

Teachers' Level of Adequacy and their Effectiveness in Implementing Curriculum in Public Primary Schools in Kakamega South District, Kakamega County, Kenya

Mr. Charles LIDORO

Doctorate Student in the Department of Educational Management, Policy and Curriculum Studies, School of Education, Kenyatta University, Kenya.

Prof. John Aluko ORODHO

Associate Professor of Education and Research in the Department of Educational Management, Policy and Curriculum Studies, School of Education, Kenyatta University, Kenya,

Corresponding Author orodhojohn@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The gist of the study was to examine teachers' level of adequacy and their effectiveness in implementing curriculum in public primary schools in Kakamega South District, Kakamega County Kenya. The study was premised on the theory of supply and demand advanced by Hicks in 1986. A survey research design was adopted to guide the study. From a population of 68 primary schools in the study locale, simple random sampling technic was applied to select 23 primary schools to act as our sampling units. From each of the sampled school, 23 Headteachers and 69 members of school management Committee (SMCs) were purposively. One Quality Assurance and Standards Officer(QASO) was also included to yield a sample size of 93 for the study. Questionnaires previously piloted to determine their validity and reliability were used to collect data from Headteachers whereas the interview schedules were used to collect data from members of SMCs. Quantitative data generated through questionnaires were analyzed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to generate descriptive statistics presented in frequency tables charts and percentages. Qualitative data generated through in-depth interviews were analyzed using interview transcription and thematic analysis and reported in direct quotes and narrative form. The major finding was that although enrollment in primary schools had escalated due to the introduction of free primary education (FPE) policy, there were inadequate teachers in the study locale due to the freeze by the Government of Kenya to recruit more teachers, retirement, natural attrition, and frequent transfers. This had made the average teaching load to increase from 32:1 in 1999 to 45:1 as of the time of the study. The conclusion was that despite the gains made in increasing pupils enrollment in primary schools in the study locale as a result of the introduction FPE policy, these gains were being eroded by the low quality of education being provided due to overstretched instructional resources and the overloaded teachers who were not effective in implementing curriculum. It was recommended that the Ministry of Education should allocate adequate funds to the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) to enable them recruit more qualified teachers and distribute them equitably in schools in Kakamega South District, Kakamega County, Kenya.[365 words].

Key Words: Free primary Education, Primary Schools, Teachers, Adequacy and Equity, Kakamega South District, Kakamega County, Kenya.

Introduction

Background to the Study

The genesis of the current Free Primary Education (FPE) policy is traced to January 2003 when the policy was introduced by the NARC government, which was elected in December 2002 (Republic of Kenya,2012a) .This, was the second attempt to introduce the policy in the post- colonial Kenya, after the first attempt back in 1970s failed to achieve much. The renewed efforts were an intentional strategy by the government to comply with UN recommendation on the children's right for education, which was reinforced by the recommendations of the UNESCO Addis Ababa conference of 1961. Section 7(2) of the Children's Act 2001 reinforces this point by asserting that, "Every child shall be entitled to free basic education which shall be compulsory in accordance with article 28 of the United Nations' convention on the rights of the child. "It was in view of this clause and the realization of the fact that education contributes directly to the growth of the national income and improvement of human welfare that the new government of Kenya initiated the FPE policy (Psacharopoulos& Woodhall,1985) . Furthermore, this was the government's bid to fulfill its pledge of offering FPE in its campaign manifesto (UNESCO, 2005,).

Like many other developing countries, it has not been an easy road for Kenya in its bid to implement the FPE policy, let alone the universal education (Ondieki & Orodho, 2014; Republic of Kenya 2012a,2012b). Recent studies indicate that some of the hindrances include an outburst in enrolments visa-avis a stagnant teacher supply and lack of finances to expand the physical facilities (Oketch & Ngware, 2012, Orodho, 2013, 2014, Orodho, Waweru, Ndichu & Nthinguri, 2013). The problem of teacher shortage especially, has been there since the missionary era when formal education was introduced (Eshiwani, 1993; Bizimana & Orodho, 2014). Eshiwani in an earlier study had demonstrated that at independence, Kenya inherited an education system with an under developed teaching profession. It was lacking in both quality and quantity. In 1971, when President Kenyatta abrogated tuition fees for the economically marginal districts of Marsabit, Isiolo, Samburu Turkana, Garissa, West Pokot, Mandera, Wajir, Tana-River and Lamu the enrolment in Samburu went up by 31 %; Wajir 72 %; Isiolo 23%; Marsabit 29% and Tana-River 26% (Bogonko, 1992).

A more recent study by the Republic of Kenya in collaboration with UNESCO (2012) established the FPE had made remarkable contribution to pupils enrollment which has been steadily rising from 5.9 million (boys ,3 million and girls 2.9 million) in 2000 to 7.2 million (boys 3.7 million and girls 3.6 million) in 2005 to 9.4 million (boys 4.8 million and girls 4.6 million) in 2010(Republic of Kenya/INESCO,2012:35). From the year 2000, there has been an increase in the gross enrollment rate (GER) FROM 99.6 % TO 109 % IN 2010, indicating that the system may either have under-enrollment or over-age or both (Orodho, 2013). The Net Enrollment Rate (NER) also indicates that there has been a steady increase in the baseline year 2000, although the Government of Kenya did not register the target of 100 percent by 2010 (Republic of Kenya/INESCO,2012:35).

The impressive figures at the national level notwithstanding, Orodho (2013) demonstrated that when these national statistics are unpacked at regional level and examined with a gender lens, then serious disparities emerge. The Republic of Kenya/UNESCO (2012) similarly lamented that despite the efforts of the government to recruit teachers, the teacher shortage still persists. The national teacher shortage stands at 61,235 for both primary and secondary schools. Of these, 32,235 are for primary school. The current demand-driven recruitment policy was put in place to address the uneven distribution of teachers and teacher shortages. However, due to the freeze on new recruitment, the commission has only been replacing teachers who leave the service through natural attrition. It is against this backdrop that this study ventured into examining the level of adequacy and effectiveness in implementing curriculum under free primary education (FPE) policy in primary schools in Kakamega South District, Kakamega County, Kenya.

State of the Art Review

Teacher Adequacy

Teacher adequacy refers to the number of teachers that can conveniently handle a given number of pupils. It is measured in terms of a ratio. Like any other good in the market, equilibrium between demand and supply of teachers is very vital for the progress of the larger education sector. The quantity of any good or service demanded is the number of units consumers want to buy, while the quantity supplied is the number of units sellers want to sell (Baumol & Blinder, 1988; Waweru & Orodho, 2014).For harmony to prevail in the market therefore, demand and supply should be kept at equilibrium. Applied to education, there should be equilibrium between demand and supply of teachers for quality teaching and learning. Usually dynamic equilibrium is more important than a static one, which only targets a particular period of time (Williams, 1979).

Teacher Demand in Public Primary Schools in Kenya

Throughout the independence era, there was a strong believe that to improve the quality of secondary education, that of primary schools had to be improved first and teachers are rightly regarded as the hub in that process (Mwinyipembe & Orodho, 2014).Basically, the teaching force can be represented as the product of two factors which are; (a) the number of learners to be enrolled and, (b) the teaching technology in use, resulting in PTR (Ampofo & Orodho,2014). According to Williams (1979), and Bizimana and Orodho (2014) the choice of the determining factor will depend on economic factors- the cost of educational inputs, particularly teachers' salaries; share of the total cost of education that the government is to meet from the public resources and the size of the private sector in education; the overall availability for educational purposes and the assessment made of the contribution that education will make to economic growth(Waweru& Orodho,2014).

In Kenya, the issue of teacher demand is of grave concern to all the key stakeholders in the education sector(Republic of Kenya,2012b) . It is usually concerned with the number of teaching force that is required by the

government at a certain point in time. Teacher demand directly depends on the gross enrolment of the learners and the ability of the government to sustain a given number of this work force. There is a decline of teachers by 1.8 per cent and 2.9 per cent in primary and secondary schools in the face of a rising number of pupils at both levels (KIPPRA, 2009). The Minister for Planning, Wycliffe Oparanya, while releasing the Economic Survey 2009 Report, called for recruitment of new teachers after it emerged the teacher numbers fell unexpectedly in 2008. He said (Siringi, 2009:3),

Teachers' employment needs to be addressed for the education to be improved through effective implementation of curricular in the institutions(Ayeni,2012). The total number of teachers at both primary and secondary level is on the decline while enrolment is expanding. Teacher Supply in Primary Schools in Kenya Williams (1979) posits that supply of teachers should be considered under stock and flow. The stock of teachers (teaching force) at any moment in time consists of the teachers serving in schools, plus those who are on the payroll but on temporary release for in- service training or approved leave. Teacher flow is concerned with the outflows and inflows.

The number of trained teachers in Kenya naturally increased in the course of time from 32,929 in 1970 to 52,132 in 1974 and further to 62,729 in 1978 and 82,983 in 1983. By 1990, the figure had risen to 121,461(Bogonko, 1992). Bogonko further posits that to maintain this kind of trend, the government enforced the regular teacher training, and mounting of in-service courses for untrained teachers in the service. This led to a steady increase in the number of trained teachers all over the country since independence. There was a big mismatch between the percentage increases in the number of learners and the number of qualified teachers available in the country. For instance looking at the year 1963 and 1964 when there was a percentage increase in enrolment of 13.8, the percentage increase in the number of available teachers was -0.08. A similar trend was also witnessed between 1969 and 1970. This is the kind of scenario that has been prevalent in Kenya to date, making teaching – learning process so difficult (Orodho, 2013).

An almost similar trend was witnessed when the GOK re-introduced the FPE policy in the country in January 2003.According to the report by the Society for International Development (2004), the country's total enrolment in primary schools currently stands at 7.5 million pupils up from 5.9 million in the year 2002, just before the inception of FPE policy .Republic of Kenya (2006) puts the current enrolment at 7.6 million. This implies an increase of over 29 %. Studies by GOK from nine sample districts show that there was a tremendous increase in enrolment in public primary schools immediately after the introduction of FPE in 2003 from 768,296 in 2002 to 916,355 in 2003, an increase of 19.3 per cent (UNESCO, 2005).

A joint study by the Government of Kenya in collaboration with UNESCO in 2012 lamented that although the Government of Kenya had trained all (100%) primary school teachers, budget constraints that led to a freeze on hiring civil servants have had adverse effects on teacher hiring and deployment. As a result, the Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) made progressive improvement since the introduction of FPE; although there are regional variations where PTRs are higher than the national level of 45:1 for instance Coast Province with 53.3 in 2007 and even 60:1 in some schools. The PTR has also been rising steadily since 2003 due to an influx of pupils because of the introduction of free primary education.

The observed trends notwithstanding, it is apparent that the country is on course to achieve EFA Goal 2 by 2015. There are 199,623 primary school teachers and about63, 609 secondary school teachers. In Kenya, all teachers employed by the government are trained and certified to teach. Due to the employment embargo imposed on the government by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in1988, the government has generally avoided employing teachers apart from replacements for vacancies caused by natural attrition. This has led to school committees and boards of governors employing unqualified teachers as a source of cheap labor (Orodho, 2013).

According to Republic of Kenya/UNESCO (2012) the Teachers Service Commission has regularly conducted teacher balancing initiatives in public educational institutions across the country, which will be undertaken on a regular basis in order to achieve equitable distribution and optimal utilization of teachers. It is envisaged that a monitoring and evaluation committee will be set up to ensure adherence to the guidelines on teacher balancing and utilization (Adan & Orodho, 2014). The commission continues to review and implement schemes of service for various categories of teachers in order to ensure professional growth (Kinyanjui & Orodho, 2014). There are three schemes of service currently in operation; a scheme of service for graduate teachers, a scheme of service for no graduate teachers, and a scheme of service for technical teachers and lecturers.

The report of the Republic of Kenya/UNESCO (2012) concluded that although there had been marked progress towards realizing UBE in the country, achievement of the MDG and EFA goals continue to experience a number of challenges, mainly socio-cultural and economic in nature. Some of the isolated constraints include:

- overcrowding in schools, especially those in urban informal settlements, ASAL areas, and densely populated areas;
- Inadequate physical facilities due to increased enrolment occasioned by FPE and FDSE;
- High pupil to teacher ratios in some regions and at certain schools;
- High costs of special equipment, facilities and materials to cater for children with special needs.

The foregoing findings by the Republic of Kenya /UNESCO (2012) are in tandem with earlier studies conducted in Kenya. By the time FPE was being introduced, teacher recruitment had been frozen in 1998 by the government due to external pressure from the donor agencies-World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) (UNESCO, 2005). This forced Government of Kenya (GOK) to maintain a teaching force of 230,000 teachers in both primary and secondary schools. Out of this, there are 180,000 teachers serving in 18,000 primary schools in the whole republic (Republic of Kenya, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

Although the pupil teacher ratio at the national level may show that the country has achieved the recommended ratio of 45:1, there are still regional disparities in the Coast and North Eastern provinces, where the pupil teacher ratio can be as high as 53:2 and 63:1 in 2007 respectively. Despite the efforts of the government to recruit teachers, the teacher shortage still persists. The national teacher shortage stands at 61,235 for both primary and secondary schools. Of these, 32,235 are for primary school. The current demand-driven recruitment policy was put in place to address the uneven distribution of teachers and teacher shortages. However, due to the freeze on new recruitment, the commission has only been replacing teachers who leave the service through natural attrition. As a result, this study was concerned that many pupils are likely to fail to benefit from primary school education in Kakamega South District, Kakamega County, before and after the introduction of FPE policy in education in the country in 2003.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of FPE policy on the adequacy and effectiveness of teachers in public primary schools in Kakamega South District. The study was set to achieve three objectives ; i) to establish the trend in pupil enrolment four years before and six years after the introduction of Free Primary Education policy (1999-2008) in Kakamega South District ii) determine the number of teachers in public primary schools four years before and six years after the introduction of Free Primary Education policy (1999-2008) in Kakamega South District and iii) determine teacher effectiveness four years before and six years after the introduction of Free Primary Education (1999-2008) in Kakamega South District, Kakamega County.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework upon which the study was based on was the Theory of Demand and Supply advanced by Hicks (1986). Hicks presented the indifference curve approach to the theory of demand and supply and gave logic ordering to the demand theory in 1986. This study was meant to assess the success of the FPE programme in relation to teacher adequacy, which is determined through PTR and teacher effectiveness. The study's theoretical framework was based on the law of demand and supply, which was considered relevant.

The law of demand states that, as the price of a good or service fall, a larger quantity will be bought, and as the price of a good or service rises, a smaller quantity will be bought. Demand for education is always likely to be affected by the costs involved, amount of school desired and the prospects of earning higher income (Todaro, 1994). With the implementation of FPE programme in Kenya, it was therefore likely that the demand for education will rise, as a response to the relatively lower cost of schooling. This law states that at higher prices, a larger quantity of a good or service will be supplied than at lower price, and at lower prices, a smaller quantity will be supplied than at higher prices. In this study, supply means the quantity of school places at primary school level.

The highest percentages of government expenditure in education, about 70% goes to payment of teachers' salaries (Republic of Kenya, 2005). This is likely to impact negatively on the population of teachers and by extension the PTR, since the government may not be able to sustain a higher number of teaching staff in schools, which equally requires other resources. In this case then, the sufficient supply of education to a big number of enrolled learners is likely to be hampered. This is because demand and supply conditions always affect the success of any new product on the market (Hyman, 1989).

Research Methodology

Design and Locale of the Study

This study utilized survey research design. This design was found appropriate since it is used in preliminary and exploratory studies to allow researcher gather, summarize, present, and interpret the data for the purpose of clarification (Orodho, 2009a:44). The study was conducted in public primary schools in Kakamega South District, in Kakamega County, in the Republic of Kenya. The district comprises one constituency; Ikolomani and is made up of two divisions. The location was chosen due to its rural setup and being mentioned among those with the highest poverty index (UNDP, 2006). It was argued that due to this high poverty index, the introduction of FPE could have had an impact on school enrolment, especially in primary schools. It was found important to examine the level of teacher adequacy in order to have some understanding of their effectiveness in implementing curriculum under the background of high poverty index in the study locale.

Target Population and Sampling Procedures

The study population was drawn from 68 public primary schools in Kakamega South District, 68 head teachers in the public primary schools in Kakamega South District, all members of the School Management Committees (SMCs) and the District Education Officer (DEO). Headteachers were targeted because they have a direct role to play, as executive officers of the management committees of schools and government agents, in provision of all the necessary resources including teachers, in an attempt to ensure the smooth teaching – learning process. The DEO was targeted so as to augment information gathered from head teachers.

From the 68 public primary schools, twenty three (23) schools, constituting one third of the total number of schools were randomly sampled to form the sampling units for this study since they were an adequate and representative sample (Creswell, 2009; Orodho, 2009a). Purposive sampling was used in choosing the Headteachers, three key members of SMCs and a Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (QASO) to constitute a sample for this study. This sampling procedure involves handpicking cases to be included in the sample on the basis of a researcher's judgment of their typicality (Orodho, 2009a:147). The QASO was therefore sampled to augment some of the information gathered from head teachers. The entire sampling matrix yielded 93 subjects comprising of 23 Headteachers, 69 members of SMCs, and one Quality Assurance and Standards Officer in the study locale.

Research Instruments

A questionnaire was found to be the most appropriate tool for data collection, since according to Orodho (2012) and Brook (2013) questionnaires are suitable to collect large amounts of data in a convenient and short time. A questionnaire for the Headteachers was developed and piloted to determine the validity and reliability. According to Orodho (2009a, 2012) and Brook (2013) validity is a measure of the extent to which the instrument used to collect data measures what it purports to measure, whereas reliability is the consistency of measuring the trait on repeated measures. The reliability being a statistical construct was determined using split-half method and a reliability coefficient of .874 which was obtained found adequate to declare the questionnaire reliable (Creswell, 2009; Orodho, 2009b, 2012).

Data Collection and Analysis

The researchers obtained a research permit from the National Commission of Science Technology and Innovations (NACOSTI), authorizing collect of data. Written permission was also sought from the County Director of Education, Kakamega County, to enable data collection in the study locale. On the actual day of collecting data, the researcher distributed the questionnaires and gave respondents one week to respond to them. The data obtained in this study was organized and then analyzed descriptively. The quantitative data from questionnaires were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to generate descriptive statistics required for the study. The data was described using means, ratios, tables, percentages and graphs. The

qualitative data which were collected using in-depth interviews were analyzed using thematic approaches and reported in direct and narrative format. The two data sources were triangulated to enrich the results of the study.

Findings and Discussion

Pupils Enrolment Trend

Figure 4.1 shows school pupil enrolment for both the period before and after the introduction of FPE. The period stretches from 1999-2008.

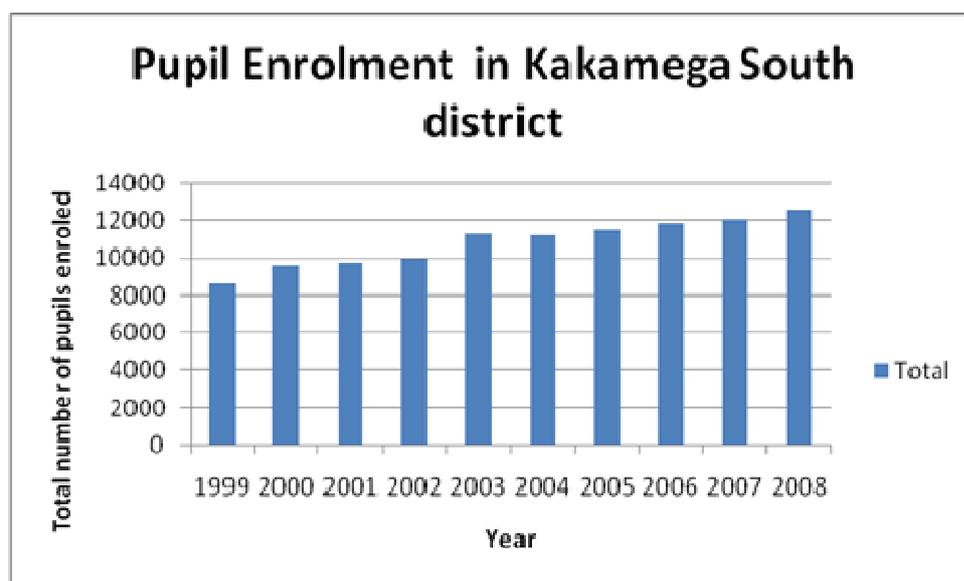


Figure 4.1: Pupil Enrolment in Kakamega South District

The overall pupil enrolment in public primary schools in the district from 1999- 2008 took an upward trend. It was more pronounced after the introduction of FPE. Pupil enrolment increased from 8500 in 1999 to 12,250 in 2008. The highest increase was witnessed in the year 2003, which experienced an increase of about 16% from the previous year. The number of pupils rose from 10,000 in 2002 to 11,600 in the subsequent year. This is the year FPE had been introduced in Kenya. The overall pupil enrolment in public primary schools in the district from 1999- 2008 took an upward trend. It was more pronounced after the introduction of FPE.

The finding agrees with the assertion by the Republic of Kenya (2003) that FPE led to increased enrolments due to a reduction of financial burden in education. This was in line with one of her philosophies concerning education, that every Kenyan has a right irrespective of his her socio-economic status to basic education .FPE policy, therefore, reduced the burden for many school going age children. This also agrees with the findings by Schmidt (2006), who says that when the prices of schooling goes down, lower income households will increase their demand for schooling. According to this writer therefore, eliminating school fees reduces the bias in access to education.

This finding further confirms the assertion by UNESCO (2005) that the introduction of FPE in the year 2003 led to an abrupt increase in enrolment in public primary schools. This was one of the major accomplishments of FPE. The influx of many pupils into the schools through FPE illustrated the fact that many eligible children had been denied education in the past because of the numerous levies they were required to pay (UNESCO, 2005).Now that the government had come in strongly to meet these requirements, many parents had a sigh of relief. They could take their children to school without feeling heavily burdened.

Similarly, the findings are in line with UNESCO (2005) who had previously recommended that the local communities should encourage parents to take children to school and encourage them to stay on. The government of Kenya through the Basic Education Act 2013 makes it an offence for any parent or guardian who fails to take any child of school going age to school (Republic of Kenya, 2013). This is in recognition of the critical role played by education in fostering socio-economic development (Republic of Kenya/ UNESCO, 2012).

Teacher Population in the District

The teacher population was measured by elicited information on the number of teachers in respect to various demographic factors like age, sex and work experience. The reasons for various staffing trends were also investigated, together with the pupil- teacher ratio (PTR).

Figure 2 gives a summary of teacher population in public primary schools in Kakamega South District from 1999- 2008.

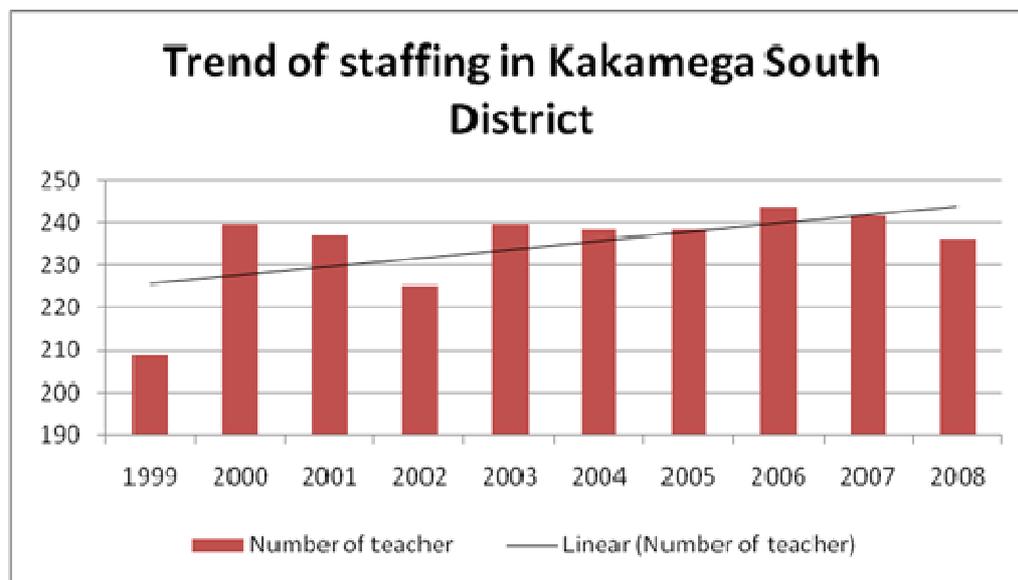


Figure 4.2: Trend of Staffing in Kakamega South District

The results of the study indicate that there had been a fluctuating teacher population in the area of study during the period 1999-2008, with female teachers providing over half of the teacher population in Kakamega South District. A critical analysis of the teacher population indicates that there were 209 teachers in 1999, 239 in 2000, 237 in 2001 and 224 in 2002 before the introduction of FPE in 2003. However, the number remained almost constant from 2003- 2005 just after the introduction of FPE. On the inception of FPE in 2003 the number of teachers stood at 239; 238 in 2004 and 2005 respectively before going up to 243 in 2006 ; and then down to 241 in 2007 and 236 in 2008 .

The trend indicates that the teacher population did not increase in consonant with the escalating pupils' enrollment but instead either remained constant or reduced. This teacher population is grossly inadequate to deal with the soaring pupils' enrollment that had made several schools in the study locale to introduce extra streams, with an average of two streams per class. The average number of teachers per school in the district four years before FPE programme was 10 (1999-2002). It was the same six years after the introduction of FPE (2003-2008) despite the influx of pupil enrolment witnessed.

Teacher Adequacy

Teacher adequacy is the number of teachers that can conveniently handle a given number of pupils. It is usually measured in terms of a ratio. Head teachers whose schools were sampled out for the study were asked to state if their respective schools had adequate number of teachers. Their responses are summarized in Figure 3 .

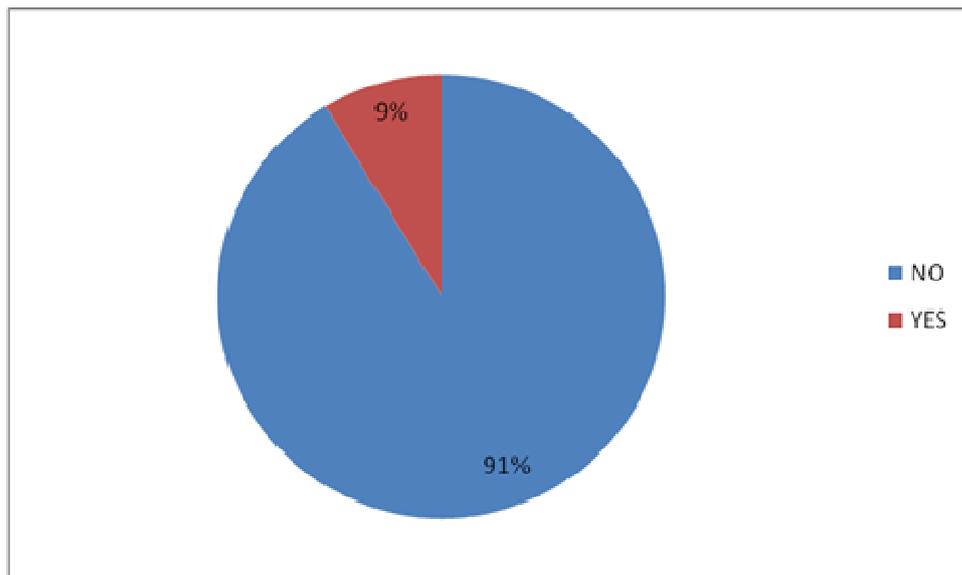


Figure 3: Teacher Adequacy

The results carried in Figure 3 indicate that nearly all respondents were of the opinion that the teacher shortage in primary schools within the study locale of Kakamega South District was quite acute. In fact ninety one (91%) per cent of the respondents in the study said that there is a shortage of teachers in their respective schools.

The acute shortage of teachers in the study locale of Kakamega South District, Kakamega County is not confined to the study locale. The Republic of Kenya/UNESCO (2012) similarly observed that due to the employment embargo imposed on the government by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1988, the government has generally avoided employing teachers apart from replacements for vacancies caused by natural attrition. This has led to school committees and boards of governors employing unqualified teachers as a source of cheap labor.

The finding is also in tandem with Orodho (2014) study that lamented that although the pupil teacher ratio at the national level may show that the country has achieved the recommended ratio of 45:1, there are still regional disparities in the Coastland North Eastern provinces, where the pupil teacher ratio can be as high as 63:1 in some countries in the country.

The Republic of Kenya/UNESCO (2012) established that despite the efforts of the government to recruit teachers, the teacher shortage still persists. The national teacher shortage stands at 61,235 for both primary and secondary schools. Of these, 32,235 are for primary school. The current demand-driven recruitment policy was put in place to address the uneven distribution of teachers and teacher shortages. However, due to the freeze on new recruitment, the commission has only been replacing teachers who leave the service through natural attrition. There is however, a growing need for more teachers to cope with higher demand following the implementation of free primary and free day secondary education; where the government provides for free tuition fees among other factors. In 2010, in an effort to bridge the gap in teacher shortage, the government recruited 18,060 teachers on contract terms as a temporary measure to alleviate the teacher shortage. In 2011/2012 financial year, these teachers were given permanent positions (Republic of Kenya/UNESCO, 2012).

Teacher Effectiveness

Performance by pupils in KCPE for the sampled schools for the period under study was sought. Figure 4.4 shows the mean scores in KCPE of sampled schools in Kakamega South District four years before and six years after FPE was introduced in the country. The mean score for the first two years (1999 and 2000) was calculated out of a possible total of 700 marks, while for the subsequent years it was calculated out of a possible 500 marks due to reduction in the number of examinable subjects. However, for the sake uniformity in presenting the findings and analysis of this study, the mean score for 1999 and 2000 was converted from 700 to 500.

The results portrayed in Figure 4.4 indicate mixed results in performance in KCPE in Kakamega South District for the period after the introduction of FPE took a fluctuating trend. Kakamega South District had a positive

mean score improvement of 268 in 2003 from 265 in the preceding year. It is reasonable to conclude that an improvement in number of teachers from 224 in 2002 to 239 in 2003 was one of the reasons that contributed to KCPE improvement. In 2004, the district mean score slightly improved to 270 although the teacher population slightly reduced.

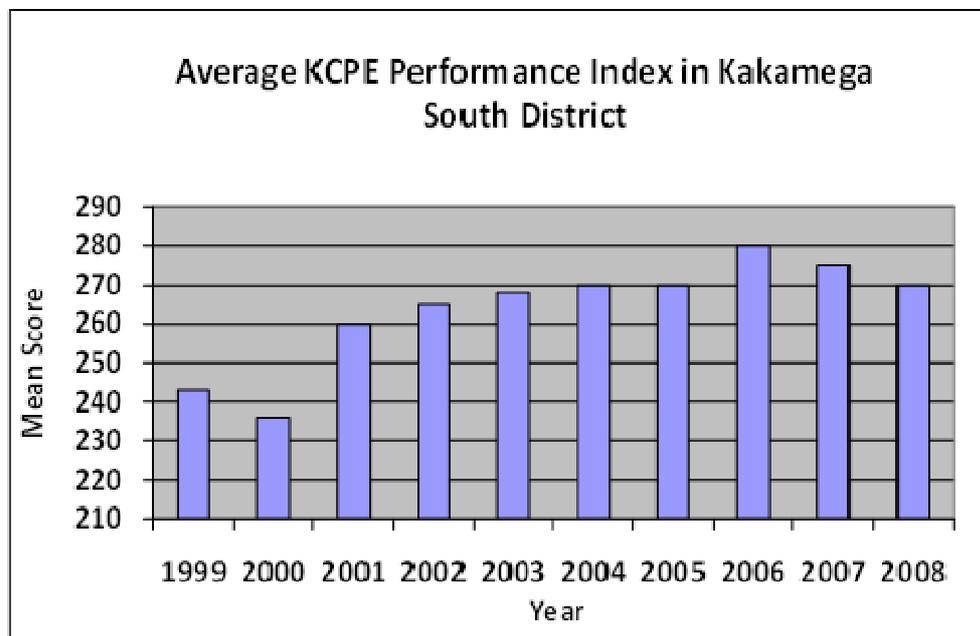


Figure 4.4: Average KCPE Performance Index in Kakamega South District

This performance can be attributed to a reduction in the candidature from 32 to 30. The district maintained her KCPE mean score in 2005 as well as the number of teachers and the number of candidates. In 2006, the mean score improved to 280. This is the time that witnessed an improvement in the number of teachers and candidates sitting KCPE. The performance dropped in 2007 and 2008 respectively when there was a reduction in the number of teachers and an increase in the number of KCPE candidates in 2007.

Comparatively, it is noticeable that the general KCPE performance in Kakamega South District was dismal before but improved after the introduction of FPE. The study has again revealed that it is not obvious that an increase in the number of candidates and a higher PTR negatively affects KCPE performance. This appears to contradict conventional opinion that an increase in pupil enrolment and maintenance of the same number of teachers always impacts negatively on the performance of pupils in national examinations. This analysis was confined to a few schools isolated to clearly understand the inherent causes of the apparent fluctuating trend.

Although the general KCPE performance improved in Kakamega South District after the introduction of FPE, it dropped in 2007 and 2008. One reason making teachers less effective in Kakamega South District is the high number of lessons. Thirty one point seven (31.7%) per cent of the respondents had a workload of between 36-45 lessons per week while 2.3% had a workload of more than 46 lessons. Only 52.5% of the teachers had between 26-35 lessons while 13.6% had less than 25 lessons.

These results reveal that quite a number of teachers are overloaded in terms of the number of lessons since the appropriate number of lessons is 36 per week (Koech, 1999). Such overloads cannot provide teachers with adequate time to give personalized attention to each pupil, to supervise class work and mark books and examinations, neither can they lesson plan and execute their plans more efficiently (Akala, 2002). It is again clear that there is an imbalance in the distribution of teachers and that is why teachers have uneven number of lessons across the district.

This finding is in tandem with UNESCO (2005) and Orodho (2014) who contend that the quality of education in the country has drastically gone down due to inadequate teachers, lack of sufficient textbooks and reduced continuous assessment tests. Orodho (2014) further asserts that teachers were neither prepared for the FPE nor the increased workload, and that even before the introduction of FPE the number of teachers was insufficient.

With the introduction of FPE, teachers now have even a bigger workload as they have a large number of pupils to attend to. This trend has made it difficult for the teachers to give individualized attention to the pupils.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study found out that there had been a fluctuating teacher population in the area of study during the period 1999-2008. However, the number was almost constant from 2003- 2005. The average number of teachers stood at 10 per school and a PTR of 40: 1 per school in the district from 1999-2008. The main reasons cited for the inadequacy in the staffing included freezing of employment by TSC and transfer of teachers. Most respondents cited hiring of more teachers by either the government or school management and balancing of available teachers across board as the most effective ways of dealing with the problem of teacher inadequacy.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, a number of conclusions were drawn:

First, the Free Primary Education had a positive effect on the number of pupils enrolled in public primary schools in Kakamega South District. The policy led to an influx in the number of learners, especially during the very first year of its implementation.

Secondly, That FPE has negatively affected the adequacy of teachers and the Pupil- Teacher Ratio. This was as a result of an ever growing number of learners against a fluctuating teacher population during the period 1999-2008. The PTR of the district rose from 32:1 in 1999 to 45:1 in 2009. The scenario has negatively affected the teaching- learning process in the district, making the performance index in the national examinations to be only slightly above average.

Third, the study found out that comparatively, teachers were slightly more effective in Kakamega South District after the introduction of FPE than before. However, in most instances, KCPE performance was pegged on the number of teachers and the number of registered candidates. Most head teachers pointed to teacher inadequacy and a bigger workload which came with the introduction of FPE for their non-achievement of high mean scores. The study also revealed that a significant portion of teachers were almost in the retirement age bracket. This could also be another reason for lesser teacher effectiveness witnessed in the district. The teacher effectiveness has been to some extent compromised with the introduction of FPE. Some learners are failing in their national examinations(KCPE) , and therefore being denied chance to enhance their studies in secondary schools, hence are being subjected to abject poverty forever.

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. In order to address the challenge posed by high PTR, the government of Kenya should hire more teachers to add up to the existing numbers. This implies reversing her current policy of freezing teacher employment and dwelling on replacing those who leave the service through natural attrition.
2. Teachers should be equitably distributed across the country. The government of Kenya, through Teachers Service Commission (TSC), should give equal chances to all schools irrespective of their settings.

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