

**PARENTS' AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND
EXPECTATIONS OF FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION AND
THEIR IMPLEMENTATION EXPERIENCES; THE CASE
OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KAMBU EDUCATIONAL
ZONE, KIBWEZI DISTRICT, KENYA.**

BY

MATEMU THERESIA K.

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF
EDUCATION IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A MASTER OF
PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN GUIDANCE AND
COUNSELLING**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
MOI UNIVERSITY**

OCTOBER, 2010

DECLARATION

DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University. No part of this work may be reproduced without the prior permission of the author and/or Moi university.

NAME: Matemua Theresia K.
EDU/PGGC/1007/2004

Signature.

Date.

DECLARATION BY THE SUPERVISORS

This thesis has been submitted to the School of Graduate Studies with our approval as the candidate's Supervisors.

Mr. Shadrack Ogoma
Lecturer, Department of Psychology
School of Education
Moi University
P.O. Box 3900
ELDOROT.

Signature

Date

Ms. Juliet Macharia
Senior Lecturer, Department of Communication Skills
School of Education
Moi University
P.O. Box 3900
ELDOROT

Signature.....

Date.....

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my husband Isaac Matemu and our children Nthautha, Kithyo, Ndanu and Nthome for their inspiration, support and prayers during my studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the process of carrying out this study, I received input, support and encouragement from a number of people. It is through their selfless resourcefulness and availability that this study has become a success.

First and foremost, to God be the glory and honour for sustaining my life and answering my prayers. Special thanks go to Mr. Shadrack Ogoma and Ms Juliet Macharia, my lecturers and supervisors for their professional guidance and supervision. Many thanks to Dr. Anne Kisilu and Dr. Kisilu Kitainge for their patience and selfless advice. Likewise, I thank Dr. Munene Mwaniki and Mr. Kiliku Musyoka for helping me during the study period. I would like to express my gratitude to the head teachers, their deputies, the teachers and parents in Kambu Educational Zone who participated in the study and gave the required information and data.

Last but not least, my greatest debt goes to my husband Isaac for his invaluable encouragement, perseverance, support and prayers during the whole period of my study. He had to suspend important family projects to finance and to allow me time for this study. God bless him abundantly for without him, this work would not have seen the light of day. I sincerely thank our children Nthautha, Kithyo, Ndanu and Nthome for their financial and moral support. They continued to encourage me to strive to attain my goal even when the battle appeared lost.

God bless you all, you made a difference in my life.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the perceptions, expectations and experiences of teachers and parents of Kambu Educational Zone as partners in the implementation of the on-going Free Primary Education in Kenya. The main objective of the study was to establish and document the perceptions and expectations of these stakeholders as vital reference material as it relates to funding, physical facilities, staffing and other resources required for use in the day-to-day running of the schools and in their endeavour to address the emerging implementation challenges of Free Primary Education. The study was also expected to establish the programme's effects on changes in enrolment and on the quality of learning in the schools.

The Survey Research Design was used for the study. Questionnaires, interviews, school records and observation were used as instruments for collection of data. A prepared questionnaire for teachers was administered by the researcher with the help of the Deputy Head teachers in the sampled schools while face-to-face conversation-like interviews were conducted by the researcher and recorded for ease of interpretation later. Data was collected from eight randomly sampled public primary schools in Kambu zone. From each selected school, eight teachers were randomly selected while the head-teachers were interviewed purposively. Seven parents were randomly selected from each school while the PTA chairperson of each school was interviewed purposively. The participants were interviewed within their respective schools. The interviews focused on the participant's individual perceptions and experiences of the programme. The total number of participants was 136.

Data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitative data was presented using narratives from themes that emerged from respondents, the expressions they used and the emotions observed during the interviews. Quantitative data was presented using descriptive statistics by use of tables. Results from the study indicated that although parents had initially expected the government to have taken up 100% responsibility of funding, staffing, building, provision of school uniform and feeding, six years down the line, they had realized that in order to benefit fully from FPE, they had to play some roles. Responses from the teachers indicated that they were unhappy about their classroom performance, poor working conditions and indiscipline among pupils.

From the researcher's discussions with parents, it emerged that Free Primary Education meant different things to different parents and this influenced their expectations from the schools and also from the government. The responses in the teachers' questionnaires reflected their feelings, challenges expectations, suggestions and opinions on the programme. However, what appeared to emerge from all the teachers participating was the problem of high work load, inadequate time for individual attention to pupils and lack of motivation. The findings of the study indicated that the parents and teachers in Kambu appreciated the government efforts in providing Free Primary Education and acknowledged that provision of learning and teaching materials was the most significant accomplishment of FPE. Their responses further revealed that both groups still expected more from the government than they were already receiving.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENT	PAGE
Declaration	
Dedication	
Acknowledgement	
Abstract	
Table Of Contents	
List Of Abbreviations And Acronyms	
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	
1.0 Introduction	
1.1 Background To The Study	
1.2 Statement Of The Problem	
1.3 Objectives Of The Study	
1.4 The Research Questions	
1.5 Justification Of The Study	
1.6 Significance Of The Study	
1.7 Scope And Limitations	
1.8 Assumptions Of The Study	
1.9 Theoretical Framework	
1.10 Operational Definition Of Terms	
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	
2.0 Introduction	
2.1 Objectives Of Primary Education In Kenya	
2.2 The Goals Of Free Primary Education	
2.3 Financing Of Free Primary Education In Kenya	
2.4 The Learning Environment And Adequacy Of Facilities	
2.5 Global Trends In Provision Of Universal Basic Education	
2.6 Roles In Provision Of Learning/Teaching Materials	
2.7 Perceptions	
2.8 Communication On Roles Regarding Provision Of Learning/Teaching Facilities	
2.9 Parents' And Teachers' Perceptions Of Free Primary Education	
2.10 Parents' And Teachers' Expectations Of Free Primary Education	
2.11 Parents' And Teachers' Experiences Of The Implementation Of Fpe	
2.12 Importance Of Guidance And Counselling	
2.13 Conclusion	
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....	
3.0 Introduction	
3.1 Research Design	
3.2 Area Of Study	
3.3 Target Population	
3.4 Sampling Technique	
3.5 Data Collection Procedures	
3.6 Instruments For Data Collection	
3.7 Validity And Reliability Of Data Collection Instruments	

<u>3.8 Method Of Data Analysis</u>	
<u>CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION</u>	
<u>4.0Introduction</u>	
<u>4.1Key Issues And Results From Interviews</u>	
(i) Summary Responses obtained from Interviews with Parents	69
(ii) Summary Responses obtained from the Teachers' Questionnaire	77
(iii) Summary Responses obtained from Interviews with School Administrators.....	83
(iv) Summary Results from Observations.....	88
(v) Summary Results obtained from Office Records	90
<u>Conclusion</u>	
<u>CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	
<u>5.0Introduction</u>	
<u>5.1 Discussion</u>	
<u>5.2 Conclusion</u>	
<u>5.3 Recommendations</u>	
<u>5.4Suggestions For Further Research</u>	
<u>REFERENCES</u>	
<u>Appendices</u>	
<u>Appendix 1: Interview Questions School Administrators (Head-Teachers)</u>	
<u>Appendix 2: Interview Questions For Parents (Including Pta Chairpersons)</u>	
<u>Appendix 3: Questionnaire For Teachers</u>	
Appendix 4: Authorization Of Research.....	
Appendix 5: Research Permit.	

LIST OF TABLES

1. Sample population
2. Percentages of Parents' Perceptions of their role in FPE
3. Percentages of teachers' perceptions of FPE and the implementation experiences

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

FPE	Free Primary Education
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
PDE	Provincial Director of Education
DEO	District Education Officer
ZIS	Zonal Inspector of Schools
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
S I M B A	School Instructional Materials Bank Account
TSC	Teachers Service Commission
KNUT	Kenya National Union of Teachers
AEO	Assistant Education Officer
CBE	Curriculum Based Establishment
QAS	Quality Assurance and Standards
MOEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
NARC	National Rainbow Coalition

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This chapter gives a brief background to the study, states the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, the scope, justification, assumptions, theoretical framework, definition of operational terms and the limitations.

1.1 Background to the Study

The Kenya Government declared full free primary education in all public primary schools in the country in January, 2003. Up to end of 2002, education at all levels in Kenya was a cost-sharing venture between parents and the government (Kamunge Report, 1988, Sessional Paper No. 8). Quality education had thus become almost unaffordable by most poor families, a situation that contributed to the high level of illiteracy, high school drop-out rates and child-labour in the country. Under those circumstances, the study assumed that the government announcement of free primary education must have been received with varying individual perceptions and expectations by different parents and teachers.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Nairobi Office, (2005) records that the main goal for Free Primary Education was to provide basic education to all school-age children, to address the problem of high illiteracy in the country, to boost education of the girl-child and to realize the Children' Act, 2001 which provides for compulsory and Free Primary Education for all children as their basic right. This study established that despite these good

intentions by the government, the rate at which enrolment increased from January 2003 was in-proportionate with that of increasing the human and physical facilities in the public schools to meet the new educational demands.

Sifuna (1990) explores the steps in the provision of primary education and records that since independence, no other field of national development has invited more criticism, experimentation or renovation than education in Kenya. He explains that from 1956 to 1964, primary education took 8 years, then from 1964 to 1985 it changed to 7 years and from 1986 to date, it takes 8 years. During this period of time, the government had tried to provide Free Primary Education but in phases and only in selected districts like Turkana, Wajir, Marsabit and Moyale based on the level of poverty in those districts. The reason for this selection was to provide more educational opportunities to poor communities where 35% of the school age children were not going to school because parents could not afford to pay the levies charged (Sifuna 1990). Some of the classes that benefited were Classes I-IV and later Classes I-VI. The government effort aimed at ensuring that at the end, all children would get access to basic education. Sifuna further argues that since science and technology continue to affect the society's future, every country should put in place national educational standards which ensure continual national survival in the global competition. In the researcher's view, it is perhaps in the light of Sifuna's above observations that the Kenya Government has now organized for Free Primary Education in all public primary schools in the country so that every child, regardless of sex, social or economic status can get access to basic education. Since Kenya is a poor developing country, (Koech, 1999, and Njeru, Sunday Nation, December, 2005), it is the argument of the researcher that basic education for every child is the best utility tool for fighting poverty and raising the living standards of the people of

Kambu in Kibwezi district which is a semi-arid part of Eastern Kenya. This feeling is shared by Anyanwu (1998) who records that, “It is the human resource of a nation, rather than her physical capital and material resources, which ultimately determines the character and pace of its economic and social development.” (p.11-12)

The people of Kambu zone described their soils as fertile and only lacking adequate rain and the necessary knowledge and technology to make it productive all year round. Although rain is a natural endowment which human beings have little control of, the researcher felt that the knowledge, skills and technology that come with education are just what these people need to access so that they can manipulate and contain their poverty situation.

Psacharopoulos (1990) advances the view that countries that have invested in primary literacy programmes have developed faster than those that have not given priority to primary education. The same view is echoed by UNESCO (2005) where it is argued that, “There is no development where there is no education.” (Nairobi Office, 2005, p.33)

In the researcher’s view, based on the above quotes, education is so crucial since it determines the destiny of individuals, counties and societies. The justification here is that with a good stock of educated citizens, they can utilize the knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired during the learning process to effectively manipulate the environment and all the passive resources available to create wealth and improve their own health and living standards. The observations by Sifuna, Psacharopoulos, Anyanwu and UNESCO perhaps explain why Kenya has witnessed so many Education Commissions and Reports from Working Parties (the 1909 Fraser Report

to the 1999 Koech Report), all of which were set up to look into and make recommendations for renovation and improvement of education in the country to relate suitably with the changing personal, national and global needs alongside the dynamic technological advancements.

The history of provision of Free Primary Education dates back to Kenya's independence in 1963 when according to Sifuna (1990)), the government committed itself to provision of a minimum of seven years of Free Primary Education to all. By 1969, the government had built many primary schools through government grants in its endeavour to meet this goal. In 1973, the government attempted to provide free education through a presidential decree which abolished fees payment in class I to V in all districts in Kenya (Sifuna, 1990). As a result, enrolment shot up in schools. However, although this was a good gesture because it aimed at giving equal educational opportunities to all children including the less privileged ones such as girls, the persons with disabilities and those from very poor families. The government did not provide alternative ways for the schools to get the lost revenue to respond to the overwhelming school enrolment and its new demands countrywide.

By 1974, as Sifuna (1990) further reports that some schools recorded as many as five streams per class yet the free education did not imply a corresponding rise in taxes to enable the government to provide adequate funds and facilities to the schools. On staffing, Sifuna notes that out of the 90,000 teachers required that time only 40,000 were professionally qualified. The demand on the government was so high that it could not meet it. Schools also found it difficult to operate. School committees thus found loopholes to introduce many levies in the name of building funds, tuition fees, activity fees and examination fees which some parents were unable to pay. This led to

drop out of pupils from poor backgrounds as education became more of cost-sharing than free. Although the government tried to abolish these levies through official circulars, schools continued to charge them alongside the government standardized primary school fees of Ksh.60/= per year. These levies made education very expensive because the cost of schooling quadrupled (Sifuna, 1990).

From 1985 to 2002, government guidelines on education clearly indicated that education was a cost-sharing venture and stipulated which role was going to fall under parents and which one the government would play. The government provided and paid trained teachers and also checked on the standards of education being offered in the schools through its Inspection Unit of the Ministry of Education. Where schools felt that more teachers were needed, the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) which is the official parent-elected management body for each primary school mobilized the parents to employ them. The parents and the community served by the respective school used a self-help approach popularly known as “harambee” to raise funds for buildings, equipment, PTA staff salaries and all other material and physical teaching/learning needs. These shared government/parent roles were clearly known and well played.

However, from January 2003, the government took up the responsibility of providing Free Primary Education to all children in all public primary schools in the country. This was universal and catered for all classes from Class I to Class VIII as compared to the earlier system where the government only catered for specified classes and in some cases specified districts based on the level of poverty and hardships in those selected districts. This study investigated whether or not there were still some shared roles particularly in provision of facilities.

The study established that the word “Free” was the centre of controversy and head teachers felt powerless to discuss with parents any development plans such as putting up new classrooms and other necessary structures in the school as this meant money contributions which parents were unwilling to contribute saying that “NARC” (abbreviation for National Rainbow Coalition) would send money. Head teachers interviewed said that the first disbursement of money and materials came after six months. This they said was a very difficult time for them as school administrators.

In January 2003 when the government called upon parents to take all school age children to school, it also removed street children from the streets and either took them to rehabilitation centres where they would be educated or sent them to their home villages for their parents to enrol them in school. As a result, schools reported overwhelming enrolment with some pupils quite advanced in age rushing to benefit from the programme. An example of this is one primary school, which reported registration of an 85-year-old pupil in Standard One. Two and a half years later, in September, 2005, this pupil’s interest in education was recognized worldwide and the pupil was awarded the “World’s Best Pupil Trophy” which he travelled to receive in New York, America (Daily Nation, Tuesday, 20th September, 2005). This was a pointer that the world recognized Kenya’s serious commitment to provide basic education to all indiscriminative of age. It was also an indication that those previously disadvantaged could now benefit from the government programme.

Classrooms previously planned to accommodate 40 pupils were reported to accommodate more than 60 pupils and with a marked increase in enrolment of girls. There were also over age pupils who returned to school and re-enrolled in order to benefit from the programme (UNESCO: 2005). A case in point here was Kambu

Primary School, which was one of the sampled schools for this study in which Class II had 73 pupils (observed on the ground by the researcher in June, 2007). This was an indication that all parents, irrespective of their social and economic status were enthusiastic and rushed to make use of Free Primary Education. Parents must have realized that with today's challenges brought about by rapid changes in technology, ignorance has no place in the world either today or in the future and that empowering all their children with education makes them better prepared to face these challenges. However, with the visible congestion in the already existing classrooms, the implication was that there were new demands on the school administration. This situation had been predicted and highlighted in a newspaper article in the East African Standard, March 10th, 2003 by Ramani who summed up the situation as follows: "Without proper guidelines on admission limits, many fear that the teachers will not be in a position to handle large classes without compromising in the standards of education." (p.5)

The researcher agrees with Ramani's observation here because achievement of quality education no doubt comes with demands. These demands include provision of appropriate and adequate up-to-date teaching/learning facilities, resource materials, equipment and sustained good teacher-parent relationships. Each party involved in the educational enterprise has individual perceptions and expectations regarding their roles in meeting these demands. This is because when human beings, by nature, get what they expect from any enterprise or partnership, they become enthusiastic and supportive while the opposite leads to disappointment and resentment. In the case of Free Primary Education, a pupil is likely to benefit more from the education provided if there is adequate preparedness by the schools and a warm teacher-parent

relationship. This view is supported by Bishop (1989) who states that there should be a strong link between home and school if the pupil is to be motivated to learn.

This study was designed to provide a fuller picture of the perceptions, interpretations, expectations and experiences of the teachers and parents of Kambu zone in Kibwezi District about Free Primary Education. Kambu zone, is in the semi-arid district of Kibwezi which was recently carved out of the greater Makueni District. It is a poor area with a history of long droughts, famine and has no cash crops to boost the parent's income (Eshiwani, 1993). Poverty in this area has led to child labour, high school drop-out rates and misery in many homes. Most parents are too poor to take their children to private schools and academies where good facilities are available. Their hope is in the government funded education. In the researcher's view, education for all is the best alternative for improvement of their social order, health and economic status.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The perceptions that individuals hold predispose them to act favourably or unfavourably towards a stimulus. This implies that perceptions whether negative or positive determine the individual's response and reaction towards new programmes, events and things in general. Although Free Primary Education has been going on for six years now, clear evidence has been lacking on the extent to which individual parents and teachers in Kambu zone perceive it, interpret it, react towards it, their experiences with it and the meanings and expectations they attach to it. This study investigated the perceptions and expectations that the parents and teachers of Kambu educational zone in Kibwezi District hold about Free Primary Education.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to establish the way the parents and teachers in Kambu zone perceived Free Primary Education, the expectations they placed on it and the challenges they were going through in the process of its implementation.

The objectives of the study were to investigate:

- (i) Parents' perceptions, expectations and experiences of FPE in Kambu educational zone.
- (ii) Teachers' perceptions, expectations and experiences of FPE in Kambu educational zone.
- (iii) The implementation experiences and challenges faced by school administrators under FPE in Kambu educational zone.

1.4 The Research Questions

The study sought answers to the following questions:

- (i) What are the parents' perceptions and expectations of their role and the roles of the government in the implementation of Free Primary Education?
- (ii) What are the teachers' perceptions, expectations and experiences of Free Primary Education?
- (iii) What are the school administrators' experiences in the implementation and administration of Free Primary Education

1.5 Justification of the Study

Kambu educational zone lies in a highly disadvantaged area both economically and climatically. It is part of the semi-arid Kibwezi District and there is hardly enough rain to support food crops. The average rainfall is 20-30" per year (Eshiwani, 1993).

There are no cash crops or mineral resources there. During a casual discussion with some elders in Kambu, the researcher had realized that some of the people who live there are victims of the 1994 and 1998 forceful government evictions from Chullu Game Park. The discussion further revealed that these people had migrated from other parts of Ukambani and had acquired land far into the interior of the Game Park in a system they referred to as “Ngwata” which in the local language means “land available for free ownership without paying any money.” They are still very poor and frustrated after losing their land and property during the evictions. The evictions included closure of several primary schools which their children attended. Following these experiences, some parents never took their children back to school. Although the government resettled some of them in other parts of the district (in Masongaleni, Mikululo and Kiund’wani), not all got resettled. For these unfortunate ones, the first priority was to find a place to settle the family other than education. As these children grew older and the idea of going back to school became more and more bleak, many of them got involved in child labour to support their parents, siblings and themselves. As they grew older and became parents themselves, poverty, illiteracy and ignorance continued to grow deeper and to spread in the area.

It is the forgoing hardships and factors that motivated this research. The study sought to find out exactly how the individual parents and teachers perceived Free Primary Education, how they interpreted it, the experiences they were going through in the process of its implementation and the expectations they placed on it. There was need to establish whether or not the people interpreted this government programme as a useful solution to some of their poverty-related problems. It was presumed that teachers were currently handling high enrolments in the schools now that schools did not charge levies. There was need to investigate the individual teacher’s level of motivation or de-motivation.

A need was rightly felt to carry out this study there so that if in the course of the investigation some negative perception-based problems emerged from the respondents, the researcher would highlight them for use by the relevant authorities in planning the necessary action. The positive ideas emerging would be encouraged so that the people of Kambu can benefit from the government effort.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Koech (1999), reports that education improves quality of life and enhances individual access to self and paid employment. The implication of this statement in the view of the researcher is that efforts should be made to ensure that every child gets access to education so as to enable them discover their potential selves and use this potential to become self-reliant and eligible for salaried jobs. It should thus be a responsibility of research to highlight any perception-based obstacles to accessibility of this empowerment to the children of Kambu zone so that authorities can address them. This study has policy implication in that once these obstacles are removed, then all children can access basic education as the best remedy for ensuring their future improved economic and social status.

This study explored the existing perceptions, emotions and expectations of parents and teachers on the ground. The researcher believes that the study will be useful in the following areas:

- (i) The views and experiences expressed by the participants have the potential to lift their spirits from the knowledge that these views will be documented, read and some of the implementation problems solved.

- (ii) The study will also provide information to the Ministry of Education to use when evaluating the policy that guides the implementation of the FPE
- (iii) It is hoped that these interventions will provide the necessary awareness with a view to nurturing positive attitudes and gaining full support for the programme for the benefit of the learners. The aim is to make them future responsible and economically empowered individuals who can be depended upon to improve their families' lifestyles and also become reliable servants of their country. It is possible that previously restrained parent/teacher relations will be improved. This will serve to strengthen the link between home and school which is necessary for a successful educational enterprise (Bishop, 1995). The findings are expected to benefit the policy-makers, funding agents, well-wishers, implementers and consumers as a base for better understanding, planning, motivating, realistic interpretation of the programme and overall self re-assessment of roles.
- (iv) This study also opens ground for further research on Free Primary Education in Kenya and elsewhere.

1.7 Scope and Limitations

Although Free Primary Education is going on in all public primary schools in the country, this study was restricted to Kambu educational zone in Mtito-Andei division of Kibwezi District. A more comprehensive study covering the four zones in Mtito-Andei division would require a lot of time and money than was available. The study specifically investigated parents' and teachers' perceptions and expectations of Free Primary Education and the experiences they are going through in the process of the programme's implementation. Data was collected from parents and teachers only because the researcher felt that these participants would be the best for providing the

necessary data since the study was interested in feelings and emotions. The study limited itself to only one independent variable, Free Primary Education. The findings of the study will be generalized to all schools in Kambu zone only but not other zones in the division because perceptions are individual issues and they vary from individual to individual.

1.8 Assumptions of the Study

This study assumed that the outcomes reached, based on the interviews, discussions, responses from questionnaires, attitudes and emotions demonstrated by participants would be purely as a result of the implementation of Free Primary Education only and would not be moderated by any social or political orientation of the participants.

It was also assumed that the perceptions, expectations and implementation experiences expressed by parents and teachers in the sampled schools would reflect a similar situation in all the schools in the zone.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by three theories. One of the theories was used as the main one which provided the overall guiding principles while the other two helped in the perceptions and expectations. The main theory was Stake's Naturalistic and Participant Oriented Evaluation Approach as discussed by Worthen and Sanders (1990). Worthen and Sanders argue that this theory is a responsive evaluation approach whose key principle is to have a first-hand experience with educational activities and settings. According to these two scholars, this approach aims at observing and identifying the concerns and consequences integral to the educational enterprise and also encourages participants to make suggestions on an educational programme. The theorists of this approach prefer naturalistic inquiry methods which

include grass-root observation and discovery – thus the use of the term “Naturalistic”. They also believe that of central significance is the involvement of those who are participants in the project being studied – thus the use of the term “Participant oriented.” The theory recommends that focus should be on portrayal and processing of the judgements of the participants.

To translate the ideas of this theory into practice, the study used it as a guideline towards achieving its stated objectives. The implication here was that it was important to interact directly with the participants so as to establish their perceptions, expectations, emotions, attitudes, challenges and reactions towards FPE right on the ground. This way, accurate interpretation of their feelings, opinions, expectations, emotions, attitudes, reactions and experiences could be realized and valid recommendations made. The study used face-to-face open-ended, conversation-like interviews to capture the perceptions, emotions, feelings, expressions and expectations of the individual participants. The interviews were conducted in Kikamba, the local language of the participants. This was an added advantage to the researcher who is fully familiar with that language. Stake’s approach looks at the inputs, resources, existing conditions, activities, processes and outcomes. These interviews which were also taped in order to capture and store information for interpretation later provided first-hand in-depth information of individual experiences and perceptions directly from the participants’ verbal and non-verbal expressions. This communication was vital for the findings of the study because it brought out participants’ emotions clearly. It is the richness embodied in Stake’s theory that the researcher chose it to guide this study.

For investigation of perceptions, the study was guided by the Gestalt's Theory of Perception as discussed by Ormrod (1990) and Watson (1995). One of the principles of this theory is that things should be perceived in "whole" and not in separate pieces that make up the whole. To the researcher, this principle, as far as the study was concerned implied that there was need for the fragmented parts of FPE such as financing, roles of implementers, perceptions, expectations and experiences of participants to be pieced-up together in order to be viewed in a compact form as they relate to its implementation in Kambu zone. This would help the study to come up with realistic recommendations. The implementation process involves the parents, the government as the financier-cum-overseer and the teachers as the implementers who have the heavy responsibility of teaching, guiding and evaluating learners whose enrolment numbers had risen by a big percentage. Since the teacher cannot control the enrolment levels, the study was interested in looking at his/her perceptions, experiences and challenges from the programme as a compact unit. Apparently, parents are currently under pressure from the community, the government and from within themselves to make use of the free educational opportunity and have to take all school-age children to school. A case in point was the recent rounding up of all school-age children in Malindi (one of the coastal towns in Kenya) by an area chief and getting them registered in schools in a visible confrontation with the parents (KTN news, (2008, February 13)

Another principle of the Gestalt Theory of Perception is that a programme should be viewed in relation to past experiences (Ormrod, 1990). In consideration of this principle, the study could not completely isolate Free Primary Education from the previous cost-sharing system if it had to reach a logical understanding of the present experiences, perceptions and the expectations currently placed on it by the consumers

and implementers. The element of comparison could not be ruled out completely. The study assumed that the perceptions and expectations expressed by participants arose from their previous experiences with the previous system. Also, since perception is an individual issue (Gestalts), the researcher felt that this theory was relevant for the study because the researcher would have to listen to individual views of individual teachers and parents if correct portrayal and interpretation of feelings, emotions, perceptions and experiences was to be made and correct conclusions made.

According to the Gestalt theory, perception is different from reality. This again brings in the element that the perceptions of the parents and teachers may be different from the intended aims of the government. So, while the government may feel that it doing enough, the other stakeholders on the ground could still be feeling that more should be done and as such, fail to appreciate fully what they are already getting.

For expectations, the study was guided by Tolman's Expectancy Theory of Motivation as explained by Ormrod (1990). According to Ormrod, this theory deals with the role of thoughts. He argues that thoughts give rise to expectations on outcomes and justifies his argument by saying the following: "The expectancy that certain behaviour will yield attractive outcomes will encourage the organism." (p.156)

In the researcher's opinion, Ormod's argument implies that if the parents of Kambu expected that taking all their children to school would yield attractive outcomes for the family, then they would be enthusiastic about it and classrooms would be overflowing with pupils. Their expectations would thus influence their perceptions and would ultimately determine the amount of or less of motivation and support they

would give to FPE, to the teachers and also to the pupils at home to enhance their desire to learn. The researcher felt that thoughts, although strictly internal and individual, are the major influencing factors of behaviour. To translate Tolman's theory into practice, the researcher listened to the participant's opinions which are results of thoughts and interpreted the elicited behaviours to establish their feelings, attitudes, expectations and perceptions.

In the researcher's view, integration of the three theories in the study was necessary because it offered important guidelines on how to obtain first-hand and in-depth information from individual participants. The theories were relevant to the study which was concerned with factors of individual perceptions, expectations and experiences - issues that can only be established appropriately by direct interaction and involvement of the participants so that findings, conclusions and recommendations can be made based on their expressions, emotions and opinions.

1.10 Operational Definition of Terms

Wiersma (1986) states that terms used in an educational research are unique to the area and relevant to the particular study. The researcher agrees with Wiersma here on the ground that human language is rich and one word can be used to mean different things in different contexts (Kinyanjui, 2008). Terms used in this study for example counselling, guidance, parent's perceptions and teacher's expectations are unique to the area of study only and relevant to the justification of why it is important for parents and teachers in Kambu zone to be assisted to change their attitudes towards FPE, This will help to ensure that all children in Kambu zone get access to quality free basic education.

Creswell (2002) shares similar sentiments with Wiersma when he argues that defining terms adds precision to a study. In this section, a number of terms are defined at the level at which they apply to this study.

Counselling A helping relationship and process between a person or persons who have a problem and a professional counselor in which the counselor takes the person through a journey of discovery and deep insight into his/her own abilities to solve the problem at hand and acquires skills to apply to solve future similar problems on his/her own.

Education: The process by which individuals acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes which help them to develop their potentialities and their maximum activation to achieve their perfect self fulfilment. The process includes development of the whole person in his intellectual, affective and psychomotor dimensions.

Enrolment: The number of pupils in a class whose purpose is to participate in, to obtain and to achieve education.

Free Primary Education: Getting education that is financed by the government through provision of funds, trained teachers and learning/teaching materials such as chalk, books, atlases, geometrical sets, pens and dusters in the public primary schools.

Guidance: The process of helping someone to achieve and develop capacity to do things on his/her own. The process involves information and giving direction to do better.

Implementation experiences: The knowledge or skill one acquires in the process of doing something over a period of time. This study will take implementation experiences to refer to the challenges the teachers and parents in Kambu are going through in the process of implementing Free Primary Education.

Motivation: To stimulate, to interest or to cause to act in a particular way.

Parents' Expectations: What the parents wanted to get from FPE. It is that which they felt was their right and which they deserved.

Parent's Perceptions: The active, individual, mental process of interpreting, comprehending and organizing information from the individual parent's senses to make meaning of FPE leading to reactions towards the programme.

Parents' attitudes: The parents' dispositional readiness to respond to Free Primary Education in a consistent manner. Their response may be negative or positive thus determining behaviour towards the programme.

Ratio: A part to another part.

Support: To help, approve and accept to bear the weight of something.

Teachers' Expectations: What the teachers in the schools expected from the government. That which they felt was their right and which they deserved as the implementers of FPE as it came with new demands which were different from the conditions they were previously working in.

Teacher's perceptions: The individual teacher's mental process of interpreting, comprehending and organizing the information on FPE when they were given the programme to implement. This led to various interpretations leading to various reactions and expectations.

This chapter gave background information to the study, stated the problem and gave the objectives of the study. It also gave the research questions, justification and significance of the study. The chapter finally gave the theoretical framework guiding the study and defined the operational terms used. The next chapter deals with the literature related to the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviewed different people's contributions to the field of universal primary education with a view to examining how they relate to the way Free Primary Education is being managed in Kenya and show the road Kenya has travelled towards achieving Free Primary Education. The researcher felt that these topics were necessary for the systematic building of support for the study. The study used this background as a reflection to connect the themes arising from the interviews and helped the researcher to understand the emotions, perceptions, views and expectations elicited by the responses from Kambu zone parents and teachers.

Literature was reviewed and dealt with under the following topics:

- (i) Objectives of Primary Education in Kenya
- (ii) Goals of Free Primary Education
- (iii) Financing of Free Primary Education
- (iv) Learning Environment
- (v) Global trends in provision of basic universal education
- (vi) Roles in Provision of Facilities
- (vii) Perceptions
- (viii) Perceptions and expectations of parents and teachers on Free Primary Education
- (ix) Implementation experiences of teachers and parents
- (x) Importance of Guidance and Counselling services to the stakeholders on the ground.

Anyanwu (1989) asserts that every nation has a profound duty to provide basic education to all her people. Anyanwu justifies his assertion by saying that education raises the quality of life, improves health of productivity and facilitates social and political participation He further says, “Basic education should be considered a right which nations have a responsibility to guarantee to each generation.” (p.13)

Based on the statement above, the researcher felt that there was a need to investigate the obstacles that may interfere with the successful implementation of free primary education and deny the children of Kambu the opportunity of benefiting fully from it. Sifuna (1993) concurs with Anyanwu when he argues that primary education ensures the provision of a more functional and practical education that should meet the needs of pupils who may not have an opportunity to continue with formal education after Standard Eight due to various limiting factors. In the researcher’s view, Sifuna’s observation here is relevant to the area of study because Kambu pupils are disadvantaged by many geographical, social and economic factors as stated earlier in this study. The researcher believed that access to Free Primary Education for all the children would no doubt afford them an opportunity to acquire a reasonable amount of education to assist them function better in society than ever before.

2.1 Objectives of Primary Education in Kenya

Objectives and goals of Primary education in Kenya changed each time a new body took over control of education. Sifuna (1990) and Eshiwani (1993) observe that up to 1911, education in Kenya was in the hands of Christian Missionaries then from then to 1963, the colonial government controlled education. The Missionaries’ educational objective was to convert the “heathen” African into Christianity and to give them only adequate education to enable them to communicate with their

European masters while serving in their households and farms. It was also meant to assist them to translate the gospel to the locals. When the colonial government took over, it controlled education along racial, gender and religious lines. The primary school curriculum for the Africans was limited to Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Religious instruction, Geography and History. The main objective of the colonial masters was to use the educated Africans to assist them in their control of the locals (Sifuna 1990 & Eshiwani 1993).

After independence in 1963, the general goals of education changed (Eshwani 1993).

The new goals then were:

- (i) Utilitarian- for the individual and the state. This was meant to help the individual get paid employment to meet their financial needs while still serving the government.
- (ii) Social - to help people fit in society. Education helped people to acquire knowledge, values, attitudes and abilities to appreciate other services offered by the nation so as to enable them fit well in the society.
- (iii) Cultural - to train people to foster cultural values such as dance, language, drama, music, architecture, creative arts, history and dress
- (iv) Functional – for training people to acquire skills, knowledge, attitudes and values to form social personalities (p. 66-67)

The researcher felt that government achievement of the above educational goals would be the best transformation and development strategy for the country. Free Primary Education, if well managed can assist in achieving this. The study investigated how well the FPE was being seen by parents and teachers to meet these goals.

The Ominde Commission of December, 1963 in recognition of the direct relationship between education and economic growth for the production of a pool of educated manpower so desperately required that time endorsed the education policy for Free Primary Education. This commission scrapped the Common Entrance Examination (C.E.E) in STD. IV which in its view was a colonial tool used to block 80% of the African children from proceeding to the academically richer intermediate level (STD.V-VIII). The commission also made reforms in education which included localizing of the curriculum content to preserve African traditions and customs (Sifuna 1990)

As a result, the Ministry of Education 1994 stated the objectives of primary education in Kenya as:-

- (i) To impart literacy, numeracy and manipulative skills.
- (ii) To develop self-expression, self-discipline, self-reliance and full utilization of these senses.
- (iii) To develop ability too clear logical thought and critical judgement
- (iv) To acquire a suitable basic foundation for further education and the world of work.
- (v) To develop desirable social standards, attitudes and religious values.
- (vi) To develop awareness and understanding of the immediate environment and foster positive attitudes towards other countries and towards the international community.
- (vii) To develop a strong whole person physically and spiritually.

With Free Primary Education, the researcher's view is that these goals can be achieved better with the support of teachers and parents. This support is only possible if the teachers and parents perceived the change positively. Koech (1999) states that Kenya's vision for education in the 21st century is to build a society in which every Kenyan, at any age, gender or special circumstance, in any social, cultural, religious, political and economic context has access to and is able to benefit from education which prepares him/her morally, intellectually and physically for the challenges, opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in a millennium which will be essentially globalized and technological. In the researcher's view, Koech's observation above implies that the government has no choice but to take education for every Kenyan child seriously in order to make the country measure up to world development standards. Koech's view is further inferred in the following statement from the Minister for Education when he addressed Education Officers on the inception of FPE. It read as follows: "This is one of those critical pledges the government made to the Kenyans and we shall not flounder by any means." (East African Standard, March, 2005). (p. 1)

The Minister was referring to FPE and was clarifying to the officers the fact that even though there might be some difficulties in implementation, FPE was set to succeed. From this, the researcher felt that the government had finally put basic education in its rightful position in the country's development agenda. However, this can only be achieved if primary education was free, universal and accepted by all the stakeholders. This study investigated the views of the main stakeholders in the implementations of the program. These are teachers, parents and school administrators.

2.2 The Goals of Free Primary Education

As noted from the Ominde Commission (1963), education is the basis of all development. From that commission report, the researcher feels that provision of basic education for all enables a country to realize a faster pace of development. However, given Kenya's diverse economic endowment with some regions extremely poor and others well endowed naturally, provision of basic education for all remained a dream for many decades despite the many attempts as cited in the background to this study. It was not until January 2003 when the government took the bold step of providing education free for the whole primary cycle. The researcher believes that this government effort was the most commendable approach for attaining evenly spread educational opportunities to all regions of the country and that this venture will later translate into relatively raised levels of national development. It is the implementation of this FPE that this study investigated.

Sifuna (1990) suggests that the main aim of providing Free Primary Education previously to selected districts only was to provide more education opportunities to poor communities where 35% of the school-age population had no access to education due to poverty. The researcher however, felt strongly that the government announcement of Free Primary Education in all public primary schools in the country in January 2003 had broader goals. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) held a consultative meeting with various stakeholders in education on 10th January, 2003 at which a Task Force was appointed to identify the immediate needs of Free Primary Education and report to the ministry in a month's time so that the ministry could respond to the emerging issues to ensure that every needy child in Kenya could benefit (Report of the Task Force on Implementation of

Free Primary Education, March, 2003. The main focus was to identify factors that would lead to the success of FPE.

Among the recommendations of this Task Force were:

- (i) To renew and re-energize partnerships between the government and all other players in education such as civil society, private sector, parents, teachers, professional, politicians, local communities, the administration, local authorities and NGOs. There was also need to create new partnerships so as to meet the immediate needs of the programme.
- (ii) To create and strengthen linkages with the media with the media houses to facilitate information sharing and advocacy of free primary education.
- (iii) To create a Universal Primary Education Fund for the sustainability of Free Primary Education. (p. 13)

Whether or not these recommendations are being implemented or not is not yet documented in the view of the researcher. The responses from participants in the study indicated that most stakeholders on the ground are still ignorant of their roles six years down the line. From a careful examination of all the recommendations stated above by the Task Force, the researcher felt that it was justifiable to investigate the extent to which Free Primary Education was achieving them in Kambu zone under the circumstances in which it is being implemented.

UNESCO, (2005) adds its voice to FPE and gives the goals of Free Primary Education in Kenya as:-

- (i) To provide basic education to all children.

- (ii) To eliminate illiteracy and create an educated citizenry to participate effectively in social, economic and political development of the nation.
 - (iii) To improve living standards and fight and eradicate poverty.
 - (iv) To bridge the gap between the rich and the poor in terms of access to education which is seen as a vehicle for economic and social upward mobility
 - (v) To cater for children from poor families and orphans.
 - (vi) To reduce school-drop-outs, street children, child labour and boost girl-child education.
 - (vii) To lessen the burden on parents.
 - (viii) To use as a means towards realizing the Children' Act 2001 which provides for compulsory and free primary education as a basic right for all children.
- (Nairobi Office, p. 32-33)

The researcher views these UNESCO goals as providing a good overview of what an effective education programme should focus on especially in the face of the dynamics of the job market and the competitive nature of modern socio-economic life styles in Kenya.

The Kenya Government, in its National Development Plan 2002 – 2005 seemed to have taken these into account when it stated that the primary goal of free primary education was to achieve and sustain universal primary education and raise the transition rates from primary to secondary from the current 40% to 70% by the year 2008. This study tried to find out from the parents and teachers if this had happened and the extent to which these goals were being met.

2.3 Financing of Free Primary Education in Kenya

Education has been viewed generally by everybody as an expensive enterprise. This is because it calls for appropriate human, material and physical facilities all of which come at a cost. This means that a country should have a streamlined system of financing it and a sustainable education budget. Following the recommendations of the Kamunge Report (1988) and the Sessional Paper No. 8.on Education and Training, education in Kenya became a cost-sharing venture between parents and the government (Koech, 1999). Implementation of these recommendations became a great hindering factor leading to decline in enrolment in both urban and rural schools. Although according to Kamunge this was part of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) which was started in all government ministries that time, the decline in enrolment was clear evidence that the impact was felt heavily in the education sector. By this report (Koech, 1999), the government was to meet the training, recruiting and paying of teachers only while the parents would meet tuition, buildings, books, activity fee and examination fees. The resulting drop in enrolment and increase in drop-out rates clearly upset the previous government policy of according equal educational opportunities to all children in all parts of the country. This study investigated the extent to which FPE was improving the situation in the eyes of the parents and teachers in Kambu zone.

From January 2003, the local media reports have consistently reported government receipt of money from foreign governments, allocation from the Kenya government budgetary allocations and disbursement of the same to all public primary school in the country to cater for pupils' learning materials. Evidence of this is a report carried in the East African Standard, Tuesday January 16th, 2003 entitled: "UN gives Sh.193m. to boost schools" and another carried in the Daily Nation of Friday, May 4,

2007 entitled, “Minister disburses ksh.300m to primary schools.” While handing over the Ksh193m to the Minister for Education, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Country Director pledged to put more support to the education of the girl-child. The researcher feels that this was an encouraging gesture that provided hope for the girl-child in the country, Kambu zone included. The girl-child has been known to be the most disadvantaged when it comes to the difficult decision of who should remain in school when family resources are limited. The researcher feels that the UNICEF idea appears to justify the need for more funding in the joint education venture.

A report from the Education Task Force set up by the Minister for Education in January 2003, states:

The first step towards the implementation of FPE is to abolish all kinds of fees, levies and user charges (activity, trips for teachers and pupils, tuition, school-based exams, salaries for PTA teachers and school development money) that have for decades kept a large number of children and the youth out of school. (Pg. x)

Under the current Free Primary Education programme, the head teachers interviewed revealed that the government funding mechanism states that a school is allocated government funds according to the number of pupils enrolled there. The study established that each school was required to open two Bank Accounts into which the government to remit the money directly. The head teacher and the school management committee are the signatories to the accounts. The Accounts are School Instructional Materials Bank Account (SIMBA) and General Purpose Bank Account. The study further established through discussion with head teachers that:

- (i) Under SIMBA, each pupil is allocated Ksh.570/= per year for purchase of curriculum instructional materials such as text books, note books, pens, pencils and other related stationery.

- (ii) Under General Purpose Account, each pupil is allocated Ksh.450/= per year for maintenance of the school such as payment of water, electricity and telephone bills, salaries for subordinate staff and general repairs. Total allocation for the year per pupil is Ksh.1020/=
- (iii) Schools with Special Needs Unit (those with a unit for the deaf and the blind) are allocated an extra Ksh.2000/= per pupil per year to cater for the children's specialized equipment.
- (iv) Schools with physically handicapped children were allocated an extra Ksh.10,000/= per year to make the school environment handicap friendly.

The study investigated how parents and teachers in Kambu zone interpreted these government and donor efforts in providing education to their children and in particular, reducing the burden and drop-out experiences of the cost-sharing time. All respondents reported their appreciation and said they were happy with the government plan although it also emerged from their expressions that most of them were unwilling to contribute anything, however little, towards education. The foundational question here was how they understood Free Primary Education in their capacity as partners in the country's education enterprise. Their responses in the interview revealed that they were happy but the general opinion from both groups of participants was that there is too much money in the government treasury set aside for free primary education and that the government should foot more than it was currently doing. One parent said that with the kind of money they hear on radio and read about in the news papers, the government should employ more trained teachers, provide adequate text-books, exercise books and also revive and equip the now abandoned workshops that parents had earlier build in every school. From these words, the researcher established that the parents' expectations on the government

were still quite high with the implication that many of their expectations had not yet been met.

Mbiti, (1987) argues that there is a relationship between expenditure, facilities and quality of education provided in schools. He suggests that even after provision of grants/funds, there should be follow-up to ensure that the learning environment is suitable. He says: “The Minister for Education must ensure that the personnel, curriculum, physical facilities and equipment are both adequate and up-to-date.” (p.28)

The researcher agrees with Mbiti in the sentiments above on the ground that a conducive learning/teaching environment is likely to yield good educational outcomes. The question to ask in this situation is whether with the abrupt increase in enrolment that accompanied the announcement of Free Primary Education the minister would keep the pace and provide the requirements on time given that in the current era of “Transparency and Accountability”, government ministries have to adhere to clearly defined procedures of procurement. Also, while schools operate by the calendar year, the government operates by the financial year. Whether the timing at the schools and that of the government as to when supplies should reach the schools will tally without causing delays and inconveniences in syllabus coverage and administration of examinations is a case to be considered. The researcher felt that there was need here for reconciliation if the whole burden was to be left entirely to the government.

The researcher attempted to investigate and establish the parents’ and teachers’ perceptions, experiences and expectations with a view to highlighting areas that needed attention by the government and any other interested parties. It was the

feeling of the researcher that if such issues remained undiscovered and un-addressed, they could possibly lead to poor morale, de-motivation of staff, negative attitudes, poor work relationships between stakeholders and a possible downward trend in examination performance. The findings and recommendations of this study will serve to bridge the information gap and thus help the stakeholders to put realistic strategies in place for ensuring suitability of the learning/teaching environment especially with respect to timing and re-stating of roles.

The parents and head teachers were interviewed in depth while the teachers responded to a questionnaire with open-ended questions. These participants gave qualitative information about their perceptions, experiences, expectations, opinions and feelings about Free Primary Education.

2.4 The Learning Environment and Adequacy of Facilities

In the view of the researcher, one of the considerations that parents make when deciding which school to take their children to is availability of adequate and appropriate learning facilities. This concerns the physical and human facilities. Another vital consideration is the tradition of the school as concerns its reputation on staff and pupil discipline as well as their performance in external examination. It is no wonder therefore that some schools find themselves overwhelmed by requests for admission from parents while others remain under-enrolled. With Free Primary Education, the ability of the school management to utilize the government funds, and the school heads to use good administrative skills to ensure that human and physical facilities are adequate and up-to-date may be quite demanding. The researcher attempted to examine the issue of facilities in Kambu zone with a view to establishing

the experiences of the school administrators and other teachers in relation to the implementation of Free Primary Education.

From the point of view of the social environment, some children have previously been disadvantaged by certain factors which hindered them from accessing basic education. Some of these limiting factors are economic, cultural norms, social values, and lifestyles. A notable observation on these factors is from Kithyo (1999) who argues that with the Kenyan society so clearly stratified along gender, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, indeed, access to formal basic education for all children still remains an issue to be addressed. Kithyo stresses that this is a situation that calls for involvement of the parents, the community, the government, teachers and peers as communicating and participating agents if the country has to realize the high socio-economic benefits of education. Kithyo asserts that many Kenyan children especially girls have for a long time been discriminated upon in provision of educational opportunities because the communities or backgrounds they come from feel that they should not “waste” limited family resources educating a girl who is seen as a temporary member of the family and is expected to get married and belong to another family. Given a choice, such parents would always choose to educate the boy. Now that the parents no longer have to make the difficult choice, there was need to establish whether more girls have been enrolled in school. The assumption among these communities is that all the girls will get married. The study tried to establish this from the parents now that the government is providing free primary education.

Koech (1999) concurs with Kithyo when he states that girls are disadvantaged by factors like poverty at household level, socio-cultural attitudes favouring boys, parental negative perception of investing in girls, teenage pregnancies and lack of role

models. Parents in some communities therefore prefer to train them as good housewives and mothers and see no good reason to insist on taking them to school. This study tried to establish whether FPE gave any boost to girl-child enrolment in Kambu.

Ndunda (1995) supports this view when she observes that some of the parents still marry their daughters off early through arranged marriages. The researcher felt that these cultural biases end up denying intelligent women an opportunity to participate in their country's development. It is the researcher's strong believe that with free primary education now available to all, every child in Kambu, regardless of sex, socio-economic background or cultural biases should be given equal educational opportunities. This will help girls in particular to increase their options from basic housewives and maids to active participants in the country's economic activities and salaried employment.

It is not only girls who are discriminated upon when deciding who to take to school. Children with disabilities are also victims of these decisions and many of them end up being denied educational opportunities. Kambu, like any other part of the country has disabled children. Some parents there who have disabled children have been observed to hide them in the houses or give them out to work for other people as herds-boys, maids or gardeners instead of taking them to school even when the disability is as mild as just a speech handicap. Some of the parents behave like this for various reasons. For some, it is either out of embarrassment, economic inability, fear of their disabled girl children being exploited and impregnated by unscrupulous men on their way to school or even within the schools. Other parents are still generally ignorant about the benefits of education. So they don't seek help for these children.

The researcher felt strongly that under these circumstances, free basic education will benefit all the children only if the government makes it both free and compulsory. This way, fear of being punished by the state will make all parents desire to look for educational opportunities for all their children even the ones with disabilities like the case above. The researcher felt that the education officers, local leaders and head teachers had failed in their responsibility of spreading the information that under FPE, the government allocates special funds for schools with a special unit. At least this would help some parents to enrol their disabled or impaired children to benefit from this programme.

Free Primary Education accompanied by professional Guidance and Counselling for the teachers and parents of these children should be a solution to this problem at least for those with simple handicaps like speech disorders or just weak limbs. The researcher believes that once teachers and parents are properly guided and counselled, they can enrol and integrate these children to benefit from free primary.

Another factor worth noting is the case of increased orphans in the entire country due to the HIV/AIDS scourge. Kambu is no exception and has its share of this problem. Most old parents who have neither property nor income to educate their grandchildren have been forced to take back the responsibility of child-rearing after the death of their sons and daughters leaving behind young children. During the study, it emerged that some of the sampled parents were grandparents and guardians who were educating orphaned children. In the view of the researcher, Free primary education, if well implemented will assist this category of parents. Whether or not this is happening will be established through this study.

2.5 Global Trends in Provision of Universal Basic Education

Some countries in the world like Canada are known to have attained universal education for all (UNESCO, 2000). Although the World Conference on Education held in Thailand in 1990 resolved that the goal for basic education for all should be attained by year 2000, (UNESCO 2000), to date, many countries, including Kenya, have not yet attained this. With FPE now in progress, this study investigated the extend to which this goal is being achieved in Kambu zone. In India, the Free and Compulsory Education for Children Bill of 2003 defines free primary education as:

Exemption from obligation to pay tuition fees or charge which schools usually charge from pupils in schools. It may extend to provision of free supply of text books, note-books and other study materials, health care and nutrition where the appropriate government so declares by rules made under the Act.” (UNESCO 2005:31)

The researcher’s view here is that Kenya could borrow a leaf from India and put more legal force on parents. Although the Children’s Act (2001) states clearly that basic education should be free and compulsory, some parents still fond loop holes not to take their children to school.

In Nigeria, the Nigerian Act on Free Primary Education is quite comprehensive and is inclusive of all groups of learners. It also includes nursery school education and education for disadvantaged groups. Although the Kenyan economy may not currently do as much as Nigeria, the researcher felt that there was need for considering this as a future plan. The Nigerian Act defines basic education as:

Early childhood care, education and nine (9) years of formal schooling, literacy and non-formal education, skill acquisition programmes and the education of special groups such as nomads, migrants, girl-child and women, street children and disabled groups respectively (UNESCO 2005:31)

Internationally, basic education is defined to include secondary school while in Kenya it is education which is offered in the primary school. (Daily Nation Monday 22nd January 2007)

This International definition is echoed in the Education Law Reform (2003) chaired by Kamunge in which the task force proposes free and compulsory basic education to run from pre-primary to Secondary.

Professor Ongeru the minister of Education while speaking at the closing ceremony of the Kenya Schools and Colleges drama festival at Nakuru said “I wish to ensure that early childhood education is included in FPE” The (Standard Tuesday 16th April 2008). (p.6)

In Kenya, The Children’s Act of 2001 states:

Every child shall be entitled to the provision of education, the provision of which shall be the responsibility of the government and the parents. Every child shall be entitled to free basic education which shall be compulsory in accordance with Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a child. Every child shall have a right to religious education subject to appropriate parental guidance. The Minister shall make regulations giving effect to the rights of children from minority communities to give fulfilment to their culture and to practice their own language or religion.
(Source: Statutes (Kenya).

The researcher considers these Acts and their provisions as an important step towards realization of the importance of education in any country. The idea of declaring what free education entails in a Parliamentary Act provides important reference for all to read and clears elements of speculation, mistrust and diverse interpretations which this study discovered in Kambu zone.

Anyanwu (1998) also makes some observations about universal primary education which, in the researcher’s opinion, Kenya could consider in her endeavour in implementing free primary education. Anyanwu argues that improving and widening access to education, especially basic education has been an objective of education policy in all developing countries for a long time now and that the benefits of basic education are now clearly established. He justifies this by making the following

remark: “Raising the quality of children by increasing school enrolment is frequently one of the goals of public policy in sub-Saharan Africa.” (p. 1)

In the view of the researcher, the implication and relevance of Anyanwu’s statement quoted above to Kenya is that Kenya can only ensure that it raises responsible citizens who meet the future manpower needs for national development if, and only if, she makes basic education free and compulsory so that there are no loop-holes for choice by parents, guardians and communities who want to stick to out-dated cultural practices, beliefs, selfish interests and biases. Educated citizenry will ensure creativity, improved participation in the economic, social, political and cultural roles.

For a long time, education world-wide has been associated more with its direct economic rewards. However, increasing awareness has progressively revealed that basic education goes beyond economic rewards to include social benefits such as acquisition of acceptable behaviour, responsible social interactions, good health for the individual and creation of a better society to live in. The following documented reports attest to this:-

A report by United Nations (1994) states,

Providing mothers with 7 (seven) or more years of education might be associated in some regions with a 40% decline in overall child mortality. (p.18)

Another report by UNESCO, (2000:), states:

A 10% increase in girls’ primary enrolment can be expected to decrease infant mortality by 4.1 deaths per 1000 because they (girls) become aware of the nutritional, fertility and health care services available to them and their children. This ensures continual building of healthy human resources for future development and also ensures longer life expectancy. (p. 37)

The researcher’s view in relation to these statements is that empowerment of girls through education also ensures slower population growth which in return assists the

governments in the efforts to distribute a country's limited economic resources. Literate women also tend to support and to spend more on the education of their children. At the end of the day, it is the nation that benefits more than the individual. In the Kenyan rural set-up, literate women have been observed to be very resourceful in dispensing advice to the ignorant mothers. This takes place in the various social groups such as merry-go-rounds, self-help groups and other social associations. The illiterate women are grateful to learn some basic hygiene and public etiquette from the literate ones during these interactions. By observing how the educated ones dress, cook, talk, relate with their children and how they keep their houses, the illiterate women learn many useful lessons. Working mothers also prefer to employ literate girls as maids. The study also examined how the girls in Kambu zone have taken advantage of free primary education by enrolling in school in large numbers alongside the boys. The head-teachers in the sampled schools revealed that there are more girls in their schools than was the case during the cost-sharing period with some who had earlier dropped out returning to enjoy the benefits of free primary education. One teacher said that unless the girl had dropped due to pregnancy, those who returned were free to join the class they left from and continue.

World Bank (1998) shares the sentiments of the teacher above when it records: "Education of women is critical for the survival of female-headed households in developing countries." (p. 37). The researcher agrees with World Bank here on the grounds that children in such households deserve to live and enjoy life and education like any family with both parents. Single-parent families are increasing today in Africa either due to the HIV/AIDS scourge or out of choice by liberated and economically empowered women who perceive marriage as unnecessary domination by men. Kambu is no exception to these situations. As such, children from such

backgrounds should not suffer unfairly because of discriminative practices in provision of educational opportunities based on gender, parentage or poverty.

Sifuna (1990) argues that studies done in developing countries show that there are higher rates of return in the investment in primary rather than in higher education. (p. 176) The researcher agrees fully with Sifuna's statement here because primary education is likely to reach more children and families than higher education which is sifted through many exams with restricted cut-off points and also high costs which many families may not afford. So children can use the basic education thus acquired to do things to earn a living and elevate the family's economic status.

In the family, educated women have been observed to contribute to the economic expenditure of their houses. This lessens the financial burdens on their husbands while at the same time raising the living standards of such households.

The World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 reaffirmed the 1948 World Declaration on Education for All whose key principle was: "Meeting Basic Learning Needs for all children, youths and adults by year 2000." This was in recognition of education as a fundamental right for all people regardless of sex and age throughout the world. The Conference reached an international consensus that,

Education is the single most vital element in protecting the environment, controlling population growth, combating poverty, promoting human rights and democracy, and creating equality between the sexes." (UNESCO, 2000 :7).

UNESCO (2000) stresses that,

Education as a goal is an outcome of development, while as a means it can be an engine of development and an indispensable tool for improving the quality of peoples' lives. (p. 4)

Since children in Kambu zone definitely require basic education for the same reasons cited in the statements above, the study investigated the extent to which girls, who are tomorrows women are benefiting from FPE. Ndunda (1995) agrees with UNESCO when she records: “Women have been forgotten, neglected and discriminated against in the provision of educational opportunities.” (p. 118

The researcher felt that if FPE gave a serious consideration to girls’ education, Kambu would enjoy an improved economic and social environment in which both men and women would compete equally for jobs, business and leadership based on ability and not cultural biases.

Ndunda appears to echo Kithyo (1999) and Koech (1999) who both say that when parents are faced with a choice on whom to keep in school when resources are limited, the girl is sacrificed in favour of the boy. She cites several barriers to girls’ education in Kenya. These, she says, include child-bride, poverty, child labour where girls work as maids to assist the family financially and high tuition fees from cost-sharing education which many poor parents cannot afford thus leading to high drop-out rates. It is hoped that with the current government decree of free primary education, this scenario will change at least as far as addressing the economic related barriers is concerned.

Kithyo (1999:69) notes that some factors that account for the slow progress towards attainment of the universal basic education for all goal, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa are drought, famine, gender structures, internal conflicts and political instability which deny most children the opportunity of completing an educational

programme within the desired time. This study finds out how these disadvantaged groups are benefiting from the introduction of FPE.

Bishop, (1995) argues that the starting point for all planning should be to provide basic education for all regardless of age and sex. (p. 43-44) The researcher shares a similar view with Bishop here because all human beings have a right to enjoy education and also have a duty to contribute to the national development of their country. Education has the power to provide that ability regardless of gender. Bishop, (1995) in quoting from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26, further says, ‘Everyone has a right to education. Education shall be free, at least in elementary and fundamental stages. Education shall be compulsory.’”

Bishop (1995) further quotes Pope Pius XII, and records: “Basic education is the primary object of any plan of development. Indeed, hunger for education is no less than hunger for food, an illiterate is a person with an undernourished mind.” (p. 47)

The researcher agrees with Bishop here on the ground that if hunger for education is comparable to hunger for food, then all people, regardless of gender, social background and age experience this hunger and it should be gratified, Kambu children included.

Mithal (1978) while commending on the need for universal free and compulsory basic education for all children in India said:

Basic education draws the best out of a child and man – body, soul and mind. It will certainly create “new men” who will bring a new social order, an ideal which is sure to make India succeed and flourish. Slow progress in basic education contributes to loss of state patronage. (p. 300)

Mithal (1978) further explains social order as “a situation where everybody will earn his own living and become self-sufficient – thus free of exploitation, no beggars and no parasites.” (p. 312). Mithal’s sentiments are so relevant for Kenya, and Kambu in

particular in the view of the researcher that they cannot be understated. Going by these sentiments, basic education for all children in Kambu will eradicate poverty even in the presence of the harsh climate if it will “draw the best out of every child and create “new men and women” who are creative and self-sufficient. It is very important therefore to identify and address any negative perception-based and demotivating experiences that may interfere with the achievement of the ultimate goal for attainment of basic education of all in that zone.

Nigeria took a big step to improve education by putting in place a number of measures (Federal Republic of Nigeria 1981, The National Policy for Education) as recorded by UNESCO, (2000). Although most of the measures aimed at improving girls’ primary education, the researcher feels that Kenya could borrow from them and utilize them for implementation of her general basic education. This is because all children, regardless of gender or race need basic education. Some of the measures that Nigeria put in place which the researcher feels could be usefully considered for application in Kenya are:

- (i) Mounting powerful campaigns using all available avenues of communication to make all parents education-conscious.
- (ii) Involving the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Local Government Authorities, Community Development and Social Welfare workers and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to encourage parents to take all children to school. This is possible through awareness campaigns, guidance and counseling, advertisements, specially arranged educational days in the zones and among other things, inviting educationists to talk about education whenever there is a chief’s “baraza” in the village, location or other important meetings or gatherings in the division.

- (iii) Welcoming Voluntary Agencies, Private individuals and Communities to establish and manage schools alongside those provided by the State Government (public schools), so as to meet the increasing demand for education. Although currently there are a number of academies and private primary schools in Kenya, (some run by churches), these are fairly expensive for most parents and are mainly in the big towns. This becomes a limiting factor. (UNESCO, 2000:18)

The projection for this Master Plan for Nigeria was that by 1994, primary school enrolment would be 85.2% reaching 99.6% by year 2000. Koech (1999) made recommendations for liberalization of education in Kenya to the effect that private proprietors could run private schools alongside the government ones to respond to the need for education as government resources were declining. He also recommended the involvement of the Ministry of information and other media houses to assist by allocating affordable airtime for promotion of educational programmes. This to the researcher was a good move towards encouraging those running private schools to advertise and create awareness to the general public of what they have to offer so that parents could take advantage.

In the researcher's view, although it is now long past year 2000, the approach by the Nigerian Government and implementation of Koech's recommendations could be of great benefit if adopted in Kenya because such a move would ensure that almost everybody is involved in the government's effort to achieve its goal of education for all. Leaving such a big responsibility to only one government ministry (Ministry of Education) or just a few wealthy entrepreneurs in the private sector may not yield good and immediate fruits as would be the case if all sectors of the economy were

involved the way Nigeria did. Kenya, in her endeavour to provide free primary education should involve many bodies at least to campaign and make everybody aware of the benefits of basic education.

Consideration of the foregoing ideas could be some of the reasons why the Kenya government has taken such a big step to give free basic education to all the children despite the many financial constraints existing in the country today and the possible challenges that lie ahead before the full realization of the goals of the project. If the principles used globally could be adopted in Kenya and are applied in Kambu zone, then the community may benefit tremendously in terms of decreased levels of illiteracy and a noticeable improvement in the socio-economic status of all the people.

2.6 Roles in Provision of Learning/Teaching Materials

During the previous cost-sharing system of education, information about who should provide what to support the learning process was clear and each stakeholder for a long time had known and had devised ways of ensuring that their part was played fairly well and on time. With the advent of free primary education, the researcher established that some information was missing leading to different interpretations and expectations particularly by parents and the communities served by the schools. Some parents, according to this study, were found to have taken a back seat and waited for the government to do everything. This scenario caused conflicts between teachers and parents. Some parents felt that head teachers were not communicating enough with the government about provisions and were trying to put the burden back on them, burden which in their opinion the government had off-loaded from them through FPE.

Obonyo, O. (2003) a reporter with the Daily Nation, covering a meeting at Kenya Science Teachers' College (K.S.T.C) between the minister for education, top ministry of education officials, provincial education officers and district education officers quotes the minister as saying "It should be made absolutely clear that the government only supports the materials that are core to learning and nothing else, like uniforms or shoes." Muchai, S. (2003) reporting for the Standard also quoted the Minister for Education as saying, "Free Primary Education does not include pre-primary and nursery classes because the government does not have resources for that."

On these two occasions, the minister was explaining what areas of FPE the government was going to finance. From these statements, the researcher felt that this information should have been further put in circulars and send to each school to clear the air effectively. It cannot be taken for granted that all parents read newspapers that day. Neither can it be correctly assumed that all the education officers attending that meeting relayed the information to the ground as emphatically as it appeared to come from the minister. In the researcher's view more needed to be done including adequate meetings at the school level with parents to repeat the message and a filed copy of the guidelines for reference in the school files. Evidence of lack of this information was clear from the responses from Kambu parents most of whom still believe and emphasize in their suggestions that the government should take over financing of education from nursery school. They claim that teachers refuse to admit a child who has not gone through nursery school successfully. Head teachers insisted on parents producing a qualifying letter for Class One from the nursery school teacher if a child had to be admitted. Teachers also claimed that some over-age children who could not fit in the nursery school classes skipped and joined Standard One. This meant that the classroom teacher was handling two different groups of learners in the

same class. Head teachers complained that they were powerless to deny such children such an opportunity for lack of clear guidelines from the ministry. This clearly indicates that information from the ministry was not effectively communicated to parents and teachers on the ground.

2.7 Perceptions

Perception is a concept that has received much attention from authors. The Gestalts, as quoted by Watson (1995) defines perception as “a mental process of comprehending and organizing information from ones senses to make meaning.” The Gestalts further believe that perception is influenced by (among other factors), past experiences, expectations and personal needs. In the six years that parents and teachers have been interacting with free primary education now, they must have engaged themselves in some mental process of trying to understand, judge and evaluate the programme as good or otherwise. They must also have done this with consideration of their past experiences with the cost-sharing system which they have just come from.

From their responses in the study, both categories of participants agreed that the programme is good because it met their need for textbooks, which they felt, had been too expensive. Teachers and parents explained how shortage of books in the classrooms had for a long time led to poor examination grades. However, the common expectation that emerged from all parents and teachers was that the government should provide and pay adequate trained teachers to all the schools. This they said was the most important facility if quality education his to be attained. Some parents also expressed their wish that the government should extend free education to the nursery school which to their understanding is part of basic education

and whose fees have now escalated. They said that the Ksh.600 charged per term by the public nursery schools had frustrated their dreams of having all their children benefit from free primary education. Their justification for this claim was that the child has to go through nursery school for the teacher to approve him/her to enrolment in Standard One where free education begins.

The classroom teachers on the other hand expressed concern that they were over-worked. It emerged from their responses that they do not have time to prepare adequately for class due to many hours of work. They mentioned issues like serious understaffing where one teacher has to teach one class while at the same time baby-sitting another. The large classes also denied the teacher time for individual attention to weaker pupils. This they saw as de-motivating as well as a compromise on educational standards.

2.8 Communication on Roles Regarding Provision of Learning/Teaching Facilities

For any shared enterprise, among the things that have to be clearly discussed and agreed upon are the specific roles each partner would play, when and to what level if the partnership is to succeed. Education can never claim to be exempted from this notion. In the case of provision of free primary education, which is a joint partnership between parents and the government, (Children's Act, 2001), the researcher feels that there was need for clarification of who plays what specific role right from the onset of the programme. In the view of the researcher, the Act sounds a bit general or the Minister did not proceed to specify in the said regulations and rules which partner does what. This information needed to go out in circulars to all schools for record and reference whenever necessary.

The Task Force on Implementation of Free Primary Education (2003) records that the government would continue to train, pay and recruit new teachers and pay salaries of essential non-teaching staff where applicable. The government would also provide all basic learning/teaching materials such as text books, exercise books, pens, pencils chalk and dusters while parents and the local communities would continue to meet their natural obligations such as uniforms, feeding and basic hygiene items, renovation and provision of additional sanitary facilities, expansion of physical learning facilities and construction of new schools where need arose. Based on the responses obtained from participants, the researcher wonders whether this information was effectively communicated to all the partners. The researcher feels that there was need for this to be done because it required the clear understanding by all stakeholders and strengthening of all the partnerships to avoid some falling back and feeling content with the apparently inadequately explained “free”.

2.9 Parents’ and Teachers’ Perceptions of Free Primary Education

Burns (1982) argues that every individual puts personal meanings to a psychological environment and that such meanings determine the individual’s behaviour. He further notes that perceptions are selective and are often erroneous as a result of distortions engendered by motives, attitudes and defence mechanisms. (p. 73) It is against this background that this study investigated the perceptions and reactions of parents and teachers in Kambu towards free primary education which was a change from a previous cost-sharing system.

2.10 Parents’ and Teachers’ Expectations of Free Primary Education

Literature on expectations in this study was based on Tolman’s, Ormrod’s and the Gestalt’s work. Ormrod (1990) argues that expectations can raise emotions and

reactions because they affect people's feelings and perceptions. These feelings and reactions according to Ormrod depend on whether or not people's expectations are met and to what level. If they are met at least to a significant level, there will be satisfaction, support and motivation. If not, there will be resentment and disappointment. The Gestalts (as discussed by Ormrod (1990), suggest that expectations cannot be isolated from perceptions because people's expectations influence their perceptions of a programme. Tolman, as discussed by Ormrod (1990) concurs with the Gestalts when he argues that once an organism learns that particular behaviours produce particular results, they begin to form expectations about the outcomes (p.192) In the researcher's view, the ideas from the above referred to authors are relevant to this study because the study seeks to find out the expectations of teachers and parents in the implementations of free primary education.

2.11 Parents' and Teachers' Experiences of the Implementation Of FPE

Parents and teachers are the stakeholders of education on the ground. The study established that most of the parents and teachers who interacted with the previous cost-sharing system are the same ones now involved in the implementation of the present free one. The experiences and knowledge they have gathered all along appeared to have shaped their perceptions, expectation, attitudes and reactions towards FPE. This emerged in the interviews as they narrated their experiences and from the emotions and the vocabulary they used. Words like an emphatic "free" and expressions like, "I am too poor, the headmaster should write to the government, and ,”I fear the examination results will be poor, NARC has money, I fear we may not enjoy the glory of retaining the coveted K.C.P.E. position in the national ranking any more,” are indicators of some of the seemingly uncomfortable experiences and anxieties that the parents and teachers were going through.

The researcher recommends that there is need for the government to put in place strategies to address these concerns if the programme is to achieve the desired outcomes in Kambu zone. The researcher suggests more seminars for all the groups, written guidelines to be filed in school records for reference and emphasis on regulated guidance and counselling programmes for teachers and parents at the school level.

2.12 Importance of Guidance and Counselling

Mutie and Ndambuki (1999) observe that the school and family are required to adopt to the changing patterns of life brought about by science and technology. This implies that in order for all children to fit socially and economically in future, strategies have to be put in place for them access basic education with minimum stress on parents and teachers. The question to ask here is: With the presence of poverty, diseases such as HIV/Aids and malaria, the increasing number of orphans, emergence of viral diseases that kill livestock which is the main source of income for some parents in arid and semi-arid areas like Kambu, coupled with the ever increasing demand for education, what is the best way forward? Under those circumstances, most parents are no doubt subjected to great psychological, social and economic difficulties. In the researcher's view, Guidance and Counselling, within the education system and also at the parental level becomes vital if parents and teachers have to cope with the implementational challenges of the programme and encourage change of attitude by all partners in the programme.

2.13 Conclusion

The above literature review taken together provided important guidelines on what policies and strategies other countries have used towards provision of universal basic education. From the review, Kenya can compare her position and also borrow a variety of ideas from the global trends on how to manage free primary education in order to achieve her intended goals. The researcher feels that the surveyed literature had many revelations which the Kenyan stakeholders could consider for application. It was hoped that the reviewed ideas, suggestions and recommendations by Kenyan scholars, Education Commissions, international conferences, other countries' education policies and master plans, renowned global educationists and educational bodies have thrown light into the usefulness of basic education. The researcher further believes that the desired goals can only be universally achievable not through government funding alone but also include clear written policies, team work and effective communication networks. It has also shown the journey through which Kenya has come in her endeavour to provide free primary education. It is encouraging to note how the country has been committed to the "education for all" goal.

Chapter Two dealt with literature related to the study. It discussed the objectives of Free Primary Education in Kenya, the goals. Financing of education, global trends in provision of basic education, roles of different stakeholders, perceptions and importance of Guidance and Counselling at the school level. Chapter III discusses Research Design and Methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Max Travers (2003) defines methodology “as the plan of action that shapes the choice of and use of particular methods and links them to the desired outcomes.” Based on this definition, the researcher’s view is that research should go through a set of appropriately and systematically coordinated steps which help the researcher to arrive at reliable and useful results in a study. The steps that this chapter followed to reach the desired outcomes include area of study, target population, sampling procedures, instrumentation, validity and reliability of the instruments, data presentation and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The study used the Survey Research Design aimed at a systematic investigation of the perceptions and implementation experiences of teachers and parents towards Free Primary Education. The survey design allows a systematic investigation of a situation through direct involvement on the ground over a period of time (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). Wiersma (1986) concurs with Mugenda when he says that survey research concerns itself with “What is” rather than “Why it is so.” Wiersma further says that results from the survey can be interpreted with confidence since data is collected from a one-to-one basis through interaction with respondents in their natural setting. This, according to Wiersma (1986) is one characteristic of a good research design.

In consideration of Mugenda's (1999) and Wiersma's (1986) observations, this design was chosen for this study because the researcher's interest was to investigate and to report the situation as it is. Since the researcher was interested in variables associated with perceptions, expectations, experiences, opinions, emotions, reactions and behaviours, it was also felt that the survey design was the most relevant design because its use enables the researcher to obtain an accurate picture of the situation over the period of interaction with the participants in the actual study environment. This arises from the fact that the researcher is able to make adequate time to interact, observe, listen and take notes from the individual participant's voice, actions, manner and vocabulary used to express responses and behaviour notwithstanding the non-verbal communication involved. From the information received, the researcher was then able to make reliable conclusions on the perceptions, expectations and experiences of the participants regarding FPE in Kambu zone. The data thus collected was analyzed qualitatively using narratives.

3.2 Area of Study

The study was carried out in Kambu Educational Zone which is one of the four zones that make up Mtito-Andei Division of Kibwezi District of Eastern Province of Kenya. Kambu lies 250 Kilometers south of Nairobi along the Nairobi- Mombasa highway. It is mid-way between Nairobi and Mombasa. Records held at the zonal office indicate that 90% of the zone lies to the west of the highway bordering Chullu Game Reserve while 10% stretches eastwards across the highway. It lies 738 meters above sea level (Divisional Headquarters office, Kambu town 2007). Kambu Educational zone borders Chullu Hills on the west and stretches eastwards across the main Nairobi-Mombasa Highway. It is a semi-arid area with very un-predictable rain patterns (Eshiwani, 1993). The people living there are

perennially in need of relief food from the government. The schools sampled for the study were eight.

This zone was selected for study because of a number of reasons. One reason was that it is the largest of the four zones in terms of pupil population. The researcher considered this to be good ground for reliable information for the study. Kambu is also one of the zones that were seriously affected by the influx of pupils from several schools that were closed down during the government evacuation of squatters from Chullu Game Park in 1988 and 1994 because it borders the park. This factor makes it prone to new experiences while implementing Free Primary Education because of the resultant rise in enrolment. It is also a very poor area with large chunks of unproductive volcanic rock, completely bare without any soil cover. This puts the community living there in economic difficulties for which Free Primary Education could be like a God-send miracle for their children to access basic education without stressful cost on parents. The schools in Kambu zone are also some of the oldest in the division with some dating back to the early 1960s when people started settling there as emigrants from other parts of Eastern Kenya. This, in the researcher's view puts the parents and teachers in a position to make reliable comparison between their past and present experiences since most of them have been involved in implementation of both the previous cost-sharing system of education and now the Free Primary Education system.

For purposes of the study, these schools were given anonymous names: School A, School B, School C, School D, School E, School F, School G and School H in that order. This was for the purposes of concealing identity of schools as a rule in research and also for encouraging genuine responses. This alphabetical order of the

schools was assigned starting from the first selected school in the North of the zonal office. Then a clock-wise direction was followed. Since the zonal office was taken as the central point, the researcher looked at the group of schools on all the four sides around it. Then random sampling was used to select schools from each cluster of schools on each of the four sides.

3.3 Target Population

The target population for the study was all the 166 teachers in all the 15 schools in the zone, all the 1327 parents and all the 15 head teachers of the fifteen public primary schools in Kambu Educational zone. Information regarding the number of teachers and schools was available in the copy of Monthly Staff Returns availed to the researcher by the Zonal Inspector of Schools at the Zonal Office in Kambu while information about parents was obtained from the Parents' Register kept by the head teachers. The assumption of the researcher was that every school had 9 or more teachers (1 teacher per each of the 8 classes plus the head-teacher) as stipulated in the Ministry of Education Staff Establishment generally referred to by the schools as CBE. (Records in the Divisional Education Office, Kambu, June, 2007). On the ground it, the study established that 90% of the sampled schools had staffing problems. It emerged during the interviews with head teachers that some schools in the zone (not participants in this study) had as few as 6 teachers against 8 classes and that the common experience of all head teachers and PTA chairpersons was a struggle of persuading parents to employ more teachers. It also emerged that there were many readily available unemployed, trained P1 teachers seeking employment in the zone. In the view of the researcher, this is a problem of attitude and lack of information from one quarter of the educational authorities and could be addressed through

written policies where responsibilities could be clearly stipulated blocking all loopholes for debate at the school level.

3.4 Sampling Technique

Wiersma (1986) asserts that a good sampling technique should be goal oriented, measurable, practical and economical. He further argues that the sample selected should be relevant to the objectives of the study. The main objective of this study was to investigate the perceptions and the expectations of parents and teachers of Kambu zone regarding FPE and the experiences these stakeholders are going through in the process of the FPE implementation. In line with this objective and in consideration of Wiersma's (1986) assertion, the researcher selected samples from the public primary schools in Kambu zone who actually are the consumers and implementers of FPE.

Three groups of participants were targeted for data collection. These were the teachers, the parents and the school administrators represented by the head-teachers.

Purposive and simple random sampling procedures were used to select participants.

In order to get reliable information, the researcher used purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was used to select head teachers and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) chairpersons in the sampled schools. Purposive sampling, despite its subjectivity was used here because the head teacher is the chief executive in the school and is expected to provide reliable information about the operations in the school. The PTA chairperson, besides being compulsorily a parent in the school and by virtue of his/her elected position, represents the voice of the entire body of parents and is at the centre of all communication between the school and the parents. In that position, he/she can be trusted to give unbiased information about the perceptions, feelings, expectations, challenges and wishes of the parents in his/her respective school. Simple random sampling was used to select the schools,

teachers and parents. However, in 3 of the school, there were only 8 teachers in total so the researcher was forced to interview all of them

The teachers participating included those employed by TSC and also those employed by PTA. All schools studied were found to have employed PTA teachers to help but the common outcry from teachers and parents was that there was still need for more government employed teachers.

Simple random sampling on the other hand gave each individual parent and school an equal chance of participating in the study without any chance of bias. Out of the 15 public primary schools in the Zone, 8 (53.3%) were selected randomly. From each sampled school, 1 head teacher, 8 teachers, 1 PTA chairperson and 7 parents were selected. This provided a sample size of 136 participants for the study. This information appears in Table 3:1 below.

Table 3.1: Sample size

Sample	No. of participants per school	No. of Schools	Total
Head teachers	1	8	8
PTA Chairpersons	1	8	8
Teachers	8	8	64
Parents	7	8	56
Grand total			136

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

Before the study was conducted, the researcher was granted a written permission from Moi University and also obtained a Research Permit from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. The permit was shown to head teachers of the

sampled schools as proof of the authenticity of the exercise. To gain access to the research site, the researcher made advance personal visits to the individual sampled schools to book appointments with the head teachers. These appointments depended entirely on the head teacher's convenience.

On the day of the interviews, the researcher requested to meet all the teachers in the staff room so as to introduce herself and explain to them what she was doing, why and whom she wished to interview. The researcher requested the teachers to fill in questionnaires, explained to them how their action would be used to shed light on the FPE programme, then distributed the questionnaires and waited for the teachers to fill them. The researcher then collected the questionnaires before leaving the venue. The selected group was assured that the information obtained would be treated as confidential and only the researcher would keep the identity of the participant's information secret. The researcher explained to the participants that they had a right to decline any question they were not comfortable in answering. This exercise was conducted over break-time or lunch time to avoid interference with normal classes. The researcher organized a full day for each school so as to allow for convenience of teachers.

Parents were interviewed when they had general parents' meetings only. Such meeting dates were established from the head teachers during visits by the researcher to the respective schools. This situation allowed for simple random sampling to be conveniently done. A total of 56 parents were interviewed.

3.6 Instruments For Data Collection

Data was collected using interview schedules, questionnaires, document analysis of copies of Staff Monthly Returns and Class Attendance Registers and through

observations. The primary data collection tool was an interview schedule. The researcher used face-to-face interviews. Two separate interview schedules were used. There was a schedule for parents and the PTA Chairpersons and another one for the head-teachers.

Creswell (2003) suggests that interviews help the researcher to control the line of questions while at the same time allowing participants to provide historical information. For this study, historical information would include the participant's past experiences with the previous education system as they attempt to justify their present perceptions and expectations. Creswell further notes that observation enables the researcher to record information as it is. On documented data, Creswell argues that it provides written evidence, which can be assumed to be accurate. Going by Creswell's (1986) opinion, the researcher felt the above selected methods for collecting data were reliable.

These interviews were based on a set of written guiding questions. These questions were also supplemented by questions, which arose as the interviews progressed. This allowed for verification of certain issues. Interviews were used to investigate perceptions, expectations and experiences. The interviews were open-ended resembling conversations. This helped the researcher to obtain first hand information about the feelings of the participants towards the programme. The researcher also had an opportunity to capture both the verbatim and non-verbal cues from the respondents. This method also enriched the information gathered because it was quite participatory and clarification of information was sought right away. The interviews were audio- taped in order to retain a verbatim record of the responses which became very necessary later in the evenings as the researcher perused and analyzed it while

still fresh in the mind. Interviews with head teachers were conducted in the afternoons during the school term and were arranged in a convenient way through appointments to avoid interference with learning and administration sessions. The total interview time was 18 hours equivalent to 15 minutes for each of the 72 participants interviewed - (56 parents, 8 head teachers and 8 PTA chairpersons). The head teacher's schedule had 22 questions while that of parents had 10 questions.

The researcher administered questionnaire for teachers was used to obtain relevant information from sampled teachers. The researcher felt that since teachers were the main implementers of the programme, it was best to seek their opinion in written form using questionnaires where their names and individual opinions would be treated in strict confidentiality and anonymity. This was done to eliminate fear of victimization by their employer and also for increased freedom to express their genuine feelings, understanding and experiences, which were the concern of this study. The questionnaire had 20 open-ended questions. Space was also provided for suggestions and opinions.

The study also used observation on the ground for verification of adequacy of facilities such as latrines, classrooms, desks, tables and other relevant equipment. It also included observation of the learning environment as regards seating arrangement in the classrooms, personal space, ventilation and experiences of teachers. The researcher felt that observation of parents was important as portrayed in their facial expressions, vocabulary and emotions as they spoke. Observation within the school compound was considered useful in reducing the number of participants and to save on interview time because while in the field, some information was observed without asking people. Pupils were observed in passing as they interacted with teachers in the

classrooms and also outside in the school compound as they shared the play fields, latrines and sports equipment. They were not interviewed. From observation, the researcher made notes to add to interview responses so as to get a comprehensive report for drawing conclusions and making recommendations.

Further information was obtained from office records such as Class Attendance Registers and Monthly Staff Returns. These records assisted in establishing the significant effect the programme has had on overall enrolment, staffing and teacher/pupil ratios in the sampled schools,— a factor that contributed to the predominant outcry for more teachers from all the participants in both the interviews and the questionnaires. The study established that the enrolment in the school studied had gone up and that teacher/pupils ratio currently ranged from 1:50 in lower classes and 1:62 in the upper classes on average. Literature reviewed such as newspapers, books, journals, education commission reports, task force reports and theses provided important information particularly on factors leading to the need for provision of Free Primary Education in the country, Kambu included.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of Data Collection Instruments

Hopkins (1983) asserts that validity is the degree to which a measuring device measures what it is supposed to measure while reliability is the degree to which the device obtains consistency in results. In view of Hopkins' definition given above, this study took information gathered from face-to-face interviews and discussions with the respondents to be their true feelings and judgment of the programme. For piloting of the interview questions, and questionnaires, the researcher administered them on teachers and parents in Eldoret Municipality before subjecting them to the participants in Kambu. This helped to establish the consistency of responses obtained.

So the interview exercise did not need a test-retest procedure in Kambu and this helped to save on of time and cost. However, the sets of guiding interview questions for each category of respondents and also the questionnaire was first discussed with supervisors for expert judgment, modification and advice on their suitability and relevance as measuring instruments for the objectives of the study

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

Since the researcher was interested in perceptions, experiences, emotions, opinions and expectations from the participants, judgment was made and explained qualitatively using words. Narrative is difficult to quantify into figures (scores). However, numbers were used to obtain percentages in enrolment, perception-based interpretations of FPE, ratios and facilities only.

The completed questionnaires were scrutinized for completeness. Information was then analyzed and presented qualitatively in narrative form. Qualitative method was used because the researcher's interest was to seek opinions, feelings, expectations, perceptions and experiences of the participants directly from conversations and interaction with them on the ground regarding Free Primary Education as it was then. Creswell (2002) suggests that narrative rather than scientific technique communicates a wholistic picture, experience and meanings attached to perceptions and experiences. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) concur when they record that qualitative research involves direct interaction between researcher and participants in their natural setting. The researcher becomes the primary data collection tool since she/he is able to build rapport and become highly involved in the experiences of the participants.

Since the area of study was familiar to the researcher after having previously worked there, her knowledge of the setting, sensitivity and awareness of the cultural and ethical values, beliefs, language, challenges, issues and experiences of the participants was an advantage rather than a disadvantage because it helped her to interact with participants with ease while still observing objectivity. This awareness was useful in the data interpretation process. This was because, as the study established, Free Primary Education for all had just emerged as a change from a cost-sharing system and as such, it was filled with adjustments, frustrations and unanticipated challenges which neither the researcher nor the participants could claim previous experience of, a factor which would otherwise influence the views.

To avoid bias in the findings and in respect of the rights, wishes and interests of informants, the researcher explained clearly to the participants the objectives and purpose of the study, the intended use of the data collected and reassured them of confidentiality and anonymity of their schools, names and identities. Creswell, (2002) advances the idea that a researcher has an obligation to respect the needs, rights, values and decisions of the informants. The study observed this principle all through the process of data collection.

The narratives used to analyze the data were based on the information drawn from the discussion-like interviews and open-ended responses on the questionnaires. It is hoped that these have brought out the perceptions, expectations, experiences and the meanings that the individual participants in Kambu Zone attach to Free Primary Education. Data obtained from field office records in the schools were taken as reliable and valid. Data on enrolment and staffing was analyzed quantitatively and explained using descriptive statistics.

Chapter Three handled Research Design and Methodology. It discussed the survey design, target population sampling technique, the research instruments used and the data collection procedure. The chapter that follows discusses Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This study explored perceptions, experiences, expectations towards free primary education. The study collected data from 136 respondents. The tools used to collect data were interview schedules (Appendix 1 and 2), self-administered questionnaire (Appendix 3), observation and document analysis. The open-ended questions on both the questionnaire and the interview schedules provided a deeper understanding of the interpretations, feelings, reactions, and expectations of the participants. Data was collected between December 2006 and August 2007. Thereafter, the researcher organized, summarized and analyzed the raw data.

This chapter analyses the responses obtained from the participants. It also outlines the results, their outcomes and the emerging issues. The responses are examined under each individual instrument as they summarize the perceptions, expectations and implementation experiences of the participants. They are analyzed as follows:-

- (i) Responses from parents as they relate to questions in the interview schedule - Appendix 2.
- (ii) Responses from teachers as they relate to the Questionnaire for teachers Appendix 3.
- (iii) Responses from school administrator (Head teachers) as they relate to questions in the interview schedule – Appendix 1.

4.1 Key Issues and Results from Interviews

(i) Summary Responses Obtained From Parents

Seven parents from each sampled school were interviewed. Most respondents articulated similar expectations and perceptions revolving around confusion in the word “free”. From this source, the study obtained valuable data on individual interpretations, understanding and expectations towards free primary education. In discussion with parents, it emerged that free primary education meant different things to different parents and that the word “Free” was the centre of controversy.

Eighty Five per cent (85%) of the parents interviewed reported that they expected everything free from the government while 10% said that even though primary education was announced as free, they suspected that the government would not remove them completely from total responsibility of educating their children as enrolment would inevitably rise and more needs emerge. The other 5% confessed that they were not sure of what FPE meant and they were still waiting to be told clearly. They all however admitted that they were unhappy with head teachers who asked them for money to finance school projects like latrines and school kitchens. Some parents were of the opinion that if they were still asked to pay K.C.P.E registration fees, pay the school cook, employ PTA teachers and put up buildings, then education was not free. Those with children in Class 7 and 8 expressed their fear for possible poor examination results but did not want to be involved in solving the problem citing that the government should do more. This is reflected in table 4.1: below.

Table 4.1: Parents' Perceptions of their Roles in FPE

Index	Perceptions	Number	Percentage
1	Absolutely no role to play	48	85
2	Some role to play	5	10
3	Neutral (waiting to be informed)	3	5
	Total	56	100

Some notable responses are highlighted below:

In response to the question on what he expected to contribute towards education of his children, this is what one of the parents said: “ Nothing. Word came that education is free. Let headmaster not bother me. I am too poor and he knows that. He should write to the government for what he needs.”

This parent's interpretation of free primary education is that it is 100% free and that there is no additional parental responsibility. The tone in her words indicated that she was not willing to play any active role in her child's education any more. It also carried a notion of bitterness with the head teacher from the way she volunteered more information in her response. On asking her how many children she had in that school, her reply was “three, one in lower and two in upper”. This meant that at least she is one of those who are benefiting more and yet her attitude sounded quite negative. In the researcher's view, a parent with this perception has very high demands and expectations on the programme and is likely to have restrained relations with the teachers. The response below showed that there were other parents with similar views as another parent put it:

I am not aware of any roles. Education is in the hands of the government. We want the government to give us teachers and pay the school cook because “NARC” has money. Why should I be asked to employ a teacher and

contribute money to employ a school cook when the government has promised free education? The idea was to remove burden from us. Why again are we being asked for money? We are not sure whether this is from the government or from the headmaster? I have been paying but I am not happy.

With the use of the words “completely free”, it appeared that some parents had set their minds off primary school requirements for their children. Being asked later to play a financial role would be difficult for her to take in. The general idea was taken as 100% free. Very few parents expected to be asked to participate in contribution of any money or provision of materials to support the programme.

The response below from another parent showed that the parents were expecting even more support from the government. This is how one parent put it:

The government has finally remembered parents. Educating children has been so difficult. We pay high fees for nursery school and too many levies in primary schools and still secondary school is waiting for us. I expect primary school to be completely free with provision of uniform, food, desks and books. Then I can plan for high school. When it was announced, I thought nursery would also be paid for by the government. I hope the government will consider this soon.

This expectation was expressed by other parents. This is how yet another parent put it.

To me, basic education includes nursery school. Nursery school fees are too high. I pay 500/= per term for my child there. I need to be relieved so that I can start saving for my children in upper levels. My son is in Class 8 now and is likely to join a good secondary school. He is bright and I wouldn't like him to have fees problems. I wish the government would finance education and put enough teachers in both nursery and primary schools. Parents can then be left with buildings only.

A few parents however believed that they still had a role to play. One parent expressed concern about the results because she said her daughter was in Class 7. This is how she put it:

Mwalimu (headmaster) called us and explained to us that we need to motivate teachers to teach because the work load is high and pupils now are many. He suggested that we organize ourselves and pay them something to give the senior classes extra coaching but parents were reluctant. Surely we cannot leave everything to the government, but only a few parents can see this. Only three of us paid for the children in class 7 in April and two teachers offered to

teach them Maths and Science. This was only in the mornings, 3 days a week. We are still trying to persuade our colleagues to be more positive but it is not easy. We hope they will change this attitude in August because we fear to see our children failing.

The words of this parent indicated that she interpreted free education as partially free and that she had a role to play without much resistance. On a further discussion with her, she revealed that this was her last born child and that her older ones had done well in primary schools and gone to good secondary schools. She explained that one was already a teacher and another taking a course in pharmacy and she did not want to disadvantage this young one. She said that she was ready to listen to the teachers' suggestions because they led to good fruits.

The following response was from a male parent:

Yes, education is said to be free, but how many good things can one get completely free? I was sure that I would have a part to play. I knew even when the announcement came that there would still be something for me to do. I have four children in this primary school and I make sure I liaise with teachers to tell me what my children need. I cannot wait for the government to do everything. I have even noticed that results in the school are beginning to be poor. A child got 200 marks out of 500 last year and was number 3 in the class. What is that and where are we going? We must be close to the teachers and assist where possible for the sake of our own children.

This response suggests that this parent is aware that he has a role to play and that he is also appreciative of the bit the government is doing. Some other parents felt that with the implementation of free primary education, quality was compromised. One of them had considered taking his children to a private school where he believed there were enough teachers and the quality of education was better. He had the following to say in response to how he was benefiting from the governments effort to support education:

Free primary education is not of much use to me because my children are not doing as well as they used to do before. Although they appear to be good in class, I am not happy with the marks they score. I cannot expect them to get marks to obtain entry in any good Provincial secondary school. They tell me that many chapters are left uncovered. I am organizing to transfer them to a

private boarding primary school next year if possible. I mentioned my wish to the headmaster last month [May, 2007] but he was not happy and promised that our school will improve. I don't know how true this is because no more teachers have been employed and the year is passing. Now my mind is fully set for the transfer in January 2008.

The disturbing question here is: Is transfer a solution with realistic fruits for the school or does it damage the government dream? To the researcher, reason, patience and active participation by parents may work better.

In questions used to establish ways in which parents benefited from free primary education, most parents expressed happiness with the programme saying that it was a big relief from the previous cost-sharing one. Most of them were happy with the provision of books particularly text books which they said most teachers in the Upper Classes (4-8) demanded each child to have. They said that books were very expensive yet they had to buy them each time a child moved up to the next class.

The study also established that most parents interviewed had more than one child in primary school with eight of them saying that besides their own, they were also educating grandchildren from their dead relatives. One lady parent had two of her own and three orphans for her dead son. Such parents expressed their happiness with the programme generally. They said it had come at a very necessary time for many of them but suggested that the government should still do more. The common feeling with all parents was that the government has too much money. The elite ones said that money for free primary education was coming in from many sources including rich donors like America and so the government should do more for parents. Some claimed that they read it in newspapers and get it on radio too. Most comments made on Question 10 justified why parents felt that the government should provide

education free 100%. The researcher felt that until there are clear written guidelines from the government this remained a grey area for parents and head teachers.

On issues or concerns that still need to be addressed, most respondents wanted the issue of salaries for PTA teachers addressed by the government. They also felt that it was not clear where the dividing line between what the government would do and what would be left for parents to do. Respondents with children in the nursery schools wanted the government to take over and consider that level as part of basic education. They expressed their concern about nursery school fees which they claimed was high.

All respondents except only one said that free primary benefited them in several ways. Some of the ways cited were provision of books and teaching materials. They also mentioned things like having peace to plan well for secondary education without having to think of levies in the primary schools. Those caring for orphans said they were generally less burdened now and can take all of them to school at least to acquire basic education like all other children. They however had the common belief that the government did not say anything about parents participating in provision of materials and facilities in schools. Most of them adamantly said that education was announced as “free” and nobody should try to alter what the government had so clearly announced on radios and all other media channels.

All PTA chairpersons observed that previously they had difficulties with parents particularly on the area of school levies such as examination money, money for purchase of school stationery, salaries for watchmen, and PTA staff. However, now with the big relief, from the government, parents were now more cooperative as children rarely went home for money. Most chairpersons however, complained that

parents meetings in the era of free primary education were poorly attended with parents claiming that they had little to discuss at those meetings since the chairperson and the headmaster could now plan alone because money was already there.

One chairperson explained that parents in his school were quite uncooperative in year 2003 and 2004 but they are now more compliant. He said that some insisted on children getting more exercise books and would not buy any even when their children filled up books provided by the school or contribute food when the stock from the school feeding programme ran out. Another chairperson said that whenever parents kept children home resisting purchase of desks and uniform, he advised the village elder to intervene and where parents proved more difficult, the village elders send the parents to the area chief, a situation parents did not like so they would opt to send the children back to school with the necessary items. The chairpersons lamented that they frequently clashed with parents in this issue but now parents are a bit cooperative although there are still some disgruntled ones. All the PTA chairpersons interviewed suggested that the government should employ teachers because those employed by the parents compared salaries paid by different schools and moved to better-paying schools frequently. Some moved without giving notice and this created new problems on top of the already existing ones. Salaries for PTA teachers as established by the study ranged from Kshs.1200/= to 2500/= per month in the same zone depending on the financial abilities and attitudes of the parents towards free primary education.

In their general remarks on FPE, most PTA chairpersons lamented the deteriorating results saying that there were inadequate teachers in the schools and over-enrolment in most classes in the lower section. To address this, they tried to arrange for remedial

classes after normal classes ended at 3.40 pm but most parents were unwilling to contribute even towards tea for the volunteering teachers saying that teachers are on government payroll and should do their work. On asking the parents to organize privately with teachers willing to teach during the holidays, most parents resisted yet they wanted their children to come for coaching especially those in class 6, 7 and 8.

In one class during the August 2006 holidays, as few as three pupils reported thus forcing the chairperson to call off the exercise. The chairpersons concerned regretted this attitude from parents saying that it frustrated the school committee's and administration's efforts to improve the deteriorating results. The chairperson emphasized that the government was not quite clear on its FPE policy and left them to work under uncertainties. He claimed that the issues of staffing, salaries and curriculum needed to be addressed better by the government. The PTA chairperson for school A stated the shock with which he received the announcement of free primary education saying that he had just been re-elected for his second term as chairman and had placed good development plans for the school with the parents. He said that he realized that he would have a difficult task in adjusting and convincing the parents to go ahead and lay the bricks for latrines and a new office. He called a meeting to request the parents to go on with the work until the government came clear on whether or not it would construct structures in schools or provide the cash to employ people to do so. The chorus he got at the meeting was that: "We have put in a great government. It will do everything."

Answering question 4 on how he understood free primary education as PTA chairman, he said that he was sure that roles would be shared still because school is too involving. His words went as follows:

I believe school is too involving and parents have to chip in. Will the government know when a school needs new latrines, classrooms etc? And even if it knows, how soon would it act on such an Emergency? In my understanding, we have a role to play and even the local leaders and the community will have to come in sometimes just like before. Education is a common enterprise.

In the researcher's interpretation, all the chairpersons appeared to appreciate the government effort and acknowledged the reduction of financial burden on parents adding that previously, some parents were unable to educate their children through the whole primary cycle due to poverty. Based on their opinions, they were happy with the rise in enrolment of both sexes in schools and also enrolment of some disabled and disadvantaged children such as those with mild disabilities such as weak limbs, mild speech defects and HIV/AIDS orphans in the schools they were associated with. Although the study established that schools which integrated children with special learning needs enjoyed more funding from the government, the researcher commented that the idea of "normal schools" giving educational opportunities to such children. This move also provided a positive statement to shy parents who previously denied their disabled children education by hiding them in the houses.

(ii) Summary of Responses from the Teachers' Questionnaire

After collecting all the filled questionnaires, the researcher assigned them numbers (1 to 61) for ease of summarizing the responses according to the relationship the responses showed in addressing various questions. This way, the researcher was able to come up with percentages of teachers who had similar perceptions and experiences.

The questionnaire was designed to ask about the pressures at work as relates to the work load, class control, conflicts with the head teachers and the parents, extend to which roles are efficiently played, individual experiences with the programme and the potential quality of education and results expected under the circumstances. The questionnaire had 20 open-ended items and aimed to cover eight teachers in each of the eight (8) sampled schools. Sixty- four (64) questionnaires were distributed out of which 61 were returned fully filled. Three could not be traced. Although the questionnaires were administered by the researcher herself with the help of the deputy head teachers in each participating school, one questionnaire mysteriously disappeared in each of three schools. The responses were as shown in table 4:2 below:

Table 4.2: Teachers' Perceptions Regarding FPE

Index	Perceptions	No. of Participants	Percentage
1	Government should provide more resources	54	84
2	Government should provide more information	5	8
3	The programme is confusing	2	3
4	Questionnaires not returned	3	5
	Total	64	100

There were surprising similarities in responses from the teachers although they were from different schools. These responses were analyzed qualitatively and the results presented in narrative form. Percentages were also used to show cases where teachers

shared similar responses. Some of the shared perceptions and experiences based on these responses were:-

1. With the increase in enrolment, more teachers would be employed by the government and in case this is not possible, the serving teachers would be paid allowances to motivate them as they inevitably handle the extra work load.
2. An appropriate method of disciplining pupils would be designed and written guidelines for the same be circulated to the schools in the face of the fact that older school drop-outs would now opt to come back to school to benefit from free education and there would be need to be extra strict with them given their previous uncontrolled experiences outside school.
3. That the government would provide the teaching/learning materials on time and frequently because it is more realistic about education requirements than parents.
4. That to date, some parents don't understand what free primary education is.
5. That free primary education has done a great service in reducing poverty because poor parents cannot justifiably explain why they cannot enrol their children their children in schools.
6. Those schools are understaffed and the few available teachers are over-worked.
7. Teachers are not happy with their own performance as compared to previously because they feel even as they claim to be over-worked; the pupils are not getting their due attention.
8. Parents still needed education on their roles in education of their children to reduce some of the misunderstanding and friction with teachers currently experienced particularly over uniform, replacement of filled-up exercise books and mode of punishing pupils.

Some notable responses, experiences, suggestions and opinions from the questionnaires are cited below:

In response to the second question which asked, “How did you immediately understand Free Primary Education?” One of the teachers wrote the following:-

I waited to be told more about it because it sounded strange and abrupt. I thought Term one would be for consultations, adjustments and seminars for parents and teachers to smoothen the change. There was a lot of confusion in our school. Pupils reported in large numbers with nothing in their bags, some wearing casual clothes. The first two weeks were very difficult. I knew “free” could not mean everything free. Education is too demanding and can never be completely free.

Another teacher wrote the following for the same question:

“I understood Free Primary education to mean that finally the government had decided to rid the parents of the entire burden involved in educating: money, materials, buildings, everything. Unless more information comes, then parents are free of all types of contributions now.”

A response from another teacher who teaches Upper Primary only went and said, “Free means free, it cannot be understood or explained in any other way.”

The above responses from different teachers in different schools are an indication of the different ways in which teachers understood the programme. In response to the fourth question which asked, “As a classroom teacher, what did you expect of the programme?”

The following are some of the common responses appearing on the questionnaires:

The government should provide a text book per subject to every pupil in my classes plus teacher’s copies and stationery necessary for teaching. This is necessary for quick syllabus coverage because pupils can take homework and work at home. Enrolment is high and a teacher must be careful how he plans his work.

The most interesting responses were found on question 3, 6 and 8. Question 3 asked, “How do you understand Free Primary Education today?” Majority of the responses written for this question implied that teachers had a different understanding from the way they understood it when it was first announced. They now understood it to be a little tricky. It never brought with it the facilities and considerations they expected such as pay increase commensurate with increase in enrolment and extra responsibility. Some revealed that they were frustrated. One teacher wrote, “I teach big classes meant to be double-streams, and I should be paid for that”. Teachers should benefit from the FPE funding.

Question 6 asked, “What characteristics of Free Primary Education make you uncomfortable about it?” The following were some of the answers.

- (i) Class control is poor, some pupils play without you noticing due to the large numbers.
- (ii) The twelve exercise books given to each pupil per year are too few. Some pupils steal or pull out pages from other pupil’s books. Their parents are unwilling to buy for them.
- (iii) Enrolment has gone up thus compromising quality.
- (iv) Parents have become irresponsible. Most of them do not even come to discuss progress or discipline of their children.
- (v) It lacks teacher motivation and also overworks teachers.
- (vi) Parents no longer see teachers as “humans” but as “machines”.

For question 8, which asked, “What specific challenges do you have with Free Primary Education as a classroom teacher?” One teacher said:

I never complete my syllabuses, the classes are large and we are few. The government is more concerned about enrolment but never about adequacy or motivation of teachers. Teachers should be considered in monetary or other incentives. The cane should also come back for use to improve discipline because we have pupils older than their class years

Another teacher from a different school said:

Pupils don't get enough exercise books. Each one gets 4 per term and parents have become so irresponsible that they don't replace filled-up books. Some pupils begin to steal from others or pull out pages from other pupil's books to write on or don't do exercises at all. This makes my work difficult and I teach Maths which requires plenty of exercises

Some suggestions made by teachers on question 20 which asked them to give their personal opinions about the programme as a whole were as follows:

A teacher had this to say:

The cane had its own miracles in handling discipline. This is the best time to have it in full force because of the come-back pupils and over-age ones who have big heads. Bad habits like smoking, absentism, laziness etc. are common in the school.

Another teacher's response was as follows:

It is time our union, Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) got into serious dialogue with the government about our grievances. Work is excessively much now and nobody is saying anything about the teacher's welfare. Is this fair?

The majority of teachers concurred in the suggestion about revision of salaries, employment of more teachers and clear guidelines while at the same time they thanked the government for what it was doing citing that retention of pupils in school was quite encouraging as opposed to previously when they went home frequently to collect monies and to bring parents to do necessary manual work in the schools.

(iii) Summary responses from interviews with School Administrators (Head Teachers)

Eight head teachers were interviewed from the 8 sampled schools. Interviews were contacted in their respective offices in the schools between December 2006 and

August 2007. The study established that Head teachers as the school administrators on the ground tended to feel that the government had left a difficult task to them about explaining to parents, the community and the leaders what free primary education involved. From their responses, it was clear that there had not been enough guidelines and adequate sensitization of the parents and teachers about the programme. The government left this difficult task unfairly to them. However, five years down the line, situations are better and more stable in the schools although under-staffing still bites. Head teachers explained that they have been able to use their administrative skills to handle the situation although with difficulty. They also said that they shared ideas among themselves particularly on issues concerning conflicts with parents.

A common perception among all the heads interviewed was that the government would deliver adequate stationery, supplementary reading materials, equipment and other teaching/learning materials to the schools along with adequate cash to buy furniture. Since every school was forced to open a bank account, something that did not exist in most public primary schools where parents elected school treasurers to keep and help the head teacher to control the little money that was contributed for projects, heads said they understood this move to mean that there would be a streamlined government grant system for salaries for all non-TSC staff and other activities in the schools such as transport for heads to ministry offices and minor construction works. On quality of education in the face of the increased enrolment, the heads said that they believed that the government would employ and staff fully all the schools from the large stock of unemployed trained teachers floating in the zone. From experiences at the time this study was done, none of their perceptions and expectations had proved right. The head teachers felt that many parents interpreted

the programme as 100% free, they later realized that unless they participated in provision of some facilities, their children would not benefit fully from the government effort. It was however not easy to get them to see and to accept that. It took time and the practical efforts of the educated elite in the area to intervene and reason out with them. The response by one head teacher during the interview went as follows:-

Staff meetings and PTA meetings in early 2003 were like battle-grounds. Each time I called a parent-teacher meeting, I made sure that I persuaded the area Assistant Education Officer (A.E.O) and the educated parents who have children in my school to attend and help me reason out with the other parents, most of whom usually came fully charged by politicians with impractical interpretations of F.P.E.

The tone and the strategy used by this particular head teacher revealed that school administration was not easy under F.P.E. and that professional confidence was lacking in his day-to-day performance of duties. It emerged in the study that head teachers experienced some confusion with the implementation of F.P.E. This is how another of them put it as regards his immediate perception of the new programme:

I felt totally confused when I heard the announcement over the radio that primary education was free. I did not know what to make of the word “Free” because it came just when schools were opening. Then the Area Education Officer (A.E.O) told us that District Education Officers (D.E.O) had been summoned to Nairobi to meet the Minister for Education and that they would bring clear details about F.P.E. later that week. All the same, nobody has ever verified things for me. I have been using my administrative skills to deal with situations as they come up to this day. The challenges have been many from teachers, parents, pupils and even from local leaders who should be assisting me.

From this response, it implied that certain expectations had so far not been met but this head teacher sounded fairly comfortable with the programme despite the challenges and lack of support from parents and some political leaders. Another head teacher had this to say when asked, “What are your new challenges with F.P.E? Specifically, the respondent reported:

My challenges have been many ranging from over-enrolment without teachers and desks to over-age pupils with discipline problems, uncooperative parents and unhappy teachers

Again the researcher posed the question: Could you please explain further about each of the challenges you have just mentioned? The respondent advanced:

See like in Class 2, I have 65 pupils. This is double-stream but I cannot separate them because although I have a room, I don't have a teacher. I have a total of 8 teachers including myself. Desks are few so I put four (4) pupils per desk and writing is difficult for them. Some begin to play without the teacher noticing and class control is not good. I have some over-age pupils some of whom smoke, absent themselves and hardly complete assignments. Teachers are always complaining about them being lazy and untidy. Last year I had a 23-year-old boy in Class 2 who could come to school drunk. He came from a family where native brew is made and sold as the source of family income. The school could not contain him. We quietly asked his parents to look for an alternative for him. They took him to a driving school in Mombasa. These over-age pupils can be difficult I tell you. Parents here again believe that the government sends everything - materials plus a lot of money. Even when I run short of food from the school feeding programme, they don't contribute. Pupils learn hungry. My teachers are over-worked and unhappy. I take this as a genuine reaction because classes are large and at times one teacher has to handle two classes at a time but this is the best I can do."

What appeared to emerge from this long narrative was that the head teachers expected the government to do more than it is currently doing. He appeared bitter in his tone, a clear indication that he understood the programme differently from the experiences he was going through. He apparently had difficulties with some of his parents. There also appeared to emerge an element of mistrust from the parents who appeared to suspect the head teacher of misappropriation of funds.

When asked, "What were the reactions of your teachers to Free Primary Education?

The response from one head teacher was as follows:

Teachers complained that the government was misusing them yet it had not honoured their pay deal negotiated for them by their union (K.N.U.T). They also expressed the need to have more teachers employed. Their common belief was that with free education, numbers would rise in the classrooms and it would automatically mean new teachers employed or special allowances paid for handling extra pupils. When we talked about management of the funds by vote heads, this was an unfamiliar language to both parents and teachers. I

think the government has lied to teachers and parents. It should come out clear on what 'free' really means.

The implication of this response was that this head teacher did not find easy time with the teachers as it appeared that their perceptions and expectations of FPE were different from what they were getting. From the words of the head teacher, the teachers in his school were unhappy, expected more from the government and also felt that the government was unfair to them. The disturbing issue here was whether these teachers would be committed to teach the children while having such a negative attitude towards their employer. It was also questionable as to whether a head teacher would have adequate command over such charged staff to ensure good examination performance given that Kenya believes so much in examinations.

The same head teacher had the following remarks to make when asked, "What are your general comments about Free Primary Education as a whole?"

The benefits of Free Primary Education are many. They outweigh the disadvantages. There is a serious reduction of the previous friction between me and parents. They hated me for sending children home even when it was necessary. Now we only disagree when they delay K.C.P.E registration money because we get one receipt book to be used by several schools and when it reaches here, we have to register quickly and pass it on to the neighbouring school before registration period is over. Some parents up to now believe that the government gives schools money for exams."

Researcher: Could you please clarify this bit about receipt books?

"The ministry discourages wastage. Each receipt book must be filled up before another one is started. If one school uses a certain number of receipts, the next school continues from the next number on the same receipt book. So when it reaches your school, you finish with your pupils and pass it on to the next school. There is always a time dead-line for submission at the A.E.Os office. This may thus force you to send home candidates who have not paid to avoid delaying the other schools who are waiting for the same receipt book."

The researcher felt that the head teachers had to explain certain things to parents and teachers which could best have been done through written circulars by the government. This would save the head teachers the trouble of verbal confrontations with parents and teachers since they would just be referring to sections in an official

circular to explain things. On the parents' perceptions to Free primary Education. One head teacher said that parents in her school wanted 100% free education for their children. Some children arrived in school with completely empty bags and without uniform expecting new sets of uniform. She went on to say:

Even today, when I ask them to replace filled up exercise books for the children, they grudgingly ask where government money has gone. Initially, the parents were very difficult but with time many have become cooperative. During meetings with parents, I let the PTA chairman talk more for fear of parent/teacher conflicts. He supports me well. I have had the same PTA chairman for the last three years now.

From this response, the researcher's interpretation was that although the head teacher sounded happy with FPE, and also with the fact that the parents had become cooperative, she still experienced some friction with parents, particularly in the area of financial management and also when trying to convince them to do things, until she sought the help of the PTA chairperson. On the question about new challenges of FPE, another head teacher had this to say:

My school is double stream from Class 1 to 8 but I have only 11 teachers. There is a short-fall of 5 teachers. Although they sit as single stream, I have a problem when a teacher is absent. One teacher therefore has to handle two classes. The teacher takes them to the workshop room which is now constantly out of use but where we have painted blackboards in front and behind. One class sits facing behind while the other faces in front. The teacher then gives different work to the two groups and goes round checking each group alternately.

Researcher: How does the teacher concerned react to this experience?

Answer:

Of course they don't like it but what else can I do. I just use persuasive language. These teachers have learned to just work because nothing much is being said by the government about more teachers and parents can't afford to employ many teachers."

The researcher's interpretation of the strategy used by that head teacher was one of desperation which could lead to poor quality education and under-coverage of the

syllabus. With the time allocation of lessons of 35mins in Lower and 40mins in Upper, such an arrangement cannot allow for adequate pupil/teacher contact time.

From the above summary of results from interviews with head teachers, the issues were similar in all the schools. These were:

- (a) Inadequate furniture
- (b) Mistrust about use of money send to the schools by the government
- (c) Book-keeping - a new concept and practice by the head teachers
- (d) Improved relations between teachers and parents.
- (e) Confusion about the word “free”.
- (f) Unmet expectations by teachers.
- (g) Dissatisfaction among teachers
- (h) Lower examination performance
- (i) Great expectations by parents on the government
- (j) Great appreciation by parents and teachers on the government move to provide free primary education.

(iv) Summary Results from Observation Notes

The researcher felt that the interviews and questionnaire could not be enough to give insight information on facilities, seating arrangement and age-levels of pupils, which was important in interpreting some of the challenges teachers expressed. To get this kind of data the researcher thought it wise to visit some of the classes as lessons were going on. To do this, the researcher sought permission from the Deputy Head teachers and the subject teachers. Permission was granted in four of the schools in the study.

In school A, the teacher allowed me to join her as she went to teach Class II Mathematics which they referred to as Number Work. The researcher's aim was to observe the seating arrangement, class size and teacher/pupil interaction with a view to establishing what experiences the teacher had in the learning/teaching exercise. A noticeable situation was that the class was congested with four pupils sitting in one desk. Writing was observed to be difficult for the pupils and the teacher was observed to be concentrating on the front few rows while those at the back would stop, talk and even play without the teacher noticing. The teacher did not move around the class, as the desk arrangement did not allow for that. An unasked question developed in the researcher's mind as to how much attention was given to the pupils when there was nobody supervising the teaching and learning process, if this teacher could afford to teach only the front few pupils while well aware that somebody was in the room investigating how teaching normally went on.

It was also noticed that although the number of classrooms were enough, desks, teachers, textbooks and latrines were inadequate. In all the schools studied, there was only one block of latrines for girls and one for boys, some with as few as only three rooms so only three pupils could use it at a time. The researcher felt that there was a shortfall of this vital facility as children formed long lines to use them and some never appeared to enjoy their break-time as they spend most of the time waiting for their turns to use the latrines. The researcher noticed that play-grounds were enough as pupils hardly used them since games time and physical education (P.E) time, according to the teachers, were either used as lesson times to make up for lost lessons, prep time or as the only free time for teachers in all the schools studied. The researcher felt that this arrangement is not healthy because pupils need to play games and enjoy physical education lessons as an important part of the school curriculum.

The researcher sees this as denial of necessary mental and physical health for the learners. It is also possible to identify certain talents, which could be useful to the learner's later life as professional sports persons which could be a good alternative for solving the problem of high levels of unemployment existing in the country today.

(v) Summary Results from Secondary Data in School Records

Office records were used to verify details about staffing and enrolment. It was established that it was mandatory for every head teacher to send monthly staff returns to the Zonal office indicating the monthly staffing and enrolment situations. A copy of this was obtained from the zonal office for a combined record of all the schools so as to get the picture at a glance. One head teacher explained that the ministry's reason for demanding these returns was to establish school staffing needs for purposes of staff balancing. But he went on to say that they only did it for formality because their cry for more teachers fell on deaf ears both at the government and parent levels. The researcher felt that these records were necessary for confirming the staffing and enrolment situations for purposes of coming up with realistic recommendations relating to inadequacy of teachers and the subsequent low quality of education offered in the schools.

Conclusion

This chapter handled data presentation, analysis and interpretation. It summarised the findings obtained from interviews with parents, interviews with head-teachers, responses from the questionnaire for teachers, results from secondary data and observation notes. The chapter that follows deals with discussions, conclusions, recommendations and suggestion for further research.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

Following the research, this chapter discusses the results, draws conclusions, makes recommendations and suggests areas for further research concerning the study problem.

5.1 Discussion

The following were the objectives of the study and were used as headings for the discussion.

- (i) Parents' perceptions, expectations and experiences of FPE in Kambu educational zone.
- (ii) Teachers' perceptions, expectations and experiences of FPE in Kambu educational zone.
- (iii) The implementation experiences and challenges faced by school administrators under FPE in Kambu educational zone.

(i) Parents' perceptions, expectations and experiences of FPE in Kambu educational zone.

Responses obtained from interviewing the parents showed that majority of them (85%) perceived FPE to be 100% free with the government providing everything for the education of their children.

They perceived FPE to mean that the government would take over all the roles including finance, buildings feeding, salaries for teaching and non-teaching staff, stationery and uniform. Their responses indicate that they did not expect to be asked

to contribute anything. This could have been due to lack of clear information from the government to the schools.

However, some of the parents (10%) were found to perceive FPE to mean that the government would meet the greater share while they play a small role. This was reflected in the following responses:

- (i) “Surely, we cannot leave everything to the government. School is too involving.”
- (ii) “Yes, education is said to be free, but how many good things can one expect to get completely free?”
- (iii) “Mzazi lazima bado ajipange.” – interpreted to mean that even with the government funding, the parent must still be prepared to contribute something.

It also emerged from some parents that there was some mistrust on the financial management in the schools. Some parents said that they did not believe auditing of school accounts was being done. To the researcher, this bounced back to the government for lack of clear information on the breakdown of the funds and how it was allocated to the different vote-heads. The fact that parents thought that the government had enough money for FPE created this situation which perhaps was not fair on the integrity of the school administrators. This in the view of the researcher could be corrected through written guidelines which could be read to or by the parents. The government could also have improved the information flow through public barazas or through Zonal Inspectors of Schools through their meetings with parents to explain what their roles in FPE would remain as.

(ii) Teachers' Perceptions, Expectations and Experiences of FPE

After analysing the data obtained by questionnaire, it became clear that from the word “free”, the teachers' Perceptions were that the government had taken over provision of all teaching/learning materials and equipment for the expanded enrolment. It looks like this did not happen.

The implication from the teachers responses indicate that although the government has provided teaching/learning materials, the teachers' expectations on the government were higher than is happening. It appears from the vocabulary used in these responses that the ease with which they imagined they would do their work in the classroom is frustrated due to inadequate materials and facilities.

More responses from teachers indicate that they expected their salaries to be reviewed with the increase in enrolment. Since this did not happen, the teachers became unhappy and frustrated. They felt that since the classes were very large and the teachers were few, the government would have come up with a way to motivate teachers. This could have been done through increasing of their salaries or some form of allowance. Throughout the research, it was clear that the government needed to address the teachers' problems with the FPE programme. This is evident from the following responses:

- (i) Parents no longer see teachers as “human” but as “machines.”
- (ii) These over-age learners are a problem.
- (iii) Class control is poor because of numbers.

These responses were a clear indication that the teachers had discipline challenges from over-age pupils but could not do much about it because they had come back to benefit from FPE and yet they brought with them unpleasant behaviours learned

outside in their years away from school. It was also evident that teachers expected the government to employ more teachers and also expand the physical facilities like classrooms to respond to the raised enrolment. The teachers did not sound motivated but appeared to have had a positive attitude towards teaching the pupils despite the challenges they faced. Some form of government support would have helped to motivate and encourage the teachers in the implementation of the FPE programme.

The researcher feels that the teachers were justified in expressing their frustration because, based on the experiences they cited in the questionnaire, they were handling large numbers of learners in the classrooms, marking more work, handling more discipline issues, had little time to rest and worked under non-motivating conditions. The researcher feels that perhaps it would have been reasonable for the government to have researched and obtained more information about the requirements of FPE before implementing it. Nafukho and Kang'ethe (2002) recommend that a conducive teaching/learning environment takes care of among other things room size, enrolment level, lighting, ventilation, inter-personal space and teacher/pupil ratios. These two scholars further argue that psychological environment involves creation of a conducive learning atmosphere where teacher and pupil can demonstrate and make full use of individual skills and talents. From the teachers' responses above, this does not appear to be available in schools in Kambu zone. This is because the government had not given the teacher information about the program. No effort was made to prepare the teachers for the change to FPE and the challenges associated to that change.

(iii) The Implementation Experiences and Challenges Faced By School Administrators

In the study, the term school administrators refers to head teachers. The study investigated perceptions as the central theme. In the course of the study, it emerged that perceptions led to expectations and that the two concepts were inseparable in the context of the study. Athey (1970) attests to this when she says, “Perceptions contribute to expectations which in turn determines attitude.” (p. 166) The Daily Nation, Tuesday July 29, 2009, says of Perceptions, “Perceptions arise from a whole host of information from word of mouth, experiences, advertising, news articles, in-store promotions and factual information like taste.” (p. 7). These two explanations of “perception” have relevance in this study because they imply that the way people react towards something is determined by the way they understand it and the source of the information.

Results obtained from interviewing the head teachers revealed that although the benefits of FPE to the schools outweighed the demerits, they faced many challenges implementing it. It emerged from their responses that the challenges they were going through from FPE were all caused by the varied perceptions among the teachers and the parents. The parents and the teachers in their responses had revealed that they got information about FPE from friends, radio, newspapers, local leaders, head teachers and politicians. The researcher could not help attributing this to lack of adequate, accurate and streamlined information from the government to the schools whose consequence opened speculation to all manner of interpretation of FPE thus determining parents’ and teachers’ expectations and reactions towards the programme. Some of the challenges facing the head teachers were:

- (a) School administration became more difficult particularly in the areas of staff management, financial management and curriculum supervision. The words of one head teacher were, “My challenges have been many, ranging from over-enrolment without teachers and desks to over-age pupils with discipline problems, uncooperative parents and unhappy teachers”

- (b) Interpersonal relations were affected particularly between head teacher and teachers and head teacher and parents.

One head teacher said,

”Of course teachers don’t like it but what can I do. I use persuasive language. These teachers have learned to just work because nothing is being said by the government about more teachers. Only my deputy sympathizes with me but the other teachers do not seem to understand my dilemma.”

Another head said,

”When we talked about management of funds by vote-heads, this was an unfamiliar language to both the teachers and parents. I think the government has lied to the teachers and the parents. It should come out clear on what “Free” really means.”

The researcher saw this as arising from the government failure to communicate clearly. This failure made the head teachers victims of suspicion and mistrust from parents and teachers. This could have been avoided if the government had provided clear information and guidelines to all in advance. This however, was not done before the implementation phase of the programme.

School heads perceived that expansion in enrolment would automatically lead to an equivalent increase in human and physical facilities. The school heads thus expected the government to employ more teachers, provide teaching materials and increase the

funding. This idea is supported by the following response from a head teacher, "See like in Class 2 I have 65 pupils. This is double-stream but I cannot separate them because although I have a room, I don't have a teacher . . . my teachers are over-worked and unhappy." This is a clear indication of the serious problems the head teachers had in the implementation of F.P.E. the government could have expected such situations and either increased teachers or staggered the school term and paid the existing teachers to teach for longer periods.

5.2 Conclusion

The research sought to answer the following three questions.

- (i) What are the parents' perceptions and expectations of their role and the roles of the government in the implementation of FPE ?
- (ii) What are the teachers' perceptions, expectations and experiences of FPE?
- (iii) What are the school administrators' experiences in the implementation and administration of FPE?

These questions were used as sub-headings to the conclusion of the study.

(i) What Are The Parents' Perceptions And Expectations Of Their Role And The Roles Of The Government In The Implementation Of FPE?

After analyzing the data obtained through this question, the research concluded that parents in Kambu perceived FPE to mean that the government had taken over full responsibility of funding all the requirements of education in the primary schools. Due to this perception, parents expected the government to provide finance, food, buildings, uniform and all the necessary teaching/learning stationery. The study discovered that parents understood nursery school to be part of basic education and expected the government to include it in the FPE programme. This perception and

the resulting unmet expectations led to mistrust and misunderstanding between parents and school administrators, a situation which restrained personal relations between these two stakeholders. The research established that parents had become too charged by politicians and other local leaders. As a result of this, it had become difficult for the head teachers to convince Kambu parents to participate in providing crucial facilities such as desks and teachers where there were shortages or do any manual work which they used to do routinely under their PTA chairperson before FPE began. The following responses attest to this conclusion:

(ii) What Are The Teachers' Perceptions, Expectations And Experiences Of FPE?

The study concluded that teachers perceived FPE to come with revised salaries, allowances, employment of more teachers and staff promotions to match the increase in pupil enrolment numbers. Teachers saw the increase in enrolment as more work load given that they had previously been used to teaching single streams classes where pupil/teacher ratio was 1:35 in Lower (Class 1 – 3) and 1:18 in Upper (Class 4 – 8) It became evident during the study that these perceptions were faulty and that none of the teachers' expectations had been met. The teachers sounded bitter and demotivated. It was also clear that they blamed the school administrators for allegedly failing to forward their grievances to their government.

Although the teachers sounded unhappy because they felt they did not benefit as individuals from the programme, the study concluded that they appreciated the government effort specifically in the provision of stationery and text books because they said that pupils were able to do extra work on their own and assist teachers in

syllabus coverage. It was also evident that they appreciated the raised enrolment of girls under FPE as a way of giving hope to the individual and the zone as a whole.

(Iii) What Are The School Administrators' Experiences In The Implementation And Administration Of FPE?

It emerged during the study that the challenges faced by school administrators in the process of implementing FPE were many. They revealed that they dealt with unhappy teachers, suspicious parents, unfamiliar financial management, and new discipline issues at a time when the cane had been banned. The study discovered that administrators were forced to devise improper strategies for managing the teaching exercise particularly in situations where there was serious understaffing as was the case in seven (7) of the schools studied. A case in point was where one teacher would be asked to supervise one class while at the same time teaching his own class yet teaching time per lesson is only 35 minutes in Lower and 40 minutes in Upper. School administrators however, were happy about the salaries for school watchmen and cooks as a great financial burden off parents.

Finally, this study concluded that introduction of FPE was done without enough information released to the parents, teachers and the school administrators. As a result, the three groups which are the major stakeholders in the Primary Education Programme did not know what their roles should have been in the implementation process and acted on speculation only. It was necessary to have had some medium of conveying the government responsibilities and apportioning of roles for the government, the parents, the teachers and other stakeholders in the education sector.

5.3 Recommendations

The study found a number of perception-based issues, expectations and implementation challenges that need the attention of all stakeholders if the government effort in providing FPE to Kambu zone learners is to bear the desired fruits. As these issues came from the opinions, feelings and suggestions provided by the participants in the study, it is important that effort should be made to address them. This is in line with the principles of the guiding theory to this study, “Stake’s Naturalistic and Participant Oriented Evaluation Approach”, discussed in Chapter One, which recommends that focus should be on portrayal and processing of the judgements of the participants. Based on the study findings, the researcher recommends the following:-

1. There is need for the government to reduce pressure on the teacher by employing more teachers.
2. There is need for the government to clarify the meaning of FPE and the roles of parents and teachers on its implementation. This can be done through public barazas and seminars or workshops.
3. There is need for the government to issue written guidelines to make the work of the head teacher and the PTA chairperson easier. This is because such guidelines will be used as reference when addressing issues arising from parents.
4. There is need for the government to design strategies for motivating the classroom teacher who is handling a double-stream class in a single room. This could be done through either provision of special allowances, employment of more teachers or rewarding best performing teachers by

subject and administration skills. This move has the potential of transforming the teacher into a productive and satisfied worker.

5. The government to develop a standardized and appropriate financial supervision system to monitor appropriation of FPE funds. This will save the head teachers (who are the accounting officers) of blame from parents and promote transparency in the whole procurement exercise. This could involve training head teachers on financial management through seminars or employing qualified accounts-clerks for the schools.
6. The government to devise a method of making parents participate more actively instead of being critics of the programme. This will help in regaining good teacher/parent relations.
7. There should be emphasis on properly structured Guidance and Counselling Services manned by competent counselling personnel with adequate resources. This should be permanently based at the zonal education office to offer services to the education staff, teachers, learners and parents. These services will help stakeholders in the management of changing circumstances, needs, roles, attitudes and interpersonal relations while at the same time assisting in individual growth in solving present and future educational problems in the zone as they emerge instead of waiting to tackle a real crisis when it occurs.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

The researcher felt that there was need for further study as explained below. A comprehensive nation-wide study similar to this one can be done to establish the overall picture of the perceptions, expectations and attitudes of parents and teachers regarding Free Primary Education. The study should also investigate the

implementation challenges that Kenyan primary school administrators, classroom teachers and parents are going through. Such research would help the government in formulating the FPE Policy Document detailing stakeholders' roles, implementers' positions and the overall desired outcomes of the programme. The reference policy document thus produced and circulated will go along way in making the work of the school administrators and committees easy and restore their confidence when dealing with teachers and parents.

Also, an evaluative study is needed to find out how the implementation of the FPE programme has worked so far. This would be useful for the purpose of obtaining feedback information that would help in refining the program for the future.

REFERENCES

- Athey, I.J. (1970). *Educational Implications of Piaget's Theory*. Toronto: Gin & Company Xerox College Publishing.
- Anyanwu, J. C. (1998). *The determinants of primary school enrolment in rural edo and delta states of Nigeria*. Benin City: Sterlin Publishers.
- Bishop, G. (1995). *Curriculum development: A text book for students*. London: Macmillan Education Ltd.
- Blaine, R. & Sanders, J. R. (1990). *Educational evaluation: Alternative approaches and practical guidelines*. New York: Pitman Publishing Inc.
- Bruner, J. (1977). *The process of Education: A landmark in Educational theory*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Creswell, J.W. (2003). *Research Design*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Daily Nation, (2005, June) . *Top six spenders of the Budget billions*. Nairobi: Nation Media Group
- Daily Nation, (2005, October) . *Primary school enrolment*. Nairobi: Nation Media Group.
- Denyer, J. C. (1989). *Office Management* (5th Ed.). London: Pitman Publishing House.
- Eshiwani, G. (1993). *Education in Kenya since independence*. Nairobi: E.A. Educational Publishers Ltd.
- Hopkins, C.D. (1983). *Educational research, a structure for inquiry*. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill publishing company
- Hathaway, A. S. (1995). "Effective Teaching/Learning Practices." *Journal on research in higher education*, Vol.36, No.5. p.18.
- Kinyanjui, M et al (2008). *Distinction English for PTE* (1st Ed.). Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau (KLB).
- Kithyo, I. M. (1999). *Making sense of students' career choices: The case of Technical Training Institutes in Kenya*. Vancouver: British Columbia University Press.
- Koech, D. K. (1999). *Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training: A Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya*. Nairobi.
- Maina, F. (1998). *Placing culture at the center of the curriculum*. Ph.D Thesis. Vancouver:University of British Columbia Press.

- Mbiti, D. M. (1987). *Foundations of School Administration*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
- Mithal, H. C. (1978). *Foundations of Educational thought and practice*. Delhi: Dhanpat Rai and Sons.
- Ministry of Education (1994). *Education in Kenya information handbook*. Nairobi: Jomo Kenyatta Foundation
- Mugenda, O. M, & Mugenda, A. G. (2000). *Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative approaches*. Nairobi. Acts Press.
- Muriu, M. (May 13, 2005). *Classroom Overload in the Standard*. Nairobi
- Nafukho, F.M and Kangethe, S. (2002). *Training of trainers: Strategies for 21st Century*. Eldoret: Moi University Press.
- Ndunda, M. M. K. (1990). *Because I am a Woman: Young women's resistance to Science careers in Kenya*. Kingston, Ontario: Queen's University Press.
- Ormrod, J.E. (1990). *Human Learning: Principles, Theories, and Educational Applications*. Toronto. Merrill Publishing Company.
- Otodo, H. (2005). "Rise in pupil numbers not matched by staff increase." *The Standard*, June 21, p.3.
- Pscharopoulos, G. (1995). *Building Human Capital for Better Lives*. Washington D.C. World Bank.
- Ramani, K. (2005). *What free schooling means at a glance*. East African Standard. October, 10, p.7
- Republic of Kenya: (2003). *Task Force on Implementation of FPE*. Nairobi. Jomo Kenyatta Foundation.
- Saleemi, N. A. (2001). *Management: principles and practices simplified*. Nairobi. Saleemi publishers.
- Sifuna , D.N. (1990). *Development of Education in Kenya: The Kenyan Experience*. Nairobi. Initiative publishers.
- Shiundu, J. S. & Omulando S. J. (1992). *Curriculum theory and practice in Kenya*. Nairobi. Oxford University Press.
- Sproull, N. (1995). *A Handbook of Research Methods: A Guide for practitioners and students in Social Sciences (2nd Ed.)*. Metuchen. Scare Crow.
- UNESCO (2000). *World Education Forum on achieving Education For All: Demographic Challenges*. Paris, UNESCO.
- UNESCO (March 2005). *Challenges of implementing FPE in Kenya: Assessment*

Report.

Warr, P. B. (1978). *Psychology at Work*. Canada: Penguin Books.

Watson, D. L. (1992). *Psychology*. California: Brooks/Cole publishing co.

Whitehead, A. N. (1967). *The aims of education*. London: Collier Macmillan publishers.

Wiersima, W. (1986). *Research Methods in Education: An Introduction*. (4th Ed.) Toledo: Toledo University Press.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS (HEAD-TEACHERS)

Section A: Administrative Details

1. What is the name of your school?

2. What is the total number of pupils in your school currently?
 - a. Boys
 - b. Girls
 - Total

3. On average, how many pupils do you have per class in the Lower Classes?
Class I Class II Class III
 - (a) How many teachers are currently teaching in this school?
.....
 - (b) How many of the following physical facilities do you have?
Classrooms Offices Library Store Latrines Play grounds
.....

6. Do you have any Special Needs Units in this school?
Blind Deaf Physically handicapped Mentally challenged Orphans
.....

Section B: General

1. What effect has free primary education had on enrolment in your school?

2. How has the programme impacted on the quality of education offered in your school?

3. Have there been challenges in pupil discipline arising from the implementation of the programme?

4. What was your understanding of Free Primary Education when the government first announced it?

5. How did you get the information about Free Primary Education?
6. How did you inform the teachers and the parents about FPE?
7. What were the teachers' immediate reactions to the information?
8. What were the parents' reactions?
9. In your opinion,
 - (a) How did our teachers perceive FPE?
 - (b) How did the parents perceive FPE?
 - (c) How did you perceive it yourself?
10. How did you deal with the reactions from each of the groups above?
11. How do you understand FPE today?
12. Has the programme had any effect on the teacher's work-load?
13. Are the teachers in your school comfortable with the programme?
14. Has the programme had any effect on your relationship with your teachers?
15. Has the programme caused any infrastructural concerns in your school?
16. What do you see as the role of parents in FPE?
17. Has the programme had an effect on your relationship with parents?
18. How do you think the concerns in 12, 13, 14,15, 16 and 17 above can be addressed?
19. What strengths do you see in FPE?
20. How has free primary education assisted orphans and other children with special needs in your school?

21. From your experiences as an administrator and accounting officer, what are your challenges from FPE?
22. What are your general remarks about FPE as a whole this far?

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS (INCLUDING PTA CHAIRPERSONS).

1. How many children do you have in this school?
2. How many children do you have in secondary schools and colleges?
3. How many of all these children depend on you for fees and other financial needs?
4. What is your understanding of free primary education?
5. How did you get information about FPE?
6. How have you benefited from FPE in the education of your children?
7. What do you think is your role in supporting free primary education?
8. What issues/concerns in your opinion, have not been satisfactorily addressed by FPE?
9. How do you suggest these issues/concerns can best be addressed? Who do you think should address them?
10. What are your general comments about free primary education as a whole?

APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS.

Introductory letter.

Dear Respondent,

This is a study on the perceptions and implementation experiences on the on-going Free Primary Education in Kambu educational zone.

The study recognizes that teachers as the implementers of the programme have had to make adjustments from the previous cost-sharing system. As a teacher, you are kindly requested to provide information on your perceptions, experiences and general remarks on the programme as a whole. The information you provide will be used for the study only and will be treated as strictly confidential. **DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ANYWHERE ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.**

Please use a ball-point pen to tick, insert figures and to write your responses in the appropriate spaces provided for each question.

Thank you in advance for accepting to participate in the study.

Theresia Matemu K.
(Researcher)

Questionnaire.

This questionnaire has two sections: Section A and Section B. Kindly fill in both sections.

SECTION A

- (i) Name of your school
- (ii) Classes you teach (a) Lower Primary only (b) Upper Primary only
- (c) Both Lower and Upper
- (iii) Number of years you have taught in this particular school
- (iv) Enrolment in the classes you teach.

Class	I	II	III	IV	V	V I	VII	VIII
Enrolment								

SECTION B

1. How did you get information about Free Primary Education?
2. How did you immediately understand Free Primary Education?
3. What is your understanding of the programme today?
4. As a classroom teacher, what did you expect of FPE?
5. What characteristics of FPE mostly make you like it?
 - (a)
 - (b)
 - (c)
 - (d)
6. What characteristics of FPE mostly make you uncomfortable with the programme?
 - (a)
 - (b)
 - (c)
 - (d)
7. Which facilities do you perceive need to be increased to make your work easy? (List them in order of your priority).
 - (a)
 - (b)
 - (c)
 - (d)

8. What specific challenges do you face in the course of your duty?
9. What do you suggest can be done to address these challenges?
10. Who do you think should address these concerns?
11. What do you perceive to be your role in FPE?
12. How do you compare your classroom performance now with that of the previous system?
13. How do you expect the results to be like in the subjects you teach at the end of this year?
14. What in your opinion are the strengths of FPE so far?
15. What do you feel are the weaknesses (if any) of FPE?
16. In what ways in your view, can these weaknesses (if any) be best addressed?
17. In your opinion, what do you think is the cause of tension (if any) between the parents and the teachers?
18. What do you suggest can be done to end this tension (if any)?
19. In what ways do you think Guidance and Counselling would assist your school as a support service to FPE?
20. From your experience, what are your general remarks on FPE as a whole.

NOTE: If space provided is not enough for the information you wish to give, please use the back of the questionnaire to write the information.

ONCE AGAIN THANK YOU FOR SPARING YOUR TIME TO FILL THIS QUESTIONNAIRE AND MORE, FOR YOUR COOPERATION.