

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that influenced performance in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE). The setting of the study was central Imenti Division in Meru District.

There had an outcry from the general public about the poor performance in the district with each blaming the other for the poor performance. Despite what had been said, there was no empirical evidence to prove the case. There was therefore the need for research in order to analyse and present the situation as objectively as possible with the view of identifying the factors responsible for this state of affairs.

Data were collected from the headteachers, teachers, education officers and chairmen of the school committees by means of questionnaire, Interviews and observation schedules. The descriptive statistics were used to analyse and present. The analysed data is presented in percentages and tables of frequency distribution.

The study revealed that certain factors affected performance in the KCPE. Some of these factors were lack of adequate learning resources, frequent transfer of teachers, heavy teaching loads, inadequate preparations by the teachers, inadequate and substandard methods of evaluation, teachers' low morale, inadequate revision by the candidates, headteachers poor administrative styles, inadequate supervision and inspection of schools, lack of in-service or refresher courses for teachers, absenteeism among pupils and inadequate parental involvement in the learning affairs of their children. Finally, some community factors were found to have adversely affected performance. These included consumption of the local brew, circumcision of both boys and girls, use of child labour especially in the cultivation of both food and cash crops, presence of quarries and clanism.

These findings should be taken seriously by the administrators; leaders at all levels, the inspectorate, parents and teachers so that both preventive and curative measures to the problem are sought. This will yield good fruits not only for the division but the district as a whole.