurred that though, there was provision of FPE, the facilities were inadequate. Sixty eight percent of the respondents agreed that the facilities were inadequate, yet they were required for effective learning in the schools to promote proper learning in schools. The responses on adequacy of teaching and learning facilities and effects of play facilities on the quality of education were consistent with the researcher's observations when she visited schools for data collection. This resulted to more pressure on existing facilities and thus resulting to poor performance in schools. Only 32% of the respondents indicated that facilities were adequate and therefore low impact on quality of education provided under FPE.

Table 4.2: Effect of Play Facilities on the Quality of Education

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Improves quality	75	75
Lowers Quality	17	17
No effect on Quality	8	8
Total	100	100

Table 4.2 indicates teacher's response on the effects of play facilities on the quality of education. From the responses there is a clear indication that according to the teachers play facilities are very critical in promoting quality education. Seventy five percent of the

respondents, who were teachers, said that play facilities helped to improve the quality of education. Play makes the child active both physically and mentally. It helps to boost learning by refreshing and relaxing the mind. This freshness of the mind improves the absorption and retention capacity of the mind thus contributing to good memory. The latter is a very essential element for learning. Seventeen percent of the teachers indicated that play facilities lowered quality of education, while eight percent said it had no effect on performance. Generally lack of enough play facilities in schools due to over enrolment (Table 4.10) and pressure on existing limited facilities eventually causes poor performance in examinations.

Table 4.3: Status of Class Space and Student Enrolment

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Congestion	75	75
Spacious	25	25
Total	100	100

Pupils were further required to state the status of their classrooms. The results to this item are as per Table 4.3. The pupils indicated that the classes were congested as reflected by 75% of the pupils, meaning that there were very many learners per class. This is a confirmation of earlier responses (Table 4.3) regarding inadequacy of teaching and learning facilities. Only 25% of the learners indicated that the classes were spacious. The responses indicate that there was a lot of pressure on the existing facilities. This implies that the number of pupils had increased in the classes which affected quality of education. This effect was reflected in the final examination results. This was in addition due to reduced teacher /pupil interaction which is important in clarifying provided information by the teachers in understanding pupils' viewpoints. Teaching and learning materials facilitate proper learning and help the learners to retain knowledge acquired during the process of teaching and learning in schools (Ajuago,

2002). Lack of enough of these facilities, as indicated by the respondents, due to high enrolment and pressure on the teaching and learning facilities affects learning negatively which eventually impacts on the final examination (KCPE).

4.1.2 Availability of Funds for Free Primary Education

This section is concerned with the information necessary for the achievement of the second objective in this study. It covers aspects such as provision of funds for FPE, frequency and adequacy of FPE funding, as well, as challenges related to the management of FPE funds.

4.4.3 Parents financial contributions to the Free Primary Education

This aspect was brought in because although the Kenya Government was concerned with the tuition fee, it was necessary that the parents make their contribution towards infrastructure. This would improve the teaching and learning environment (Frazier, 2002; Crandell and Smaldinos, 2000). Consequently, the parents were requested to indicate whether they paid any tuition fees with respect to their children's education. The responses are indicated in Table 4.4. According to the responses the parents did not contribute to tuition funding of the programme since they were convinced that, this was the government responsibility. However, it is generally known that many parents who understand the value of education and importance of education and are able, make extra contributions to supplement government funding, especially, in terms of infrastructure contribution.

Table 4.4: Fees Paid by Parents/Guardians for Primary Education

Fees paid in Kshs Annually	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No fees at all	89	100
Less 1,000	0	0
1,000-5,000	0	0

5,001-10,000	0	0
Over 10,000	0	0
Total	89	100

Nevertheless, parents/guardians indicated that they paid additional expenses on transport to schools, meals, uniform and books (non-tuition activities/ items). Table 4.4 indicates that over 70% of the respondents paid more than Ksh. 5, 000 to the schools for the services. Consequently the parents did not believe that education was completely free as it involved other expenses (Table 4.12). In fact, more parents/guardians are ready to pay this money for the betterment of their respective schools' performance.

Table 4.5: Additional Expenses on Non-Tuition and Tuition Activities / Items

Amount (Kshs) annually	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 1,000	0	0
1,000-5000	19	21
More than 5,000	70	79
Total	89	100

The above table indicates that 79% of the respondents (parents) paid more than Kshs 5,000 annually, while 21% paid between Kshs 1,000 – Kshs. 5,000. Thus parents paying additional expenses were an indicator that funds released for FPE were not adequate for the implementation or there was financial misappropriation of FPE funds compromising quality of education.

4.4.4 Frequency and adequacy of funding

Items related to the frequency and adequacy of funding to respective public primary schools was directed to the head teachers of the respective schools. This was because they are the recipients, custodians and managers of such facilities. Table 4.6 and 4.7 provide responses to the respective items.

(a) Frequency of funding for the FPE

Table 4.6 : Frequency of Funding for Free Primary Education

Effects	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Termly	8	100
Semi –Annually	0	0
Annually	0	0
None	0	0
Total	8	100

Table 4.6 indicates the head teachers' responses to an item regarding frequency of funding in schools. According to the respondents frequency of funding for FPE was done on termly basis and therefore, there are funds available that help in the implementation of FPE. If this were the case then the public primary schools should not have any challenges regarding the funds. However, according to Table 4.14, the available funds were generally very inadequate. Only two (25%) of the four head teachers indicated that the funds were adequate. Inadequate funding would compromise quality of education, since the schools would find it difficult to provide the essential teaching and learning materials and resources (Siegel, 1999; RoK, 2004)

(b) Adequacy of funding for the Free Primary Education

As far as adequacy of funding of the FPE programme was concerned, 75% of the respondents indicated that funds were not adequate, while only 25% indicated that the funds allocated for the FPE programme were adequate (Table 4.14). Lack of adequate funding of the FPE was a factor that negatively influenced the implementation of FPE. Funds are usually needed to buy various consumable materials, such as, books, chalk, and teaching aids, besides, other teaching resource and materials.

Table 4.7: Adequacy of Funding of the FPE Programme

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	2	25
No	6	75
Total	8	100

4.4.5 Influence of Pupils Enrolment on Academic Achievement of Pupils under FPE Programme

The item related to the number of pupils in a class was directed to the pupils. The idea was to find out whether the classrooms were spacious or congested the results are displayed in Table 4.17.

Table 4.8: Total Number of Pupils per Class

Responses (Pupils)	Frequency	Percentage
1-40	27	27
41-50	45	45
51-60	19	19

61-70	9	9
Total	100	100

According to Table 4.8, 27% and 45% pupils indicated that the classes had 1-40 and 41-50 pupils, respectively. According to 28% of the pupils, some classes had an enrolment of 51-70, pupils. Few classes had an enrolment of above 60 pupils. The Ministry of Education recommends that primary school enrolment should normally be 40 pupils per class. Respondents of the study were standard seven pupils. According to the respondents less than one third met the criteria. This observation was consistent with another related item to the teachers regarding pupil- teacher ratio. This ratio was considered to be high by 42% of the teachers, while 50% considered it to be just average. One of the teachers (8%) did not respond to the item. Low teacher: pupil ratio reduces the level of interaction between the teacher and the pupils. Consequently, it becomes difficult to identify and deal with individual pupils' differences and especial needs. This eventually boils to poor academic performance which is reflected in national examination (KCPE) results.

Besides, in another item regarding effect of FPE on the primary school population, 75% out of the 100 teachers who participated in the study, affirmed that the introduction of FPE increased the population of pupils in primary schools. 4.7 Effectiveness of Implementation of Free Primary Education. Regarding the effectiveness of the implementation of FPE the headteachers were required to indicate whether the implementation of the FPE programme in their schools was effective (Table 4.19). All the headteachers agreed that implementation of the programme in their schools had been very effective because of increased enrolment and access to FPE irrespective to age factor amongst old learners. This inevitably negatively influenced the pupil's academic performance due to increased large classes and unbalanced teacher-pupil ratio.

5.1 Summary of the Findings

Teaching and Learning Facilities

Teaching and learning facilities are very important because they improve the interaction between pupils and the teachers, more so, the interaction between the pupils and the materials as they provide a hands-on experience. This helps the learner to relate well to the knowledge and skills being taught, as well as, acquired attitudes.

Availability of funds

It was necessary that, if FPE was to be effectively implemented to provide the required results, then funds had to be adequate and also availed when required. The results obtained indicated that funds were inadequate, although whatever was available was regularly (termly) released. The inadequacy was caused by the fact that adequate initial financial outlay was not well set at the introduction of FPE. There was neither strategy nor prior planning to set the stage for implementation. There was no audit that had been done to identify facts on the ground and thus, it was difficult to know the actual amount required for the running of FPE.

Pupil's enrolment

There has been an increased enrolment in public schools since the introduction of FPE. Classes have been overly congested and facilities have been overstretched. Eighty five percent of the respondents indicated that FPE promoted learning though 10% indicated that it had negative effects on learning that reduced quality of education.

Effect of Facilities

It is evident from this research that most schools lack both teaching and learning facilities which contribute to the student's under-achievement. Most rural schools get little support from parents due to the poverty levels.

Status of Class Size

In Kenya, since the introduction of FPE and subsequent increase in enrollment, this has outstripped the current funding of schools. The government provision is not adequate to fully finance the cost of education for even one term.

5.2 Conclusions

Teaching and Learning Facilities

The following conclusions can be drawn from the results observed. As a result of the introduction of the Free Primary Education the quality of education was undermined. This is because the existing teaching and learning resources become over stretched. The overall effect has been poor academic performance at national examinations.

Availability of funds

The amount of funds required to implement FPE policies especially at the beginning was and is still limited. Essentially, this leads to most of the parents /guardians sitting back expecting the government to do all the funding.

Essentially funding has been overstressed in terms of the adequacy and timely release.

Pupil's enrolment

The introduction of FPE meant schooling for all, including over-aged who had missed schooling before and improved access by those who had not enrolled due to fees payment problems. This has led to over enrolment and consistently low teacher pupil ratio. The latter has resulted to poor teacher pupil interaction, as well as, pupil's poor interaction with the overstretched teaching/learning resources. These interactions are essential for comprehension and memory of what is learnt. Poor comprehension of what is taught is reflected in poor academic performance as expressed by all the respondents.

Effect of Facilities

Most schools have not been up to date in improving facilities to enhance quality on education, as well as, timely and adequate provision of teaching and learning resources. To many schools this has led to poor academic performance or poor quality education. Pupils' retention in public primary schools has been compromised due to wastage along the academic ladder.

Status of Class Size

Most schools have inadequate classes to enable effective teaching and learning. Increased enrollment has led to congested classrooms which led to poor teacher-student interaction, which led to academic under-achievement of the pupils, and most most students do not exploit their potential to the fullest.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

There are a number of other aspects that can be explored, in order to improve the quality of education in primary schools under the FPE system. Consequently, further research is recommended as follows:

- i. Factors that influence the implementation of educational policies. In this, it is assumed that if the policies were well implemented, then the quality of education would significantly be improved.
- ii. Investigate effectiveness of parental participation in the teaching and learning process.
- iii. Repeat the same study in a wide scale to ascertain the generalizability of the results obtained.
- iv. To undertake a study on individual student funding under the current economic status of the country.

- v. The Government to take over the construction of classrooms instead of giving the task to very poor communities where income levels are too low for any meaningful contribution towards construction of schools.

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