THE ROLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OF EMBU DIOCESE IN ADDRESSING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES FACING THE CATHOLIC YOUTH IN EMBU COUNTY

AGNES WAWIRA NGUNGI

C50/CE/11428/2007

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DECEMBER, 2015
DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university or any other award.

Signed: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Agnes Wawira Ngungi

Registration Number: C50/CE/11428/2007

We confirm that the work reported in this thesis was carried out by the candidate and has been submitted with our approval as university supervisors.

Signed: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Dr. Zacharia W. Samita

Kenyatta University

Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies

Signed: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Prof. Mary N. Getui

The Catholic University of Eastern Africa

Department of Religious Studies
DEDICATION

To my three youth siblings: Terry Ngungi, Martin Njue and Anthony Kariuki, whose young lives motivated me into youth studies.
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A word of thanks goes to the Catholic parishes and departments within the Diocese of Embu in which I conducted my research. I am particularly very thankful to all research respondents. They helped in generating the data which became a resourceful research bank to this study.

I wish to thank my parents Anna Wanjuki and Charles Njue, my siblings and relatives. Their diverse forms of support enormously inspired me. Without their encouragement and challenge to carry on, this research would have stalled. I also wish to acknowledge Mr. Ramzan from Nanyuki for his immense assistance. He gave me hope when I was most disheartened. May the Lord God Almighty bless him and his family bountifully.
ABSTRACT

The youth encounter various socio-economic challenges which threaten to derail their lives to a successful and fulfilling future. This is a global phenomenon, true even to the youth of Embu County and particularly those of the research focus, the Catholic adherents. The study examined socio-economic challenges confronting the Catholic youth in Embu County. The study was guided by the Complimentary Model of Interventions to Challenges Facing the Youth, a conceptual framework that underscores the essence of a complimentary undertaking of the Christian and traditional view of the youth. It comprises measures for mitigating their socio-economic challenges. The study reviewed relevant literature in line with the objectives of the study. The broad themes included the main socio-economic challenges facing the youth; causes of these socio-economic challenges in the context of the youth in Embu County; the effects of these challenges on the youth; the role of the local Catholic Church in addressing the challenges as well as the challenges facing the Catholic Church in Embu in its attempts to mitigate these challenges experienced by the youth in Embu County. This study largely employed the descriptive survey design to gather both primary and secondary data. The target population consisted of 200 Catholic youths. Both male and female youth were sampled. Random, purposive and stratified sampling methods were used to sample the respondents. The researcher used questionnaires, interview schedules, Focussed Group Discussions (FGDs) and observation schedules. These data gathering tools were helpful in generating both qualitative and quantitative data for this study. Data has been presented in form of discussions, narratives as well as descriptive statistics such as pie charts, line graphs and frequency tables where applicable. The research found out among other things that the youth in Embu County face myriad socio-economic challenges. These include lack of needed education to be useful and well adjusted members of the society. Unemployment was also found out to be a major challenge to the youth in the area. The study also found out various challenges facing the Catholic Diocese of Embu in mitigating these challenges among others. Finally, the study has suggested various recommendations to assist mitigate the various socio-economic challenges facing the Catholic youth in the county and entire universal church where applicable.
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS  Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMECEA  Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa
AMREF  African Medical and Research Foundation
BRC  Boundaries Review Committee
CUEA  The Catholic University of Eastern Africa
CWA  Catholic Women Association
CYSP  Catholic Youth Strategic Plan
ECD  Early Childhood Development
FGDs  Focus Group Discussions
FGM  Female Genital Mutilation
FLE  Family Life Education
GOK  Government of Kenya
GTI  Government Training Institute
HIV  Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT  Information and Communications Technology
IRF  Inter-Religious Forum
IGPs  Income Generating Projects
KEC  Kenya Episcopal Conference
KEMU  Kenya Methodist University
KIM  Kenya Institute of Management
KIPC  Kenya Institute of Professional Counselling
KMTC  Kenya Medical Training College
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCYNAR</td>
<td>National Catholic Youth Needs Assessment Report</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>NRMs</td>
<td>New Religious Movements.</td>
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<td>PEV</td>
<td>Post Election Violence</td>
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<td>SHG</td>
<td>Self-Help Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>STI</td>
<td>Sexually Transmitted Infections</td>
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<tr>
<td>TTC</td>
<td>Teachers Training College</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<td>YCA</td>
<td>Young Christians Association</td>
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OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

At Risk: Being in a situation that jeopardizes ones' healthy and successful living.

Catholic: The universal body of Christians under the Pope who domiciles in the Vatican.

Church: An organized group of people who trust Christ; for example the Roman Catholic Church.

Diocese: An ecclesiastical area within the Catholic Church that is headed by a senior Christian priest known as a bishop.

Youth: Transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence. It is also used here to refer to persons between the ages of leaving compulsory education and finding their first job.

Youth developer: An individual or organization that works among and with the youth to guide/assist them as they develop into adulthood.
CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The youth constitute the greatest percentage of the world’s population at any given time. According to McWhiter (1993:4), many of such youth confront diverse challenges. The said challenges confront the youth be it in Africa, America, Asia, or Europe. The challenges are related to poverty, unstable families, alcohol and substance abuse, unemployment, early parenthood and suicide, among others (Wanyoike, 2003:21-22). Any society’s stability and strength depends on its youth’s preparedness to act responsibly, especially amidst life challenges or crises. Consequently, if such challenges are not adequately addressed, the society risks its stability.

Worldwide, the youth are considered resourceful to society because of their creative minds, untapped and latent talents, energy and zeal. They have been instruments often marshaled to attain objectives and goals of politicians and religious leaders. The youth have great potential, capable of transforming the world through poems, music, art, and comedy and job creation, among others. However, this potential has to be discovered, nurtured, trained/directed and supported to be useful to them and society (O’Donovan, 2006: 200-202).
Generally, majority of the youth are unemployed and come from poor families that own little or no land. This implies that the possibility of them inheriting land from their parents for farming is remote. Lack of land, a major production resource, coupled with unemployment, poverty, poor education background and lack of capital to create self-employment among other challenges consequently expose the youth to idleness. Others migrate to urban centers, hoping to make a better livelihood by securing some jobs. Here, they are even in greater adversity as they get exposed to dangers and challenges such as lack of basic needs, unemployment or underemployment.

In the face of the above reality confronting its youth, the Catholic Church has attempted to address those challenges. However, the church finds itself largely handicapped by challenging situations in the community as well as within itself. Some of such challenges are fast growing youth population compared to the number of the church’s ministers. This is compounded by inadequacy of role models among the church ministers. Advancement in technological development brought about by rural electrification, increase in web-enabled mobile phone use and increased accessibility of cyber cafes, especially among the youth, are other opportunities-yet-challenges.

In Kenya today, the Catholic Church has shown an understanding that the youth are an important segment of its adherents. It does so by organizing
national activities such as games, music festivals and mass, among others. Through such activities, the youth meet, network and exchange ideas and discuss various matters of concern to them. Through such meetings, they are given talks on various topics which are pertinent to them. In 2004, the national youth office conducted a Catholic Youth Needs Assessment on which a report was written. Following the Catholic Youth Needs Assessment Report (CYNAR), the Catholic youth apostolate has been able to organize many programmes and activities in Kenya in order to be relevant to the needs of the youth as well as to assist them feel appreciated.

The Catholic Diocese of Embu has a challenge to cope and deal with the youth apostolate. It is one of the most challenging and important ministries to which the Church is called. The Catholic Diocese of Embu demonstrated its concern for the youth. It attempted this by offering the youth employment opportunities in its various projects including Mbeu (seed), a microfinance project, and departments such as livestock development, among others. It also provided education and vocational training to them. Socially, it organized youth activities such as drama, music and sports competitions, seminars, workshops and counseling at various diocesan levels. Through such programmes, the church was able, to a large extent, to reduce the involvement of the youth in risky situations/ behavior hence avoided some of the challenges by keeping the youth busy in constructive activities.
This research concerned itself with investigating the role of the Catholic Diocese of Embu in addressing challenges facing the youth in Embu. In order to fulfill its objectives, the study explored the challenges facing the youth in Embu, the causes of those challenges and the extent to which they affect the youth. In the process, limitations experienced by the Catholic Diocese of Embu in addressing challenges facing the youth in Embu clearly came out. The research also explored new and better ways of addressing the challenges confronting the youth so that they can constructively utilize their resourcefulness, even amidst these adverse challenges.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Rastello and Rolandi (2006: 17-18) view the youth as a key hope of generational progression, a view also held by O'Donovan (2006). McWhiter (1993: 10) noted that many young people have the potential of becoming responsible and productive members of the society. The Catholic Church in the Diocese of Embu is in the forefront of helping mitigate the various socio-economic challenges facing the youth in the county. Through its various parishes and local churches, the diocese has formed various ministries to involve and enlighten the youth on their proper place in the society. However, despite the undertakings by the church and other stakeholders in checking these challenges, it appears that the Catholic youth in the county continue to meet one socio-economic challenge after another.
It is in view of the aforementioned facts that some questions come to the fore: is the church really doing enough to mitigate these socio-economic challenges among its adherent youth? Are there impediments that the church itself is facing in its attempts to assist the youth face these challenges in life? These questions among others led the researcher to ground her study on the search for the role of the Catholic Church of Embu Diocese in addressing the socio-economic challenges facing the Catholic youth in Embu County.

1.3 Research Questions

The background to the study generated the following questions:

1. Which are the main socio-economic challenges facing the youth in Embu County?

2. What are the main causes of the socio-economic challenges facing the youth in Embu County?

3. What are the main negative effects of the socio-economic challenges facing the youth in Embu?

4. What measures is the Catholic Diocese of Embu taking to cope with these difficulties?
1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study was carried out being guided by the following key objectives:

1. Identify the main socio-economic challenges facing the youth in Embu County.
2. Investigate the main causes of the socio-economic challenges facing the youth in Embu County.
3. Discuss the effects of the socio-economic challenges facing the youth in Embu.
4. Assess the programmes and activities of the Catholic Church Diocese of Embu in addressing the challenges facing the youth.

1.5 Research Premises

1. The youth in Embu are oblivious of socio-economic challenges which stem from poverty, family, technological developments, social, political and religious sectors.
2. The main causes of the socio-economic challenges facing the youth are largely self-inflicted.
3. The youth in Embu are missing opportunities for self-development due to the socio-economic challenges they are facing.
4. The Catholic Church in Embu is making deliberate efforts to address the socio-economic challenges facing the youth.
1.6 Justification and Significance of the Study

Many studies have been carried out concerning challenges facing the youth and the measures of intervention employed by various concerned bodies including the Church, State and NGOs. Majority of such studies have been carried out in urban areas where it is presumed that the youth, in large numbers, inhabit. It is also assumed that, more than in the rural areas, the youth in urban areas are exposed to more glaring challenges of slum life, unemployment, underpayment, violence, drug and substance abuse, cruelty and crime, among others. Embu is currently experiencing major technological developments in terms of mobile phones and the services associated with them, rural electrification, accessibility to television, videos and internet. Besides, some cultures, not indigenous to Embu, such as the western cultures have spilled into the Embu local traditional culture among other challenges.

This study definitely helps the Church, as a complement to the government, to determine necessary skills they can equip the youth with for the collective achievement of the social teaching of the church and government’s Vision 2030 goals. These goals are elimination of poverty through production of responsible, globally competitive and prosperous youth, creation of jobs especially for the youth, among others (Kenya Vision 2030 2007: 14-15). This would be in the Catholic Diocese of Embu’s endeavor to accomplish its mission in the social teaching which is to assist the youth achieve full
humanism which poverty harbors. The study will also help the church to secure its youth against lack of human professional fulfillment as well as shielding them from becoming victims of social exclusion which are brought about by unemployment or underemployment (Compendium of the Social Teaching of the Church 2004:160,242). The study will also help the Catholic Church in Embu to identify the limitations in its current interventions in the challenges facing the youth hence come up with newer and more effective ways of addressing them.

In addition, the study will bring to the awareness of the church and the government, possible dangers the youth are exposed to if challenges facing them are not effectively dealt with. This study will prompt a desire in the afore-mentioned stakeholders to take charge and intervene in the challenges facing the youth. The study also adds to scholarly knowledge. It will direct scholars, researchers, authors and publishers on youth matters, social workers, health educators, psychologists and program administrators to the key areas concerning the youth, which require attention and research. This will ultimately help address the challenges facing the youth.

Owing to the dearth of literature on the contribution of the church in mitigating the challenges facing the youth, the study will contribute to the body of knowledge on the same. Scholars will benefit in both getting more
information on the role of the church in Embu County as well as get areas recommended for further studies where they can research more on.

1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

1.7.1 Scope of the Study

The research focused on the Catholic Diocese of Embu's role in addressing challenges facing the youth within the administrative boundaries of Embu. Due to the vast ecclesiastical area covered by Catholic Diocese of Embu, the study restricted itself to the Embu section of the diocese. The study had its respondents drawn from the youth who had at least Form Four graduates. Both male and female youth who practiced the Catholic faith and who had been residents of Embu since birth were considered crucial respondents for the study since they had more information needed for the study. Those who had resided in Embu for at least ten years were also considered as respondents. This was because they were deemed to have been in the youth ministry and hence were expected to have useful information required for the study. Some of these youth were expected to be in tertiary institutions of learning in Embu or elsewhere in Kenya while others had finished their respective courses from these institutions. Among these youth, were those who were found to have resigned their lives to fate, not knowing what it held for their future. This was so because some had lost hope of furthering their education, getting
employment, having considerable capital to start self-employment or of having anything to better their lives.

1.7.2 Limitations of the Study

The study faced various limitations which could otherwise affect the findings. One of the main limitation faced by the researcher in her quest to carry out this study was scarcity of finances since it was self-funded. The production of data gathering tools and field movements to distribute the questionnaires, carry out interviews and Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) as well as to carry out observations was quite expensive. Another limitation was on time since the study could only be carried out during the months when the tertiary institutions were on session: this was the time when the researcher was at work at school. Getting permissions to carry out the study was not easy since it meant that her own students had to miss some lessons.

Another key limitation was the vastness of the study area which was not easy to cover and travel costs were exorbitant. Some of the informants were also reluctant to give much needed information with some openly demanding to be paid for it. Others were adamant that they could not see how the study would eventually be of benefit to them. It was also not easy to get some of the respondents who could only be found on Sundays when they attended mass in the churches. The problem here was that the researcher could only attend one
church at a time though she enlisted the help of research assistant who assisted in distributing questionnaires and recording information during FGDs.

Weather was also not conducive for the study as in most instances it rained a lot making travel almost impossible. However, the vice versa was true as the heat in the lower locale of the county sometimes proved intolerable for the researcher who came from the cooler upper region of the county. Nevertheless, the researcher had to get ways of ensuring that she got sufficient data to complete the study in time and successfully.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the background to the study. From the discussion, it is evident that the youth, globally, are faced with many challenges which affect their lives negatively. The youth in Kenya and Embu are no exceptional to these challenges. These challenges affect the youth against the reality that they are an integral segment of the society due to their potential, zeal and energy as well as seeds of hope for propagation of society. However, the challenges facing them from family, school, church and society at large stunts their growth into productive members of society. The chapter also listed the research questions, objectives of the study and the research premises which guided the study. More so, the chapter establishes the reasons why this study was justified as well as showing its significance to the youth, church the
society in Embu and the world at large. Lastly it has laid down the scope and the limitations of the study.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

Relevant literature has been reviewed so as to identify gaps to fill with this study. The literature herein has been reviewed thematically in line with the objectives of the study. First, literature has been reviewed on major challenges facing the youth; secondly, is review of literature on the causes of the major challenges facing the youth; thirdly, are effects of these challenges on the youth and lastly, the role of the Catholic Church in addressing the said challenges. The chapter concludes with a suggested conceptual framework that can be put in place to help mitigate the problems facing the youth in Embu County under the auspices of the Catholic Diocese of the area.

2.1 Review of Related Literature

2.1.1 Challenges Facing the Youth

The youth form the fastest growing segment of population in Kenya today (Wanyoike, 2003: 120). The Kenya Bureau of Statistics 2008-2009 Population Projection (Embu District Population Projection Paper, July 2009), also confirms this. Many authors including McWhirter (1993), Agaya (2009), Wanyoike (2003), O'Donovan (2006), Ndirangu (2007), and Makewa (2008) have shown that the youth are faced with enormous challenges. However,
these works do not focus on any specific contexts within which the said challenges are examined. A scholarly research directed to the youth in Embu County became appropriate to put the issues in context.

Unemployment levels among the youth were seen as a major cause of the challenges facing the youth by majority of the authors whose works we reviewed. The youth, unlike any other social group, tend to be more adversely affected by unemployment (Agaya 2009:33-34). According to this author, the youth formed 78.1% of all the unemployed in Kenya. Many factors contribute to this challenging reality. They include inadequate job opportunities, poor educational backgrounds of the youth, lack of required skills, youth’s preference for certain jobs, ethnic-based discrimination and poor national policy. In Embu, unemployment among the youth was also high and this study intended to find out what the Catholic Diocese of Embu was doing to mitigate this.

Njonjo (2010) put it more clearly when he observed that, “majority of Kenya’s young people are unemployed, underemployed or underpaid, hence swelling ranks of the working poor.” He further asserted that:

A large proportion of young adults and a rapid rate of growth in the working-age population exacerbate unemployment, prolong dependency on parents, and diminish self-esteem and fuels frustrations, which in effect increases the likelihood of violence or conflict.
He argues that the rate at which the net jobs are created is not the same as the rate of labour force growth. This is evidenced by the fact that the informal sector has been growing at an average rate of 17.2% per annum compared to the formal sector which has been growing at an average of 2.23% per annum (Njonjo 2006: 23). He further explains that the country’s working age population increased by 24.5% between 1999 and 2006. This effectively means that the growth rate of jobseekers is higher compared to the rate of job opportunity creation. This is true, considering both the new labour market entrants and those who are out of employment due to the various labour separation mechanisms. This study sought to assess the programmes and activities of the Catholic Church Diocese of Embu in addressing these challenges facing the youth. This was important given the different spatial-temporal contexts of this author and our study.

Ordinarily, jobseekers remain out of employment for a longer period, hence swelling the ranks of discouraged job seekers. Most employers in Kenya, including those in the public sector have resorted to increasing use of casuals, temporary, part-time, contract and sub-contracted labour. Some even outsource the workforce. They do so in order to ostensibly reduce labour costs, achieve more flexibility in management and exert greater levels of control over labour (Njonjo, 2010:19-20). Njonjo views this as one of the major reasons as to why many youth are facing challenging situations as far as
employment is concerned. The researcher attempted to seek more information on the main socio-economic challenges facing the youth in Embu County and their possible causes.

The present-day youth is faced with the current economic world structures which are brought by the pillage of the third world raw materials, unbearable burden of international debts and exploitation through multinationals, among others. Though many African countries are rich in natural resources such as minerals, their youth have no jobs to cater for their responsibilities vested upon them by nature or the culture, for instance, being the 'medical insurance' cover for their ageing parents (The World Bank, 2014:34, Larson, 2002:8). As a result of the pillage of the African raw materials by the industrialized nation, in the pretense of evenly distributing the natural resources, the African youth are faced with poverty, misery and lack of jobs whether educated or not. This challenge breeds frustration, anxiety and despair which culminate in crime, drugs addiction and alcoholism (Rastello, 2004:30). This study sought to find out specific core causes of the challenges facing the youth in the largely rural youth in Embu County.

The Church in its social doctrine sees work as having a very important role to play in social life. It, therefore, views unemployment as a real disaster especially among the young generation (Compendium, 2004:159). According
to the teaching, the society can hardly attain social peace if its economic policies do not allow workers to reach satisfactory levels of employment. This study sought to find out exactly what strategies the church has in addressing these challenges facing the youth.

According to the Church, the unemployed and the underemployed suffer profound social consequences, marginalized within the society and becoming victims of social exclusion. Stoil (1996:9) concurs with Monti, (2001:297) that the youth today are faced with the challenge of drug and substance abuse. Makewa (2008:36) for instance, expresses his fears by asserting that the world seems to be fighting a losing battle against drug and substance abuse. He asserts that today children are exposed to drugs at an early age compared to their counterparts of 1970s. According to him, the youth today are living in the dawn of a global village where drugs which were not known to the youth of 1970s are easily transported to different parts of the world. The ease in availability of the drugs and the pressure from the youth peers to take them lead many youth to abuse the drugs. This is a precarious situation that was also evident in the area of study. This prompted the researcher to search into what the church was doing to scale down the vulnerability of the youth into falling prey to the menace of drug abuse and transmission chain.
Makewa (2008:37-38) further cites some of the drugs such as tobacco, caffeine, alcohol, sleeping pills, stimulants and narcotics. Besides the earlier mentioned reasons for the youth taking drugs, the other possible causes as pointed by the author are poor or drug-abusing family background, limited, compromised or ineffective law enforcement, ignorance of the negative effects of drugs on the user's health and the performance and financial gain through drug peddling, among others. This, according to the author, exposes the youth to more glaring challenges of involvement in criminal activities, pre-marital sexual activities, depression and suicidal attempts. This study on its part aimed at finding out the specific negative effects of challenges facing the youth that are peculiar to Embu County.

New Religious Movements (NRM s) and cults, for instance, Mungiki pose great challenges to the youth. Ndirangu (2007) blames such NRM s and cults for confusing, casting and rendering the youth eventually vulnerable to becoming violent, murderers, irrational drug abusers and rapists. Makewa (2008) and O'Donovan (2006) blame mainstream churches for lacking role models among their leaders to be emulated by the youth. The authors lament that such churches lack variety. The churches appear out of touch with the reality of the young people in the manner of conducting worship and activities that are profoundly meaningful to the youth. Accordingly, the youth feel bored in the church.
The youth have to search for solace and company in the cults that appear more promising and accommodative to them. Some church elders were faulted for being rigid regarding church tradition. They were seen as lacking variety and dynamism in the ministries for the youth. Consequently, this creates a yearning among the youth for something more related, dynamic and appealing to them. Certainly, the NRM are used as a snare by the devil to the youth because they easily attract the youth by the promise of wealth and health that the cults make. The authors continue to argue that the NRM appeal to human basic needs which include need to be loved, to feel needed, and to sense that our lives have direction and meaning. Makewa (2008: 70-71) adds that people who experience an identity crisis or have emotional problems are particularly attracted to cults. The NRM, therefore, make a favorable impression on the youth who fail to find satisfaction and spiritual warmth in the mainstream churches. The researcher sought to unearth what the Catholic Diocese of Embu is doing to mitigate the socio-economic challenges facing the youth in order to shield them from the aforementioned adversities linked to NRM.

The failure of the mainstream churches to provide youth friendly and compliant programs leads to another challenge: the appeal to the youth, by modern technological advancements such as internet and other forms of mass media. The authors, especially O’Donovan (2006), see this appeal as directed
to the youth. It provides answers to the need for excitement, variety and ultimate meaning. Njonjo (2010) confirms the assertion by O'Donovan (2006) that young people are the main users of the new Information and Communications Technology (ICT) application devices which are growing much faster than older ICTs (television, radio, mainline telephones and newspapers). Many youth are drawn to use of new ICTs, particularly entertainment - playing games, downloading music, and talking with friends. However, the new ICT technologies are having wide-ranging effects on youth transitions. Some of these include early exposure to pornography, laziness and secularism. Internet connection is prioritized highest among the new mass media to access reliable information and knowledge: entertainment and communicating with others through e-mail, social networking, chatting and Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP).

The most popular social network is Face Book and twitter, accessed by 96% of social network users with majority of these being the gullible youth (Swanson, 2010:158). This is a view also held by Kelsey (2010:237). Old ICT media are still the most prominent sources of information on sexual and reproductive health (Njonjo, 2010: 19). The researcher sought to know whether the Catholic Diocese of Embu was abreast with advancement of technology and using the same to positively help the youth face their challenges. This is because advancements in technology cannot be wished
away; they are here to not only stay but to advance even more. The study sought to find out what measures the Catholic Diocese of Embu can put in place to cope with the challenges facing the gullible youth including pastoral as well as technological.

Through the technological developments, the youth appear to find role models to identify and associate with. Modern technology, therefore, has replaced the time the youth would spend with their parents and relatives at home and in the Church. This is because the secular technological world appears more appealing than the sacred world to the youth. Makewa is convinced that while the secular world commits huge resources to produce programmes for the youth, the church is allocating minimal or no resources to youth programmes. He warns that the church might end up closing some of its outlets to the secular world some day (Makewa, 2008:75).

O'Donovan (2006, 199) blames the discontentment faced by the youth in the church on church leaders. According to him, the leaders have neglected the youth to the extent of regarding them as children who cannot be entrusted with major responsibilities in the church. They also disregard the youth even in the making of critical decisions, for example, concerning their own issues. This denies the youth a participatory role and opportunity to exploit their potential, hence hampers their growth into being independent, dependable and
responsible. The researcher in this study aimed at finding out the programmes and activities the Catholic Diocese of Embu can engage in to address the challenges facing the youth there.

Frustrations experienced by the youth from the family are cited as another challenge. The social teaching of the Catholic Church views the family as the first teacher, in the social, spiritual and even economic aspects of life. Indeed, the family constitutes one of the most important terms of reference for shaping the social and ethical order of human behavior (Compendium 141). Its role is seen to offer protection against the many attacks which children/youth are exposed to.

By carrying out its roles effectively, the Church foresees a development of the youth in accordance with what constitutes authentic human growth. O’Donovan is convinced that parents have failed to provide spiritual and moral training to the youth. Besides, they are hardly available. This renders the youth as easy prey to any influence, positive or negative. Makewa (2008) shows how the older generations greatly misunderstand the youth. And the youth on their part do not also understand themselves. This exposes the youth to other challenges that they have to grapple with. These include deviance, cross-generational relationships, sexual promiscuity, uncertainty and emotional fears. Makewa is convinced that parents are very important youth
developers. This is because they lay foundation for youth development. He holds an opinion that parents and other youth developers can change the life perspective of the youth from positive to negative (Makewa, 2008: 40-41). He urges that parents should manage their children well at home in accordance with St. Paul's teaching so that they can merit being truly called church elders as expressed in some Bible verses:

One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? I Timothy (3:4-5).

Other challenges facing the youth are HIV and AIDS, family disintegration, homelessness and the radically changing economy and harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM). Many youth are lured into the infection of HIV following campaigns of population control, prevention of HIV and AIDS and other STIs (Rastello, 2004: 30-31). In the campaigns, condom use is popularized as a prevention measure against such infections. Rastello, on the contrary, insists that not all STIs or HIV are 100% preventable by use of condoms. According to her, education about the working and make-up of the condoms should be availed to the youth in order for them to make informed decisions. She is convinced that many African youth die of HIV and AIDS due to misinformation rather than promiscuity. The researcher in this study sought to find out the main socio-economic challenges facing the youth in Embu County.
Njonjo (2010) argues that crime is strongly associated with young people as 53% of crime is predominantly committed by persons aged between 16 and 25 years, both male and female. However, it emerges that there are ‘female crimes’ and ‘male crimes’. According to Krohn (2009:89), women commit basically three types of crimes: infanticide and procuring abortion, concealing birth and use of dangerous drugs. This is an assertion also held by Zaplin (1998:15) who noted that men on the other hand dominated five types of crime; robbery and theft, homicide, offenses against morality, assault and corruption. Overall, crime has generally been on the increase in Kenya. Following print and electronic media reports, there are many illegal groups which are associated with perpetuating crime in the country. Such groups are, for instance, the Mungiki, Al-Shabaab, Chinkororo, Sugusugu, Taliban and Baghdad Boys, among others. The crimes committed include grenade attacks even in areas of worship, car-jacking, kidnapping, rape, and destruction of property and murder.

Majority of the recruits and perpetrators of the mission of the groups are the youth (Agaya 2009: 39). Such crimes as reported in both print and electronic media are murder in the family, robbery with violence, rape, car-jacking, kidnapping and destruction of property. Juvenile offenders’ involvement in crime was influenced by family negligence to giving proper guidance to the youth. Other causes were found to be need for easy means of getting money,
negative influence from peers and the quest for survival. Poverty and alcohol/drug abuse were cited as reasons underlying the youth’s vulnerability to re-commit crime (Njonjo, 2010:19). This further prompted the researcher to find out the main socio-economic challenges facing the youth in Embu County. The researcher also sought to find out the possible causes and consequences of the delinquencies the youth in the county engages in.

2.1.2 Causes of Challenges Facing the Youth
The aforementioned challenges facing the youth stream from various factors or causes: breakdown of cultural values, psycho-social, developmental, environmental, technological, religious and economic (Kondlo, 2013:170-172). Some of the psycho-social and developmental factors include physical growth not proportional to emotional maturity (Wanyoike, 2003: 21). This study aimed at finding out the role of the Catholic Church of Embu Diocese in addressing the socio-economic challenges facing the youth there.

Ndirangu (2007) adds that the youth in contemporary times face rapid changes amidst family break-ups. He continues to argue that the youth miss the benefit of experience and stable families hence, they are ill-equipped to effectively cope with distressing contemporary conditions and frustrations at their disposal. Rastello (2004:18) laments over the decline of the family, traditionally a child’s primary moral molder. She argues that though the sizes
of families have decreased and the level of education of parents' increased, more children experience family break-ups, two or three times during childhood today than before. To her, the youth have been adversely affected by poor parenting, wrong kinds of adult role models, gender based violence, materialism portrayed in the mass media and peer pressure. As a result, they face low self-esteem, loneliness and insecurity about the future. This study sought to identify some of the socio-economic challenges facing the youth particularly those in Embu County.

Njonjo (2010) underlines the role of the family as crucial in developing young people. He notes that the influence of parents over their children is greatest when they are younger; parental influence reduces as the youth grow older and is replaced by media and peers. Sr. Caterina Cangia recounts the words of Coleman and Hendry (1990:40) in part, “... during adolescence, peer relations become more intense and extensive and family relations are altered.” This study has examined how the Catholic Diocese of Embu is integrating youth mentorship and relatively positive peer-to-peer influences. This is because at this stage, the youth begin to date, work with others in part-time jobs or spend time together without adult supervision (Rastello, 2004: 16).

The kinds of literature the youth are exposed to and read at tender age, like the kind of information they access through the social media, make them feel and
seem to know more socially than their chronological age would allow them. This puts the youth in danger of neglecting parents and the church that may not be aware or are ignorant of the kind of information the youth are exposed to. Most parents of a vast majority of the youth may feel that since the youth know much, they need no guidance (Rastello and Rolandi, 2005: 24).

The youth culture is in tandem with the new media which certainly confronts the world with a continued array of new information (Wesunga 2013). This new media is arguably omnipresent with sexual culture which fills it with sleaze and is beckoning the youth to sexual activity at ever earlier ages (Rastello, 2004: 16-18). This is confirmed by the fact that print and more so electronic media (television, radio and the internet) are still the most prominent sources of information on sexual and reproductive health. Most youth are found to lack information on sexual and reproductive health within the confines of the family. Interestingly, 7-10 year olds trust information delivered from the family. Unfortunately, their parents do not give the relevant information to this age group (Njonjo, 2010:18). This study intended to find out the causes of the socio-economic challenges facing the youth particularly in Embu County. These could include, as in the rest of the world, matters of sexuality.
Mass media has compounded the challenge since some sections of the media seem to glorify sexual perversions, crime, violence and secularism by airing programs which often display sexual scenes and sexually appealing individuals. Rastello (2004:18) further notes that the youth source from the media their role models and ways of behavior. Such media icons and behaviors are for the most part unrealistic. This culminates in grief, anxiety and hopelessness among the youth. This media influence has pervaded even the rural families. The present study wished to find out if the youth in Embu County had been adversely affected. More so, the study directed its interest in finding out what the Catholic Diocese of Embu could do to engage the youth in the area constructively.

Makewa (2008) notes that when parents are poor role models because of being alcoholics, anti-social, cynical or distrustful, their children may develop the same problems. He argues that the youth, who take hard drugs such as marijuana had mothers who were impulsive, anxious, rebellious and psychologically unstable. Such mothers could find it difficult to relate with others. The mothers would spend little time with the youth, were dissatisfied with their children and exerted little control over their children's activities. They may have made no objection to their children taking any form of drug (Makewa 2008:41). Castillo (1986) sees poor parenting habits including authoritarianism, patronizing attitudes or over-rigidity, hostile or unfair
treatment of youth, second marriages and denying the youth freedom to make their own choices as major causes of challenges facing the youth. Wanyoike (2003) seems close to Castillo, holding poor parenting accountable for the youth's mental and emotional maladjustment. The author adds that parents are not available to provide guidance and counseling to the youth; they do not listen to the youth.

When it comes to major life issues, the youth, therefore, lack proper knowledge based on which, they can make sound decisions. Ndirangu (2007) adds that the social environment is pervaded with hard drugs and drug peddlers. Social systems have failed due to corruption that has incapacitated the law enforcers' bid to prevent the trafficking and sale of these drugs. Embu County being a major source, transit and distribution point for a certain species of miraa locally referred to as muguka may have its youth suffering from it, other drugs and substance abuse. This study wished to get information on the causes of challenges facing the youth in the area of study with drug abuse being one of the suspect causes.

The social teaching of the church places the role of parents (family) in raising up children of sound moral and Christian character as very important. Accordingly, parents have a right and duty to impart religious education and moral formation to their children. This right and duty is irreplaceable and
inalienable hence, is not to be delegated to or usurped by others (Compendium, 2004: 136). Parents are advised to work together as the role of both of them is equally necessary in educating the children. Their authority must be exercised with gentleness and respect but also with firmness and vigour when necessary.

Parents have the responsibility to impart the knowledge of sexuality to their children. This they should do in an orderly and progressive manner so that children learn to appreciate the human and moral values connected with it (Compendium, 2004:138-139). This role of the parents and their efforts have been frustrated by other socio-economic and physiological factors in society, including both electronic and print media, which display all forms of sexual overtones, youth curiosity to experience sex and easy and cheap availability of drugs (Lutomia, 2009: 42-44).

Lutomia, (2009) further argues that the family, as an educator of morals to the youth, has its social and moral obligation eroded and overtaken by the emergence of powerful socializing agents and role models outside it. They add that, due to modernity, many families become victims to secularizing trend hence have become characterized by immorality, spiritual emptiness and a general lack of direction and purpose (Lutomia, 2009: 62-63). This study wished to establish whether secularization in religion was influencing the
youth and what activities or programmes the Catholic Diocese of Embu had to stem this alienation.

Some of the challenges facing the youth are apparently church-related. The church was found to lack skilled personnel within it working in the youth ministry (National Catholic Youth Needs Assessment Report, 2004). The report also pointed out poor participation of stakeholders including the catechists, the youth themselves and their parents on the activities and essence of the youth ministry. Along similar sentiments, Makewa (2008) asserted that the youth departments in many churches operate on a non-existent budget as compared to the children and adults departments.

Makewa (2008) proceeds to lament that churches allocate minimal or no resources to the youth programmes as compared to the secular world. Therefore, it becomes very difficult to compete for youth attention with the secular world such as the media, whose youth programmes are produced by professionals at a cost of millions of dollars. Makewa warns that if the Church does not reverse the trend, it might or will lose its youth to the business world as it happened to some churches, in the West, which have been closed. He recommends that the church must be willing to spend lots of money on youth ministry lest it will continue to fight a losing battle (Makewa 2008: 11, 75). Unfortunately, these apparently very useful observations are not given any
particular context. It was important for our research to examine such comments in a particular church context as the one specified in our case of Catholic Diocese of Embu.

Rastello (2005: 21-22) faults the church for lacking a clear strategic focus on the youth. In the few youth centers and youth activities in action, there appeared to be more of talking than action. Accordingly, many pastoral agents in the church viewed the youth ministry as the least marketable among the existing church departments. Consequently, the many activities the church engaged in for the youth such as schooling, sporting, spiritual seminars and cultural activities, were not adequate if one wanted to concretely address real issues. Many youth were not reached by these organized group activities. This study sought to assess the programmes and activities the Catholic Diocese of Embu was engaging in to address the various socio-economic challenges facing the youth, its rank and file.

Sometimes, church leaders fail to recognize the potentiality in the youth. Other leaders only value the youth when there is a task requiring muscle power. Only then do they call on the youth to act. Rastello (2004) observes that the youth lack formation programmes, as far as faith is concerned as the only systematic formation the youth received was the catechism. Once the youth received confirmation, their spiritual nourishment was left to fate. With
this kind of spiritual formation, the youth find their belief system shaken and confused by the issues which surround them such as poverty, war, high rate of crime, drug addiction, devil worship and cults, and diseases. Accordingly, this study delved into investigating the precise causes of the socio-economic challenges facing the youth in Embu County.

Constant pressure and tension in learning institutions is cited as another major cause of challenges facing the youth. Failure to achieve the expected high grades and standards in school, national examinations and shortage of qualified teachers makes the youth to feel frustrated, creating despair among them (Wanyoike 2003: 22). Communication breakdown between administrations and the students, adolescence and lack of sensitivity by teachers to students' grievances and issues are blamed for other challenges to the youth. Owing to this, the students boil to pressure and eventually cause strikes; Others start abusing drugs and bullying their colleagues (Lutomia and Sikolia 2006: 17-18). Strain and pressure in learning institutions bring rise to revolt against the authority. This in turn fuels animosity between the administrators and the students as a result of which students may strike. The students' unrest results in death, destruction of property, expulsion from school and being charged in the court of law among others (Lutomia and Sikolia 2006: 14-19). This in turn exposes them to more challenges. Wanyoike (2003) links the said challenges to the breakdown of traditional African moral
and religious values. The breakdown has apparently paved a way to secularism, which has brought about liberalism and permissiveness in society.

The foregoing reviewed literature locates multiple causes underlying the complex challenges confronting the youth. The present study examines these challenges from the viewpoint of the youth themselves, parents and the church leaders in a concrete contextual reality in a rigorous research endeavour. The study further seeks to establish any other factors or causes of the challenges faced by the youth in Embu.

2.1.3 Effects of the Challenges on the Youth

Some of the ills mentioned as challenges emanating from the church alienate the youth within their own church. It is a challenge of the church to see itself only from the eyes of the clergy and the adults. In such situation, the church is faulted at denying the youth the opportunity to express their contribution. Rastello and Rolandi (2005, 25-26) are of the view that though the youth have their contributions to make and the church ideologically accepts this, practically there is distrust and discomfort in getting the youth to participate and even be represented. This denies the youth opportunity to take part in activities which they ought to know. Some of them take such responsibilities at an older age for instance, being an altar ‘boy’ at 30 years.
Responsible adults have forgotten that the youth need guidance; they suppose that the youth know much. Due to this down play of the religious and parental responsibility, the youth seek solace in the global world where they can access any form of information. Some of this information is highly suspect or dangerous. The youth, therefore, adopt a hedonistic idea; here, everything pleasurable is perceived as good. Their sense of sin ends up fading off. In this situation, the youth develop without a sense of God and are hence prone to develop a dead conscience which is highly dangerous for themselves and the entire community (Rastello and Rolandi 2005: 26). This study aimed to find out the negative effects of the socio-economic challenges facing the youth in Embu County. As in this literature review, a lot has been done on the effects of challenges facing the youth in various parts of the world. However, the particular effects on the youth in Embu County have not been carried out. This study sought to fill this gap.

The environment in which the youth in our society live suppresses their potential and also their vital contribution to our society. The environment, often results into suicide or early death, street kids, child and teenage prostitution, abuse of their strengths in violence and robbery, drug abuse or addiction and alcoholism and orphans (Rastello, 2004: 47-48).
Following the challenging situations found within the church, such as outmoded forms of evangelism and the leaders not giving them a participatory role in the church, the youth keep off from participating in the life of the church. Others abandon the church; they shun attendance of the church and the reception of sacraments (Rastello 2004: 74). If this trend continues, warned Makewa (2008: 75), the church would surely find itself losing its youth, especially to the media/business world which is much more appealing to the youth. The new media also has customized itself specifically for the youth. This makes the youth feel cared for and understood.

Youth involvement in criminality as noted by Makewa (2008: 43-44) is caused partly by the challenging nature of the adolescence. Accordingly, parental control at this period of development is loosened though adult responsibilities have not yet begun to constrain the youth behavior. Lack of role models to the youth, among the leaders in society, is cited by the author as another cause of crime among the youth. The author argues that violence is aggravated by leaders who engage in violence when demanding for freedom or putting their views across. The youth end up emulating such leaders whenever they want their freedom, want their demands to be heard due to communication breakdown between them and the authorities including parents (Makewa 2008: 43).
Suicide is cited by Makewa (2008: 44-45) to be the second leading cause of death among the youth, after accidents. The author notes that this could be attributed to the challenges such as broken families, depression, drug and substance abuse and demonic music. He observes that youth who commit suicide have given up in life they feel unwanted.

Due to breakdown of African moral values coupled with youth attraction to print and electronic media, the youth find themselves inclined to watching and reading pornographic materials. This often produces negative effects on the youth. This is because it greatly arouses their sexual appetites hence high levels of sexual excitement. As a result, these sexual desires will want to be satisfied thereby leading to sexual perversions such as prostitution, rape, adultery, homosexuality and bestiality. Such irresponsible sexual behavior often results to other complications, for example, unplanned pregnancies, abortion, suicidal cases and animosity between the youth and parents (Lutomia and Sikolia 2006; 34-46).

Apart from the social challenges leading to criminality and violence among the youth, economic challenges are also cited as leading to youth violence. Reichman (2014:60) reports that in 2007/2008 post elections violence in Kenya, majority of the youth engaged in crimes and violence based on the perceptions that their neighbors from particular ethnic groups had better
access to political and economic opportunities than themselves. This is a view also held by Njogu (2013:8). This state of affairs drove particularly the youth into desperation and hostility towards the long-term immigrants from other parts of the country that often are more prosperous than indigenous populations. This took place in Nyanza, Rift Valley and Western Kenya where the indigenous youth flashed out the Kikuyu (Kenya Thabiti Task Force, 2009: 35-38).

It has been mentioned earlier that the greatest challenge facing the youth today is unemployment. Indeed, levels of unemployment among the youth places them as an easy prey to the political leaders who end up manipulating the youth to engage in violence in order to settle the politicians’ scores with their opponents. The politicians promise the youth money, wealth and even employment if the youth support them by way of fighting for them. Such crime and violence have adverse effects on the youth and the society at large. Some of the effects of this behaviour are destruction of property, arrest and conviction in the courts of law and tragically, loss of life.

According to Lutomia and Sikolia (2009: 60-61), engagement in drug and substance abuse produce youth who are lazy, are low in productivity, are school dropouts, are sick in health, are violent, have low life expectancy, have poor memory and have poor judgment of time, among others. Bearing this in
mind, the questions one is bound to pose would be; can such youth be entrusted with the stewardship of themselves, family, church, jobs and the society’s resources if good produce ought to be attained? Could the youth of Embu be in the same dire consequences? The society, in Embu, therefore, faces a threat of inadequate people on whom to rely on for its future.

It is evident from the foregoing literature review that a lot of studies have been carried out on the negative effects various socio-economic challenges have had on the youth. However, the precise effects of these challenges among the youth of and in Embu County have not been studied nor documented. This study sought to fill this gap among others as in line with the objectives presented in Chapter One.

2.1.4 Catholic Church’s Response to Challenges Facing the Youth
Developing the youth demands adequate quality time from parents, teachers and youth developers (Makewa, 2008). In view of the apparent gap created by the afore-mentioned stakeholders, the church, the media, modern technology and peers readily come in to shape the youth. The latter (media, modern technology and peers) cannot be fully trusted with this profoundly noble mission. They indeed may easily mislead as they may impart what is appealing to the youth irrespective of its moral implications. In Embu, these modern modes of IT are present. But there is a question that begs attention: is
the Catholic Diocese of Embu responding adequately to mitigate the negative effects of the same? This study aimed at assessing the mitigative programmes and activities the church has put in place for the youth.

The Church, therefore, is expected to be one of the reliable agents in inspiring and forming the youth. It could help the youth overcome the challenges confronting them either through prevention or through deterrence. In using the preventive approach, the Church takes the role of giving information on life issues the youth are likely to encounter. Such information relates to growth and development, HIV and AIDS, secularism and spiritual growth, among others. Proper information is power which can protect one against the adverse effects of scrupulous information. The Church therefore, secures its youth against wrong information by providing the right information on time. Besides, it equips them with skills which are necessary to keep them busy and occupied in constructive affairs. Through the skills acquired, majority of the youth are able to derive a means of living. Through deterrence, the Church should be vigilant enough to understand behavior trends of the youth from time to time. Then through seminars, workshops and forums, she should sensitize them on implications of such behavior.

The Church has the potential and an upper hand to mobilize resources and call all parties to spend quality time, energy and money to develop the youth. This
would ensure that the youth effectively deal with their challenges and are responsible in a way that they benefit themselves, the family, the church and the society. As its hope, the Church is called to guide the youth towards growth in stature, wisdom and in favor of God and humanity (Luke 2:52).

According to Njuguna, if the above is done, the youth will be able to make great and major contributions to the Church and society. Some of the contributions of the youth cited by Njuguna are the youthfulness which gives and inspires hope, creative liturgy, dynamism in life, their physical strength and curiosity that leads to innovation. Above all, they will be to their fellow youth evangelizing agents, challenging role models in life and faith issues and a transforming force in all spheres of life (Elena ed. 2004:70-71).

Castillo (1986), McWhiter (1993), Campbell (1994), Avallone (1999), Wanyoike (2003), O'Donovan (2006), Ndirangu (2007) and Makewa (2008) share the view that the Church can address challenges facing the youth. They concur that deterrence cannot be fully perfect; it must be supplemented by curative measures. They cite guidance and counseling as useful both as a preventive and curative measure in addressing challenges facing the youth. Avallone (1999: 12-13,102) adds that there must exist a friendly relationship between the youth and their developers. Good rapport could be vital for security, warmth and closeness on which the process of maturation depends.
Avalone (1999) and Makewa (2008) further suggest that the church could organize youth activities and establish youth organizations. Such activities must be diverse and varied to accommodate varied youth interests. These could form an integral part in imparting education as well as being a way to reducing idleness. The activities are essential ingredients in the youth's physical development. Besides, they are an aid to the positive mental development of the youth. They will also help in enhancing character formation and social growth. The two authors are equivocal that the persons entrusted with youth development must participate in these activities. This accords him/her an opportunity to monitor, supervise and usher them to the right way again if they tune off. Likewise, it shows the youth that someone (youth developer) understands and wants to help them by being “incarnation” into their challenging world (Makewa, 2008).

Avalone (1999: 67-85) advances an approach through which the church can foster moral and religious training upon the youth. The approach is based on the sacraments of reconciliation and Eucharist, devotion to the mother of God and regular attendance of mass by the youth. Mulongo (2007), Kinyua (2007) and Selvam (2007) echo a similar idea. They are in agreement that holistic education liberates and transforms. Through such kind of education, the youth form faith that would help them combat/avoid vices and inculcate moral values in their minds. Moreover, it helps the youth get in touch with God, deal
with their challenges and move on with their lives. To Pope Benedict XVI (2005), life in the Eucharistic sacrament would liberate the youth as well as bring them freedom, beauty, greatness, happiness and perfection for the glory of God.

Mulongo (2007), Kinyua (2007) and Selvam (2007) also suggest the need for the youth to have liberty and independence. In this way, they may discover their abilities, talents and potential. Once discovered, these may be developed to benefit them and the society at large. Independence could also help them learn from consequences of their mistakes. It may further instill in them a sense of being trusted by the church. To make constructive use of this freedom, independence could be coupled with creation of a one-on-one contact between the youth developer and the youth (Avallone, 1999). This in turn would open up dialogue avenues among parents, church or the youth developers and the youth. Such dialogue would inspire the youth to share freely their emotions and feelings, hence creating a chance of being understood and guided accordingly. Besides developing their communication skills, dialogue would make them feel appreciated. It may also give an easy way to melt possible tensions and minimize the tendency towards desperation and deviance.
The Church also needs to adopt a teaching role. It could train and equip the youth with appropriate skills through which they can earn a living. The church can also create employment opportunities as well as helping the youth be job creators for themselves and others rather than being job seekers. Besides, the Church could train the youth on proper use of leisure and career choice.

In essence, the foregoing reviewed literature is generally for the youth on the global scene. It is evident therefore that literature on the role of the Catholic Church of Embu Diocese in addressing the socio-economic challenges facing the catholic youth in the county is lacking. This study aimed at filling this gap by trying to satisfy the four objectives set for it. There have emerged gaps on the particular socio-economic challenges facing the youth in Embu County, their causes and effects as well as on the programmes and activities that the area Catholic Diocese can and is engaging in to address them.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

The present study drew from two diverse yet seemingly similar views on youth, namely, the Christian/biblical teaching and the African concept on youth to construct a conceptual framework to guide the study. The Christian teaching on youth draws heavily from the Bible. It seeks to interpret the scripture in the light of the youth for it to make meaningful contributions to their lives. The youth, biblically, are people viewed to be on a journey. The
Church therefore, walks with them guiding, healing, counseling and educating them on different issues of their lives' journey. The Bible presents God's love for His people both in the New and the Old Testaments. God's love for humanity is viewed as being tender than a mother's love for the baby (Isaiah 49:14-16). In the Gospels, Jesus puts children and young people at the centre of his apostolate. He took them as models of trust, simplicity and immediacy in relationship with God. The Church's youth ministry strives to place young people at the centre, making them the hub of all its dreams, plans and executes. The basic attitude of a youth minister is on of humility, knowing that he/she is dealing with people who are very close to the heart of Jesus whose basic attitude he/she should imitate (Rastello and Rolandi, 2006: 40-41).

The church views the youth not only as her hope and joy but also that of the community even though majority of them are poor and most afflicted (Rastello and Rolandi, 2006: 18). As indicated in the literature review, many among the youth are faced by myriad socio-economic challenges. Nevertheless, these challenges have not been viewed by the church as insurmountable. The Church has in its mitigating measures to include the youth in various activities and programmes to ensure they do not fall prey to the anti-social behaviours like drug abuse and crime.
The church expresses hope that what seems impossible today may be possible tomorrow (Luke 13:6-9). The Church believes that all is not lost for the youth. It understands that with a little more patience, the youth will at the end become stable pillars on which the Church and society will stand. The church trusts that even those affected by challenges can be resurrected and their potentialities freed (Mark 5:22-24; 35-43).

The Church youth ministry is, therefore, life-giving in the sense that its main focus is to promote the life of youth from all perspectives. Youth ministers are called to assist the youth to free their potentialities by spotting the gift in each youth. Once they discover the potential inherent in the youth, the youth ministers are called to accompany them and invite them to offer their gifts, the whole of themselves to Jesus. Through their love and tender care to the youth, the ministers can help them become useful members of the Christian community even amidst the challenging situations they encounter. All that said and done, the church takes a stand that the youth are the best evangelizers to their peers. Through their vigor, the visibility, activeness and the vibrancy of the Christian church service is experienced.

The youth are also looked at as people with great strength and gifts which they can use for the benefit of the Church. David was only a youth when he battled and killed Goliath and led the Israelite army to defeat the philistines (1 Samuel
This was through wisdom, faith and strength of the Lord. Andrew, one of Jesus’ disciples, emerges as the first youth minister in the New Testament. He is the one who spotted the young lad’s potential and mentioned about him to Jesus. Jesus, in this story, then took whatever the youth had and transformed it for the benefit of his followers (John 6:3-15). Youth ministers are therefore called, like Andrew, to spot the gifts in the youth and journey with them in developing them. Once they are fully developed, the youth may experience freedom, joy and satisfaction through service to humanity.

The church looks at Jesus as the icon of the youth. It draws from his example of walking/journeying with the disciples for instance in the walk to Emmaus. Through listening to them keenly during the journey, He was able to deliver them from doubtful states and confirmed to them the reality of life (Luke 24:13-33). Like Jesus, who is in constant move to meet people wherever they were, especially those cut off from the community, in order to bring them to communion with others, youth ministers must brace themselves also to go where the youth are. They are called to journey with the youth and be close to them rather than cry and lament of the present situation, wanting them to be different. Just like Jesus, by listening to the youth, the youth developers will understand the youth and guide them through the various challenging and doubtful situations of life successfully.
According to Abba (2005: 367) and Trigilio (2006:213), the Church attaches special importance to the youth as a key stage in the life of each human person. It is the stage of life where there is teeming energy from an individual with a great motivation and discovery and experimentation. The church views the youth as a special possession belonging to everyone. Abba (2005:367-369) asserts that the youth are seen as the youth of family, all humanity, nations and societies and the church. They are a special treasure to humanity.

The Church believes that the material possessions the youth have often lead them away from Christ. Their potential needs harnessing through training and utilization. For this reason, the Church has undertaken great measures towards attending to the needs of the youth. For instance, it equips the youth to penetrate into the deepest ranks of society through training and socializing them. The youth ministers have been accorded the noble task of being educators. This means that they share with God the work of shaping the youth to succeed in life.

The family is endowed with this noble responsibility/ task of educating, inspiring and guiding the young and enriching them with values necessary for life. However, the family, though the first educator, does so in close and vigilant cooperation with the ecclesial agencies (Compendium 2004, 137). This enables the youth to be well formed in order for them to share in the
societal duties for the benefit of all in the society. The Church itself is aware of the current challenging situation the youth of today are faced with. The current situation is posed as a heavy cross which brings about sadness, suffering and death among the youth. The cross carries the reality of war, violence, poverty, diseases, lack of adequate education, frustration, anxiety and despair. All these culminate to drug addiction, crime and alcoholism. Faced with this situation for its youth, the Church, like Moses in the desert, is called to help the youth raise their eyes on Jesus on the cross in order to be saved and redeemed from all forms of suffering (Numbers 21:4-9; Rastello and Rolandi, 2006: 40-41).

The traditional African setting also provided the study with a concept that would be useful in understanding the usefulness of the youth today. The African traditional context views the youth as a segment which bears great importance. In this way, the youth are the hope of the old, assuring the sustainability of the community. They are also entrusted with the security of the family and community. They are seen as a gift of God to the family and the society (Rastello, 2004: 28). As a result, certain measures have to be employed to ensure that the treasure in the youth is not ruined. Therefore, an integrative approach (which involves preventive, rehabilitation and punishment measures) is used to address various issues which threaten the survival and usefulness of the youth to the society as a whole.
Among the methods used are on one hand, training, apprenticeship, guidance and counseling to induct the youth on their social responsibilities. Though in the African context children were inducted in the ways of the society, this was intensified among the youth after initiation (Asabere-Ameyaw, 2014:97). At this stage, the youth were taught many things concerning the life of their people, the history, traditional beliefs especially those secrets which could not be revealed to children. The youth at this stage were believed to be mature enough to take up responsibilities in society.

Following initiation, they became full members of the society and could assume responsibility and play an active role in the society. For instance, they could marry, bury their parents take up leadership positions and inherit property, among others. The type of education given to the youth at this stage equipped them to cope with moral, mental, emotional and physical challenges which they encountered. Through this kind of training the society cushioned itself against moral breakdown. This in return protected it the society’s integrity especially in its youth hence prevented its tragic end (Mbiti 1975: 99-102). On the other hand, there is punishment to correct errant youth. Indeed the society kept a close eye for any individual weeds in its moral life and often uprooted them before they turned human life into an immoral wasteland (Mbiti 1975: 175). Elaborate rules and regulations are set to guide the youth on acceptable behavior in society (Kenyatta1984: 65-70).
Other than the aforementioned measures, the traditional societies group the youth into age-sets (Mbiti 1975: 103). These groups are meant to be the basis of the moral formation. They also give an individual youth a sense of belonging and close association. These age-sets mete out punishment to errant members, warn, ridicule and even praise good behavior. The groups set the standards of behavior for their members. Therefore, each member feels a sense of being responsible for the behavior of other fellow individuals.

Further, the society keeps the youth busy and informs them of their role in society. This would be through engagement in various activities. Such include undertaking roles in the family and society, drama, hunting and dances. Because they know the consequences of misbehavior, for example, severe punishment by elders and peers, most of the youth end up having sound morals.

The key guiding principle from the Christianity point is that the youth should not only be preached to and have their challenges wished away or left to the mercies of hope. Instead, pragmatic activities and programmes should be put in place in order for them to be in-serviced in practical ways of overcoming most of the socio-economic challenges that confront them. This, seemingly, is the point of agreement between the two views looked at as the guide to the study. The two world views are understood to give a responsibility to the
society to equip the youth with skills- economic, intellectual, mental, moral, physical, social and spiritual. The skills will give the youth the direction expected of their life by the society. It is believed here that once the youth acquire the skills and direction they will live by the guidelines given. This will consequently enable the youth utilize their full potential for the wellbeing of the society at large.

The two concepts brought forth the questions on challenges facing the youth and their possible effects on the youth. It is also clear that both the world views take actions to mould the youth into people who can be entrusted with societal responsibilities both now and in the future. Moreover, they highlighted possible challenges faced by the Catholic Church in Embu as it tries to address challenges facing the youth. Figure 2.1 below summarizes this viewpoint.
Fig. 2.1: Complementary Model on Interventions to Challenges Facing the Youth

Legend

A-This section represents the socio-economic Challenges facing the youth in Embu County

B-This level indicates the integrated complimentary approaches of mitigating the challenges facing the youth, the church with its scriptures and traditions with their etiquettes.

C-This level represents the outcome of the two-prong approach, a whole social person.

D-This final level reveals the upturning of the challenges into socio-economic empowerment for the youth.
2.3 Conclusion

The chapter has delved into the Catholic Church's teaching on the youth. The reviewed literature informed the study that, according to the church, the youth are highly regarded as its joy and hope. Owing to this, the church has attempted to put measures in place to see to it that its youth are equipped with necessary knowledge and skills to prepare them for their role in the church and the society at large.

From the literature reviewed, it was clear that the youth are facing many challenges. These challenges were found to have diverse causes. It was also evident that many stakeholders concerned with the youth, including the church, have tried to address the challenges facing the youth through various measures. However, gaps emerged on the particular socio-economic challenges facing the youth in Embu County, their causes and effects as well as on the programmes and activities that the area Catholic Diocese can and is engaging in to address them. These gaps are what the study has attempted to fill. Most of the works did not stream from scientific research hence the basis of their observations, like their conclusions, were unclear.

The chapter also presented the conceptual framework which guided the study. The conceptual framework drew from the Christian approach and the traditional African approach. The two worldviews had an almost similar
understanding of the youth in that they viewed the youth as an important segment in the society. The Africans too were aware that the youth are exposed to many challenges which, if not effectively addressed, can threaten their survival and productivity in the society. Therefore, measures were put in place to cushion the youth against challenges threatening their lives.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology that was used in carrying out the study. It covers the research design, study area, target population, sampling procedure and sample size, instruments, validity of the instrument, reliability of the instrument, procedure for data collection, data analysis and findings.

3.1 Research Design

The research design employed in this work is a descriptive survey. The survey seeks to analyze and describe the culture and behavior of human beings and groups from the viewpoint of those being studied. It uses the methods of participant observation (PO), interviews, questionnaires and FGDs to collect data. Through these methods, the researcher acquired primary data from the field. Secondary data was generated from books, journals and articles, research reports, newspapers, magazines and the internet. The research work was largely qualitative though quantitative data was also sought and collected. In this research, information from the respondents and their opinions regarding the role of the Catholic Church in Embu Diocese in addressing challenges facing the youth was collected.
3.2 Study Area

Catholic ecclesiastical Diocese of Embu was selected as the study area. It comprises two distinctive sections namely, Embu and Mbeere. For the purpose of this study, the researcher concentrated in Embu which is largely more representative of various cadres of youth including urban and rural. The youth in the area have also been greatly affected by unemployment. The youth in this area were found to be more outward. It is also an area where the Catholic Diocese of Embu has initiated various measures to counter the negative effects of the challenges facing the youth.

Many of the colleges under the Diocese are also found in this part hence making it more appropriate to the study as compared to Embu East and Embu North. The Catholic Diocese of Embu is one of the twenty six dioceses in Kenya. It is found in the ecclesiastical Province of Nyeri. The entire diocese covers 2,714 km² (1,048 square miles). It has a total population of Catholic Christians 328,000 and 47 ordained ministers. This translates to the reality that every priest, ideally, serves 6,963 Christians (www.catholic-hierarchy.org/dke.html). Embu County covers an area of 729 km² and has a population of 194,984 in the age between fifteen and seventy-nine years (Kenya Bureau of Statistics for Embu District Projections, May 2009). The Catholic Diocese of Embu is composed of eight parishes, namely, Embu, Kairuri, Kevote, Kianjokoma, Kithimu, Kyeni, Nguvu and Nthagaiya.
3.3 Target Population
The entire Catholic Diocese of Embu has a registered youth population of about 13,500 in various programmes overseen by the church (Catholic Diocese of Embu: Youth Enrolment Data, July 2009). The targeted respondents were youth who are Catholics by faith. The respondents included both male and female. However, it also considered, for respondents, those youth who had lived in Embu since their primary school age and had continued living there even after completing their form four education. This was so because they were believed to have had the knowledge of the work the church was engaged in for the youth. It was presumed that by virtue of their participation or by being mere observers (as growing children) of some activities the church planned for the youth, they could give credible information necessary for the study.

3.4 Samples and Sampling Procedures
Out of the total Embu Catholic youth population, a sample of 180 youth students was selected for the purpose of the study. In addition were other relevant persons from the diocese who included officers from the diocese, parishes and Catholic institutions. These officers totalled 20 in all. The youth were clustered depending on the parish they resided. From these clusters, purposive sampling was used to select three youth leaders per parish. This was done by picking the chairperson, secretary and treasurer of each group.
Thereafter, random sampling was used to select a sample of twenty two youth from each parish. This was done by having all the possible respondents being assigned numbers. These numbers were then written on pieces of papers that were then folded and the needed number randomly picked. This was done in order to give each youth an equal chance to be chosen to represent the whole parish. The selection of the parishes to participate in the study was done through purposive sampling to ensure the more inclusive parishes and those with relatively larger population of youth were included. These were parishes that were also more vibrant with youth ministries that had more youth programmes and activities. The youth in the selected parishes were also expected to have adequate information which the study so required.

The study included the youth in higher learning and tertiary institutions within the ecclesiastical boundaries of the diocese, particularly those in the Embu section of the diocese. Such institutions were both government and private Catholic-sponsored. These institutions included the Kenya Medical Training College (KMTC), Government Training Institute (GTI), Kigari Teachers Training College (TTC), besides professional colleges such as Achievers and Kenya Institute of Management (KIM). The institutions were grouped depending on the duration of the courses they offered and certificates awarded at the end of the course such as degree, higher diplomas and diplomas. The reason for this decision was the assumption that the length of stay in an
institution would determine the analyses one was likely to give over a situation or issue. Consequently, one institution was randomly selected in every category. Those selected from the institutions were members of the Catholic movement for students in tertiary institutions and those of higher learning namely the Young Christian Action (YCA). In this way, the researcher acquired, from these youth, information on challenges facing the youth, their major causes, impacts on their lives, the response of the Catholic Church in Embu to the challenges facing the youth in Embu. Further, recommendations, which if effected, could avert or could help the youth live fulfilling lives even amidst the challenges which confront them, were also elicited.

Other respondents who were relevant to the study were diocesan youth chaplains (4), heads of Catholic departments, namely Education Secretary (1), head of Development Office (1) and Family Life Education (FLE) Officer (1). Those in charge of tertiary institutions (2) and Catholic-managed rehabilitation homes (2) were also useful to the study. The researcher purposefully picked these categories of the respondents for they could give crucial information about the youth in their jurisdiction. From these categories of respondents, information concerning causes of challenges facing the youth and their impact on the youth was sought. More so, information concerning the approaches employed by the Catholic Church in addressing the challenges
facing the youth in Embu was acquired. The researcher further drew from them information on challenges facing the Catholic Church in Embu Diocese in addressing those challenges among its youth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Area</th>
<th>Respondent Selected</th>
<th>Sampling Method</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tertiary Colleges</strong></td>
<td>Students in institutions</td>
<td>Random sampling</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Departments in the Catholic Diocese of Embu</strong></td>
<td>Education Secretary</td>
<td>Purposive sampling</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development Officer</td>
<td>Purposive sampling</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family life Education Officer</td>
<td>Purposive sampling</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parishes</strong></td>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>Random sampling</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Members of Youth Groups</td>
<td>Random sampling</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth Chaplaincy</strong></td>
<td>Diocese Chaplains</td>
<td>Purposive sampling</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Catholic Institutions</strong></td>
<td>Chaplains in-charge of Technical Institutes</td>
<td>Random sampling</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chaplains in-charge of Rehabilitation homes</td>
<td>Purposive sampling</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5 Time of the Research

Data collection for this study was carried out for a period of four months. Most of this data was gathered from the month of August to November in 2010. However, some data needed for clarifications was collected later in December 2012.

3.6 Data Collection Tools and Procedures

Data for this study was collected using questionnaires, interview schedules, FGDs as well as PO.

3.6.1 Questionnaires

The questionnaire had closed and open-ended self-administered questions. The questionnaires were administered to the youth and church ministers. The two categories were assumed to be literate hence capable of filling in the questionnaires on their own. This was meant to allow for objectivity and broad-based views on challenges facing the youth, Catholic Church’s intervention in addressing those challenges and the challenges she experienced while addressing them. The researcher also sought to acquire from the respondents themselves, recommendations which could be employed to more effectively address the cited challenges. The questionnaires were distributed to the two targeted categories of respondents by the researcher through the help of the priests in charge of the youth in the sampled parishes in conjunction
with the youth officials. One-week duration was given for reading and filling in the questionnaire. After this, the researcher through the same channel collected the questionnaires. For those in the learning institutions, the chairpersons of the YCA were given to distribute to the sampled respondents. The heads of Catholic departments and heads of participating institutions were visited by the researcher and given a copy of the questionnaire each. All the filled in questionnaires were collected one week after distribution.

3.6.2 Interview Schedules

The researcher organized interview schedules for various categories of respondents targeted for the study. These categories were the parish and diocesan youth officials, church ministers in charge of the youth in parishes, heads of Catholic departments and institutions. In all, twenty interviews were held where by both structured and informal interviews were used to obtain information from all targeted respondents. These instruments allowed flexibility on the part of interviewees to respond, taking into consideration individual differences, situational changes and emerging new information (Rukwaru, 2007:52-55). The choice of interview schedules on these categories was informed by the fact that they could help gather much more data from these respondents.
The interview schedules also gave opportunity to the researcher to clarify on needed information. The researcher visited the parishes and had an interview session with each targeted group separately. This also happened for the other groups who were not based in the parishes: the diocesan youth officials, the diocesan youth chaplain and the education secretary, among others. These were visited in their respective offices upon an earlier agreed upon time. There were different sets of questions designed depending on the group targeted. This was aimed at collecting important information on various pertinent issues of concern to this study.

3.6.3 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

FGDs with the youth were carried out to acquire data on challenges facing the youth, their sources, and the church’s intervention in addressing the challenges. Youth FGDs provided the possibility of going more in depth into the topics and questions at hand because the participants could follow up one another’s answers and give useful comments. On the other hand, the FGDs assisted in creating group synergy where the participants were able to remind each other or build on each other’s ideas. This approach helped to acquire unbiased information, as the discussions were open. This applied only to the youth groups at various zones.
Only three FGDs were held based on the zones of the parishes of the Diocese in Embu. The FGDs were held at Kairuri, for the upper zone (made of Kianjokoma and Kairuri parishes), Kithimu and Embu for the lower (Kithimu, Kyeni and Nthagaiya Parishes) and central zones (Embu, Kevote and Nguviu parishes) respectively. The researcher composed the FGD groups of six members each comprising of four youth officials and two other youth members from each parish.

3.6.4 Participant Observation

The researcher used an observation schedule to observe the youth within the study area while they undertook activities such as Bible study, seminar attendance, games and preparation for music and drama festivals, among others. These were activities that had been organized by the local parishes to engage the youth in utilizing their leisure time positively. The activities were observed at Kairuri, Kithimu and Nguviu parishes. The youth were observed as they interacted with one another and also as they carried out the various activities.

During the study period, the observation took place only once per parish but it enabled the researcher, with her research assistant to gather adequate relevant data. This method helped the researcher to acquire information in the natural setting hence most authentic. However, this method had limitations in that it
required a lot of time for the researcher to gather substantive information for
the purpose of the study with personal presence or that of the research
assistant.

3.7 Data Analysis Procedures
Data streamed from primary and secondary sources. Primary data were both
quantitative and qualitative while secondary data were mainly qualitatively
descriptive. However, some quantitative data was also gathered from the
secondary sources. Along study objectives and premises, the raw data was
collated and arranged thematically in accordance with the research questions
and objectives. To ease analysis, questionnaires were coded along study
objectives and premises: challenges facing the youth, causes of the challenges,
their effects, role of the Catholic Church in addressing the challenges and
constraints of the Catholic Diocese of Embu in addressing the challenges of
the youth in Embu.

3.8 Ethical Considerations
Respondents voluntarily participated in the study. The researcher explained
the purpose of the research, the potential implications it would have on them,
the church, the youth and society at large. Those who participated in the study
were duly informed that this was an academic exercise with no financial
inducement. Confidentiality of individuals was ensured since providing names in the questionnaire was optional.
CHAPTER FOUR
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.0 Introduction
This chapter presents and analyzes data gathered from the study on the role of the Catholic Diocese of Embu in addressing challenges facing the youth in Embu. The research was based in the Catholic Diocese of Embu, Embu County. The analysis was based on data gathered from the respondents and discussions of major investigations under pertinent basic research questions and premises. Data from the latter two methods were analyzed and presented along with that from the questionnaires. The first part of this sub-section presents descriptions about the respondents and background. Next, the main data have been treated under each of the basic research questions, objectives and premises underlined in Chapter One. Finally, major investigations are discussed under pertinent research questions and premises. Out of the 180 questionnaires distributed to the youth, only 172 were returned out of which 164 were duly filled and 8 were returned blank. In this analysis therefore, the researcher has dealt with the figure of 164 youths and 20 officers including chaplains.

4.1 Receipt of Data Collecting Tools
With the help of the assistant researcher, the researcher managed to distribute a total of 180 questionnaires to all the targeted youth. This was as presented in
Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 which also indicates how the responses were like. However, only 172 were returned and out of these, eight had not been filled.

Table 4.1 Summaries of Distribution and Responses to Questionnaires

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Youth</th>
<th>Questionnaires Distributed</th>
<th>State of Response</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students in Tertiary</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>Duly Filled</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not Filled</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not Returned</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of Youth Groups</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Duly Filled</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not Filled</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not Returned</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>180</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>180</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Observation

According to the Table 4.1, it is evident that the questionnaires were largely a success in the data gathering. This is because out of the 180 questionnaires distributed to the respondents, the researcher got back 164 (91%) of them duly field with 16 not being returned or returned blank.

4.1 Background Information

4.1.1 Gender and Age Distribution

The researcher had sought to know the gender of the respondents who had participated in order to ensure both sexes were represented in the research. This was because both are included in the socio-economic challenges facing the youth in the county. In this study, 36% of the respondents who dully filled
the data collection tools and returned them were male and 64% were female. The higher percentage being of females could be attributed to the fact that the researcher was female and therefore that sex might have felt more obliged than the more likely disdainful male chauvinists. This disparity resulted from the fact that there were more ladies attending church and getting involved in church activities than men. Therefore, there were more female respondents than their male counterparts as shown in Figure 4.2.

Table 4.2: Respondents by Gender Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender of Respondent</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.2: Respondents by Gender Distribution
In terms of age, the respondents who participated in this study were respectively in the following age brackets: those between 19 and 20 years 54%; those aged between 21 and 22 years, 29% and those aged between 23 and 25 years, 17%. These are as presented in Table 4.2. The researcher classified the youth sample into these age cohorts in order to find out which age section of the youth was most affected since interventions would also differ.

Table 4.3: Respondents by Age Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Distribution</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between 19 &amp; 20</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 21 &amp; 22</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 23 &amp; 25</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 4.3 above, all the respondents were within the 19-25 years target group just as included in the operational definition of terms. In this way, the target population was accurately achieved. Therefore, the information acquired for the purpose of the study was balanced and represented the true situation relating to the youth of age and gender covered by the study. This helped in the acquisition of relevant data concerning pertinent issues and premises for the purpose of the study from the targeted group.
4.1.2: Respondents by Level of Education

The level of education of the youth who responded is presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Level of Education of the Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Graduates/Students</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Level Institutions (Students and Graduates)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up To Form Four Graduates</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Primary Education &amp; Below</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>164</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from the findings, majority of the youth (59%) had completed Form Four level of education. These were followed by those who had graduated or were pursuing courses in tertiary middle level institutions (29%) and those with either elementary or no formal education were 7%. University students and graduates accounted for only 5% of the youth.

From the findings in the Table 4.4, it is evident that the rate of transition from lower to higher levels of education reduces respectively. Among all the youth interviewed, it was only 5% who had managed to reach the university. The Catholic Diocese of Embu has complementary role in raising the level of transition to tertiary institutions by providing low cost colleges. However, the Diocese faces challenges in its provision of higher levels of education to the
youth. Though the responsibility to impart education to all Kenyans is not its core mission but rather the duty of the GOK, as an ecclesiastical body the church has a role of imparting educating relevant to the systems of the nation in which it is found. Through this role, it is able to guarantee full development of human society as well as remaining relevant to its subjects (Compendium, 203).

The diocese has initiated and sponsored many private and public primary and secondary schools which maintained their standards of school teaching and accommodating majority of the school going learners (6-19 years). However, it had only two tertiary colleges: St. Augustine TTC and Videnza Nursing School to cater for those graduating from the lower level institutions. Such youth did not qualify for direct admission in the universities.

It is worth noting that plans were underway to start a constituent university college of the Catholic University of East Africa (CUEA) within Embu Diocese. It was planned that the Ishiara TTC (privately owned by the Catholic Diocese of Embu) would be upgraded to become a constituent college of CUEA. The study was informed, from the Education Secretary that this idea was conceived by the immediate former bishop, Rev. Anthony Muheria in 2006. His main wish was to bring higher education services closer to the people of his Diocese. Though land had already been purchased in 2010, the
launching of the college could take some more time due to the protocol which has to be followed both from the GOK and the universal Catholic Church. This shows that Catholic church as an institution plays a pivotal role in educating the youth and understands challenges facing the youth in terms of education.

During the time of data collection for the study was carried out, many of the older youth in colleges and universities were in session. Majority of those found in the parishes were fresh form four graduates, those who had graduated from tertiary colleges and those who had basic or no formal education. Those pursuing their studies were still in their institutions of learning.

4.2 Presentation and Analysis of Study Findings

4.2.1 Major Challenges Facing the Youth in Embu and Their Underlying Causes

The first research objective revolved around major challenges facing the youth. Responses to the parts of the questionnaire related to this objective were analyzed and presented in percentages. Out of all the youth who responded, 97.1% affirmed that they were facing challenges of similar or diverse nature. The major challenges mentioned by the youth are presented in Table 4.5 below.
Table 4.5: Major Challenges Facing the Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of School Fees</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support from Parents</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Pressure</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Abuse</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Youth Guidance and Counselling from the Church</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premarital Sex</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=164

Nb. Multiple Responses used to compute Percentages

Some inferences can be drawn from the responses of the respondents in Table 4.5 above. Majority of the youth (46%) cited peer pressure as a major challenge in their lives. This seemed to emanate from lack of inter as well as intra-personal skills such as self awareness, self esteem, effective communication, friendship formation, assertiveness and peer pressure resistance. It was not a wonder then that 43% of the respondents stated that drug abuse was a major challenge amongst the youth with majority joining the bandwagon out of peer pressure.

This study confirms the findings of Agaya (2009:34) that primarily, unemployment levels among the youth, unlike any other social group, tended
to adversely affect a large number of this section of the population with those who cited unemployment were 29% while and 26% of them cited lack of support from parents. What some respondents called ‘inherited poverty’ was noted by 24% of the youth as a challenge who argued that fate had sealed their destiny and that there was nothing they could do about it—they had resigned to it.

The current study’s findings also agreed with Makewa (2008) who pointed out that older generations greatly misunderstand the needs and aspirations of the youth. It was evident from the FGDs that the youth felt misunderstood by their parents. They pointed out that parents lacked quality time for them yet questioned the character of their peers. Parents were also faulted as they denied the youth time to meet as youth in the parish/churches for youth activities especially on weekdays. These youth activities were generally essential as they not only meet and exchange ideas but also get vital talks from experts in certain relevant fields. Guidance and counseling also takes place in such activities. This exposes the youth to other challenges that they have to grapple with including deviance, cross-generational relationships, sexual promiscuity, uncertainty and emotional fears. It was clear that lack of parental support was an issue.
From the interviews, both with the youth leaders and the Church ministers, majority indicated unawareness of the existence of the Catholic Youth Strategic Plan (CYSP). This is a key pastoral policy paper of the church meant to guide the youth into useful and independent and responsible adults. The CYSP was perceived by the researcher to be relevant in addressing challenges facing the youth and the Catholic youth ministry in Kenya. It was noted that its proposals and strategies had not been implemented in the parishes in Embu Diocese. In fact, it was only known to a handful of the youth, mainly those who had attended the National Youth Council (NYC). Majority of these were already in college and university and had, therefore, stopped to actively participate in the parish youth activities as only a few did so during their vacations. They happened to have been the youth leaders in the parishes before joining the institutions of higher learning.

The findings also show that the Church seems to employ a reactive approach in addressing the concerns of the youth. The youth agenda in essence was noted to have taken a back stage. As a result, some of the youth (7%) asserted that the church had neglected them. These respondents argued that the church service had become boring and hence it did not entice them to attend. They therefore, opted to remain at home and watch the televangelised gospel Sunday programmes as they were more entertaining. Others organized to attend to other activities such as watching soccer in local bars at very late hours, surf
uncensored internet, visit unrestricted friends and going out for picnics, among others. Some youth informed the researcher that some of these activities led them to engage in immoral behavior such as premarital sex and alcohol abuse.

Unemployment was cited by the youth and the chaplains as another major challenge facing the youth. It was noted that some of the youth who had successfully completed university and college education had either no job or were paid meager salaries. Other youth who had no opportunity to proceed to the university or college after form four education due to failure to attain required grades, lack of school fees and alcohol and drug abuse, engaged in casual jobs which were poorly paying. Some of the youth informed that *miraa* farming and trading had become a source of employment for them. However, to a certain percentage, this was retrogressive because some of the youth found solace in chewing the *miraa*.

Other persons who wished to make quick money from the business engaged in theft of the produce. Others yet drop out of school to engage in the trade and its farming. Many of the priests interviewed lamented that the level of the youth taking alcohol and chewing *miraa* had become worrying. They argued that the youth took illegal/local brews since they were cheap and readily available. This made the youth irresponsible in family matters, violent, lazy,
and influenced them to drop out of school. In summary, majority of the challenges facing the youth in Embu have their source in the economic, social and religious factors.

I. Extent of involvement in non-church activities
Respondents were asked to state how often they were involved in various activities in terms of whether they had never, rarely or regularly involved themselves in the activities. Responses to the questionnaire were analyzed and presented in percentages and are in Table 4.6 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Never (%)</th>
<th>Rarely (%)</th>
<th>Regularly (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smoking Bhang</td>
<td>97.60%</td>
<td>2.40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching Pornography</td>
<td>75.60%</td>
<td>24.40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fornication and Adultery</td>
<td>85.40%</td>
<td>14.60%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Drinking</td>
<td>70.00%</td>
<td>22.50%</td>
<td>7.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misunderstandings with Parents</td>
<td>36.60%</td>
<td>61.00%</td>
<td>2.40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the responses in Table 4.6, it was evident that majority of the youth in Embu are not glaringly affected by challenges of a social nature which in many a times affect the youth especially in urban areas. However, consumption of alcoholic beverages and conflicts with parents were found to
be regular as compared to youth involvement in other kinds of irresponsible behavior. It is apparent from the study that the youth in Embu were not badly engulfed in challenges related to irresponsible sexual behavior and drug and substance abuse. Nevertheless, a sizeable number, constituting 24% confided to have at times enjoyed watching pornographic materials on their internet accessing gadgets such as smart phones. This means that these youth had taken major strides and great efforts to remain chaste even as they grappled with challenges confronting them.

2. Extent of Active Involvement in Church Activities
The youth respondents were asked to state how often they were involved in social, religious and economic activities in the church. The responses determined how often the youth were involved in the stipulated activities within a year. Rarely meant that active involvement was seasonal and far between within a year while regularly meant that the involvement was at least once in two months. The responses to the questionnaire were analyzed and presented in percentages. The responses mentioned by the youth are as presented in Table 4.7 below.
From the Table 4.7 above, the Catholic Church positively involves the youth in evangelization as its agents. From the data presented in Table 4.7, it is evident that the youth do not regularly involve themselves with core matters of religion despite efforts by the church to include them. Presentations on Table 4.7 show various activities and programmes being carried out by the church attempts to address challenges facing the youth by involving them in religious matters. However, there was, among the youth, some reluctance over their participation and voluntary involvement in such activities. It was also noted that there was inadequacy and limited number of the Church’s ordained ministers. These were also found to have been reluctant to participate actively
and give direction in some of the activities as they found out that even after preparations for the same, very few youth came forward and even fewer followed up.

The interviews between the researcher and the selected sample of the Church ministers and the discussions with the youth in FGDs showed that involvement in such aforementioned activities as contained in table 4.7 had extensively reduced idleness among majority of the youth. Most of these activities such as Bible study, games, choir and open discussions took place in the late afternoon hours of weekends, when the youth had ample leisure time at their disposal.

These findings on the role of the church in addressing the challenges facing the youth practically agree with Avallone (1999) and Makewa (2008); both of whom argue that involvement in such activities helped to reduce idleness. From the participant observation, these activities also assisted in positively developing the youth morally, socially, physically, and mentally as well as enhancing character formation. These could also be gathered during the FGDs and face to face interviews from both body language and in-depth elaborations by the informants.
4.2.2: Persons Responsible for the Challenges Facing the Youth

Besides identifying the major challenges facing the youth, the respondents linked them to some causal factors. This was through the question on the cause for the challenges facing the youth in Embu. The respondents stated who or what could be responsible for the challenges they were facing. The responses to the questionnaire were analyzed and presented using percentages as in Figure 4.3 below.

Figure 4.3: Responses on who was Responsible for the Causes of the Challenges

As shown in Figure 4.3 above, majority of the youth (63.8%) indicated that they themselves were responsible for the challenges facing them. This is followed by 26.1% who reported that most challenges facing the youth were caused by parents-negligence, ignorance or a combination of the two. From
the study, 4.3% and 2.9% believed that priests and teachers respectively were
to blame for the challenges facing the youth in Embu. The explanation given
by the respondents particularly on parents was that most parents were not fully
supporting their children in terms of guidance, financial support as well as
motivational support. This concurs with O’Donovan (2006) who noted that
church leaders and parents neglected the youth to the extent of regarding them
as children who could not be entrusted with major responsibilities in the
church and making critical decisions even those concerning their own affairs.

From the researcher’s analysis, parents have failed to provide spiritual and
moral guidance to the youth through proper role modelling. From the data
gathered, 26.1% of the respondents stated that their parents were more
preoccupied with their other younger lower school going siblings and seemed
to leave them to fend for themselves. The youth in the FGDs reported that
majority of their parents were more involved in economic activities in order to
provide for their families. As a result they found no time to give attention to
the youth for guidance. The youth argued that due to failure to secure
guidance and financial support from their parents, they ended up seeking
counsel from their peers, internet and mass media, among others. Some of
them especially girls engaged in cross-generational sexual relationships with a
hope of benefiting financially. Such a move brought with it adverse
consequences such as early pregnancies, single parenthood, possibility of
infection with HIV as well as depression. Others opted for early marriage after realizing that their parents were not able to finance their education in higher learning institutions.

The youth argued that poor economic status of their parents to a large percentage was to be blamed for the socio-economic challenges facing the youth. The youth indicated that majority of the parents depended on casual labour. Only a few of them had white collar jobs. Other parents ran business enterprises in their local markets. The youth also asserted that following the collapse of coffee and tea industries in the country since the 1980s, their parents' source of income was adversely affected. They stated that their parents struggled to educate them to certain levels. However, due to poverty they failed to raise money or fees for higher education which would secure the better paying jobs.

Unemployment was cited as another cause of the challenges facing the youth. Due to high rate of youth unemployment, many youth are frustrated. The lack of hope to get absorbed in the labour market after completion of studies also tended to discourage the youth from furthering their education since they had no hope of securing white collar jobs. From the discussions in the FGDs, it was evident that the youth in Embu looked down upon some jobs such as farming, small scale businesses and casual labour in homes, farms and even
businesses. They argued that with a form four certificate and having attained grade "C" and above, such jobs were not worthwhile. Some youth lamented that they could not even raise capital with which they could start small scale enterprises. This further added to the hopelessness among the youth.

Some of the youth argued that some of their parents were not good role models for them to emulate since some were uneducated while others were drunkards. Others strongly noted that some of their parents and church ministers had no moral authority to guide the youth as their character was questionable. They intimated that some of their parents were drunkards while others were violent to their wives and children. Such parents-mostly male-according to the youth, were lazy and only waited for their wives to provide for them and their children.

According to the youth, there were many brewing dens in most of the villages where both parents (men and women) and the youth drink together. A youth respondent (017) from Nthagaiya Parish (OI 23rd December 2012), indicated that her father who was a watchman at a coffee factory spent all his earnings on the local brew and cigarettes. She informed the researcher that she was the only one in her family who had gone through to the university. All her siblings had dropped out of school at primary school level due to lack of school fees.
Her fee was paid by well-wishers after she sought assistance from her local chief.

The youth also blamed themselves for not seeking advice from parents. Some of the youth argued that their parents were not educated and therefore, doubted the quality of advice their parents would give. Others felt that their parents were too judgmental on the youth hence they already had an image of the kind of character the youth are. According to some of the youth, some of their parents were still in the traditional African times where ideas of scrutinizing ones friends by parents, virginity, dress code and morality were highly valued. The youth felt that these factors created a wall between the youth and their parents.

Finally, priests and teachers were accused as responsible for not inculcating moral values to the youth, particularly in church and in institutions of learning. Like some of the parents, some priests and teachers were said to be drunkards. The youth reported that some of the priests were spotted in local pubs in a state of being drunk. Whereas this is a lifestyle choice, the wrong issue about it is that the youth could be getting the wrong models. In fact, about five priests attached to the diocese were undergoing rehabilitation following over-indulgence in alcohol.
Interviews with church ministers revealed that there were few church ministers in the diocese compared to the number of Christians they were supposed to serve. The church ministers argued that besides the youth, they also had other groups in the Christian congregation, for instance, the children, women and men under their service. A priest respondent (OI 21st December 2010) asserted that the youth in the parishes were under the priest’s tutorage and mentorship in the respective parishes. He strongly stated that majority of those priests had no professional expertise in handling the youth as they had no formal training in the youth ministry.

It is evident from the youth and the church ministers that the church has taken massive efforts to look into the plight of its youth. It has done this by appointing one of its ordained ministers, to head the youth ministry in the diocese. It has also selected, from each parish, a priest to work with the youth. The diocese had organized many activities for the youth either at parish or diocesan levels. Some of those activities were ball games, music festivals, seminars and workshops, among others. At the time this research was being carried out, some of the parishes such as Embu, Kithimu, and Nthagaiya were preparing themselves for the diocesan youth music and ball games festivals. Others such as Kevote had a seminar on 5th Sunday the 5th September, 2010 when the questionnaires were distributed to the youth.
However, the Catholic Church in Embu faced some difficulties as it intervened in the challenges facing the youth. Some of those limitations have been aforementioned. For instance, Embu, Kevote,Nguviu and Nthagaiya parishes are vast in terms of Catholic Christian population and the area covered. Each of the mentioned parishes had three ordained ministers. Out of the three, one had been delegated responsibility in the ministry of the youth in the parish. However, since they had other duties, their availability for the youth was limited. They would probably meet the youth once in three months only for one hour.

Respondent 002 for example, informed the researcher that in 2010, he was able to meet the youth three times the whole year. This also applied to respondents 003 and 004 in their respective parishes of jurisdiction. The parishes hardly had lay men and women responsible over the youth. The youth in Embu Parish argued that they sometimes went for a month or two without having a one-day seminar. Respondent 005 informed the researcher that the priests who were youth chaplains in various parishes had other pressing duties such as pastoral activities to other Christians for example burying the dead, blessing homes and preparing old couples for nuptials among others, besides their responsibility to the youth. To him, the parish was quite too large to be ministered by the only four priests who served it.
Respondent 006 underlined the fact that the work for her was enormous since she served the entire Diocese. She argued that her ministry was only partly to the youth as she had also to handle other groups of the Christian fraternity, for instance, single mothers and married couples. She, therefore, could not reach out to the youth many a times when called upon to handle issues of the youth as expected to. These limitations curtailed the church’s efficiency and effectiveness as it addressed the challenges facing the youth.

4.2.3 Effects of the Socio-Economic Challenges on the Youth

The challenges mentioned in Table 4.2.1 had far reaching-effects on the lives of the youth in Embu Catholic Diocese. In addressing the question on the effects of challenges facing the youth in Embu District, the responses to the questionnaire were analyzed and presented using percentages as in Table 4.8.
Table 4.8: Effects of the Socio-Economic Challenges Facing the Youth in Embu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drug Abuse</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immorality due to Idleness</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slowed down Evangelism among the Youth</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure in Examination Resulting from Deviance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropping out of School</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STDs and AIDS Infections</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Marriages</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment among Post School Youth</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Nb. Multiple Responses used to compute Percentages*

The following deductions can be drawn from the responses of the respondents in Table 4.8 above. From the findings, it can be deduced that 29% of the youth who responded were into drugs while only 15% of them reported that they indiscriminately and prematurely engaged in immorality. The study established from those in drug and substance abuse that the main drug abused in the area was *khat* and *muguka*. From the study, 28% of the respondents noted that as a result of challenges, most youths had dropped out of school. Those who had dropped out of school blamed it on their parents’ ignorance while others stated that it resulted from peer pressure and engagement in the cheaply available mild stimulants of *muguka* and *khat*.
The discussions with the youth in the FGDs on the effects of challenges to them suggested that a challenge such as poverty was responsible for most of the challenges they were facing. This was because it led to lack of school fees which consequently led to failure in examinations, dropping out of school, early marriage, unemployment, prolonged dependency on parents and eventual frustration.

Failure in examinations came about since the students spent most of their time out of school as they get sent home by school administration and therefore lost many class hours. In such a situation, one lost hope. This forced some youth further to drug and substance abuse, detachment from the church or opting to marry prematurely. From the FGDs held at Kyeni, Kevote, Nthagaiya and Kianjokoma parishes, the youth reported that many of their fellow peers got married at the age of 19-22 years owing to the frustrations due to failure in examinations, poverty and unemployment, among others. The girls got married before getting some form of financial independence making them socio-economically vulnerable.

The youth reported that some of their colleagues had ceased to actively participate in youth activities. The researcher was informed that there were those who, at one time or another, had been treated for STIs while others had been infected with HIV. Other effects of the challenges facing the youth, as
cited in FGDs by the youth included death, arrests, and convictions under the court of law. Deaths were caused by diseases such as AIDS or being shot by police following nabbing in the process of committing crime. At Kithimu Parish, a youth had reportedly died in December 2010 of HIV and AIDS related illnesses two weeks after graduating from the university. One youth was shot dead by police following robbery with violence in Nairobi in November 2009. Another one (22 year old) was said to be serving a jail term of seven years at Embu GoK Prisons for theft.

The researcher found out that due to peer pressure, some of the youth bowed out of active participation in the youth activities. They argued that they ended up feeling odd among a different category of youth (newly registered). This curtailed the youth's involvement in the church activities including catechism and mass. Respondent 011 observed that when the youth stopped to actively participate in organised youth activities, it made it difficult for them to be easily reached.

These findings agreed with O'Donovan (2000) who asserts that many young people engage in premarital sex as a result of socio-economic challenges. This action put them at the high risk of being infected with STIs and early pregnancies. On his part, Makewa (2008) states that due to the dawn of globalization, hard drugs can be availed to any part of the world within a short
period of time. The easy availability of drugs coupled with the prevalent permissiveness in society compounded the rising challenge of drug abuse among the youth.

4.2.4 Role of the Catholic Diocese of Embu in Addressing Challenges of the Youth

The Catholic Church in Embu is directly involved in addressing the challenges facing the youth. Majority of the youth interviewed (87%) affirmed that the Catholic Church had made efforts to deal with some of the socio-economic challenges facing the youth. This was confirmed by diocesan youth officials who were interviewed. Those who completed the questionnaires on the intervention of the Catholic Diocese of Embu to challenges facing its youth also affirmed this. Those involved in the research included the diocesan youth chaplains, heads of Catholic departments, namely, the Education Secretary, head of Development Office and FLE Officer.

The researcher further sought information from Catholic managed technical institutes, for instance, Don Bosco Polytechnic, Mother Mazzallello Dress Making Polytechnic, and Child Welfare Salon and Beauty Training College, among others. These also gave useful information concerning the role played by the Catholic Church in mitigating some of the challenges facing the youth. In its attempt to address the socio-economic challenges facing the youth, the
Catholic Church has employed massive and diverse methods such as organising seminars and workshops, training the youth to equip them with skills, starting youth Income Generating Projects (IGPs) and offering the youth employment, among others. Some of these measures as drawn from the research findings are discussed here below.

1. **Seminars and Workshops**

Workshops and seminars were organised to teach the youth on how to cope with various challenges in life. The inferences drawn by the researcher were that the Catholic Church helped the youth to develop the intellectual faculties. The diocese also helped to form their ability to resist peer pressure, improve friendship formation skills, assertiveness and effective communication to enable them judge correctly to positively fit in the society.

The youth officials in the diocese informed the study that the workshops were mostly organised at the parish level mainly during the December holidays. This is because majority of the youth were home for the long vacation. In December 2010, for instance, eight parishes among them Nthagaiya, Kithimu and Kevote organized and ran workshops successfully. According to information from the parish secretary the number of youth attending the workshops ranged from 200 at Kithimu to 600 at Kevote Parish. In these workshops, men and women of different professions were invited to facilitate
or give talks to the youth on diverse matters of concern to them. A case in point was a medical doctor who was attached to Kenyatta National Hospital. He was working in Southern Sudan with African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF). Others included religious nuns and priests, project managers, and family life educationists. These and many others were invited to assist the youth.

According to the diocesan youth chaplain who had received reports from the parishes, majority of the invited facilitators heeded to the call. Some of the topics discussed/delivered were for instance prevalence of HIV and AIDS among the youth, self-reliance, counselling skills, drug and substance abuse, spiritual formation and values in marriage, among others. The youth in the FGDs were appreciative to the organized activities because to majority of them, the workshops formed them socially, spiritually, economically and morally.

Being focussed as a result of the gains from the workshops and involvement in the program activities meant that the youth were better occupied and informed. This assisted in scaling down instances of sexual promiscuity and engagement in drug and substance abuse among other evils. Seminars were organised often depending on the demand based on the youth needs assessment from time to time and availability of facilitators.
2. Equipped for Guidance and Counselling
The church ministries and departments in charge of youth affairs organized the workshops and seminars to improve the welfare of the youth. The diocesan youth chaplains engaged trained counsellors to guide and counsel the youth on various matters of interest and concern to them. Some of the issues brought to counselling according to a member of Pro-life Movement and a professional counsellor were trauma, following Post-Election Violence (PEV) experienced in Kenya 2007-2008, youth and sexuality- factors leading to premarital sex and consequences, youth and drug and substance abuse, suicidal tendencies, parental negligence and conflicts in family, among others. The topics of discussion could be suggested by the youth themselves or by the priest in charge of the youth in a parish. The youth were encouraged to seek counselling from the priests or sometimes professional counsellors whenever available.

The church, in conjunction with St. Augustine Teachers Training College (TTC) trains and equips some willing youth with counselling skills so that they could help their fellow youth. This was done over the school holidays in April, August and December 2008-2010. The course took a total duration of three weeks spread through the three holidays. Fee for the course was subsidised so that many could afford. Each attendant paid Ksh 4500 for the whole course. At least two youth from the sampled parishes such as Kithimu,
Nthagaiya, Embu, and Kevote had received the training in 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Respondent 018 for example, a youth at Kithimu Parish and a primary school teacher indicated that the skills helped her earn some extra money on top of her salary. This was because sometimes she was called upon to speak to the youth group and even children on various occasions whereby she was given a monetary token. She observed that the skills had also helped her cope with difficult situations which she personally experienced. According to her, the certificate placed her in a better position for a better job with the government or in the private sector when they came forth. Her colleagues also informed the study that she had assisted them even without any charges whenever they required her help.

3. Youth Income Generating Projects (IGPs)
The Catholic Church in Embu supports youth IGPs by financially contributing towards them. In some parishes such as Kithimu, the youth were given a portion of the parish land on which they carried out a tree nursery and poultry keeping projects. At times, when they needed professional assistance, the Diocese through its development office invited professionals to assist the youth with technical knowledge on the project at hand. Some of those
professionals were employees of the diocese. A case in point was respondent 008, a veterinarian.

Plate 1: A Tree Nursery in Kithimu in Embu Diocese

A member of a youth group running a poultry and tree nursery projects at Kithimu Parish informed the study that a veterinary doctor, respondent 008, who was also an employee of the diocese, assisted them with technical knowledge often at subsidized charges. The self help group (SHG) at Kithimu informed the researcher that the then parish priest advanced to them a loan of Ksh 30,000 to which they added their own contributions of the same amount. With the total amount of Ksh 60,000, they started the projects in 2008. By the date of the research (2011) they had repaid the loan and had been able to increase their capital to Ksh 100,000. For instance, in December 2010, each group member (a total of fifteen members) carried home Ksh 3,000 as dividends.
The youth were sensitized to start SHG projects such as bee keeping, rabbit-rearing, poultry farming and tree nurseries, among other projects. This to some extent helped the youth be job-creators to themselves as well as to their fellow youth. Those who had taken the initiative and challenge to take up some of the projects had also become role models and motivation to the rest of youth fraternity of the constructive use of the youth potential.

At Kivue, for instance, two youth who were graduates from Don Bosco Polytechnic had a carpentry workshop. They had employed four others to work in the workshop. More to this, it helped them realize that they were a useful segment in the society. Through such projects, the youth were able to contribute positively to the growth of society. The projects also assisted them to realize their goals in life. Their self-esteem was raised and they were able to earn a livelihood. For instance, respondent 019, one of the proprietors of the carpentry at Kivue, intimated that through that project, he was able to buy land on which he was planning to put up houses for himself and for his parents since they were living in rented houses.

4. Training
In 2009 The Diocese started a programme to train Early Childhood Development (ECD) teachers. Some of the graduates were offered employment in Catholic Church owned pre-schools. It was evident from the
findings that the teachers recognized that the Catholic schools depended upon them almost entirely for the accomplishment of their goals and educational programs. They were, therefore, carefully prepared so that in acquiring both secular and religious knowledge, they were equipped with suitable qualifications and also with skills that were necessary in keeping them relevant in the contemporary world.

Besides training in ECD, through its institutes, the Diocese equipped the youth with skills such as masonry, dressmaking, building and construction, farming and carpentry among others. The Diocese was running many institutions through which the training was being effected. Many of these colleges have been mentioned earlier: the Don Bosco Technical, Mother Mazzallello Dress Making Polytechnic, St. Augustine TTC and Videnza Nursing School, among others. By doing so, the church has helped a number of its youth to become constructive in the use of their potential by contributing to the growth of the nation's economy from payment of taxes to the Government. They also, though in an indirect way, reduced crime rate and the dependants on the economy but rather became developers of it by way of working.
5. Employment Opportunities
The Diocese offered job opportunities to the technically, professionally trained and skilled youth in many of the projects it runs. Respondent 009 indicated that employment terms varied from one year contract to casual employment, depending on one’s qualification. The Diocese was proud of having started and sustaining many IGPs. Most of them were run by young people as employees to the Diocese. Such projects ranged from privately owned learning institutions to community based development projects, for example Kithimu-Kithegi water project and livestock project. The Diocese also ran savings and credit societies, namely, MBEU and Ukira Ukirue.

Other projects through which the diocese offered employment to the youth were a garage, petrol stations and carpentry workshops found in different parishes. For instance, Kyeni and Embu parishes run petrol stations. In addition, the two parishes were hosts of the diocesan garage and the Kyeni Mission Hospital. All of the parishes sampled ran a private pre-unit and a primary school and in some cases a secondary school. For instance, St. Peter Primary and St. Paul Secondary schools, Our Lady of Assumption were under Embu Parish, Mother Angelina Academy, under Kithimu, Holy Family Academy in Nguviu, and Sacred Heart Academy in Kyeni Parish, among others. The youth and the priests in charge of the parishes noted that majority of the employees in the institution were drawn from the immediate
communities. The Videnza Nursing School, the Kyeni Mission Hospital and the Saint Augustine TTC were avenues through which the diocese was able to offer employment to some of its youth.

Many of the youth respondents hailed the Diocese for the job opportunities it created for them. According to them, the jobs enabled them to earn a living as well as afford them an opportunity to serve the community. A youth, who is a diploma holder in automotive engineering, expressed his gratitude for the employment opportunity given. To him, the job gave him the opportunity to have experience which was so much demanded by other informal and more established sectors, besides helping him earn a living.

However, majority of the youth interviewed complained that they were underpaid. Some of the youth argued that they were paid on commission yet some of them were professionals in such fields like veterinary medicine, agricultural extension work and teaching, among others at diploma and degree levels of qualification. Respondent 009 concurred with them. He argued that majority of the IGP s were established with an aim of delivering services to the community at the minimum cost and that they were not profit-making businesses. For this reason, the ability to remunerate its employees appropriately was challenged. This lead to a high turn over rate of its qualified employees: many of them moved to other enterprises in search for better
employment terms. Respondent 009 intimated that the employees viewed the diocese employment as a stepping stone for other more lucrative employment opportunities.

One informant indicated that employment with the diocese gave them a chance to get years of experience which was sought after by other employers. For instance, respondents 010 and 008 who are veterinary Doctors and an animal health specialist respectively were awaiting communication on the reporting dates. They both had attended interviews in which they had been successful with other employers who had offered them better terms. Respondent 010 had been offered a job as a manager with the Farmers Choice whereas 008 was to report to Kenya Methodist University (KEMU). The youth indicated that the problem of under-employment ensued from the fact that some projects were run by priests who had no expertise while other project funds were mismanaged.

Following this challenge, the church had embarked on sponsoring some of its priests to study in the areas of its need. Such included project management, administration and accounting, among others. The sponsorship was both in colleges in Embu: KIM, local universities such as CUEA and international colleges and universities. For example, respondent 011 was in KIM taking courses in management and human resource management while 007 was a
student at Kenya Institute of professional Counselling (KIPC) doing a higher diploma in counselling. Others who were taking other courses included respondents 015 and 016, among others. The Diocese also engaged lay men and women who were professionally qualified to run some of its projects. For instance, project managers, teachers, accountants and administrators and at the same time gave them freedom to do their work with minimal interference. The Diocese could carry out audit often to determine and check on the proper management of its finances. It could do this by engaging the services of qualified government auditors or even private audit firms. By doing this, it could ensure proper management which could contribute to a better remuneration of its employees and reduce wastage of its resources.

Majority of the youth and church minister respondents affirmed that the church incorporated the youth in running its programs. The findings in Table 4.2.2 showed that the frequency of the youth who were regularly involved in activities was above 45%. The youth were also given managerial posts in various projects in the Diocese even though this was at lower levels of management. This happened because the top administrative posts were held by priests, for instance, the directors of the schools and institutions, the hospital, the development office and the education secretary were priests. The rest of the posts were in the hands of lay men and women such as head teachers in schools, accountants and sub-project managers, among others.
Besides organizing seminars and workshops, the church appointed a youth leader to organize various activities in and out of the diocese.

The study found out that the Church can effectively address challenges facing the youth which is in concurrence with many authors, for instance, Castillo (1986) McWhiter (1993) and Campbell (1994). The authors recommend preventive rather than curative measures. This was because the Catholic Church in Embu had, from the study findings, adopted measures which have been aforementioned. To some extent, these measures were preventive as they aimed at averting the occurrence of challenges among the youth. The two world views focused on making the youth equipped and more so prepared to handle all situations in life without putting themselves to risk.

4.2.5 Constraints of the Catholic Diocese of Embu in Addressing Challenges of the Youth

Even though the church was directly involved in addressing some of the mentioned challenges, 75.9% of the youth and the church officials interviewed admitted that the church faced some constraints. These constraints were as reported by the youth as well as from the ministers’ point of view. The limitations as found from the study findings are discussed here below.

From the youths’ point of view the church experienced the below challenges.
I. Ignoring the Contribution of Youth by the Parishes

There is a need to enhance the link between diocesan youth officials, other stakeholders in youth ministry and local parishes through joint activities, forums and dialogue. In many parishes, there was a concern that the youth were still not represented adequately in the parish committees and councils. Further to that, the youth argued that the local church set up had not incorporated them wholly in their midst. For instance, the savings and credits facilities set up by the diocese especially *Ukira Ukirue* and *MBEU* only accommodated women who were *bonafide* Catholic Women Association (CWA) members.

Whenever a female youth wished to join the society, she had to contend with carrying out the CWA activities and taking part in all of its members' contributions. In Kithimu, Embu and Nthagaiya parishes, for instance, the youth argued that they were a major consideration only when and in cases where they were required to contribute towards projects which the church was carrying out from time to time. The youth considered themselves left out on important matters in the parishes for instance, in planning the strategies on how to raise their share of contributions required in the church for its projects.
2. Limited Finance
A few parishes were playing a crucial role in the youth ministry by providing both financial and moral support to the youth. For example in Kithimu Parish, a former parish priest gave a loan to a youth group to start a project. Such parishes also involved the youth in the decision-making processes. However, this was inadequate as many of the youth projects failed due to financial constraints. Lack of adequate capital to meet running costs and overheads resulted from the fact that initial individual contributions were little, members were unable to meet their personal financial obligations to initiate projects and returns were low especially in the formative stages. This normally made it difficult for the projects to break even as fast as the members would wish. An example of this was given as the 2008 tree nursery project which had to be halted for six months due to embezzlement of funds by the treasurer.

Other youth failed to attend workshops due to lack of money to pay for their upkeep. The research was informed by respondent 012 that a one week workshop failed to kick off for two consecutive years: 2009 and 2010, due to under-registration of the youth. In some parishes, fundraisers had to be organized, with participation of other Christians, in order to raise money so that the youth office could subsidize contributions from the youth. However, it was found that some youth were still incapacitated. For instance, in Kithimu Parish, the youth organized a jumble sale in the church before the workshop.
This was meant to collect money so that the individual contributions towards the upkeep during the workshop could be subsidized. However, the proceeds from the sales were not enough. This locked many youth from attending the workshops.

The church too lacked funds to start many more projects through which the youth would find a means to earn a livelihood. Some of the projects in which the diocese employed the qualified youth, on contract and on casual terms, had been closed down due to mismanagement and or under enrollment. This could also be caused by their failure to comply with the government requirements. An example of such was the Saints Peter and Paul Secondary School which had been closed down by the Ministry of Education (MOE) in 2009 and was yet to reopen because of mismanagement and poor equipment as per the ministry’s assessment. This rendered the former employees jobless and frustrated.

3. Lack of Cooperation among the Diversities of Youth

The youth were of varied ages and came from diverse backgrounds, with possibly diverse needs and values. They also lived in different circumstances and were faced by diverse problems. Their levels of education also varied. Therefore, bringing them together to work and socialise naturally was challenging for the church. In essence, the church could respond to the
specific needs of the different youth. The church could package its activities in a customized ways in order to address the diverse needs brought about by differences in age, educational levels, geographical areas and socio-cultural factors. These factors made it difficult for the youth to work together as one, for the good of each one of them. In Kithimu Parish, for example, there had been two youth groups. One of the groups had those who had just completed their form four education as its members while the other was composed of the students in universities and those who were working. A rift had ensued between the two groups as the younger youth felt looked down upon by the older youth members. According to respondent 017 this led to the collapse and discontinuation of the senior youth group after about three years of existence.

In the African concept, for easier management of the youth, the society grouped them in age-sets. The age-sets were formed on the basis of age/initiation for moral formation of the youth. If adopted by the church, this concept could go a long way in assisting the youth. Through such groups, the church could enhance and encourage intra-group togetherness through projects and activities for the various groups.

Respondent 011 contended that neither him nor his predecessors had strategized to address those diversities in Embu. He promised to look into the
possibility of laying down the strategies to address those diversities in the near future.

4. Apathy Among most Youth in Attending Church Services
The youth in Kenya lacked sufficient knowledge about the Church and its teachings (Youth Needs Assessment Report 2004). They did not have information on the various social teachings of the Church with many having stopped being interested in learning about the catechism. Many blamed this on the static orthodoxy of the church hierarchy and establishment where the youth have little or no direct involvement in the services. They had limited access to resources such as pastoral letters, encyclicals and other documents. This has left the youth in a precarious situation on matters spiritual with many getting information from the media and confused on their basic religious tenets of their church. They therefore lack pastoral guidance and they end up not knowing the expectations of the church.

From the youth FGDs comprising the diocesan youth leaders, it was clear that the pastoral letters from the papacy and the bishops were only read once a year. This happened on the Palm Sunday, a day on which the youth had a common mass at the diocesan level. Many of the youth did not attend the mass even back in their home parishes nor did they attend the various activities planned for them in their respective parishes. Some explained that the Sunday
mass or services were commonplace and therefore boring with nearly only the elderly being involved. Apart from the choir, the youth found nothing else interesting them in church services and others satisfied themselves with televised masses in the comfort of their homes. They therefore, had no access to the instructions from their spiritual leaders since such letters were under the custodianship of the bishop, the youth chaplain or sometimes the parish priests. Such youth lacked spiritual guidance.

It was reported by the youth, parish and diocesan youth chaplains that majority of the youth stopped to actively participate in Catholic youth activities once they joined colleges or universities. Some of these youth were available when the research was being carried out. They indicated that they were not comfortable to mix with the younger youth as already noted. At the same time those in colleges, universities or were of working class indicated that they felt out of place whenever they attended youth meetings during vacations. They argued that this was caused by the fact that they were not in touch and neither were they informed of the youth programmes while they were in school. The senior youth group aforementioned in Kithimu Parish, for instance, met once a year specifically in December holidays. It was, however, reported that the group had disintegrated after majority of them married and others got jobs far from Embu.
Other than from the youths' point of view, the church ministers also had their contribution concerning the limitations experienced by the Catholic Diocese of Embu in its intervention measures of the challenges facing the youth. All the church officials/ministers interviewed agreed with this view. Some of those limitations as found are discussed next.

The youth were at many times not available for education and spiritual guidance. The youth argued that at times, when their availability was required in the church, they were busy in the farms, their businesses, in college, or even just relaxing through other ways. Some of those activities were not being availed by the church. Such activities included playing soccer with peers some of whom were non-Catholics. Others were availability of basket ball courts and gym, among others.

Other youth indicated that at times, only few youth were available for parish or centre meetings, discussions and Bible study sessions. This ended up discouraging those few who had attended the previous meeting. Many of them ended up not attending some of the consecutive meetings. This trend made many planned activities to abort. Respondent 014 argued that, sometimes the youth required his presence even when he had other commitments elsewhere. This brought conflict of interest and sometimes it made the youth to see themselves as neglected.
Some of the youth were already badly afflicted psychologically, socially and spiritually as a result of drug and substance abuse especially alcohol, *miraa* and bhang. Others were facing frustrations due to failure in form four examinations, lack of fees to proceed to tertiary colleges as well as having become single mothers, among others. As a result of these frustrating situations, it became difficult for the concerned to reach out to the youth and accord them necessary assistance. This was because some of the helpers were too busy to avail and accord special attention to one individual at the expense of other youth and the parish. Respondent 014 argued that due to the vast area of his parish, work was overwhelming and hence tiring. Therefore by evening, when he could visit such youth, he found it necessary to rest from the day’s work.

Besides this, many youth had a negative attitude towards counselling. Due to this attitude even those adversely afflicted did not seek help even when priests in their parishes availed themselves for the youth. Individualized counselling according to respondent 007, a professional counselor, was hard to come by. This was because the qualified counsellors were limited and their charges were high for many youth to afford. Many of the counsellors were not within reach of the youth in the parishes. This made the youth in many cases to be given talks for guidance as groups which was not as effective as personalized counselling.
Due to the large number of the youth in need of help and the diversity of their needs in terms of age, education level and economic status, among other factors, the church lacked enough resources to cater for the many deserving youth. Many of the ministers and lay people delegated the responsibility of mentoring the youth lacked professional know-how in youth ministry.

Respondent 011 expressed his concern that he had to use the human resources at his disposal to assist him in the diocesan youth ministry. He argued that he had to seek the help of priests in the parishes and at times the lay men and women who were interested in the youth.

The other limitation he faced was financial constraints. He indicated that the lay persons he employed were not being remunerated for the services they offered. They therefore, ended up being given honoraria of Ksh. 1000 for a day spent with the youth. However, this appreciation was not consistently given; other times they went empty-handed. This would discourage both the ordained ministers and the lay. They hence ended up not availing themselves to the youth at times when they were called upon. The same views were shared by youth leaders of Kithimu, Kyeni, Kevote and Nthagaiya parishes, among others.
As argued earlier, church ministers were few as compared to the number of Christians under their jurisdiction. At times, therefore, some groups had to be given little or no attention at all. If we compared the Christian trend with the situation in African Tradition heritage, we will find that Africans are never short of people to guide and counsel the youth. In fact, the old were always available at designated times for the youth for instance, in the evening and during seclusion periods after initiation. This is so because life in tradition Africa is lived in a closely-knit community within a village-like context. However, today even the church is in dire need for professionalism among its ministers and Christians. More so, the church places certain measure of qualification for its ministers, not just old age as it was in traditional Africa but also status in society and knowledge of the church teachings. This leads to a high number of Christians (youth and other groups of Christian) demanding for the service of the church minister.

Whereas elders to guide the youth are not in short supply in the church, it is the youth who seem to have no time to listen to the old guards whom they view as out of touch with modern reality of issues. As a result, many ministers are overwhelmed by the work load. For instance, when a parish priest or the priest in charge of the youth goes on leave the responsibilities delegated to him are shared among his colleagues. Due to the reason that they had other
duties, some of the programmes are kept pending so that the most basic and important services can be offered to the Christians.

Due to their dynamism and high mobility of the youth, it was hard to maintain youth leaders in the parishes and diocese for one full year or so. As a result of this dynamism, it became difficult, at times, to plan and run projects especially the ones requiring large amounts of money or long periods of time to bring returns for example poultry farming, among others. This was because a business needed consistency of managers for it to thrive successfully and bear good fruit.

Respondent 015 and some of the youth raised a concern that for two years in a row they had wanted to start an IGP for the youth. However, this had become difficult due to lack of consistence in youth membership and leadership. More so, majority of them had not contributed towards the initial kick off of the project. One respondent, a youth member in Kithimu Parish, indicated that the poultry and the tree nursery projects which they had started had collapsed due to the poor financing from the youth. Currently the parish priest runs the two projects, as parish projects, having employed a youth as a casual labourer.
4.3 Conclusion

This chapter analyzed data from the field. First, the researcher analyzed categories of youth respondents in the research. The analysis was in terms of age, gender and educational levels. Secondly, the chapter analyzed the findings from the field. The raw data was analyzed alongside the research objectives and premises which are major challenges facing the youth, causes of those challenges, effects of those challenges to the youth in Embu, measures taken by the Catholic Diocese of Embu in addressing those challenges and the limitations the church faced in addressing them.

The findings clearly show that the church, following realization that it was facing limitations as it addressed challenges facing the youth, had taken certain measures to deal with those limitations. It did so by sponsoring some of its ministers to study in its areas of need such as project management, counseling and administration among other courses. Besides, the church has attempted to incorporate the youth in running its programmes and projects/enterprises such as schools albeit at lower administrative levels.
5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study and presents conclusions and recommendations of the study as well as indicates areas that require further research. The purpose of the study was to find out the role of the Catholic Diocese of Embu in addressing challenges facing the youth in Embu, which is located in Embu County.

5.1 Summary of Study Findings

In Chapter One of the thesis, the background information to the problem was discussed. Related literature was reviewed in Chapter Two along our aforementioned key objectives. The discussion here below presents a summary of the study findings.

5.1.1 Challenges Facing the Youth and Their Underlying Causes

The literature reviewed raised many challenges facing the youth and also discussed their causes. Study findings showed how difficult it is to readily distinguish between the challenges and their causes. This was so because a factor could be a challenge looked at from one angle while from another it
was a cause to another challenge. For instance, unemployment was cited by 29% of the youth respondents as one of the challenges facing them. The same factor was indicated by the youth from the FGDs and in the questionnaires, being a cause to many of the challenges they were facing. Some of the challenges which resulted from unemployment were early marriages, engaging in criminality and drug abuse, among others. Moreover, it was faulted to have been a cause to poor education and poverty, among others.

The youth cited lack of adequate education as a major factor underlying their poverty and frustrations. As a result of the inadequate education and vocational training, the youth found themselves in odd jobs where they were under-paid while others remained unemployed due to lack of relevant knowledge and skills. Their poor academic background thus ignorance of necessary life skills exposed the youth to negative concomitant effects such as finding solace in cheap and easily available drugs including alcohol, miraa and bhang. The lack of intra and interpersonal life skills and values led others yielding to negative peer pressure influence and hence found themselves engaging in sexual immorality and joining illegal gangs. The result of which were early pregnancies, early marriages, infection with STIs and conflict with law enforcers which sometimes leads to arrest trial and conviction. The family initially is viewed in the social teaching of the church and by many authors,
for example, Njonjo (2010) as being pivotal in developing the young people, now seems to be failing as the first educator, formatter and counsellor.

To some extent, lack of models from both the Church and the parents was seen as part of the challenge. This ended up plunging the youth in more difficult situations such as reliance on the print and electronic media and the internet to search for models to emulate. The youth ended up by being choosy in job acquisition and having negative attitudes to help-lines availed to them such as counselling, among others. However, many of the challenges facing the youth and their causes were outside the youths' power to eradicate completely. Such challenges include inadequate availability of job opportunities, poor education background, lack of required skills for specified available jobs, poor planning, bad governance in both the church and the government and poor implementation of the government policies especially concerning illegal drugs.

5.1.2 Extent to which the Challenges Affected the Youth

The challenges facing the youth were found to have far reaching effects on their lives. Due to the challenging situations, some youth found themselves dropping out of school before they completed the courses they were taking. Others took longer than the duration expected to complete the courses due to,
for instance, early pregnancies and lack of fees. Some plunged themselves into drug and substance abuse and engaged in conflicts with their parents often.

The aforementioned challenges often lead to poor performance in examinations. Other effects were early marriages and drug and substance abuse as measures to escape from the frustrating situations. However, some youth were found to have successfully overcome their challenging situations as they had managed to carry on with life as though it bore no challenges at all. Such had been through with their college and university education. Others had already acquired jobs in the government and private sectors including the Catholic Diocese of Embu. A case to mention was a young lady whose parents had separated when the children were young. She and her siblings had engaged in casual jobs over the school holidays. Through well wishers, who supported the destitute siblings by paying part of their school fees, they had successfully completed their education courses at various levels. The young lady was at the time of the research a teacher having completed her course in Bachelor of Education (Sciences) in 2011. Her other siblings were working in different fields.
5.1.3 Role of the Catholic Church in Addressing Challenges Facing the Youth

Part of the research findings confirmed the fears raised in the background to the study and therefore satisfied the objectives and questions. Both the literature reviewed and the conceptual framework has it that the youth were a very crucial group to the church and the society at large.

Some of the literature that was reviewed identified the youth as people who can easily be influenced positively or negatively. The Catholic Church in Embu was found to have taken steps to positively influence the youth in order for them to feel valued and an integral part of the church. It did this by organizing seminars and workshops, evangelization sessions through the youth, games, drama and music competitions, youth retreats and Eucharistic celebrations and counselling sessions. By doing this, the church demonstrated its care for the plight of its youth hence helped them to feel accepted and important.

In addition to the spiritual concern, the church had come in handy to offer training in technical and professional courses by putting up institutions where this was possible. The Church also has created employment opportunities in its different institutions and development projects. The Diocese did this to cushion the youth against any possible challenge that could impact on them
negatively. However, some of the youth had been adversely affected by the challenges which they encountered from time to time. Confronted by this reality, the Catholic Diocese of Embu had taken the initiative to address challenges facing the youth as it understood that it had a social responsibility to take. By doing so, it was demonstrating its adherence to the social teaching of the Catholic Church of transforming its young members into skilled labourers necessary for the service of the society. It was also found to have a great potential of establishing and running entrepreneurial investments by including the youth. Through them both the skilfully trained and the untrained youth acquired jobs through which they earned a livelihood.

5.1.4 Constraints of the Catholic Church in Embu in Addressing Challenges of the Youth

As stated in the National Catholic Youth Needs Assessment Report (NCYNAR, 2004) the Catholic Church in Embu was found to face shortcomings even as it handled the youth. First and foremost, majority of its personnel who were accorded the responsibility to the youth were not adequately skilled to handle the youth. Respondent 011 informed the study that as a result of the inadequacies in skills, there is inadequate involvement in the youth ministry. The youth also poorly participated in the Catholic youth activities at the parish, diocesan and even national levels. This was found to be
caused by lack of interest by the youth, peer influence, lack of information on the dates of the activities and lack of funds, among others.

The Catholic Church in Embu was also found to have comparably few ordained ministers compared to the numerous numbers of Christians they were called to serve. This was because the priests at its disposal had enormous responsibilities besides the youth ministry. This made it difficult for them to give undivided attention to the youth even for the ones charged with that responsibility in the parishes or the diocese. Respondents 014 and 015 argued that the parishes they served were too large and that the population was also high. Their parishes had been assigned three priests each. According to them, it was very difficult to manage to serve all groups of Christians under them effectively.

The Church had also to deal with the challenge of diverse categories of youth in terms of age, education levels and economic status among others and dynamism and mobility as a true characteristic of youth. Bringing all these diverse categories of youth together and have them work as a single unit required a professional touch and patience on the part of the youth and the ordained minister or the youth developer. Owing to the large number of the youth in need of attention, the church was short of resources such as land, money, time and capacity to cater for the many deserving youth.
The study found out that most parents were not fully providing their children in terms of guidance, financial support as well as motivational support. Church leaders and parents neglected the youth and did not entrust them with major responsibilities in the church. The youth were also not involved in making critical decisions even those which concerned their own lives.

The research also found out that the church has done quite a commendable job in trying to mitigate the socio-economic challenges facing the youth in the county. However, a lot more remains to be done by the church and other stakeholders such as more guidance and counselling sessions through the diocesan youth chaplaincy and other trained counsellors. For the guidance and counselling to succeed, the Church must equip the youth developers and its ministers in charge of the youth in parishes with counselling skills appropriate for youth ministry.

The Catholic Diocese of Embu was found to have created many job opportunities by establishing many institutions and other development projects such as micro-finance projects, schools and livestock development projects, among others. Through such enterprises, it had created white collar as well as casual employment opportunities where both the professionally qualified and technically skilled youth could work. However, the study found that even in its efforts, the church did not have enough personnel to work with
the youth. It was also criticized for poor management of some of those enterprises, leading to their closure. Further, it did not remunerate its qualified employees adequately. Some of the youth interviewed who were employees of the diocese complained of being under-paid.

5.2 Conclusion

The findings of this study are can be useful to stakeholders involved in all sectors which have interest or are in one way or another concerned with the youth. Based on the results of this study, the Catholic Diocese in Embu is not satisfactorily addressing itself to the current challenges confronting its youth. The Church has managed to recognize and brace itself for its responsibility to the youth albeit to some degree. It does so realizing that the youth are its hope for now and also the assurance of its propagation and continuity. More so, as a family, the church acknowledges that it has a social and basic role to develop youth who are responsible and independent. The church therefore, holds the youth as crucial members of her congregation. As a result, the church had employed certain measures to enable it develop and protect its youth from any factor which may threaten their survival or health. The Catholic Church as an institution had great potential for succeeding in developing effective values in the country.
The church can be affirmed for having appreciated its social and religious responsibility specifically to the youth, the focus of the study. The church did this after realizing that the youth formed an integral part of its development and propagation. They are the guarantee that the church will survive tomorrow. Besides, the church had attempted to assist those, among its youth, who were already in frustrating situations.

The study concludes that there are several socio-economic challenges facing the youth in Embu County. In summary, these socio-economic challenges facing the youth in the county include:

- Lack of school fees leading to dropping out of school.
- Lack of support from parents in establishing small scale entrepreneurialships.
- Peer pressure as a result of lack of necessary life skills and living values.
- Drug abuse especially *muguka, miraa*, alcohol and bhang as escapes from reality.
- Lack of youth guidance and counselling from the church since many of them fail to attend church proceedings as well as activities organized by the same.
Poverty among the parents impacting negatively on the youth some of whom eventually resign to fate.

Premarital sex resulting from drug effects, seeking love missed out from non-caring parents or ways of getting finances.

Unemployment as many believes in being employed instead of getting knowledge and skills to become job creators.

5.3 Recommendations

On the basis of the findings, discussions as well as conclusions, and in line with the objectives of this study, the following recommendations are suggested for effective address of the challenges facing the youth by the Catholic Diocese of Embu in Embu in particular and Kenya as a whole.

To start with, the church should engage experts in non-biased baseline study to identify the main socio-economic challenges facing its youth. It is from this that the stakeholders should come up with strategies, tailor-made to address the raised challenges. By carrying out the suggested investigation, the church should come up with a collaborative system of probable joint ventures with other stakeholders such as the GoK and the County Government of Embu to bail the youth from the se challenges.
In the collaborative joint ventures suggested between the church and the two levels of governments, the study would come up with the underlying factors leading to these challenges. This study has already found out that one of the key factors to the socio-economic challenges facing the youth is poverty background. This by extension was found out to be leading to poor academics since many youths had barely elementary education. Their parents were largely unable to have them progress to tertiary educational levels where they could be equipped with skills for vocational purposes. This study recommends that the law enforcers should ensure that all children of school going age be made to attend classes. This is a long term measure so that the youth of the future to be literate and well equipped for life challenges.

This study also recommends that more bursaries from the Constituency Development Fund, the Church itself and the National as well as county governments be availed for tertiary institutions such as youth polytechnics. The youth should also be engaged in workshops and seminars for training on micro financing systems and revolving funds such as the Youth and Women Development Funds which are available for them to empower themselves economically and eventually socially.

The study found out that some of the youth were not attending the church services and activities. This was largely as a result of the static way they found the church establishment doing things including a degree of youth exclusivity.
This study therefore recommends that the church-with findings of the baseline study- seek ways of including the youth through dynamism by including the youth in more church activities. Vibrant choirs and drama artistes and competitions should be brought back to the church which would be entertaining to the youth. These are things that the youth identify more with unlike the liturgy more emphasized by the church.

On the effects of the socio-economic challenges facing the youth, the study recommends that the youth be engaged in relevant skills and empowerment programmes by the stakeholders. This would make them more of job creators as opposed to the job seekers most of them were found to think about.

There were some youth who had claimed that there was a lot of opacity in the way accounts records are carried out in the church sponsored entrepreneurial investments where they are involved. The study recommends that there should be stringent measures to ensure accountability. Apart from the spiritual teachings and expectations of trustworthiness and integrity among the leaders, regular audit of proceedings should be carried out in the tree nurseries and poultry ventures that the youth have engaged in. this would help to remove suspicion of embezzlement of funds or outright mismanagement of the same.
The Catholic Diocese of Embu, through its youth office, should consider how to further motivate the youth to participate in activities which would contribute to their healthy physical growth. These are activities involving use of talents such as sports, drama and other social and cultural activities. These can be done through availing sporting facilities such as football pitches, basketball courts and indoor game facilities in parishes. If such facilities and activities were availed for the youth, they can be bait for making the youth be interested in the spiritual and moral activities which the church organizes for them. Also, they could involve the youth in organizing activities, thematic competitions and other creative forums for purposes of promoting their sustainability in the group. This will be done on the realization that the youth are able to make their local contributions in unique ways. By doing this, the Church will find itself attracting many more youth to be interested in the activities it plans for and with the youth.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Further research related to this study needs to be carried out to fill the gaps revealed by the study are now presented in this section. They are drawn from the findings based on the research objectives and premises.
The study, through the first objective, sought to find out the challenges facing the youth in Embu and their causes. The research findings found a gap in that the youth were so diverse in terms of age, levels of education and economic status. Owing to this, research could be carried out to establish the most efficient strategies that could be put in place in order to effectively address the challenge caused by various diversities among the youth.

Objective Four of the study looked into the role of the Catholic Church in Embu in addressing challenges facing the youth. The church was found to have put many strategies in place in its effort to do so. For instance, it has started many projects and institutions through which the youth got employment opportunities. Others were drama, ball games, seminars and workshops. However, a gap was found in that the diocesan employees complained of the terms of employment and the diversity of the availed activities by the church. A research on the ways of diversifying activities meant for the youth in the Diocese in order to accommodate the different diversities within the youth group. This is because the current study established that many of the youth, especially at the college and universities, hardly got interested in the activities in their parishes and diocese.

Objective Four further studied the limitations the Catholic Church in Embu experienced as it intervened in the challenges facing the youth. From the
research, it was found that many of the ministers and lay persons accorded the responsibility to work with the youth were not well equipped for the job. A study may be undertaken to further investigate how adequately the different ordained church ministers and lay people were equipped, before they were accorded the responsibility, to handle the youth entrusted to them. This would probably suggest ways through which they could be prepared to take up that responsibility.

More research needs to be done to analyze the constraints that the private institutions managed by Catholic Diocese of Embu are facing. This would help analyze their specific limitations with an aim of producing better results and making profit. The analysis would also result in suitable interventions and recommendations given on the proper remedies which could be undertaken.
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire for the Youth

I am Agnes Ngungi, a Masters student at Kenyatta University. I am conducting a research on "The Role of the Catholic Church in Addressing Challenges Facing the Youth in Embu". Kindly assist me gather data on this topic by answering all the questions objectively and freely. Your responses will be held in strict confidence and will be used only for the purpose of this study. Carefully read each question and tick or fill in the appropriate answer in the spaces provided.

(A1) Name: (Optional) _______________________

Age (Years) _______________________

(A2) Gender: a. Male [ ] b. Female [ ]

(A3) a. You are an Embian by: i. Birth [ ] ii. Residence [ ]

b. If ii above, indicate for how long.

(A4) Your Parish _______________________

(A5) a. Highest Level of Education:

i. Form Four graduate [ ]

ii. In College/University [ ]

iii. College/ University graduate [ ]
(A6) a. Are you facing any challenges as a youth?
   i. Yes [ ]   ii. No [ ]

   b. If Yes above, mention four major ones.
   i.
   ii.
   iii.
   iv.

   c. a. Other than you, are other youth facing any or similar challenges?
   i. Yes [ ]   ii. No [ ]

   b. If Yes, mention four of such major challenges.
   i.
   ii.
   iii.
   iv.

(A7) a. Who/what could be responsible for the challenges you are facing?
   i. Self [ ]   ii. Parents [ ]   iii. Teachers [ ]
   iv. Priest [ ]   v. Others [ ]

   b. Explain your answer above.

   c. i) Who/what could be responsible for the challenges faced by the youth generally?

      ii) Please explain.
(A8) a. Mention major factors underlying challenging situations facing present day youth.

b. What are some of the effects of these challenges to the youth?

c. Mention key ways through which the Catholic Church is addressing these challenges facing the youth.

(A9) a. Does the church incorporate the youth in running its programs?

   i. Yes [ ]   ii. No [ ]

   b. Explain your answer above.

(A10) a. From your own assessment, is the church faced with any limitation as it addresses challenges facing the youth?  i. Yes [ ]   ii. No [ ]

   b. If Yes, mention of the major limitations.

(A11) How often are you involved in each of the following?

a. Smoking bhang:  i. Never [ ]   ii. Rarely [ ]   iii. Regularly [ ]

   Others [ ]

   Please specify ________________________________

b. Teaching Sunday School:  i. Never [ ]   ii. Rarely [ ]   iii. Regularly [ ]

   iv. Others [ ]

   Please specify ________________________________

c. Watching pornography:

   i. Never [ ]   ii. Rarely [ ]   iii. Weekly [ ]   iv. Daily [ ]
d. Carrying out acts of mercy

Mention some of those you have been involved in.


Please specify:

f. Choir practice for mass.

g. Alcohol drinking:

i. Never [ ] ii. Rarely [ ] iii. Regularly [ ] Others [ ]

Please specify:

h. Bible study group discussion.

i. Conflict with parents: i. Never [ ] ii. Rarely [ ] iii. Regularly [ ] Others [ ]

Please specify:

j. Mention other activities in which you are involved in.

(A13) a. Rate your involvement in the church:

i. Very active [ ] ii. Active [ ] iii. Not active

b. If your answer above is a. or b, rate the involvement in the specific areas below.

Youth music, games and drama festivals:

i. Never [ ] ii. Rarely [ ] iii. Regularly [ ]

Youth guidance and counseling:

i. Never [ ] ii. Rarely [ ] iii. Regularly [ ]

Sessions/ seminars/ workshops:
Youth retreats and Eucharistic celebrations:

Never [ ] ii. Rarely [ ] iii. Regularly [ ]

Open discussion on matters concerning the youth:

i. Never [ ] ii. Rarely [ ] iii. Regularly [ ]

c. If the answer for the above was Regularly, give reasons.
Appendix 2: Questionnaire for Church Ministers

(B. 1) a. Name (Optional)

b. Parish of residence

c. Position in the church:

(B.2) a. Are the youth in your area of jurisdiction faced with any challenges?
   i. Yes [ ]
   ii. No [ ]

b. If Yes, mention some of them.
   iii. What approaches are you employing to address the adverse effects of
       the afore-mentioned challenges?

(B.3) a. Are there any limitations which you face as you attempt to address
       the challenges facing the youth?
   i. Yes [ ]
   ii. No [ ]

b. If yes, mention some of them.
Appendix 3: Interview Schedule for FGDs for Youth

1. What challenges are you experiencing as youth?

2. What do you think are the possible underlying causes of these challenges?

3. What measures has the Catholic Diocese of Embu taken to intervene in addressing those challenges?

4. What difficulties is the Catholic Diocese of Embu facing as it attempts to address challenges facing the youth?

5. How is the church dealing with those difficulties?

6. Suggest what more could be done to efficiently address the challenges facing the youth in your diocese.
Appendix 4: Interview Schedule for the Clergy

1. What challenges are the youth under you are facing?

2. Cite any possible causes underlying those challenges.

3. What measures are you taking to address them?

4. What approaches have you taken to prevent more youth from being adversely affected by the challenges mentioned?

5. What difficulties are you facing in your attempt to address the challenges facing the youth?

6. How are you dealing with those difficulties?

7. Suggest what more could be done to efficiently address challenges facing the youth in your diocese.
Appendix 5: Map of Embu County/Embu Catholic Diocese

Source: County Development Office
Appendix 6: Map of the Location of Embu.

Source: County Development Office