CHALLENGES AND COPING MECHANISMS OF STUDENTS FROM ARID AND SEMI-ARID LANDS ADMITTED TO NATIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NAIROBI, KENYA

BY

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JULY 2011
DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any
other university.

__________________________  ________________________
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This research project has been submitted for examination with our approval as university
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In loving memory of my beloved father Stephen Maruti Khamala. You sacrificed a lot for my education and impressed on me the need to pursue and value education.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I wish to extend my profound gratitude to my supervisors Prof Grace Bunyi and Dr John Aluko Orodho both of the Department of Educational Management, Policy and Curriculum Studies, School of Education, Kenyatta University. I am greatly indebted to them for the guidance, advice and encouragement they accorded me. Second, I sincerely thank my lecturers who taught me coursework, all of them from the Department of Educational Management, Policy and Curriculum Studies, Kenyatta University. Mr. A. D. Bojana deserves gratitude for editing the final work. Third, I appreciate the information given to me by my respondents - members of staff and pupils in the national secondary schools Nairobi without which this work would not have been completed. Fourth, my deep and heartfelt appreciation goes to my dear husband, David, children Sam and Amo for their love, understanding and support during the time of my studies. Last but not least, I thank God Almighty for enabling me to go through my studies.
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ABREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASAL-Arid and Semi-Arid Lands

CDF- Constituency Development Fund

EFA – Education For All

FGD- Focus Group Discussion

GER – Gross Enrolment Rate

JKF- Jomo Kenyatta Foundation

KCPE – Kenya Certificate of Primary Education

KCSE – Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education

NGO- Non- Governmental Organization

UNICEF –United Nations International Children’s Education Fund
ABSTRACT

Education is an important means of promoting equality in a country. In Kenya, children from arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) have unequal access to education. The quota system of selection is a policy that seeks to enhance access and equity in secondary school education. This study sought to find out the challenges students from the ASALs, who are admitted to national secondary schools in Nairobi through the quota system of selection, encounter and their responses to these challenges. The research questions for the study were to find out the challenges faced by ASAL students admitted to national secondary schools in Nairobi, to identify the coping mechanisms that ASAL students employ to deal with the challenges that they encounter and to find out what needs to be done to make transition into national secondary schools in Nairobi for ASAL students less challenging. The study employed the descriptive survey design. The target population for the study were teachers, support service providers (guidance and counselling staff, nurses and matrons) and ASAL and non-ASAL students from three national secondary schools purposively selected. The sample for the study comprised 23 teachers, 149 students, 3 deputy principals/senior teachers, 3 guidance and counselling teachers, 3 school nurses and 8 school matrons/house masters. The study used questionnaires, interview schedules and Focus Group Discussion (FDG) to collect data. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results were presented in tables of frequency distributions, percentages, bar graphs and pie charts. The study established that 78.4% of the ASAL students in the study faced initial challenges when they report to Form One. The challenges included adjusting to the new physical environment, academic and social. Other challenges were linguistic, cultural, religious and financial. Since the challenges ASAL students face were at the initial stages, most ASAL students were able to overcome these problems by the time they get to Form Two. Coping mechanisms that ASAL students employ include seeking help from fellow ASAL students whom they feel understand them better. ASAL students tend to keep to themselves and do not interact easily with non-ASAL students. The ASAL students also use existing programmes in various schools that help Form One students, for example, mentor/mentee programme. Most of these programmes are initiated by the guidance and counselling departments. The schools also help the ASAL pupils in getting bursaries to meet their financial challenges. ASAL students also seek financial assistance from organizations like Constituency Development Fund (CDF). The study recommends that schools should have an elaborate induction programme for ASAL students. Schools should provide regular guidance and counselling to ASAL students to help them cope with the challenges that they encounter. Stakeholders from ASAL home areas need to set up funds to take care of needy students admitted to national secondary schools. Schools need to organize talks by successful people from ASAL areas who were alumni of these schools to motivate ASAL students in their new learning environments.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction
This chapter presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, theoretical and conceptual frameworks, assumptions of the study, limitations of the study and definition of significant terms.

1.2 Background to the Study
The 1990s saw the right to education being reaffirmed internationally (UNICEF, 2001). Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that every child has a right to education no matter what his or her circumstances and the Government of Kenya has stated its commitment to making this a reality (Republic of Kenya, 2005). Indeed, the Government of Kenya seeks to ensure equity in terms of equal access to education (Republic of Kenya, 2005). This commitment to achieving equity is important since equity in education is a fundamental principle of the EFA agenda. According to UNESCO (2008), equity in education should ensure provision of appropriate, relevant and viable learning opportunities to all children without distinction of location.
A report by UNESCO (2008) observes that despite numerous strides being made in the attainment of the equity goal, challenges are still being experienced. Some groups such as indigenous populations, remote rural groups, nomads and cultural minorities are still neglected.

Kenya is not an exception in this scenario. The country faces major challenges in the attainment of the equity goal especially for children in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs). North Eastern Province, Isiolo, Marsabit and Moyale districts are home to some of these ASAL areas. Children from ASAL regions have less access to education, perform poorly and transit less to secondary schools. While the national Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) in primary education in 2007 stood at 107.6%, GER for North Eastern Province was 37.7% for boys and 30.5% for girls compared to Western Province’s GER of 151.5% for boys and 135.6% for girls (Ministry of Education, 2008a). These statistics as illustrated in Table 1.1 point to the imbalance that exists between the ASAL areas and non-ASAL areas in terms of the children who are able to access primary education.
The low GER in North Eastern Province has been due to a number of factors that affect this region. The factors include the unique climatic condition of the ASALs which make provision of education a challenge. These areas experience extremes in climatic conditions which are at times characterized by frequent droughts. The terrain is harsh as much of it is dry, with average rainfall of only 250mm (Republic of Kenya, 1976).

The ASALs are remote and vast and have poor infrastructure which makes provision of educational services difficult. The remoteness of these areas means that they are far from the capital city, which is the very centre of planning and they are thus marginalized. The
remoteness has had a negative impact on the number of teachers in schools. Many teachers are unwilling to work in these areas especially if these are not their home districts. Otieno (2006) observes that ASAL areas suffer high teacher turn-over owing to the interplay of factors such as harsh climatic conditions, poor infrastructure, insecurity and lack of teacher housing. As a result, teachers find it difficult to survive in these regions and hence look for transfers as quickly as possible leaving the areas deprived of teaching force. Table 1.2 illustrates the disadvantage the area has in terms of the teacher pupil ratio in public primary schools as compared to other areas in the country.

**Table 1.2: Pupil Teacher Ratio in Public Primary Schools (2003-2008)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coast</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rift Valley</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyanza</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NorthEastern</td>
<td>58.9</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Education (2009)

The economic activity in the region also affects education. The major economic activity carried out is pastoralism, with many of the communities being nomadic. Worldwide,
nomads are among groups that are considered neglected (UNESCO, 2008). The ASAL areas in Kenya are considered to be home to the poorest of the poor with over 60% of the population living below the poverty line (Republic of Kenya, 2005). All these factors point to the variety of handicaps that children in ASAL areas face. This situation is summed up well by Poole (1981) whose studies in Australia observed that multiple factors produce and reproduce disadvantage. Students from ASAL region are disadvantaged, this being a condition that is experienced by minority groups.

In spite of the additional challenges students from ASAL areas face compared to those from non-ASAL areas, they sit for the same Kenya Certificate of Primary Examination (KCPE) which determines which secondary school children in Kenya transit into. Students from ASAL areas sit for this examination with counterparts from much more privileged backgrounds. Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) state that certain groups of children are educationally disadvantaged in virtually all societies; this is reflected in their educational attainment. This fact is evidently true in the case of students from the ASAL areas in Kenya. The KCPE performance of students from ASAL regions is lower than that of students from other regions, which are more privileged. Table 1.3 shows the performance of North Eastern Province, which is an ASAL province compared to the performance of their counterparts from other provinces in the 2008 KCPE examinations. The KCPE top performer in North Eastern Province lags behind the top performers from the other provinces.
Table 1.3: The Highest Marks Per Province in KCPE Examination 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Total Marks (Out of 500)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coast</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Eastern</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyanza</td>
<td>446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rift Valley</td>
<td>452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>454</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Daily Nation (31 December 2008)

The top performer in North Eastern Province scored 434 marks compared to 460 marks scored by the highest performer in the country. The highest performer from North Eastern Province was 26 marks below the top performer in the entire country.

Admission to government secondary school system in Kenya is meritocratic; selection is purely based on performance in the primary leaving examination (Knight & Sabot, 1990). According to the Ministry of Education (1996), secondary schools in Kenya are grouped in different categories - national, provincial and district schools for administrative purposes especially with regard to admission of students in Form One. National secondary schools, which are best endowed of all public secondary schools, admit the best students nationally as they always have the first priority in the selection process (Bogonko, 1992). Kihara (2002), notes that national schools which are spread across the country admit students with the best grades at KCPE. These schools are well equipped
have the best teachers and resources and usually produce the best Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) results. National secondary schools are perceived as model secondary schools since they have high academic standards and have remained centres of excellence over the years (Ministry of Education, 1996). Given the characteristics of these national schools, it is the desire of most students to be admitted to these high performance schools.

Admission to public secondary schools is highly competitive and is based on the quota system of selection. The quota system of selection was introduced in 1983 in order to enhance regional equity in the provision of education (Elimu Yetu Coalition, 2003). Entry marks to national schools are flexible, in that admission is determined by the highest performance in each district, thus making it theoretically possible for rural schools and schools in marginalized areas to send their children to these schools (Bogonko, 1992). The quota system of selection is a computerised selection for national schools which takes into account the top performers in each district (Mathenge, 2008). Given that KCPE performance is varied across the country, students admitted to national schools have different marks depending on where they were schooling. Top performing students from ASAL areas therefore get admission to national secondary schools despite their relatively lower performance.
The number of students admitted to the national secondary schools is determined by the quota given to each district depending on the population of the district. Table 1.4 shows the quota allocation during the 2008 Form one selection.

### Table 1.4 Form One Quota Distribution For National Schools By Province 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coast</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rift Valley</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyanza</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Eastern</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>485</td>
<td>195</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Computer Department, Ministry of Education (2008b)

Since the quota system of selection is used with a view to promoting national integration and unity among the youth (Ministry of Education, 1996), the national secondary schools are a meeting point for students from varied social, economic and cultural backgrounds. However, students from ASAL areas selected to join national secondary schools in Nairobi find themselves in a totally new environment. Coming into these metropolitan national secondary schools from marginalized backgrounds has its challenges. These students now find themselves in a setting that exhibits a dominant culture, which is totally new to them. They now find themselves having to interact with other students who have come from top performing primary schools in urban areas and other parts of the country.
Children from ASAL areas are moved from their primary schools which are located in familiar environments to new and different settings in secondary school. Prior to this, they schooled amongst their own group hence there was no difference. Edwards (1981) observes that for many children, school is a continuation and extension of home life. However, disadvantaged children often experience a sharp discontinuity between home and school. Once ASAL students are admitted into national schools, they come face-to-face with an entirely new culture. This creates a challenge for students from ASAL region since they have to navigate through a very unfamiliar territory. According to Edwards (1981) the discontinuity experienced by minority students in the United States of America amounts to ‘cultural shock’ a phenomenon one experiences on finding oneself in a foreign and unfamiliar context.

Admission to national secondary schools in Nairobi is a result of the quota system of selection which is done to ensure that all areas of the country benefit from the education that is offered in the national secondary schools. The practice is similar to what was done in the United States of America in the 1970s where black students were moved daily to white-dominated schools in a bid to achieve integration in schooling and also benefit minority students (Swift, 1976). This was done through ‘busing’, a policy that was aimed at seeking integration as a way of eliminating disparities in the quality of education provided to different racial and ethnic groups (McLaren, 2006). The ‘busing’ policy resulted in students being moved daily from their familiar surroundings to schools in
white neighbourhoods that were foreign to them. Concerns were raised about the benefit of integration. Opponents wondered whether it would really benefit black students or whether they will simply be lost in the mass of white students (Swift, 1976). ASAL students coming to Nairobi encounter a similar situation.

It is imperative that the experiences of minority students are addressed since equitable access is only one aspect of education equity, which also includes equity in process and in outcomes (Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991). Failure to identify the needs of minority students has far reaching repercussions. Findings from studies on Asian students in Britain reveal that failure to meet the needs of minorities has resulted in an increasing alienation of such children from the British educational system (Verma & Ashworth, 1981). In Kenya, it is only when the experiences and challenges faced by students from ASAL areas in the national schools they are admitted to, are addressed that these students will be able to smoothly go through the education process.

1.3 Statement of the Problem
According to government publications (Government of Kenya, 2003, Republic of Kenya, 2005, Republic of Kenya, 1999), the government is committed to reversing past inequalities in education so as to promote development in the ASAL areas. In line with the stated obligation, the government has focused on policies such as initiating out of school programmes for pastoralist children, establishing mobile schools and
strengthening boarding institutions to cater for nomadic children (Government of Kenya, 2003). A policy aimed at ensuring access to good quality secondary education for ASAL students is the quota system of selection. Based on the quota system of selection which was introduced in the mid-1980s, each district is allocated a number of places in the national schools depending on its population. From the ASALs where academic standards are poor, candidates enter national secondary schools with lower marks than candidates from other districts. Coming from marginalised areas, these students come to national schools which are located in urban areas. The purpose of this study was to find out the challenges faced by students from ASALs selected to join national secondary schools and how they cope with the challenges they encounter in their new schools.

1.4 Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges and the coping mechanisms of students from arid and semi-arid areas who have been admitted to national secondary schools in Nairobi through the quota system of selection.

The specific objectives of this study were:

a) To find out the challenges faced by the students from ASAL areas admitted to national schools in Nairobi.

b) To examine the strategies employed by ASAL students in national schools in Nairobi to cope with the new school environment.

c) To assess what needs to be done to make transition into national secondary schools in Nairobi less challenging for students from ASAL areas.
1.5 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

a) What are the challenges that students from the ASALs admitted to national secondary schools in Nairobi on the basis of the quota system experience during their course of study?

b) What coping mechanisms do these students employ to see them through secondary education in national secondary schools in Nairobi?

c) What needs to be done to make transition in Nairobi national secondary schools less challenging for students from ASAL areas?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study looked into the experiences and challenges of students from ASAL areas who have gained admission to national secondary schools in Nairobi. There is a world-wide concern on the treatment of minorities with a need to reduce existing disparities. It is hoped that this study creates awareness of the challenges faced by students from ASAL areas in their new school setting and provide suggestions on how students from ASALs can be helped in their adjustment to national secondary schools in Nairobi.

1.7 Assumptions

The study assumed the following:

i. That students from ASAL areas desire to join National secondary school in Nairobi.
ii. That all the respondents will be co-operative and provide reliable information.

iii. That the researcher does not know the number of students admitted to Nairobi national secondary schools from the ASAL areas.

iv. Where district specific data is unavailable, the North Eastern Province, in which all districts are arid, shall be used as reference point.

1.8 Scope and Limitations of the Study
The study was limited to only three of the national secondary schools in Nairobi. The other three national secondary schools in Nairobi do not use the quota system of selection. The study also limited itself to only students from ASAL areas that are categorized as 100% ASAL. The researcher could not cover all national secondary schools in Kenya because it would be expensive.

1.9 Delimitations of the Study
This study confined itself to national secondary schools in Nairobi which admit students using the quota system of selection. The focus of study was confined to the students from ASAL areas of North Eastern Province, Isiolo, Marsabit and Moyale districts.

1.10 Theoretical Framework
This study was guided by the critical theory which had its origins in the Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt (Frankfurt School) in the 1930s (McLaren, 2006). According to critical theory, education serves the dominant cultural interests in any society. Serving the
interests of the dominant culture is achieved by creating a community whose members are unable to question or challenge the status quo and who meekly accept the directives they are given by the authority. Critical theory values socio-equality. According to critical theorists, in any society, the dominant or majority have power while the minority do not have power. The status quo is maintained through the process of social reproduction. One of the areas where reproduction is evident is in education where children from minority groups suffer disadvantage with regard to access, retention, transition, performance and education experience.

However, the dominant culture is rarely successful in silencing the dominated on all counts. People do resist and manage to find different values to regulate their lives (McLaren, 2006). Students resist the experiences of institutionalized education due to the contradiction they perceive between the dominant discourse of school knowledge and experiences, on the one hand, and their own lived experiences of subordination, on the other hand (Lewis, 1990). The minority also have a vital and vibrant culture of their own which stands in active resistance to that of the dominant culture.

The theory is applicable in this study since the students from the ASAL areas represent a marginalized or minority group. They go through an education system that largely favours the dominant group. Despite the challenges that students from ASAL areas face, a few of the children manage to get admission to the national secondary schools due to the quota system of selection. Some get admitted to schools located in Nairobi which is
the heart of the dominant culture. According to critical theorists, there are two options open to such students. They may try to fit in the new culture or resist. According to critical theorists, the two lead to social reproduction and social production respectively. Social reproduction results in the social inequality being maintained while social production has the potential to lead to social transformation and the dismantling of social inequalities.

1.11 Conceptual Framework

![Diagram of Conceptual Framework]

From the conceptual framework, ASAL students gain admission to national secondary schools by being beneficiaries of the quota system of selection. This selection means that
some of the students are admitted at a slightly lower mark as compared to their counterparts from other competitive districts. The lower qualifications pose a challenge for the students when it comes to the academic demands. Second, these students come to a new environment. From their rural and marginalized surroundings, they now find themselves in urban centres. For some, this may be the first time to come to the capital city. In addition to this, the school culture is also foreign to the students. Being marginalized students, they now come face-to-face with the dominant school culture. All these aspects pose challenges to the students and they are forced to deal with the situation that they find themselves in. The coping techniques they adopt will produce varying results. Some will quickly adjust to the system and take up the values and end up performing well academically. For others, the whole experience will be too overwhelming and they will experience feelings of alienation. Another alternative will be to come up with a different culture from the one exhibited by the dominant school culture.

1.12 Operational Definition of Terms

**Coping mechanism** - an action undertaken by an individual facing a challenging situation.

**Culture** - a set of practices, ideologies and values from which different groups draw to make sense of the world.

**Dominant culture** - the norms, standards, social practices or representations that affirm the central values, interests and concerns of the social class in control of material and wealth of society by which all
other social groups are measured.

**Majority**  - group with access to society’s resources and has the greater influence on shaping the society’s cultural system.

**Marginalization**  - some level of neglect or being treated unequally because of geographical or political factors.

**Minority**  - condition of being inferior or subordinate.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction
This study is concerned with the challenges faced by students of ASAL areas in national secondary schools and how these students cope with the given challenges. These students are beneficiaries of the quota system of selection. This section reviews literature on characteristics of the Arid and Semi-Arid lands. It also considers the quota system of selection, the challenges that students from ASAL areas face in national secondary schools and the strategies they employ to face these challenges. Finally, it deals with the performance of minority students in dominant schools.

2.2 Arid and Semi-Arid Lands
Arid lands are defined as places with deficient rainfall (Hills, 1966). The dominant elements in these regions are scarcity and variability of rainfall. The low rainfall is usually insufficient for sustained agriculture, but can support pastoralism. These vast areas occupy about 80% of the Kenya’s land and have very harsh climate. They are hot and dry, with low and highly varied rainfall. This greatly varies in space and time, (Republic of Kenya, 2003). ASAL areas experience temperatures of 30°C and above (Ottichilo, Kinuthia, Ratego & Nasubo, 1991); this is an indication of the high temperatures in ASAL areas. These areas experience irregular but frequent droughts. They experience
extremes of climatic conditions which greatly reduce crop production and hence lead to food shortage.

The Republic of Kenya (2003) classifies ASAL districts into five categories based on the extent of aridity, which considers moisture availability. The five categories are those that are 100% ASAL, 85-100% ASAL 50-85% ASAL, 30-50% ASAL and 10-25% ASAL. This study dealt with the first category that is 100% ASAL which include the following districts Moyale, Marsabit, Isiolo, Wajir, Mandera, Garissa and Ijara.

Kenya’s arid and semi-arid areas cover about 80% of Kenya’s land surface and have 25% of the country’s population, which was about 10 million people (Republic of Kenya, 2003). The Northern districts like Wajir, Garissa, Marsabit, Isiolo and Mandera are largely Muslim (Ruto, Ongwenji & Mugo, 2009).

This region faces socio-economic problems such as poverty. The widespread poverty is largely due to the under development of local resources. Pastoralist areas have the highest incidences of poverty and the least access to basic services. According to the Republic of Kenya (2003), these areas have an average of 65% poverty characterized by very low access to basic services. The low access to services is partly due to the fact that many of the arid and semi-arid lands are vast and remote. This further pushes them into the periphery.
Pastoralism is the major economic activity carried out in these regions. This is because the weather does not favour crop production. This poses a problem in terms of education as it has been found that pastoral participation in education is much lower than that of sedentary communities (Holland, 1996). This is partly due to economic reasons, for example the lack of necessary monetary resources to send their children to educational facilities such as primary schools provided for them by the government.

A study carried out by Khalif (2008) on education life chances for girls under the free primary education in Garissa Municipality, notes the effects the arid nature has on education. The drought situation reduces the economic capacity of the families rendering the community vulnerable to poverty. Given that the main activity is livestock rearing, any threat to livestock is a direct threat to economic livelihood of the people. During drought, families lose a lot of livestock either due to absence of pasture or indirectly as a result of inability to sustain long journeys with little food or water. So families cannot afford to cater for indirect costs of education that are not taken care of by the free primary education programme. Some of these costs include uniform, health, food and any other requirements that pupils may need in order to concentrate in their learning. According to the study by Khalif (2008), this affects both boys and girls. Parents are however ready to sacrifice daughters and let boys continue with education.

Communities in arid and semi-arid lands have lagged behind in education (Government of Kenya, 2003). Part of the reason for this situation was the historical background.
Eshiwani (1993) traces the origin of inequality in education in Kenya to the colonial period. During the colonial period, the state concentrated its resources on European and some Asian children. Historically, Kenya’s ASALs received low priority in allocation for development resources. This for a long time was justified on economic grounds that aimed at maximising productivity in areas with known and proven potential.

Republic of Kenya (1976) points to the fact that there are imbalances with regard to access to education between districts and divisions and between sexes. Some of these imbalances were a result of historical, socio-economic, socio-cultural and environmental factors. The report points out that the imbalances were particularly serious among the nomadic communities. These areas were formerly demarcated as ‘closed’ districts of Eastern, North Eastern and Rift Valley provinces during the colonial period. Movement to and out of the districts was restricted. This meant that the ASAL regions were entirely neglected in the development of education. At independence, the country had to deal with these disparities which various education commissions have sought to remove (Republic of Kenya, 1964, 1976, 1999). Despite the government’s commitment to provide education for all, ASAL areas still remain disadvantaged.

Challenges in ASAL are not only limited to the physical and economic conditions. Njeru and Orodho (2003) further point out that some retrogressive, socio economic and cultural traditions, religious values and practices have greatly affected access and participation in secondary school education. A study by Saru (2006) on the socio-cultural and economic
factors that affect the academic performance of secondary school students in Marsabit, revealed some of the socio-cultural factors affecting performance in ASAL area as circumcision, early marriages, low opinion of women and lack of priority in education. Several studies conducted in arid and semi-arid lands point to the fact that the boy child is favoured over the girl (Noor, 2003; Juma, 1994, Mbatia, 2005). Many of these studies try to explain the factors affecting girl-child education. In a study carried out by Noor (2003) on accessibility and retention of girls in primary education in North Eastern Kenya, a variety of reasons are given that prevent girl education, pointing to the fact that girls are clearly disadvantaged. A study carried out by Juma (1994) on determinants of female participation in primary education, identified cultural practices such as nomadic pastoralism, which is a way of life of ASAL communities, as a factor which influences girls aspirations in school. In this practice families move far away from settlement areas where schools are located in search of water and pasture for their livestock. When this movement happens, parents are forced to withdraw their children from schools. In her study, Noor (2003) found that girls are more affected than boys since girls cannot be entrusted with anybody and have to accompany their parents wherever they go.

Girls education is also affected by the fact that they have to contribute to household chores. They are sometimes taken away from school to help in the home, nurse babies, clean the house, fetch firewood and water, cook food and milk cows. Juma (1994) posits that such heavy household duties, long distances from school result in physical and
mental exhaustion which makes learning difficult. All this leaves the child overwhelmed both at school and at home.

Accessibility to school is another problem that faces girls in ASAL areas. In her study, Noor (2003) notes that in Wajir District, the distance between home and school is a major problem to girls since many parents do not allow their daughters to walk alone. They are thus kept out of school unless there is somebody preferably an older brother to accompany her to school. This decision is bound to affect the girls’ performance in school. Proximity and access to primary school are a pre-determining factor to enrolment and retention. In ASAL areas, distance between school and homes is far and the educational delivery systems are often incompatible with the lifestyle of nomadic people. (Noor, 2003, Khalif, 2008). Noor (2003) further observes that distance between school and home affects girls more than it does boys because parents are afraid to let the girls walk alone unless they are accompanied by older brothers. Security in and out of school is of utmost concern for girls. Some of the girls who walk long distances to school end up being raped and sexually abused by older boys and male adults. (Noor, 2003).

Building boarding schools as a solution to curb the problem of distance between school and home has not tackled the problem. A study carried out by Khalif (2008) revealed that despite the presence of boarding schools in Garissa Municipality, there was no single girl, despite the fact that boarding for girls would give the girls greater security. There was no girl boarder since a girl should not be left to stay away from her parents or adult relative. This decision is a further reflection of how cultural practices affect access to education in
the ASAL areas. Although boarding schools solve the problem of distance, culture does not free the young girls to stay in boarding school, therefore, the girls miss school.

Early marriages also affect access and retention in education in ASAL areas. Ombongi (2008) in his study on cultural and socio-economic factors influencing implementation of free primary education in Isiolo, one of the ASAL districts, found that early marriages influenced participation in education. Girls in standard 4 or between 12 and 14 years were withdrawn from school to be married off to wealthy men in the community in exchange for dowry. The study goes on to say that girls who remained in school were under constant pressure from their peers and community members including their own parents to drop out of school. Boys, on the other hand, are expected to marry and establish families almost immediately after circumcision. Upon circumcision, the boys are given a herd of cattle so as to start accumulating wealth for the family that they are about to establish. This practice has led to a low value being attached to education since in these communities, economic empowerment supersedes academic achievement (Ombongi, 2008).

According to a survey of education access by the girl-child in ASAL regions, carried out by Mbatia (2005), the enrolment of boys in ASAL areas was higher than that of girls throughout the years covered by the study. Education of sons is considered an investment in security for old age (Psacharopoulos &Woodhall, 1997). This emphasizes the importance of educating boys. Despite having an advantage in terms of access to
education over girls, the boys still face challenges in education. In addition to their school work, boys also have to help their parents with fencing, herding and help in branding livestock during market days (Khalif, 2008, Ombongi, 2008).

School related factors have also inhibited enrolment and participation in education in North Eastern Kenya (Otieno, 2006). A study carried out by Otieno (2006) on effects of abolition of school fees on enrolment in primary schools in North Eastern Province, reveals that school factors not only inhibit but also negatively affect children’s performance. The study observes that poor school environment including rudimentary shelters, lack of desks, overcrowding, lack of water sanitation facilities and poor safety standards are factors blocking enrolment and successful completion of schooling. This particularly affects the girls.

The North Eastern Province suffers high teacher turn-over owing to interplay of factors such as harsh climatic conditions, poor infrastructure, insecurity and lack of teachers’ housing. As a result, teachers from other parts of the country do not want to serve in the province. Since teachers find these areas difficult to survive in, they look for transfers as quickly as possible leaving the area deprived of teaching force. Lack of teachers and teacher absenteeism are a source of demotivation to the learner (Otieno, 2006).

Several studies have been carried out on primary education in ASAL areas (Ombongi, 2008, Hassan, 2008, Abdi, 2008, Mbatia, 2005, Noor, 2003), which document the
difficulties children in ASAL areas face in education. Despite the challenges facing boys and girls from these regions, there are students who do well enough to gain admission to secondary schools.

Available data indicate that between 40 and 45% of students who sit their standard eight examinations proceed to secondary school. Table 2.1 shows the statistics. Less than half of the students who sit for KCPE examinations make the transition into secondary school.

Table 2.1 Secondary School Enrolment in North Eastern Province as Percentage of Previous Year’s Standard 8 for the Period 2002 to 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>44.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>45.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>44.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


There are studies that have looked into the performance of students admitted to secondary schools within ASAL areas (Chirchir, 2005, Koring’ura, 2004,Saru, 2006, Atudonyang, 2005). Koring’ura (2004) looks into the learning participation of students in secondary schools in West Pokot, an ASAL region and notes that students who study within the
district do not do well as they are denied a chance to study alongside better performing students from other districts.

There is a lack of information on students who attend secondary schools outside the ASAL areas more so in national secondary schools in Nairobi. Not much is known of how they fare once accorded this chance to pursue secondary school education outside the ASAL districts. This study sought to find out how students selected on the quota system of selection and who go to study outside their home districts in ASAL regions actually cope with the new environment that they find themselves in.

2.3 Quota System of Selection in Education

The quota system of selection is an example of positive discrimination. This refers to a process whereby policies and practices are put in place to accord individuals special treatment in educational selection because of their membership to a disadvantaged group or groups (Wang, 1983). This is done in a bid to correct inequalities that exist. Disadvantage is a social issue which takes shape when comparisons are drawn between majority and minority groups, (Edwards, 1981). In Kenya, this is evident when one looks at education in ASAL regions as compared to some other parts of the country. As noted above, these were previously closed areas during the colonial era. Practices and policies are needed to try and correct the existing imbalances.
In the United States of America, integration and busing were used as a means of reducing educational inequality. The rationale for integration is that minority students in segregated schools are deprived of material and benefits enjoyed by white, middle-class students. Minority schools are usually shabby, crowded and poorly equipped. This atmosphere does not encourage pupils to value education and aspire to desirable jobs. Busing was a means of achieving racial balance in middle-class schools (Swift, 1976). The policy also sought to eliminate disparities in the quality education provided to different racial and ethnic groups (McLaren, 2006). This was achieved by moving students from their familiar environment to unfamiliar white school environments.

Positive discrimination may take various forms. One such method is different qualifying standards for admission to selective institutions or courses of learning. Another way is by use of quotas which enables policy-makers to define at the outset the proportions of different groups of students to be represented in a given level or type of schooling (Wang, 1983). In Kenya, this is how the quota system of selection works. During the time of the Form One selection, the various national schools know in advance how many students they have to select from each district in the country. In addition to this, they go out to select the best performers in each district. It is here that the other form of positive discrimination comes into play since these top performers qualify at different standards.

In Kenya, one such practice is the quota system of selection which was implemented in the 1980s upon recommendations made by the teachers’ union to the Presidential
Committee on students discipline. According to Muya (1991), this practice applies to the selection of students into national schools. Each district is allocated a number of places depending on its population. The quota system takes into account the top performers in each district. Some candidates from districts in which academic standards are poor enter national schools with low marks which would not otherwise have allowed them entry into good high schools in competitive areas. Quotas are important as a means of propping up pupils from poor areas who perform poorly not because they are not gifted but because of poor learning conditions. It is a way of ensuring that the disadvantaged districts have an equal share in the national schools and that each district is represented in the national schools. The quota system of selection in Kenya has been criticised due to the fact that it penalises bright students and rewards weak students (Muya, 1991). According to Wang (1983), as a means of positive discrimination, quotas can and do increase the degree of upward social mobility of disadvantaged groups but is in itself inadequate to affect long-standing group inequalities in a significant way. The ultimate solution is to eradicate the social and economic conditions which create inequality.

Studies in colleges in the USA reveal that even if most colleges were to adopt racial quota in their admission policies, it is unlikely that satisfactory degree of racial integration in student bodies could be achieved (Epps, 1972). For children from disadvantaged areas like the ASAL, admission into national secondary schools would be of benefit only if they successfully cope with the challenges they encounter in the national secondary schools.
2.4 School Challenges Facing Minority Students

Students from ASAL areas admitted to national secondary schools initially find themselves in a different environment from their familiar home environment. Here are marginalized students who differ from the majority in socio-economic background. In a study carried out in Australia, it was found that marginalized children have several problems. They have to contend with the initial adjustment to schooling, uneasy transition, culture-conflict, feelings of alienation, loneliness, isolation, loss of self-esteem and a sense of loss (Poole, 1981).

The study in Australia corresponds with findings made by Epps (1972) in a study of black American students in white schools. In the American study, Epps (1972) found that upon arrival to white schools, a number of black students experienced feelings of loneliness and isolation. This may be a similar situation for students from ASAL admitted to national secondary schools in Nairobi. The school environment is foreign and they are meeting other students from different cultural, academic and religious backgrounds. This in itself is an overwhelming experience. Pupils have to learn to cope and survive in classroom and school situations in which they may well feel insecure (Njoroge, 2008). Coping in such environment is a daunting task.

In addition to the above factors, students from ASAL areas are coming face-to-face with students with a culture very unfamiliar to them. According to Ogbo (1978), this creates a
problem of social adjustment because they bring their customary behaviour that is different from that of the school as well as the dominant group members who control the school. Njoroge (2008) in a study on school culture observes that schools have a dominant culture which is a set of co-values shared by a majority of school members. For instance, she further notes that members of the better performing schools seem to subscribe to values such as hard work and the need to excel academically. These values help guide the day-to-day behaviour of the members of the school. A typical school will have a dominant culture and a sub-culture. A sub-culture in a school is a set of values shared by a minority of the school members. The sub-culture is usually a result of problems or experiences that are shared by members of a group (Njoroge, 2008).

Upon admission, another issue that comes up is how these students from ASAL areas are perceived by the other students. Different cultures exist in the school that relate to ethnicity, language, religion, social class and personal views. A problem may arise when some cultures are regarded as inferior to the others (Njoroge, 2008). This study sought to analyze the challenges students from ASAL regions face upon admission and through their secondary cycle in urban secondary schools.

### 2.5 Strategies Adopted by Minority Students

Once an individual or group of people find themselves in challenging situations, they need to come up with responses to the given situation. In this study, these responses are referred to as coping mechanisms. Coping mechanisms lie within the framework of an
individual’s risk aversion or tolerance level (ILRI, 2000). ILRI (2000) further observes that, while some coping mechanisms may be brought into play by stress factors, others may be an intensification of an already in-built strategy. It is human nature to deal with any situation that is stressful or foreign. The students from ASAL areas have this in them and are able to come up with responses to challenges in the new environment that they find themselves in. The students have in-built capabilities to go through their current situation.

Faced with all these problems, the students have to adjust and this calls for them to come up with certain responses that will see them through secondary schooling. One result of this may be to come up with an alternative culture which is different or opposite to the dominant culture (Ogbu, 1978). The alternative culture that students may come up with will be a means of opposing and resisting the dominant culture. It will draw upon their own culture (Gibson, 1986). This becomes one of the ways that minority students respond to the new situation that they find themselves in.

Members of minority groups protect themselves by attempting to isolate themselves from the larger group (Hawley, 1981). Isolation helps students to keep contact with those with whom they share a similar background. This helps them by sharing their experiences which may be similar and coming up with ways that they can overcome whatever comes their way. It is only among their own that these students feel understood and receive encouragement.
As much as reaction to a situation may be collective, it can also be individual. Schools create individuality (Anderson, 1967). Children learn to think about and react to new situations. This is all in-built in a student’s character. Apple (1990) re-emphasizes this when he notes that students tacitly learn certain identifiable social norms mainly by coping with the day-to-day encounters and tasks of classroom life. These encounters may also go outside the classroom and within the school environment.

Minority students in a dominant culture will either come up with their own ways of responding to the challenges facing them or they will conform to whatever values they find in school. According to Corson (1993), the moment minority children enter school they are expected to learn and abide by the cultural norms of the school. Almost everywhere, these same norms of behaviour match the values and traditions of the dominant culture. Students may abide by the given standards since these may be the very norms that they aspire to acquire.

2.6 School Performance
Positive discrimination policies and practices have an effect on the beneficiaries. Some students admitted under the policies may fail to profit fully from having been admitted. In rigidly structured institutions where all students are put through demanding examinations, students admitted with lower achievement scores stand a great risk of failure to complete their courses (Wang, 1983). Despite the difficulties students face upon admission, they
must ensure that they perform well since this is their ultimate goal at the end of the secondary cycle. Studies of black students in college who benefit from quota admission reveal that upon arrival, they experience a problem in meeting academic demands and standards (Epps, 1972). Admission to national secondary schools with an inferior KCPE mark may pose a problem for the students from ASAL regions. This may be due to the fact that their counterparts have been admitted with much higher marks and it may be a bit difficult to keep up with the demands in school.

ASAL students admitted to national secondary school, outside their home districts have the potential to do well in school. Studies in the USA on racial segregation reveal that students from disadvantaged backgrounds fare better in schools and classrooms where a majority of the students come from advantaged backgrounds than in schools where they are isolated with others of the same background (Hawley, 1981). Once they have overcome the initial feelings of isolation and loneliness, they can go on to excel in their performance. Since differences in minority students are so recognizable and clear, it makes it easier for minorities to adopt schooling strategies that enhance academic success and produce social adjustment (Corson, 1993). This may be motivated by their desire not to stand out. Once students have settled, they stand to benefit from the competitive environment that they find themselves in. Saru (2006) suggests that the high level of aspirations of pupils in national schools tend to be due to the reputation that such schools enjoy. This fact may motivate students from ASAL regions to put in all their effort in order to excel in their schoolwork.
Studies carried out in America indicate a large number of significant positive correlations have been found between various school resource variables and pupil performance even when family background and other student characteristics are held constant (Rivlin, 1973). The same studies go on to reveal that schools can have an effect that is independent of the child’s social environment. Schools make a difference. These studies point to the fact that a student is capable of doing well depending on the school they attend and that performance may not be determined by a student’s background.

As much as the student is responsible for his performance, the institution has also to assume responsibility for the student’s performance (Epps, 1972). The student should not be left alone, he should be offered special tutoring, and remedial work and counselling so as to enable the student assimilate into the regular academic programme. Teachers need to be aware of the combination of learning capabilities which a child possesses so that he or she will not be disadvantaged in the schooling process (Poole, 1981). Achievement of this calls for close monitoring of students from ASAL areas. This may not be the situation on the ground as teachers and counsellors and staff may be ill-prepared to work with minority and poor children (Hawley, 1981). Unless the schools have put programmes in place, the student will not benefit from the schooling experience. The academic performance therefore, is result of the student and the institution working together.
### 2.7 Summary

The literature reviewed has shown that students from ASAL areas face challenges in the education process. Studies outline challenges faced at the primary tier of education. Despite these challenges, there are students who make the transition to secondary schools. A gap exists regarding students who gain admission to national secondary schools in Nairobi. No information exists regarding their experiences and challenges in these secondary schools.

Quota system selection benefits disadvantaged students. It helps to prop up students from these regions. The selection process will only be of utmost benefit if the challenges these students face are identified and addressed. This study sought to find out the challenges and coping mechanisms of students from ASAL admitted to national secondary schools in Nairobi. Several studies have been carried outside the country on the academic performance of disadvantaged students in schools. This study sought to find out how minorities in Kenya react to this situation in school.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction
This chapter focuses on the study design, study area, target population, sampling strategies, research instruments and methods of data analysis.

3.2 Research Design
The method used in the study was the descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey design seeks to obtain information that describes existing phenomena (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). Descriptive survey design is ideal for gathering information regarding people’s behaviour, feelings and opinions about educational issues (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Engelhart (1972) argues that the survey method is widely used to obtain data useful in evaluating present practices and providing basis for decisions. The descriptive survey method was suitable for this study because this study sought to find out the present challenges and coping mechanisms of ASAL students currently studying in national secondary schools in Nairobi.

3.3 Study Location
This study was conducted in Nairobi Province, the capital city of Kenya. Nairobi was selected as the location for the study as it is the administrative and commercial capital of Kenya. Being the capital city and a commercial hub of the region, it is the centre of the dominant group that exercises dominant economic, social and political power and has
the greater influence on shaping the society. Nairobi national schools provide a setting where students from marginalized ASAL communities come into contact with the dominant culture which is foreign to them.

3.4 Target Population
The study targeted students from ASAL areas who had been admitted to national secondary schools in Nairobi through the quota system of selection. The students were those from the areas that are 100% ASAL, these comprise districts from North Eastern Kenya, namely Wajir, Mandera, Garissa and Ijara. Included in this category are also Isiolo, Marasabit and Moyale districts which are also 100% ASAL. Three out of the six national secondary schools in Nairobi were chosen for this study. The three national secondary schools selected for the study are the only schools in Nairobi that admit students from all over the country on the basis of the quota system of selection.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Strategies
The national secondary schools in the study were selected using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is used to pick a sample with the required characteristics (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). Purposive sampling enables the researcher to select information rich cases for in-depth study. Such cases enable the researcher to learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research (Patton, 1990).

The sample was made up of students from Form One to Form Four from ASAL and non-ASAL areas. Most social researchers recommend a sample size of at least 100 as the
extreme lower limit of a sample size (Orodho, 2005). In this study, a sample of 149 students was considered adequate, given financial and time constraints. The sample was obtained through stratified random sampling. Stratified sampling is one way of ensuring that a population is well covered (Manly, 1992). The population was divided according to classes and then the sample was obtained through simple random sampling as it provides equal opportunity of selection of each element of the population (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). School administrators, namely; principals or deputy principals or senior teachers from the three national secondary schools were part of the sample. One deputy principal and two senior teachers were also selected for the study. These school administrators were selected because they would give valuable information about the challenges and coping mechanisms of students from the ASALs enrolled in their respective schools. In addition, 23 teachers were included as teachers spend a lot of time with students and would give insight into ASAL students’ school progress. Three guidance and counselling teachers representing one guidance and counselling teacher from each of the sampled schools were also part of the sample as they would provide insights into some of the experiences and challenges faced by students from ASAL areas. Given that the study took place in boarding schools, the sample also included eight house masters and matrons and three school nurses.

3.6 Research Instruments

To address the research objectives and research questions, data were collected by use of questionnaires, interview schedules and focus group discussions. Data from the school deputy principals and senior teachers were collected using interview schedules.
Interviews were considered appropriate for the deputy principals and senior teachers since they provide in-depth data which are not possible to get by using a questionnaire according to Mugenda & Mugenda, (1999). Interview schedules involve the collection of data through direct interaction between individuals and it permits the researcher to obtain more data and greater clarity (Borg & Gall, 1977). An interview schedule was used as a guide during the interviews of the deputy principal and senior teachers. The interview schedule was used to supplement data from the questionnaires. The semi-structured interview schedule uses both open and closed-ended approach hence enables the researcher to get a complete and detailed understanding of the issue under research (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). To record data accurately, the researcher used a tape recorder.

Data from the teachers, house masters/matrons, guidance and counselling teachers, nurses and students were collected using questionnaires. Questionnaires were suitable to collect data from these groups because according to Orodho (2005), questionnaires have the ability to collect large amounts of information in a reasonably quick space of time. They are standardized; therefore everyone gets the same questions. These reasons were considered appropriate given the number of students and teachers involved in the study. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was used to collect data from the ASAL students. According to Orodho (2005), a FGD is usually composed of 6 to 8 individuals. The FGD in this study involved 8 students, 2 students representing each class from Form 1 to 4. FGD is important in obtaining information that might not be easily obtained through face-to-face interviews or questionnaires (Orodho, 2005). FGDs were considered ideal to
gather information from ASAL students that may not have been captured in the questionnaires. According to Mwiria & Wamahiu (1995), FGDs are best suited for obtaining data on group attitudes and perceptions. They are effective for bringing to the surface issues with educational significance that may be considered sensitive and/or controversial by the members. This research instrument therefore, provided an opportunity for ASAL students to divulge more on the challenges they encounter in school and how they manage to cope with these challenges.

3.7 Pilot Study
The research instruments were piloted to establish their validity and reliability. These instruments were administered to five secondary school students and three teachers.

3.7.1 Validity of Research Instruments
Validity of research instruments refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it is designed to measure (Wiersma, 1985). Piloting of research instruments assists the researcher to identify misunderstandings, ambiguities and useless and inadequate items (Borg & Gall, 1977). Results of pilot runs may show the need to include additional items in the questionnaire. They may reveal possible mechanical difficulties in data tabulation and finally may unearth difficulties with the directions for completing questionnaires (Wiersma, 1985).

The questionnaires were piloted on students in a public national secondary school in Nairobi that was not part of the sample. The questionnaire was administered to 3 ASAL
and 2 non-ASAL secondary school students and 3 teachers. Responses were analysed with the assistance of supervisors and questionnaire items suitably adjusted.

3.7.2 Reliability of Research Instruments
Reliability refers to the consistency of an instrument in measuring whatever it measures (Wiersma, 1985). According to Nachmias and Nachmias (1992), reliability refers to the extent to which a measuring instrument contains variable errors. Variable errors are those that appear inconsistently from observation to observation. Reliability was established using the test-retest method whereby the questionnaire was administered to the same group of students at two different times. There was an interval of two weeks between the tests. The completed questionnaires were scored or analyzed manually. A comparison of answers was analysed. Spearman rank order correlation was employed to compute the correlation coefficient so as to establish the extent to which the contents of the questionnaire are consistent in bringing out the same responses. According to Orodho (2005), a correlation coefficient of 0.75 is considered high enough to judge an instrument as reliable. The researcher’s value of correlation co-efficient was 0.81 and therefore considered the instrument reliable for data collection.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures
The researcher sought permission from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology headquarters to collect data from national secondary schools in Nairobi. After getting permission, the researcher reported to the Provincial Director of Education
for clearance and information purposes at the provincial level. A clearance letter was obtained from the Provincial Director of Education to be presented to the various head teachers in the national schools. After this, the researcher booked appointments with the school administration for the research visits. When the researcher visited the schools to collect data, she sought the assistance of the teachers in each of the schools sampled in administering the questionnaires to the students. The students completed the questionnaires in one sitting as the researcher waited.

Teachers, house masters and matron, and nurses were given the questionnaires which the researcher collected after three weeks. The researcher booked appointments with the school administration to conduct three FGDs with students from ASAL areas in the respective schools. The researcher conducted the FGDs with the students. The researcher also conducted the interviews with one deputy principal and two senior teachers and tape recorded the interviews.

3.9 Data Analysis
Data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Before the actual data analysis, the questionnaire data were validated, edited and then coded. In the validation process, the collected questionnaires were checked to determine whether an accurate sample was obtained in terms of the issued instruments. Questionnaires were checked for completeness and those that were less than 50% complete were disregarded. Finally, in editing, the instruments were scrutinized to see whether there were errors, omissions, inadequate responses or illegible responses. They were then classified into
two categories of accurate and questionable responses. Instruments with 60% questionable responses were disregarded.

Quantitative data from questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, means, averages and percentages. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics since this allows for data to be presented in an organised and meaningful fashion, and data can be simplified so that the general trend can be seen (Orodho, 2005). Qualitative data were obtained from reading responses to open-ended questions from the questionnaires and notes taken during the interviews and FGDs. The qualitative data collected were systematically organized in a manner that facilitated analysis. Data from the interviews and FGD were carefully read paying attention to comments, ideas and concerns from the participants. The notes were edited and coded. A code sheet was prepared to aid in data analysis. Qualitative data were arranged into themes and discussed in narrative form. Data were presented using pie-charts, histograms and frequency distribution tables.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to investigate the challenges faced by students from ASAL areas admitted to national secondary schools in Nairobi through the quota system of selection and the coping mechanisms they adopt to deal with these challenges. The following objectives guided the study:

a) To identify the challenges faced by the students from ASAL areas admitted to national schools in Nairobi.

b) To examine the strategies employed by ASAL students in national schools in Nairobi to cope with the new school environment.

c) To assess what needs to be done to make transition into national secondary schools in Nairobi less challenging for students from ASAL areas.

Data were collected using questionnaires, focus group discussions and interviews. In this chapter, research findings are presented to address the research objectives of this study. The research findings are discussed according to the research objectives and are presented in graphs, tables and figures as appropriate. Qualitative data were arranged into themes and discussed in narrative form and conclusions drawn. However, the background information on the respondents is provided first.
4.2 Background Information of the Sample/Respondents

The study targeted students from ASAL areas who have been admitted to three national secondary schools in Nairobi. Seventy-five students from ASAL areas took part in the study, of whom male students were 55 (73.3%) of the sampled population and females 20 (26.7%). The researcher also collected information from non-ASAL students on their perceptions of the challenges faced by ASAL students and the coping mechanisms they adopt. There were 74 non-ASAL students in the study, whereby 55 (74.3%) were male, while 19 (25.7%) were female respondents.

As for the teachers who responded, 9 (39.1%) of the teachers were male while 14 (60.9%) were female teachers. There were 14 support service providers who responded comprising guidance and counselling teachers, house masters/matrons and school nurses. Of the support service providers, 6 (42.9%) were male and 8 (57.1%) were female. In terms of departmental distribution for the support service providers who were sampled, 3 (21.4%) of the support service providers were from guidance and counselling, 8 (57.1%) were housemasters and matrons while 3 (21.4%) of the support service providers respondents were nurses. It was noted that the experience of the teachers and the support service providers ranged from 5 years and below to over 16 years (see Appendix VII). The years taken in the current stations by the teachers and the support service providers varied from 5 years and below to over sixteen years. Majority of those in the study had been in the current stations for 5 years and below, (see Appendix VIII).
4.2.1 Age Distribution of the Sampled Students

Students from both ASAL and non ASAL areas who participated in this study were found in the ages between 13–21 years. There was no respondent above 21 years for both male and female respondents. Majority of the sampled students were 16 years old. Table 4.1 presents the information on the age distribution of the sampled students.

Table 4.1 Age distribution of the sampled students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages of Students</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>149</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 Challenges faced by ASAL Students

The first objective of the study was to identify the challenges faced by students from ASAL areas admitted to national schools in Nairobi. Data from the study indicates that 58 (78.4%) of the 75 ASAL students in the study faced difficulties, while 16 (21.6%) of the ASAL students indicated that they did not face any difficulties. Non-ASAL students indicated that ASAL students faced challenges in national secondary schools in Nairobi.
Of the 74 non-ASAL students in the study, 69 (93.24 %) indicated that ASAL students faced challenges in school, while 5 (6.76 %) reported that ASAL students did not face any sort of challenge in school.

The teachers seemed to concur with the students that the ASAL students faced difficulties upon reporting to Form one as 22 (95.7%) of the sampled teachers indicated that ASAL students faced initial difficulties upon reporting to Form one while only 1 (4.3%) did not agree. Fourteen (100%) of the support service providers comprising guidance and counselling teachers, house masters/ matrons revealed that ASAL students faced challenges upon reporting to form one. The results are an indication that ASAL students faced difficulties when they first reported to national secondary schools in Nairobi. The various challenges encountered are discussed below

4.3.1 Environmental Challenges

Being in a totally new environment was a challenge for some ASAL students. The study revealed that 40 (53.3%) of the ASAL students had never been to Nairobi while only 35 (46.7%) had visited Nairobi either once, twice or more than twice before joining the Nairobi-based national secondary schools. Thus a good proportion of ASAL students were in a completely foreign environment, different from what they were used to prior to joining these national secondary schools. The new environment came with its own challenges. The ASAL students had to contend with the change of physical environment and climatic conditions that were far different from the climate back at home. In the FGDs a Form one male student in one of the schools revealed that the school
environment was very scary to him initially since there were many big trees and it got dark very early in the evening. This was very different from his home district which was very dry with hardly any trees and where the sun did not set very early.

Many ASAL students indicated that they had a problem adjusting to the new climate which was much colder than their home climate. The response of ASAL students on the issue of climate is shown in Table 4.2. Thirty-seven (49.3%) of the ASAL students indicated that it took them a long time to get used to the climate and only 2 (2.7%) did not seem to have found the weather problematic.

**Table 4.2 ASAL students responses to the climate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>It took me a long time to get used to the climate</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>49.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>75</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: SA-strongly agree, A-agree, N-neutral, D-disagree, SD-strongly disagree

Coupled with the low ambient temperature, was the fact that ASAL students had to bathe using cold water. Support service providers also revealed that the lower air temperatures in Nairobi posed a challenge to ASAL students.
ASAL students also had a challenge settling in schools that had very high student populations. The national secondary schools had student populations of between 830 and 1100 which was very high compared to their primary schools. According to the teachers, the much higher class capacity in Nairobi national secondary schools as compared to sparsely populated schools where ASAL students came from, led to low esteem among the ASAL students. Further, this made it difficult for ASAL students to adjust to the student numbers in classroom and the school. From the perspective of the support service providers, ASAL students also had a problem with their degree of privacy since they found the schools too small spatially, having been used to big open spaces at home. For ASAL students, this was an invasion into their personal space.

ASAL students had difficulties in adjusting to the school routine. This was revealed by the support service providers whereby 50% of the support service providers strongly agreed that ASAL students have difficulty in adjusting to the school routine, 42.6% agreed with this statement and 7.1% disagreed.

4.3.2 Social Challenges

Data from the FGDs revealed that the ASAL students experienced various social challenges. For some ASAL students, this was the first time to be in a multiethnic setting and meeting students from other parts of the country. This posed a social challenge for some ASAL students having come from a place where they had only interacted with students from a similar background. Some of the students were from places where there
were only members of the Somali community. These students were therefore, coming from quasi closed society to suddenly rather open society. Being far away from home contributed to many of the ASAL students feeling homesick and scared.

The FGDs also revealed that some ASAL students came to national secondary schools, with their own preconceived ideas about non-ASAL students. ASAL students believed that some non-ASAL students would bewitch them if they excelled academically. A Form 4 student revealed that so scared was he of being bewitched, that he chose not to put in his best effort academically for the first two terms of Form one. Some ASAL students came with the notion that Nairobi was a very insecure place and so they were constantly in fear that something bad would happen to them. This fear prevented them from freely interacting with non-ASAL students opting instead to keep to their fellow ASAL students.

Some ASAL students faced discrimination from non-ASAL students. The discrimination was due to the colour and background of ASAL students, which made them feel socially inferior. The Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) revealed that some non-ASAL students held certain stereotypes about ASAL students. Since some ASAL students had been admitted to these national secondary schools with slightly lower marks, some non-ASAL students used this fact to discriminate against them in terms of their academic ability.
Non-ASAL students were asked to comment on social challenges that ASAL students face. They were required to indicate whether they strongly agreed, agreed, were neutral, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the given students concerning challenges that ASAL students faced in national secondary school in Nairobi. The non-ASAL students were asked whether ASAL students made friends easily. Twenty-seven (34.48%) disagreed while 9 (12.16%) strongly disagreed that ASAL students made friends easily. The non-ASAL students’ responses are shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Non –ASAL students on challenges faced by ASAL students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>SA (n)</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>A (n)</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N (n)</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>D (n)</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>SD (n)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make friends easily</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>29.72</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>36.48</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face hardships in school</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24.32</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41.89</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17.57</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.46</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face discrimination</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.46</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27.02</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18.91</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>29.73</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic challenges</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16.21</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>43.24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22.97</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjust easily to routine</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21.62</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>43.24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28.37</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key

SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree

Some of the teachers were of the opinion that the students from ASAL areas were not outgoing and had problems interacting with other students. This was a hindrance as they took a long time to settle into the school programme. The teachers added that ASAL
students faced relationship problems as they took a lot of time before they could mingle freely with other students. The main reason that contributed to this challenge according to the teachers is that most of the ASAL students had a language problem. The English language skills of some ASAL students were poorly developed making it difficult for them to communicate well with non-ASAL students. This led to lack of confidence in expressing themselves and hence they tended to withdraw from other students. This reason given by the teachers was however superficial because in actual terms ASAL students were trying to come to terms with the non-ASAL students that they were meeting for the first time and who were so different from them.

According to the support service providers ASAL students suffered from an inferiority complex, this resulted in them being very withdrawn. Some ASAL students having come from a largely rural setting had a fear of students from urban areas. This social challenge was compounded by the fact that some of the ASAL students had difficulty in expressing themselves.

One of the senior teachers observed that the ASAL students faced social challenges that were perpetuated over time in that they hardly interacted with other students. They simply kept only to their own. This was seen as a challenge because whatever weakness ASAL students may have, they passed the same to their fellow ASAL students. This is because they studied together and were not able to get help from other students.
4.3.3 Linguistic Challenges

ASAL students initially had a problem communicating with the peers from non-ASAL areas since ASAL students were unable to communicate using the informal language *sheng*. This was a challenge for ASAL students since this made them unable to fit socially with the other students from non-ASAL areas. Inability to communicate in *sheng* made some ASAL students feel that they were not quite accepted by their non-ASAL peers and this bothered some of them. Some ASAL students acknowledged that they had difficulty in communicating in English and Kiswahili since in their previous schools they hardly used these languages to communicate.

According to the teachers, some ASAL students’ English language skills were poorly developed. This linguistic challenge resulted in ASAL students facing relationship problems. It took ASAL students a long time before they could mingle freely with other students because they had difficulty in communicating well with non-ASAL students. Difficulty in communication led to lack of confidence in expressing themselves and hence ASAL students tended to withdraw from non-ASAL students.

The deputy principal and senior teachers concurred with the teachers that some of the students had a problem with communication. They further revealed that the students had language problems with regard to the use of English and Kiswahili languages. This was therefore an impediment to their communication. Faced with a problem in English and Kiswahili, the ASAL students resorted to using their mother tongue. Having problems in
English and Kiswahili language, affected the ASAL students’ academic performance, since these two languages were examinable and so ASAL students ended up performing poorly in the subjects. Poor English language development also had a negative bearing on the other subjects since English was the language of instruction. The language challenge raised by the senior teachers and deputy principal was different from that raised by the students. Language challenge according to the students was with regard to *sheng* which affected their social acceptance, while for the deputy principal and senior teachers, the language problem was in the use of English and Kiswahili languages which affected their social interaction and their academic performance.

### 4.3.4 Religious Challenges

Some of the ASAL students felt that school authorities that were predominantly Christian did not give Muslim ASAL students adequate time to worship. Being taught Christian Religious Education made them uncomfortable as most ASAL students came from areas, which were predominantly Muslim. Female ASAL students experienced the challenge of having not to wear their *hijab* (headscarf worn by Muslim women). Not wearing the *hijab* made the Muslim girls feel uncomfortable. Of particularly difficulty, was the fact that failure to wear the *hijab* was against their religious beliefs. Being without the head scarf was something that they were not used to and had great difficulty in adjusting to.
On the issue of wearing the *hijab*, the study learnt that that was a school policy which the female students had to adhere to, since it was meant to enhance uniformity among the students. Given that the school had students from different areas, many students would want to seek exceptions to be allowed to wear various items affecting uniformity among the students in the school.

### 4.3.5 Cultural Challenges

According to the ASAL students, although the food given in school was good in terms of quality and quantity, some students had a problem in getting used to the school diet as it was very different from what they were used to at home. Some of the ASAL students had difficulty getting used to eating *githeri* (mixture of maize and beans) that was served in the schools. According to one support service provider, some ASAL students preferred rice which was not always available.

### 4.3.6 Financial Challenges

Some ASAL students reported that they faced financial challenges. A number of ASAL students faced difficulties in paying school fees. The financial challenges which made it difficult for ASAL students to meet their financial obligations.

The teachers revealed that the ASAL students faced fees problems as majority of them came from less privileged families. Such students were unable to regularly pay their
school fees. This financial challenge was concurrent with some ASAL students lack of personal effects like soap and school uniform.

The deputy principal and senior teachers interviewed concurred that ASAL students faced financial challenges. They revealed that some ASAL students upon receiving admission letters simply reported to school without school fees, uniforms and personal effects like school uniforms. This they attributed to the fact that some of the students came from very needy homes.

4.3.7 Academic Challenges
Having been admitted to national secondary schools with slightly lower marks than other students, some ASAL students faced a challenge in the academic work. They found that they were slightly disadvantaged in some academic areas. ASAL students were asked to rank themselves compared to other students in the classes. The results of the ranking given by the students are given in Figure 4.1. More than half of the students in the study ranked themselves among the top 20 to 30 and above. Some of the students who were categorized under others were non-committal.
It was revealed that upon arrival to the schools, some of the students found that they were among the students with some of the lowest marks. This turned out to be very demoralizing for the students once they arrived in school. The ASAL students also had to contend with their poor English and Kiswahili language skills. Having come from primary schools where they were all from the same ethnic group meant that many of them were used to using their mother tongue, this meant that they had not developed the use of English and Kiswahili. Poor development of English and Kiswahili language skills had a negative bearing on the academic performance of ASAL students.
The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) revealed that some non-ASAL students had certain stereotypes about ASAL students. Since some ASAL students had been admitted to these national secondary schools with slightly lower marks, some non-ASAL students used this fact to discriminate against them in terms of their academic ability. The non-ASAL students were asked if ASAL students faced any academic challenges, 16.21% (n=12) strongly agreed with the statement, 43.24% (n=32) agreed that ASAL students face academic challenges in school, 12.16% (n=9) were neutral on the issue, while 5.41% (n=4) did not agree that ASAL students faced any academic challenges.

The deputy principal and senior teachers interviewed were in agreement with the findings from the students and teachers that ASAL students faced academic challenges upon reporting to Form one. Having problems in English and Kiswahili language, affected the ASAL students’ academic performance since these two languages were examinable and so the students ended up performing poorly in the subjects. Poor English language development also had a negative bearing on the other subjects since English was the language of instruction. One of the senior teachers linked the social challenge faced by ASAL students to their academic challenge. The teacher observed that the fact that ASAL students simply kept to their own meant that whatever academic weaknesses ASAL students had, they passed the same to their fellow ASAL students because they studied together.
4.4 Coping Mechanisms of ASAL Students

The second objective of the study was to examine the strategies employed by ASAL students to cope with the new school environment and the challenges that this posed for them. The ASAL students employed various mechanisms to deal with the challenges that they faced in the national secondary schools.

4.4.1 Coping Mechanisms to Environmental Challenges

With regard to the environmental challenges, ASAL students learn to adapt to the cold environment with time. Eleven point five percent of ASAL students resorted to wearing warm clothes in order to cope with the cold environment. In one of the schools, the nursing department advises the ASAL students on how to dress warm. Some new students, who were severely affected by the cold climate, were given notes by the school nurse allowing them to be given warm water for bathing during the first few weeks of the term. ASAL students also learnt to adapt to the new diet that they found in national secondary schools in Nairobi. The ASAL students were able to deal with the environmental challenges they faced by getting help from students from their home areas. Eighty eight percent of ASAL students in the study revealed that they sought help from fellow students from ASAL areas. Assistance to ASAL students was offered in various ways. The senior ASAL students advised the new comers on how to cope with climatic change, school rules, regulation and school routine. Senior ASAL students encouraged junior ASAL students to embrace patience and prayerfulness.
Various people helped ASAL students fit in the school routine. Eight point seven percent of the ASAL students got assistance from the teachers, 13.2% from classmates, 14.5% received assistance from students from other classes while others either received assistance from fellow ASAL students, prefects or didn’t receive any assistance at all. While 92.0% received assistance in one way or the other, 8% of the respondents did not receive any assistance at all.

4.4.2 Coping Mechanisms to Social Challenges
The ASAL students were able to deal with the social challenges they faced by getting help from students from their home areas. Eighty eight percent of ASAL students revealed that they sought help from fellow students from ASAL areas. Assistance to ASAL students was offered in various ways. Senior ASAL students protected incoming ASAL students against harassment and assured them of good life in school. Senior ASAL students encouraged junior ASAL students to embrace patience and prayerfulness.

One of the ways ASAL students were able to cope with the social challenges that they faced, was by keeping to themselves. In terms of friendship between ASAL students and students from other parts of the country particularly non-ASAL students, 85.3% of the ASAL students had friends from other parts of the country while 14.7% had none. For those who had friends from other parts of the country, 62.9% of those friends came from urban areas while 37.1% were from rural areas. The study revealed that even though majority of ASAL students had friends from other parts of the country, the students who
came from their home districts offered them the greatest support in dealing with the challenges that they faced in school. These findings were as shown in figure 4.2. Students from the ASAL students’ home districts offered the greatest support to ASAL students. They were therefore, able to offer the greatest support to help them cope with the challenges that they encountered in secondary school. Students from ASAL home districts were of great help since they shared the same religious beliefs and shared challenges and coping mechanisms.

**Figure 4.2 Support offered to ASAL students**

Findings from non-ASAL students on the coping mechanisms revealed that 41.89\% (n=31) strongly agreed that one of the ways ASAL students faced their challenges was by keeping to themselves, 32.43\% (n=24) agreed that ASAL students kept to themselves,
12.19 %(n=9) were neutral on the issue, while 6.76%(n=5) disagreed that ASAL students kept to themselves and another 6.76% also strongly disagreed.

The support service providers who comprised guidance and counselling teachers, house masters and matrons and school nurses revealed that ASAL students cope with the challenges that they face by keeping to themselves. They are not outgoing and this helps them deal with the challenges that they encounter. Seven point one percent (7.1%) of the support service providers strongly agreed with the statement that ASAL students keep to themselves, with 64.3% of the respondents agreeing to the fact that ASAL students keep to themselves.

Help was accorded to the ASAL students from fellow ASAL students, 35.7% of the support service providers strongly agreed with this statement, 57.1% of those who were in the study agreed with this statement. Non-ASAL students also accorded the ASAL students help in school. Fifty-seven point one percent (57.1%) of those in the study agreed that non-ASAL students helped ASAL students adjust to the school situations. Responses from the support service providers are indicated in Table 4.4
Teachers were asked to comment on various aspects of ASAL students. The teachers were to say whether they strongly agreed, agreed, were neutral, disagreed or strongly agreed with certain aspects about ASAL students. These aspects dealt with how ASAL students coped with the challenges that they encountered in school. The findings are in Table 4.5. Majority of the teachers (65.2%) agreed that ASAL students are well-behaved. ASAL students were found to be generally hardworking, cooperative and responsible. The teachers did not rate the ASAL students highly in terms of their ease in interacting with others. Most of the teachers agreed that ASAL students tended to keep to themselves. This was one of the ways that students from ASAL areas were able to cope
with the challenges that they encountered in the national schools that they had been
admitted to in Nairobi.

Table 4.5 Teachers’ comments on various aspects of ASAL students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well behaved</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardworking</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interacts easily</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep to themselves</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the challenge of the myths that ASAL students have about students from other parts
of the country that they meet, they overcome these as they go along. The more they
interact with non-ASAL students, the misconceptions that ASAL students earlier had
about them fades. Prejudices that non-ASAL students have about ASAL students also
disappear with time. As they interact, more non-ASAL students get to learn more of the
issues that ASAL students encounter.
National secondary schools have put programmes in place that help the ASAL students face the challenges that they encounter is school. The guidance and counselling departments in these schools have various programmes in place that help students. To begin with, there is the orientation programme given to all form one students once they report to school. Other programmes include mentor/mentee programmes, peer group counselling and ‘school families’ in which these students belong to. All the three schools in the study reported that they have house-based systems whereby house masters and matrons help students fit into school, they therefore have someone to run to. One of the schools has ‘school families’ where the Form 1 is taken as the child, Form 2 as the parent, Form 3 as the grand parent and the Form 4 student as the great grandparent. This system seeks to ensure that each student has a sense of belonging to a group where they may share their problems and get advice. Although orientation is a good programme, it is not necessarily tailored to ASAL students. The deputy principal and senior teachers admitted that they do not have any programme specially tailored for ASAL students.

4.4.3 Coping Mechanisms to Linguistic Challenges
As ASAL students continue being in school, they get to learn the informal language *sheng* by asking around and getting to know how to speak *sheng*. Once they learn the informal language, they experience a greater sense of belonging
4.4.4 Coping Mechanisms to Religious Challenges

For many ASAL students who are Muslims, the religion becomes a rallying point. Their fellow Muslims are of great help in that they offer a lot of encouragement to Muslim students from ASAL areas. This help is very crucial at the beginning of their stay in the national secondary schools. Due to the help accorded to them a strong bond develops among Muslim students from ASAL areas despite the fact that they may not be in the same classes. ASAL students handle the problems that they face in school by persevering. The students learn to withstand whatever challenges that come their way. For instance, on the issue of not being allowed to wear hijabs, they reason that it is something that they only have to withstand for four years and then it will be over. The teachers revealed that house prefects and house masters and students from ASAL areas in particular Muslim students inducted the newcomers from ASAL areas in the schools, many of which have mosques. One of the schools had a constructed mosque where Muslim students meet for prayers. Two of the other schools had allocated special rooms that were used by the students as mosques.

4.4.5 Coping Mechanisms to Cultural Challenges

The ASAL students were able to deal with the cultural challenges they faced by getting help from students from their home areas. Eighty eight percent of ASAL students in the study revealed that they sought help from fellow students from ASAL areas. Assistance
to ASAL students was offered in various ways. The senior ASAL students advised the new comers on how to cope with the new culture. With time the ASAL students were able to adapt.

4.4.6 Coping Mechanisms to Financial Challenges

Regarding the financial challenges that the ASAL students encountered, some of the students looked for bursaries to overcome the fees challenges from the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). Schools also help identify students in need of financial assistance and link them up to sponsors for example CDF and Jomo Kenyatta Foundation (JKF). Some ASAL students are beneficiaries of JKF, CDF and United Nations International Children’s Fund (UNICEF) sponsorship. Schools at times call upon the student community to give assistance to needy students by donating personal effects or collecting funds to pay school fees for the needy students. The deputy principal and senior teachers revealed that the schools are constantly seeking ways in which to raise money so as to give bursaries to needy students. They at times call upon former students of the schools to help raise funds to aid needy students. There are also some parents who volunteer to pay fees for needy students, though this help is not reliable. Sometimes the financial assistance is pegged on academic performance; it is at times stopped when some students are unable to keep up their good academic performance.

4.4.7 Coping Mechanisms to Academic Challenges
ASAL students are able to overcome academic challenges with time. Although initially it is difficult, they work extra hard and with time they are able to catch up academically and compete with their fellow classmates. Most of the ASAL students are able to overcome their difficulties by the time they are in Form 2. Some of the ASAL students are motivated to put in extra effort in their academic work once they realize that they are among those admitted with low marks. This fact motivates them to work hard so as to leave the low positions that they initially had. ASAL student advised fellow students from their region on how to improve their academic performance. They helped them to improve in subjects they were weak in, advised them on improved studying skills and availed past examination papers for revision.

The teachers revealed that ASAL students received assistance from various groups of people in order to induct them into the school programme and routine. Teachers, in particular class teachers, greatly helped ASAL students overcome their academic challenges. Class teachers did this by constantly monitoring the students’ academic performance. Other students also played a role in helping ASAL students. The teachers and other students (non-ASAL students) helped ASAL students deal with their academic challenges. ASAL students consulted their teachers when they were faced with a problem. Sixty-nine point six percent (69.6%) of the teachers in the study confirmed that ASAL students consulted them when they faced problems in school, 21.7% of the teachers said the students did not consult them while 8.7% of teachers declined to respond or were non-committal.
The study found that ASAL students possess certain traits that helped them overcome the challenges that they encountered. Majority of the teachers found ASAL students to be hard working. Twenty-one point seven percent (21.7%) of the teachers strongly agreed that ASAL students were hardworking, 39.1% did agree that students from ASAL were hardworking, 21.7% were neutral while 17.4% disagreed that ASAL students were hard working. The findings are found in table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Teachers’ responses on ASAL students hard working

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASAL students are hardworking</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Majority of the teachers found the ASAL students to have a good attitude to their academic work. Other teachers (8.7%) found ASAL students to have an excellent attitude towards their academic work, 34.9% felt the ASAL students were fairly good, 39.9% were of the opinion that ASAL students exhibited a good attitude to their academic work while 17.4% of the teachers found their attitude to their academic work to be average. Figure 4.3 reveals that majority of the teachers found ASAL students to have good attitude to their academic work.
The deputy principal and two senior teachers interviewed revealed that ASAL students are able to face the challenges that they encountered since most of them are very focused. Once ASAL students settled in school, they maintain their focus throughout secondary school, which enables them to overcome and survive whatever hardship they may have in school. When they get to school, they maintain the focus they have in their studies and they continue in that same manner until they sit for the final form four examinations. In addition to the focus that they have, most ASAL students are hard working and diligent and this is of great help to handle the academic challenges that they encounter in school.

The sampled teachers who responded indicated that even though ASAL students do face difficulties upon reporting to form one, they at some point do overcome initial difficulties. Twenty-two point seven percent (22.7%) of the teachers who responded
indicated that the ASAL students overcome these difficulties in form one, 59.1% said that the students overcome the challenges in form two while 9.1% and another 9.1% indicated they overcome them in forms three and four respectively. From the study, it implies that these ASAL students do settle immediately they go past form one. By the time they get to form two, they have adopted coping mechanisms that help them handle the challenges that they encounter.

Once the ASAL students have settled and overcome their challenges, the teachers reported they go on to perform well in the final examinations. Table 4.5 reveals how teachers rate the performance of ASAL students in their final examinations. Four (18.2%) of the teachers rated the ASAL students general examination performance as very good. Seven (31.8%) rated the ASAL students examination performance as fairly good, 7 (31.8%) found the ASAL students examination performance to be good. Four (18.2%) of the teachers found the ASAL students examination performance to be average.

Table 4.5 General performance of ASAL students in the final examination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ratings</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly Good</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The schools’ guidance and counselling department plays a pivotal role in helping ASAL students cope with the challenges that they encounter in school. The departments run various programmes that are of help to ASAL students. One such programme is the mentor/mentee programmes in which each student has a mentor who guides the student. The guidance and counselling departments also offer counselling services to the students. To cope with the situations at the school, 58.0% of the ASAL students opted to use the guidance and counselling programmes while 42.0% did not. Those who used guidance and counselling programmes reported that the programmes organized by the guidance and counselling department helped them adapt to the school well, giving some remedies for the challenges they faced, for example, providing them with personal effects. The guidance and counselling department helped some students to cope with the school routine by counselling students. ASAL students were of the opinion that the guidance and counselling personnel were understanding and caring.

Some students however, declined to use school guiding and counselling program. This was because some male ASAL students felt that the guidance and counselling departments were headed by women who could easily disclose their secrets to other women. Some of the male ASAL students were uncomfortable with sharing their problems with female teachers. There were some ASAL students who were scared about sharing their problems with other people. Another group of students were of the opinion
that some the guidance and counselling services could not add much value compared to the spiritual guidance from fellow students.

One of the major coping mechanisms employed by ASAL students is keeping to themselves and mainly interacting with fellow ASAL students. All the respondents agreed that this is a mechanism employed by ASAL students. It is within this social network that ASAL students are able to get help to deal with the challenges that they encounter in school.

### 4.5 Suggestions to Improve School Transition

The third objective of the study was to assess what needs to be done to make transition into national schools in Nairobi less challenging for students from ASAL areas. ASAL students, non-ASAL students, teachers, members of staff, the deputy principal and senior teachers were asked what they thought would help make the transition into national secondary schools in Nairobi less challenging for ASAL students. The respondents suggested some measures that would make the transition into national schools in Nairobi by ASAL students less challenging. Seven (30.7%) of the teachers, 5 (35.7%) of the support service providers and 11(14.75%) of the ASAL students indicated that ASAL students need to be taken through a more elaborate orientation programme that would prepare them both morally and psychologically on what was expected of them as they get into form one. This orientation would let the students from ASAL areas know what exactly was awaiting them and therefore be somehow prepared for their four years in
secondary school. After the orientation, it would be advisable to have a follow up so as to find out how the ASAL students were settling into the school programme.

The schools should organize talks by successful people who are from ASAL areas and were former students of these schools especially during orientation to address ASAL students. Such talks will provide a forum for the former students to motivate the current students as they share their experiences and how they overcame the challenges that they faced while in school.

Some teachers 10 (43.5%) were of the opinion, that there is a need to give motivation to ASAL students when they perform well in exams. For instance, the schools should probably appoint them as prefects and school counsels as this boosts their morale in that they are recognized as part of school community. In line with this motivation, the schools need to appreciate ASAL students when they do something good and encourage them in their weak areas.

The ASAL students need continuous financial support to enable them pay school fees and purchase personal effects. This was revealed by 19 (25.3%) of ASAL students, 22 (29.3%) non-ASAL students, 6 (26.1%) of teachers and 4 (28.6%) of the support service providers. The government should increase scholarships and funding to all students from poor families in these ASAL areas so as to minimize their financial challenges. The self-esteem of ASAL students can be improved if their basic needs are met. Leaders from
ASAL areas should be encouraged to identify needy students going to national schools so that adequate financial support can be given to them.

Ten (13.3%) of the ASAL students revealed that being given greater religious freedom would help Muslim ASAL students make the transition into national schools in Nairobi less challenging. During the FGD, female Muslim students indicated that they should be allowed to wear hijabs as this makes them feel their beliefs and way of life have been accommodated.

Guidance and counselling was mentioned as one of the ways that can help make the transition into national secondary schools less challenging. Thirty one (41.3%) of ASAL students, 30(45.3%) of non-ASAL students, 10(43.5%) and 4 (28.6%) of the support service providers revealed this. The respondents felt that guidance and counselling would help sort out most of the challenges that ASAL students experienced. The guidance and counselling needs to be constant with regular follow ups at class and house levels. There is a need for constant communication from chaplains, class teachers house teachers and prefects. Putting ASAL students into families where they learn from one another and allocating them guardians from form two.

4.6 Discussion

Majority of ASAL students, 58 (78.4%) indicated that they faced difficulties when they first reported to Nairobi national schools while 16 (21.6%) did not face challenges. The
study revealed that the ASAL students faced initial challenges which majority of the ASAL students overcome by the time they get to form two. From the teachers who responded, 22.7% of the teachers indicated that the ASAL students overcome these difficulties in form one, 59.1% said that the students overcome the challenges in form two while 9.1% and another 9.1% indicated they overcome them in forms three and four respectively.

The challenges that the students faced included financial difficulties, whereby some students had a problem in meeting their fee payment obligations. Some ASAL students had problems in coping with the change in climatic conditions which were very different from what they were used to at home. Students found the weather very cold. Being far away from home, contributed to many of the ASAL students being homesick and scared.

ASAL students faced social challenges. ASAL students faced discrimination from non ASAL students due to their colour and background. For many of the ASAL students coming to national secondary schools in Nairobi was the first time, they were coming into contact which students who were not similar to them. This in itself was a social challenge. Poole (1981) in a study in Australia on marginalized students found that such children have to contend with initial adjustment to schooling, uneasy transition, culture-conflict, feelings of alienation, loneliness, isolation, loss of self-esteem and a sense of loss. The study found that the discrimination made the ASAL students feel inferior socially and damaged their self-esteem this corresponds with the findings made by Poole.
Having benefitted from admission on lower marks into national secondary schools, meant that some students had challenges meeting their academic requirements. This is similar to a study by Epps (1972) on blacks students in United States of America who benefitted from quota admission. The study on black students revealed that upon arrival, the black students experienced a problem in meeting academic demands and standards. Coupled with poor English and Kiswahili language development, ASAL students had difficulties in their academic work. Language problems made it difficult for ASAL students to adequately interact with fellow students. This resulted in them keeping to themselves or only interacting with fellow students from their home areas. Teachers felt that the ASAL students’ poor language development in English and Kiswahili was a factor that affected their academic performance and interaction with other students. According to the ASAL students, inability to communicate in the informal language ‘sheng’ made students feel left out in social interactions with other non-ASAL students. Inability to communicate in ‘sheng’ contributed to non-ASAL students not fully interacting with ASAL students. This made some non-ASAL students to look down upon ASAL students. The non-ASAL students also looked down upon ASAL students due to the fact that they had gained admission to the national school on lower marks. This finding concurs with a study carried out by Njoroge (2008) who found out that in schools, different cultures exist that relate to ethnicity, social class and personal view. This results in some culture being regarded as inferior to others.
Majority of ASAL students received support from fellow ASAL students on how to meet the various challenges that they face. Forty-four point six percent (44.6%) received support from friends from their home districts. 35.1% received support from friends from other ASAL areas. To fit in the school routine, different people helped these students with 8.7% of the respondents getting assistance from the teachers, 13.2% by classmates, 14.5% received assistance from students from other classes while others either received assistance from fellow ASAL students, prefects or didn’t receive any assistance at all. Even though 92.0% received assistance in one way or the other, only 8% of the respondents did not receive any assistance at all.

To cope with the challenges they face in national secondary school in Nairobi, ASAL students tend to keep to themselves. Njoroge (2008) in a study on school culture found that schools have a dominant culture and sub-culture. The sub-culture the study revealed is usually a result of problems or experiences that are shared by members of a group. ASAL students therefore keep to themselves because of their shared problems. They do not interact easily with non-ASAL students. This is because they feel that only their own understand them and are in a position to help them face the challenges that they encounter in school. Hawely (1981) observes that members of minority groups protect themselves by attempting to isolate themselves from the larger group. Isolation helps in that the students keep contact with those with whom they share a similar background.
ASAL students learn to persevere and with time they are able to face the challenges that they encounter in school. Teachers found ASAL students well-behaved, hard working, responsible and cooperative. These are some of the traits that enabled ASAL students to meet the challenges that they encountered in school. Apple (1990) observes that students learn certain identifiable social norms mainly by coping with day to day encounters and tasks in classroom life. ASAL students learn these norms which enable them to overcome the challenges that they face in national secondary schools.

National secondary schools have put programmes in place that help the ASAL students face the challenges that they encounter is school. The guidance and counselling departments in these schools have various programmes in place that help students. Some of these include mentor/mentee programmes, peer group counselling and ‘school families’ in which these students belong to. Majority of these programmes are for all students and not necessarily tailored to ASAL students. Schools also help identify students in need of financial assistance and link them up to sponsors for example JFK and CDF. Some ASAL students are beneficiaries of JFK, CDF and UNICEF sponsorship. Schools at times call upon the student community to give assistance to needy students by donating personal effects or collecting funds to pay school fees for the needy students. Epps (1972) in the study in United States of America observes that institutions have to assume responsibility for the student’s performance. National secondary schools assume these responsibilities by addressing some of the challenges that ASAL students face so as to enable the ASAL students to concentrate on their studies.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to investigate the challenges and coping mechanisms of students from ASAL areas admitted to national secondary schools in Nairobi. The following objectives guided the study. This chapter provides the summary of the findings, conclusion and recommendations for possible action are made and suggestions of areas for further research are also provided.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study revealed that ASAL students admitted to national secondary schools in Nairobi encountered challenges. One of the challenges they faced was being in a new physical and social environment. The climate in Nairobi was so different from what the students were used to back home. Most of the students found Nairobi very cold compared to their home districts. On the social front, this was the first time that some of the students were coming into contact with students from other parts of the country. They were now in a multiethnic environment that was completely new to ASAL students. Prior to coming to Nairobi, majority of the ASAL students had schooled only among students from their own community.
Second, ASAL students faced financial challenges. Some of the students came from home where they were unable to meet their financial obligations in school. To these students, the financial challenge was an issue of concern since they did not know whether they would be able to pursue their secondary education to completion. The third challenge that ASAL students faced was the academic challenge. Having being admitted to the national schools on the quota system of selection, some of the students were admitted with slightly lower marks than their fellow students. This meant that the ASAL students started Form one from a disadvantaged position academically. Their academic challenge was further compounded with the fact that some students from ASAL areas were not competent in English and Kiswahili languages. Poor use of English affected their performance in several subjects since this was the language of instruction. The weakness in Kiswahili meant that they did not do very well in the subject.

The fourth challenge ASAL students had was a social challenge. They were not able to interact quickly and freely with other students. The ASAL students’ poor language development was a source of low esteem to the students and they tended to keep to themselves. ASAL students did not know how to speak sheng, the informal language spoken by the rest of the students. This meant that they were not socially accepted among their peers. The Muslim female students did not feel so free in school since they were not allowed to wear their head scarves.
The study revealed that the challenges the ASAL students encountered were prevalent in form one, most of the ASAL students were able to overcome these challenges by the time they got to form two. The ASAL students were able to overcome the challenges they faced by persevering and working hard in their academic work. They learnt to wear warm clothes so as to bear with the cold climate. Majority of the ASAL students sought help from their fellow ASAL students who gave them advice and helped them around school. ASAL students were comfortable among their own since they felt understood. The various programmes run by the schools’ guidance and counselling departments aid ASAL students in dealing with the challenges that they encounter in school. Some of the programmes that are run are like the mentor/mentee programme. Some ASAL students opted not to use the guidance and counselling department help since they felt that the department was not able to adequately help them. Some of these students decided to keep to themselves. The schools help ASAL students deal with their financial challenges by getting bursaries for some ASAL students, getting scholarships from organizations like Jomo Kenyatta Foundation. Some of the ASAL students get sponsored by UNICEF, other get financial aid from CDF.

The national secondary schools in Nairobi can help make the transition into school for ASAL students less challenging by having orientation programmes that are particularly tailored to the ASAL students. Regular guidance and counselling should be given to ASAL students. Former students from these schools who were from ASAL areas should be called upon to speak to current students so as to motivate them and share their
experiences with the current students. The schools should get a regular source of income that can help support needy students from ASAL areas. The leaders from ASAL areas should set up funds to help needy students admitted to national secondary schools.

5.3 Conclusions

The study concluded that upon arriving to national secondary schools in Nairobi, ASAL students face initial challenges which include change in the physical environment, they find Nairobi very cold compared to their home district. Some ASAL students face financial difficulties in meeting their fee payment and buying of personal effects. The ASAL students have poor language development in English and Kiswahili which causes difficulties for them in terms of social interaction and relationships with non-ASAL students. The language problem affects ASAL students’ academic performance. Having qualified for admission on slightly lower marks poses academic challenges for ASAL students. Challenges that the ASAL students face are at the initial stage with many of the students overcoming these challenges by the time they get to form two.

Coping mechanisms that ASAL students employ include persevering and dressing warm to cope with the climate. They rely on their fellow students from ASAL areas to help them face the challenges that they encounter. The schools have also put in place various measures to help the ASAL students handle the challenges that they face.
In order to make the transition into national secondary schools less challenging, the schools need to have elaborate orientation programmes tailored for the ASAL students. Schools should provide regular guidance and counselling for ASAL students and set up fund to cater for needy students admitted to national secondary schools in Nairobi.

5.4 Policy Recommendations
Arising from the findings and conclusions of this study, based on the research objectives, the following recommendations were made:

i. Have a more elaborate orientation programme tailored for ASAL students so as to prepare them both morally and psychologically for life in the national secondary school.

ii. In boys schools, have male teachers in guidance and counselling departments so as to encourage male students to seek the services of the guidance and counselling department.

iii. The ASAL students need continuous support particularly financial support to enable them to pay school fees and purchase personal effects. Government increasing scholarships and funding all students from poor families in these ASAL areas can minimize these challenges.

iv. The self-esteem of ASAL students can be improved if their basic needs are met by encouraging leaders from ASAL areas to identify needy students going to national schools.
v. Organize talks by successful people who were from ASAL areas and were former students of these schools especially during orientation to address them.

vi. School administrations should allow Muslim female students to wear the hijab as this makes them feel that their beliefs and way of life have been accommodated.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

a) This study was carried out in national secondary schools in Nairobi that admit students through the quota system of selection. Similar studies should be carried out in other national schools in the country which select students using the quota system of selection.

b) This study focused on ASAL students from ASAL areas categorized as 100% from North Eastern Kenya and Upper Eastern district. Further studies need to be carried out in other ASAL areas to find out the challenges that students from these areas face.
REFERENCES


Dear Sir/Madam,

This questionnaire hopes to benefit from your experience as a teacher by getting your views on the challenges faced by students from ASAL (Arid and Semi-Arid Lands) and how they cope with these challenges. Your responses will be treated with confidentiality and pooled with those from other secondary schools. Your sincere views and suggestions will contribute highly to coming up with a collective view on this topic.

Section I: Background Information

1) Gender  Male [    ] Female [    ]

2) Which class(s) do you teach? ______________________________

3) What subjects do you teach? _______________________________

4) What is your teaching experience?
   5 years and below [    ]
   6 to 10 years [    ]
   10 to 15 years [    ]
   16 years and above [    ]

5) How long have you been in your current station?
   5 years and below [    ]
   6 to 10 years [    ]
   10 to 15 years [    ]
   16 years and above [    ]

Section II: School Experience
6) Do students from ASAL areas face any initial difficulties upon reporting to Form One?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

7) If, yes what are some of these initial difficulties that students from ASAL areas face upon reporting to Form One?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

8) At what point of their study do these students overcome the initial difficulties

End of Form One [ ]

In Form Two [ ]

In Form Three [ ]

Any other specify____________________

9) How would you rate ASAL students’ initial academic performance?

Excellent [ ] Fairly good [ ] Good [ ] Average [ ]

Any other (specify) _________________________________

10) How would you rate ASAL students’ attitude towards academic work?

Excellent [ ] Fairly good [ ] Good [ ] Average [ ]

Any other (specify) _________________________________
11) How would you rate ASAL students’ attitude towards co-curricular activities?
   Excellent [ ]  Fairly good [ ]  Good [ ]  Average [ ]
   Any other (specify) ____________________________

12) How would you rate ASAL students’ interaction with other students?
   Excellent [ ]  Fairly good [ ]  Good [ ]  Average [ ]
   Any other (specify) ____________________________

13) Who helps the students from ASAL areas settle into the school programme and routine?
    __________________________________________________________

14) Do ASAL students consult you when they have a problem?
    Yes [ ]  No [ ]

15) How do students from ASAL overcome the school challenges they face?
    a) ______________________________________________________
    b) ______________________________________________________

16) How would you rate the performance of students from ASAL areas in the final national examination?
    Very Good [ ]  Fairly Good [ ]  Good [ ]  Average [ ]  Poor [ ]

17) Comment on the following aspects of the students from ASAL areas

   **Key SA-Strongly Agree A= Agree N- Neutral D –Disagree SD- Strongly Disagree**
   
   a) Students from ASAL areas are well behaved.
      
      SA [ ]  A [ ]  N [ ]  D [ ]  SD [ ]
      
   b) Students from ASAL areas are hard working.
c) Students from ASAL areas are responsible.

SA [ ] A [ ] N [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

d) Students from ASAL areas are co-operative.

SA [ ] A [ ] N [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

e) Students from ASAL areas easily interact with members of the school community.

SA [ ] A [ ] N [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

f) Students from ASAL areas keep to themselves.

SA [ ] A [ ] N [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

18) What measures does the school take to ensure students from ASAL areas settle into the school routine

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

19) What else should be done to help students from ASAL areas cope with the new school environment?

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX TWO

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ASAL STUDENTS

Dear Student,

You have been chosen to participate in this research which seeks to get your views on the challenges and coping mechanisms of students from ASAL (Arid and Semi-Arid Lands) areas admitted to national secondary schools in Nairobi. Your most sincere view is all that is required. What you write will not be shown to your teacher or any other person. Please feel free to add any other comments.

Section I: Background Information

1) Home district:_______________

2) Class/Form_______________

3) Sex: Male [    ] Female [   ]

4) Age_______________

5) What type of school was your primary school?
   Day school [    ] Boarding School [   ]

6) What were your feelings upon receiving admission to this school?
   Excited [   ] Scared [   ] Disappointed [   ]

7) Had you been to Nairobi before?
   Yes [   ] No [    ]

8) If yes, how many times had you been to Nairobi before?
   Once [   ] Twice [   ] More than twice [   ]

Section II: School Experience

9) What was your first impression when you reported to this school?__________

__________________________________________________________
10) Upon reporting to Form One, were you given some one to show you around?

   Yes [ ]   No [ ]

11) If, yes, who was it? ________________________

12) If, no how did you find your way around? __________________

   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

13) a) Is coming to study in this school in Nairobi of benefit to you?

   Yes [ ]   No [ ]

   b) Give reasons for your answer above____________________________________

   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

14) Did you face any difficulties when you first reported to school?

   Yes [ ]   No [ ]

   a) If yes, what were the difficulties that you faced

   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

15) Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following ideas. Tick only one answer.

   Key SA-Strongly Agree A= Agree N- Neutral D –Disagree SD- Strongly Disagree

98
a) I felt warmly welcomed by teachers when I came to Form One.
   SA [ ] A [ ] N [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

b) I felt warmly welcomed by students when I came to Form One.
   SA [ ] A [ ] N [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

c) As a new student, I faced a lot of hardships.
   SA [ ] A [ ] N [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

d) I found it difficult to catch up academically.
   SA [ ] A [ ] N [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

e) Adjusting to the school routine was easy.
   SA [ ] A [ ] N [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

f) Making friends was easy.
   SA [ ] A [ ] N [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

g) I had a hard time getting used to the teachers.
   SA [ ] A [ ] N [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

h) I felt a high level of support from the teachers in terms of respect, acceptance and caring.
   SA [ ] A [ ] N [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

i) I experienced discrimination from my fellow students.
   SA [ ] A [ ] N [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

j) I felt accepted by my fellow classmates.
   SA [ ] A [ ] N [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

k) I felt rejected by my fellow classmates.
I felt misunderstood by students from urban areas.

I received a lot of support from students from ASAL areas.

It took me a long time to get used to the climate.

It took me a long time to get used to the school diet.

The school facilities are appropriate.

The sleeping arrangements are appropriate.

Section III: Coping Mechanisms

Who are the people that have helped you most to fit into the school routine?

a) Teachers

b) Classmates

c) Students from other classes

d) School workers

e) Others specify ________________________

Have you received any help from students from your home area?

Yes [ ]  No [ ]
18) If, yes what kind of help have you received? ___________________
__________________________________________________________

19) Do you have friends from other parts of the country?

   Yes [    ]   No [    ]

20) If yes, are these friends from urban or rural areas?

   Urban area [    ]   Rural area [    ]

21) Who has offered you the greatest support?

   Friends from my home district [    ]
   Friends from other ASAL areas [    ]
   Friends from other parts of the country [    ]
   Friends from Nairobi [    ]

22) Have you used the school’s guidance and counselling programme?

   Yes [    ]   No [    ]

23) Please give reasons for your answer in 18 above______________________

   _____________________________________________________________

24) Compared to other students in your class, what is your rank in class?
   a)  Top 5 [    ]
   b)  Top 10 [    ]
   c)  Top 20 [    ]
   d)  Top 30 [    ]
e) Others [ ]

25) What continues to be a challenge to you? ____________________________
______________________________________________________________

26) How have you managed to face the above mentioned challenges?
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

27) Do you know of any student from ASAL areas who joined Form 1 with you but
    have since dropped out?
    Yes [ ]    No [ ]

28) What do you think were the reasons for dropping out of school?
    _____________________________________________________________
    _____________________________________________________________
    _____________________________________________________________
    _____________________________________________________________

29) What two things must a new student from ASAL areas do in order to fit in the
    school?
    a) _____________________________
    b) _____________________________

30) What two things should the school do to enable students from ASAL areas fit
    easily into the school?
    a) _____________________________
    b) _____________________________
Dear Student,
You have been chosen to participate in this research which seeks to get your views on the challenges and coping mechanisms of students from ASAL (Arid and Semi-Arid Lands) areas admitted to national secondary schools in Nairobi. Your most sincere view is all that is required. What you write will not be shown to your teacher or any other person. Please feel free to add any other comments.

Section 1: Background Information

1) Home district:_______________

2) Class/Form_______________

3) Sex: Male [   ] Female [   ]

4) Age___________________

5) Do you have any friend from ASAL(Arid and Semi-Arid Lands)?
   Yes [   ] No [   ]
   Give reasons for your answer above________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

6) I frequently interact with students from ASAL areas
   Yes [   ] No [   ]

7) Have you ever gone out of your way to help a student from ASAL areas?
   Yes [   ] No [   ]

8) If, yes what type of help have you given?
   __________________________________________________________
9) Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following ideas. Tick only one answer.

**Key SA - Strongly Agree A - Agree N - Neutral D - Disagree SD - Strongly disagree**

a) Students from ASAL areas make friends quickly.

SA [ ] A [ ] N [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

b) Students from ASAL areas face a lot of hardships in school.

SA [ ] A [ ] N [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

c) Others students discriminate against students from ASAL areas.

SA [ ] A [ ] N [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

d) As new students, ASAL students find it difficult to catch up academically.

SA [ ] A [ ] N [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

e) Students from ASAL areas are at times misunderstood by other students from urban areas.

SA [ ] A [ ] N [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

f) ASAL students adjust to the school routine easily.

SA [ ] A [ ] N [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

g) Students from ASAL areas are accepted by their fellow classmates.

SA [ ] A [ ] N [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

h) Students from ASAL areas tend to keep to themselves.

SA [ ] A [ ] N [ ] D [ ] SD [ ]

10) Do you think that students from ASAL face any challenges in school?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]
11) Give reasons for your answer in No 10 above ______________________
______________________________
____________________________________

12) How do students from ASAL areas deal with the challenges they face in school? ____________________________

13) What two things must a new student from ASAL areas do in order to fit in the school?
   a) ____________________________________
   b) ____________________________________

14) What two things should the school do to enable students from ASAL areas fit easily into the school?
   a) ____________________________________
   b) ____________________________________
Dear Sir/Madam,

This questionnaire hopes to benefit from your experience by getting your views on the challenges faced by students from ASAL (Arid and Semi-Arid Lands) and how they cope with these challenges. Your responses will be treated with confidentiality and pooled with those from other secondary schools. Your sincere views and suggestions will contribute highly to coming up with a collective view on this topic. Thank you

1) Gender  Male[ ] Female[ ]

2) What is your work experience?
   5 years and below [ ]
   6 to 10 years [ ]
   10 to 15 years [ ]
   16 years and above [ ]

3) How long have you been in your current station?
   5 years and below [ ]
   6 to 10 years [ ]
   10 to 15 years [ ]
   16 years and above [ ]

4) What department are you in?
   i) Guidance and Counselling [ ]
   ii) House Master/Mistress [ ]
   iii) Matron [ ]
   iv) Nursing [ ]
5) How often do you interact with ASAL students?
   i) Frequently [   ]
   ii) Rarely [   ]
   iii) Never [   ]

6) Please give reasons for your answer in 5 above____________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________

7) Comment on the following aspects of the students from ASAL areas.

Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following ideas. Tick only one answer.

Key SA- Strongly Agree A- Agree N-Neutral D-Disagree SD-Strongly disagree

   a) ASAL students initially face difficulties adjusting to the school routine.
      SA [   ]   A [   ]   N [   ]   D [   ]   SD [   ]

   b) Students from ASAL areas participate actively in the school programmes.
      SA [   ]   A [   ]   N [   ]   D [   ]   SD [   ]

   c) ASAL students get along well with other students.
      SA [   ]   A [   ]   N [   ]   D [   ]   SD [   ]

   d) Students from ASAL areas easily interact with members of the school community.
      SA [   ]   A [   ]   N [   ]   D [   ]   SD [   ]

   e) Students from ASAL areas are cooperative.
      SA [   ]   A [   ]   N [   ]   D [   ]   SD [   ]

   f) Students from ASAL areas keep to themselves.
      SA [   ]   A [   ]   N [   ]   D [   ]   SD [   ]

   g) ASAL students help their fellow ASAL students adjust to the school programme.
      SA [   ]   A [   ]   N [   ]   D [   ]   SD [   ]
h) Non-ASAL students help ASAL students adjust to the school programme.

8) What particular areas do ASAL students have challenges in?
   a) ____________________________________________________________
   b) ____________________________________________________________
   c) ____________________________________________________________

9) Are you aware of any student from ASAL areas who has dropped out of school?
   Yes [ ]  No [ ]

10) What in your opinion may have been the reason for dropping out of school?
    ____________________________________________________________
    ____________________________________________________________
    ____________________________________________________________
    ____________________________________________________________

11) How do students from ASAL areas deal with the challenges that they face in
    school? ______________________________________________________
    ____________________________________________________________
    ____________________________________________________________

12) What does your department do to help ASAL students meet the school
    challenges? ____________________________________________________

13) What should the school do to make ASAL students make a smooth transition to
    secondary school?
    ____________________________________________________________
    ____________________________________________________________

APPENDIX FIVE

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1) What is the total number of students in the school?

2) How many students are from the ASAL areas?

3) Do all the students selected to join the school from ASAL areas report?

4) Does the KCPE performance of students from ASAL areas affect them once they get to Form One?

5) How many students from ASAL areas have completed the four year secondary cycle between 2006 and 2009?

6) Upon reporting to Form One, how easily do they fit into the school programme?

7) What are some of the challenges that students from ASAL areas face in school?

8) How do the students from ASAL areas overcome the challenges that they face in school?

9) Comment on the following aspects of the students from ASAL areas

   a) Cooperation with the rest of the students
   b) Extra-curricular activities
   c) Behaviour
   d) Diligence
   e) Responsibility

10) What measures does the school have in place that help students from ASAL areas settle into the school programme?
APPENDIX SIX

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

1) How were your feelings upon receiving admission to this school?
2) What was it like upon reporting to school?
3) What are some of the things that impressed you about the school?
4) What were the initial challenges?
5) How did you initially fare on in your academics?
6) How have you managed to deal with the various challenges that you experience?
7) Are there certain issues that remain challenging to you?
8) How are you coping with issues that challenge you?
9) Describe your relationship with non-ASAL students?
10) What does the school do to help ASAL students make the transition into national schools in Nairobi?
11) What more can the school do to help students from ASAL areas make the transition into national secondary schools in Nairobi?
APPENDIX SEVEN

Years of experience for Teachers.

Years of experience of support service providers.
APPENDIX EIGHT

Years taken by Teachers in current station

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<th>Frequency in Percentage</th>
<th>5 years and below</th>
<th>6 to 10 years</th>
<th>10 to 15 years</th>
<th>16 years and above</th>
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<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17.4</td>
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</table>

Years taken by support service providers in their current station.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency in Percentage</th>
<th>5 Years and below</th>
<th>6-10 Years</th>
<th>10-15 Years</th>
<th>16 Years and Above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>28.6</td>
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