

THE IMPACT OF POLICY CHANGES IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOOK PUBLISHING INDUSTRY IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the impact of policy changes in the education sector on the development of the book publishing sector in Kenya. The article begins by detailing the current status of the book publishing sector in Kenya. Then the interdependence between the education and book publishing sectors is highlighted. The government policies that have shaped the education system in Kenya are analysed with a view to establishing how they have affected the book publishing sector. An overview of the new school textbook policy that was introduced in 1998 is presented in order to show how it has influenced the textbook production and procurement. Then the introduction of the Free Primary Education (FPE) is discussed because it is the most recent development in the education sector that has provided tremendous impetus to the development of the book publishing industry in the country. The challenges encountered by the Government of Kenya in implementing the FPE and those faced by the book publishers in producing books for the school market are analysed. Finally, a way forward is proposed in the form of recommendations that can contribute to positive growth and mainstreaming of the school textbook publishing sub-sector in Kenya. A literature review approach is used in which sources that include newspapers, government and institutional websites, journals, books and dissertations have been consulted.

KEYWORDS

Publishing, education policies, school textbook policies, Kenya.

1 INTRODUCTION

Since 2003 when the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) Government came into power in Kenya, the book publishing industry has expanded tremendously. Currently, the annual worth of the book industry in Kenya is estimated to be KShs 10 billion (R1 billion), excluding the bookselling and distribution business (Ngunjiri 2007). According to Andrew (2004:34), the school textbook sub-sector is the most dominant, constituting about 90% of all the books produced in the country. Most of the book publishing houses in Kenya concentrate on producing books in this sub-sector, because it is the safest and most lucrative (Chakava 1996, in Ogechi & Bosire-Ogechi 2002:173). Andrew (2004:34) estimates that academic, trade and professional books account for the remaining 10% of Kenya's book publishing industry. Academic books are produced by some of the leading publishing houses and university presses.

The two most active university presses are Nairobi University Press (NUP) and Moi University Press (MUP). Other public universities such as Egerton and Kenyatta have small desktop units and their capacity for production of academic publications is very limited. Some of the research institutions that produce scholarly publications are: The African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) Press; the African Academy of Sciences (AAS), also known as Academy Science Publishers; the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE) Science Press; and the African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF) (Makotsi & Nyariki 1997:31). The scholarly publications produced by these institutions are widely used in universities and middle-level institutions including polytechnics. The research institutions therefore fill an otherwise largely neglected gap of academic and scholarly publishing that has not been addressed adequately by the university presses.

According to Makotsi and Musonda (2000:93), local sales of books generate 85% of revenue while 15% of total income comes from exports of Kenyan publications. The same authors state that Kenya exports school textbooks, and fiction and children's readers to Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Namibia, Botswana, Nigeria, and South Africa. A very insignificant percentage of titles in fiction are exported to United States of America, Europe and Asia, specifically India.

The same source (2000:94) claims that most trade and academic titles in the country are imported from the UK and USA. The Text Book Centre, which is the largest bookshop and distributor of books in East and Central Africa, imports and stocks 90% of fiction and non-fiction books from the UK and America, and 10% of locally and regionally published titles. Other major bookshops that also stock imported and locally produced titles include Book Point, Keswick, Chania, Savanis, Elimu, and Prestige. All the major bookshops are located in Nairobi, but small ones are spread all over the whole

country in towns and shopping centres. Andrew (2004:40) refers to the most active book publishing houses, including the East African Educational Publishers, Oxford University Press, Longhorn Kenya, Macmillan Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta Foundation, Kenya Literature Bureau, Phoenix Publishers, Focus Publications, Jacaranda Designs and Word Alive.

2 OVERVIEW OF THE INTERDEPENDENCE BETWEEN THE PUBLISHING AND EDUCATION SECTORS

The book publishing sector in Kenya has always been school textbook-oriented (Makotsi 2005:1). This means that most of the books published in the country have been geared towards meeting the educational needs of the primary and secondary school market. Minowa (2000:11) defines publishing as the process by which a publisher obtains a manuscript, designs and edits it, produces multiple copies of the finished book by printing and binding means, and eventually delivers the completed copies to readers through a distribution mechanism. According to Makotsi and Nyariki (1997:34), education is a system of training and instruction aimed at providing knowledge and skills. It involves the acquisition of knowledge, abilities and the development of character and mental powers. These authors recognize that, unlike the traditional education that was practised in the pre-colonial period, modern formal education requires support services such as publishing for it to be complete and beneficial to the recipients. Modern education cannot be implemented effectively without instructional materials such as textbooks for use by teachers and students. The same authors further observe that formal education has always been accompanied by instructional materials in order to further the aims of education. They state that the publishing industry plays a pivotal role in the education process because knowledge, information and skills and cultural values are imparted by reading books and other information-rich material (1997:35). It therefore follows that education, culture and publishing are closely interrelated and depend on each other. However, the same authors emphasize the need to plan systematically for education and development of reading materials in order to ensure that all areas of study are catered for. Educational (school textbook) publishing is very important for the development of a country because without educated people, a country cannot achieve any meaningful development (Makotsi & Nyariki 1997:39).

3 POLICY GUIDELINES ON KENYA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Government of Kenya recognises the fundamental role played by provision of education and training to all Kenyans in line with the country's overall development

strategy. The long-term objective of the government is to provide all Kenyans with basic quality education in order to enhance their ability to preserve and utilize the environment for productive gain and sustainable livelihood (MOES&T 2004:1). The Government of Kenya is aware that the development of human resources is central to the attainment of national goals for industrial development. To this end, the government realises that the universal access to basic education and training ensures equal chances for all children, including those from the disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. The government also recognizes that education is necessary for the development and protection of domestic institutions and human rights (MOES&T 2004:1).

Ngigi and Macharia (2006:3) state that education and training in Kenya is governed by the Education Act (1968) and other related Acts of Parliament, such as the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) Act, the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) Act, the Adult Education Act, the University Act, and various Acts and Charters for individual universities. However, the Education Act of 1968, and the related Acts are not harmonised and are not responsive to the current and emerging trends in education and training. Therefore, the legislation governing the education sector did not keep pace with new developments.

According to Rotich (2000:60, 2004:176), a number of Commissions, Committees and Task Forces have been set up to review and address the challenges facing the education sector in Kenya since independence in 1963. It is regrettable that most of them did not address the crucial issue of provision and circulation of teaching and learning materials including textbooks in the primary and secondary schools. The next section presents a brief discussion of the major Commissions, Committees and Task Forces on education in Kenya.

- The Ominde Commission was the first to be set up after independence in 1964. It compiled the *Report of the Kenya Education Commission* that sought to reform the whole education system. The Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 on *African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya* adopted the Ominde Report as a basis for post-independence educational development but this did not specify how books were to be produced and supplied to schools (Rotich 2004:177).
- The Gachathi Report (1976), known as the *Report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies*, focused on redefining Kenya's educational policies and objectives, with specific consideration of national unity, and the economic, social and cultural aspirations of the people of Kenya. The outcome of this Report was Government's support for *Harambee* schools (schools built by cost-sharing between community members and the government) and the establishment of the National Centre for Early Childhood Education (NACECE) at the Kenya

Institute of Education (KIE) (Ngigi & Macharia 2006:3). This report was silent on provision and procurement of textbooks for primary and secondary schools.

- The Mackay Commission (1981) came up with the *Report of the Presidential Working Party on the Second University in Kenya*, known as the *Mackay Report*. This led to the removal of the Advanced (A) level of secondary education and the expansion of other post-secondary training institutions. The recommendations of this Commission were to overhaul the entire system of education, by changing it from 7-4-2-3 (seven years in primary, four years in secondary, two years in high school, and at least three years in university) to 8-4-4 (eight years in primary, four years in secondary, and at least four years in university) but did not address textbook provision and procurement for the primary and secondary schools. It further recommended the establishment of Moi University and the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) (MOES&T 2004:2).
- The Kamunge Report (1988), also known as the *Report of the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond*, focused on improving education financing, quality and relevance. Based on the Kamunge Report, the Government produced Sessional Paper No. 6 on *Education and Training for the Next Decade and Beyond* which led to the establishment of the policy of cost-sharing between the government, parents and communities (Ngigi & Macharia 2006:4). The issue of textbook provision and procurement was not addressed at all.
- The Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya (2000), which came up with the *Koech Report* was mandated to find ways and means of enabling the education system to facilitate national unity, mutual social responsibility, accelerated industrial and technological development, life-long learning, and adaptation in response to changing circumstances. The Koech Report recommended Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training (TIQET). The Government, however, did not adopt the whole Report due to cost implications, but some recommendations such as curriculum rationalization were adopted and implemented. There was no specific guideline in the Koech Report on production and distribution of learning and teaching materials for schools (MOES&T 2004:3).
- The MOES&T (2004:3) states that the most recent government policy initiatives on education were formulated in 2003 and focused on the attainment of Education For All (EFA), and in particular, the Universal Primary Education (UPE). The key concerns of the EFA initiative were access, retention, equity, quality and relevance, and internal and external efficiencies within the education system. The effectiveness of the 8-4-4 structure and system of education especially at the primary and

secondary levels were scrutinized. The recommendations of a national conference held in November 2003, and various studies undertaken on the sector were considered. The result was the Sessional Paper of 2004 that constitutes the Government policy on education, training and research and embraces the EFA and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (MOES&T 2004:3; Ngigi & Macharia 2006:4). In this Sessional Paper of 2004, the provision of books and other learning materials was mentioned briefly. The provision and procurement of learning materials are guided by the textbook policy that was introduced by the Government of Kenya in 1998. A brief discussion of the textbook policy is presented in the next section.

4 AN OVERVIEW OF THE TEXTBOOK POLICY

The national textbook policy was launched by the Government of Kenya in 1998 (Muita 1998). The policy outlines the roles of the government, the publishing industry and the schools in the text book publishing process. Under this policy, the book publishing houses are required to submit textbook proposals (dummies) to the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE), which is the curriculum development centre, for evaluation and approval for use in the schools. In preparing the textbook proposals, the publishing houses are guided by the “Textbook Submission, Evaluation and Approval Procedures” which are prepared by the KIE. However, the KIE does not in any way interfere with the publishing programmes and decisions of the publishing houses. The publishing houses pay a non-refundable fee of KSh. 5,000 for a set of documents of the KIE guidelines. There is also another fee of Ksh 35, 000 for every textbook proposal submitted to the KIE for evaluation and approval (MOES&T 2005:3). The decision on whether or not to submit a proposal to KIE is at the discretion of the publishing houses.

The process of textbook evaluation is managed by the Ministerial Textbook Vetting Committee (MTVC) which falls under the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOES&T). The KIE recommends suitably qualified evaluators to the MTVC, which scrutinise and approve the membership of all evaluation panels. According to the MOES&T (2005:34), the actual evaluation is based on the following criteria: conformity to physical production and type specifications; publisher qualification; conformity to bid requirements; conformity to the curriculum; content; language; exercises, activities and assessment; illustrations; layout; teacher’s guide; and price indicated. When the publishers are coming up with book proposals, they follow the evaluation criteria outlined above and the approval of their projects depends on how well they meet the requirements stipulated by KIE. Each criterion is scored and an aggregate for all scores for every book proposal submitted is determined. A maximum of six titles per subject per class are approved for each category of the primary and secondary textbooks. This means that the competition is very stiff for the publishing houses to have a title approved among the six per subject per class.

Rotich (2000:63) states that with the new textbook policy, the publishing industry and book trade in the country were liberalised. All the book publishers could compete equally for the textbook market unlike previously when the state publishers had the monopoly to produce textbooks. Schools are free to choose textbooks that they feel cover the content adequately and are affordable from a list of six titles per subject per class. However, most publishers and teachers argue that the government should approve all the titles that meet the minimum requirements set by the KIE and that teachers should have absolute freedom in choosing the titles to use in class instead of being restricted to only six titles per subject per class.

One of the major developments in the education sector that had a profound influence on the book publishing sector since the NARC government assumed power in 2003 is the free primary education (FPE). The next section presents the introduction of FPE and the challenges that have been faced in its implementation.

5 THE FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION (FPE) PROGRAMME

Of all developments in Kenya's education system, the introduction of free primary education (FPE) has been the most notable in the recent past. The FPE has presented new gains and challenges to book publishing houses and also to the Kenyan government. The next section provides a background to the introduction and the eventual implementation of FPE in Kenya.

5.1 BACKGROUND TO INTRODUCTION OF FPE

According to Aduda (2007:1), some 164 countries assembled in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2000 to review progress made in education provision at the close of the 20th Century. Their aim was to chart a new strategy for the new millennium. In attendance were Heads of State and representatives of various governments and development agencies who were concerned that millions of children, youth and adults remained illiterate. Yet, education as first recognized in 1948 under Article 26 of the Universal Human Rights, was a fundamental human right. Before the meeting in Dakar in 2000, an earlier meeting had been held in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990. In this meeting, the world first committed itself to providing education for all and set out six goals to guide development and expansion of education and training. The provision of the UPE was among the goals spelt out in the meeting.

The goals adopted in the Jomtien meeting were set to be achieved in 2000 but the Dakar summit extended the timetable to 2015. Arising out of this, the United Nations Millennium Summit was held in September, 2000, in New York where 189 nations were

represented, among them by 147 Heads of State. The summit adopted eight targets to spur the world's development which they were designated as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As stated by Aduda (2007:1), among the eight MDGs, two were adopted from the six education targets that had been agreed upon earlier at Dakar. These were providing the UPE, invariably referred to as EFA, and promoting girls' and women's education. Both the EFA and MDGs goals are expected to be achieved in the year 2015 (Aduda 2007:1).

5.2 IMPLEMENTATION OF FPE IN KENYA

A political transition took place in Kenya after the December 2002 general elections when the Kenya African National Union (KANU), the political party that ruled for 24 years since independence, lost to the major opposition parties that had formed a coalition party known as the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) (Unesco 2005:11). During its campaigns, NARC members promised to offer free primary school education (FPE). The NARC government introduced the FPE in January 2003, through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST). Sifuna (2007:1) notes that the Kenya government had promised free primary education to its people since 1963 but it did not happen until 2003. The failure by the then KANU government to introduce FPE was attributed to a poor performing economy. A substantial proportion of children were out of school before the introduction of FPE and the response to it was overwhelming. In many schools, the enrolment was more than their capacity could hold. Due to the limited space and facilities, some head teachers turned children away.

5.3 THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF FPE ON THE BOOK PUBLISHING INDUSTRY

As stated by Rocky (2004:14), since the introduction of FPE in 2003, the book publishing industry in Kenya has expanded tremendously. The book publishing houses which managed to have their titles recommended for use in the new curriculum for primary schools have enjoyed a vibrant business season. The Kenya government got financial support from donor agencies such as the Department for International Development (DfID), Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and the World Bank and IMF to fund the FPE. The money from the government and donor agencies is channelled straight to schools to purchase books. With ready money in schools, demand for school books has shot up and some publishers have been selling all their titles, especially the recommended ones. Many school head teachers have expressed satisfaction with the textbook funding but they would welcome more in order to achieve a pupil:book ratio of 1:2 for upper primary and 1:3 for lower primary (Makabila 2005:5; Mwangi 2006:12). The quality of the books, following the standards set by the donors and the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE), has improved too. However, a number of chal-

lenges have beset the implementation of FPE, some of which have affected the book publishing industry negatively.

5.4 GENERAL CHALLENGES OF FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION

The introduction of free and compulsory primary education by the NARC government in January 2003 witnessed a record enrolment of approximately 1.5 million children who had previously no access to formal learning. The teachers had to cope with large numbers of enthusiastic pupils. At the same time, the government has been struggling to find money to pay for schools, teachers and facilities (IRIN Africa 2007:1).

According to the IRIN (2007:1) the average classroom size rose from 50 to 100 pupils in some schools while the number of teachers remained the same. In many schools, teachers were forced to do shift work with different groups of children in the mornings and afternoons, for no extra pay. The government also had to persuade teachers to take up posts in less desirable areas such as in the slums or arid and semi-arid regions. There has been a lot of resistance from teachers and heads of schools to move to marginalized areas. As a result, many poor schools are understaffed because teachers are reluctant to go to schools where parents cannot afford to pay for private tuition after normal school hours. The teachers also cite security problems as one of the reasons for their reluctance to work in slums (IRIN 2007:1).

Sifuna (2007:1) observes that among the pupils who enrolled for the free primary education were many “over-age” children, including street children. Some of the “over-age” pupils had to be segregated from the younger children. The street children for example, have patchy educational and dysfunctional backgrounds, short attention spans and glue-sniffing addictions. Many of the street children also have serious linguistic difficulties as they speak “sheng” – a blend of mother tongues, Kiswahili, and English. These problems definitely lower the standards of teaching as teachers have to deal with a myriad of problems in a classroom situation.

Many children in marginalised areas did not make it to classrooms. They were chased away by the guards who were instructed to do so by the administration of schools. Pupils who did not have the right uniform, or looked untidy, or were suspected to be undisciplined were not accepted in some schools (IRIN Africa 2007:2).

A lack of facilities is a big problem in most schools. Some rural schools in economically low-income areas do not have adequate classrooms, and teaching and learning materials. The schools in urban areas with a large slum population lack even the most basic amenities such as toilets and running water. Therefore, the government, church groups, NGOs, parents and other stakeholders have to come up with effective strategies to address these problems in order for the pupils to get quality education (IRIN Africa 2007:1-2; Sifuna 2007:3).

5.5 CHALLENGES OF FPE SPECIFICALLY TO BOOK PUBLISHERS

The introduction of Free Primary Education has presented a number of challenges to the book publishing houses in Kenya. Some of these challenges are summarised in the next section.

Approval of allegedly low quality books

Ngunjiri (2005:6) states that disagreements have been experienced between some book publishers and officials of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOES&T) over the approval process of titles that are included in the recommended list. The same author observes that some publishers have suspected their competitors of colluding with the Ministry's officials to approve some books that do not meet all the KIE's approval requirements. The accusations were mostly targeted at a few representatives of multinational publishers that dominated the controversial recommended list and who were allegedly involved in intense lobbying for approval of their books.

Inappropriate book approval policies

According to King'oo (2005:14), some representatives of publishing houses believe that the policies adopted by the Ministry of Education and the attitude of the Ministry's officials towards book approvals are likely to lower education standards in the country. This is because students in public schools are disadvantaged as they are forced to use some allegedly inferior titles that appear on the recommended list unlike their counterparts in private schools who use books of their choice because they are not funded by the government. The government, through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, has therefore been accused by some representatives of publishing houses of allowing inferior standards of education to infiltrate schools by sidelining the best books, including supplementary titles.

“Alien” technical specifications

Ngunjiri (2005:6) states that the technical specifications used by the Ministry of Education, as part of the criteria for book approvals have been criticised by some publishers as unwarranted and not done in the best interest of the development of the education and book publishing sectors in the country. Some publishers have argued that a good book should not be disqualified on the premise that it does not meet the technical specifications but rather on the quality of the content. The technical specifications pertain to: text paper, cover, font and font sizes, page design and layout, binding, stitching and gluing. The publishers who have expressed dissatisfaction with the technical specifications aspect of book approval criteria argue that Kenya does not have sophisticated printing machines that can achieve the technical standards required of them. The publishers

therefore refer to the technical specifications as “alien” and meant to lock out the best books from being accessed by school children. But some of the publishers who support the requirement of technical specifications argue that printed books are supposed to last at least four years before they are replaced. This argument lends credence to the strict technical specifications in addition to the criteria for sound subject content. However, those publishers who see the emphasis on technical specifications as unfair also cite the cost of production that is incurred in fulfilling the technical requirements.

Use of dummies to evaluate textbooks does not guarantee desired quality of textbooks

When the technical specialists are evaluating textbooks, they base the expected quality of the books on dummies submitted by book publishers. Rotich and Musakali (2005:352) observe that the dummies are recommended by the subject evaluation panels and approved by the Ministerial Textbook Vetting Committee (MTVC). According to these authors, the actual textbooks are never subjected to the scrutiny of the market. Furthermore, the actual textbooks are neither pre-tested nor piloted with teachers. Chatry-Komarek (1994, in Rotich & Musakali 2005:352) observes that in standard practice, the Ministry should stipulate the content matter and may define the technical textbook requirements, and then the private publishers can produce and market the published textbooks. In the Kenyan system, however, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, through the MTVC, vets the dummies before the actual textbooks are published. The main challenge in using a dummy to base textbook approval on is that there is no quality control mechanism. Therefore, the final product may differ from the dummy. This loophole in the book approval system has resulted in some textbooks that have for instance, poor illustrations, low text paper quality, and typographical errors. Approved textbooks that do not meet some of the technical specifications have been a major source of disagreements between officials in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and book publishers whose dummies are rejected.

High costs incurred by book publishers in bidding for textbook approval

The book publishers have complained that the process of approval of school textbooks is not cheap. Documents to bid for textbook submission, evaluation and approval are charged a non-refundable fee of KShs 5,000 (US\$ 77.7). Each submission in every subject must also be accompanied by a non-refundable evaluation fee of KShs 35,000 (US\$ 538.6). In 2004, there were 43 subjects for bidding. If a publisher submitted a title for bidding in all the 43 subjects, a total of KShs 1.51 million (US\$ 2323.8) would be paid. These costs are prohibitive to the book publishing houses, especially the small ones. A case in point is a small, upcoming indigenous publisher that in 2004 spent KShs 35 million in production plus a non-refundable fee of KShs 3.5 million for

evaluation of its 35 titles, yet none was approved (Muroki 2004:14; Rotich & Musakali 2005:353).

Inadequate printing capacity in the country

Muroki (2004:14) argues that most of the local printing firms do not have the capacity to handle large volumes of work occasioned by the introduction of FPE. The same author also cites the stringent technical requirements that are stipulated by the KIE as unattainable by the majority of small printing companies in the country that lack sophisticated machinery. Only the major printing firms such as the English Press, Auto Litho, Kenya Litho, Sun Litho and Printpak have the capacity to handle large volumes of work (Odini 2002:47). Because of these reasons, most publishers print their books outside Kenya, thus denying the country the much needed revenue. According to Kathuri (2004), some of the countries where local publishers send approved books to be printed are Singapore, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Mauritius, United Arab Emirates, India and South Africa.

Delay in printing approved books

According to Muroki (2004:14), when the local publishers send work to foreign countries for printing, it has to queue among other orders. This delays the printing process even further. Moreover, the same author explains that it takes at least three months to ship books from a country like Malaysia to Mombasa, the sea port where the book consignments are received in Kenya. At the port of Mombasa, there is bureaucratic red tape that goes with clearing the book consignments. These delays result in late orders by bookshops and ultimately books do not get to schools and the market in good time.

Short notice in announcement of approved books

Muroki (2004:14) observes that since the introduction of FPE, the book publishers are given a very short time to develop the books that are approved by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. In 2004, publishers were informed of the successful titles in October. The publishers were supposed to produce and print the books between October and November. Schools were expected to place orders with booksellers between November and December. This kind of pressure meant that the publishers had only four months to print the approved titles in sufficient quantities for the more than 17,000 primary and 3,000 secondary schools and carry out promotions and marketing. It becomes difficult for printers too to cope with this kind of pressure. In the subsequent years to 2004, notification of approved books has been characterised by similar strict deadlines and publishers and printers have been operating under intense pressure. It is easy for mistakes to be made when publishers and printers work under intense pressure and strict deadlines.

Late disbursement of donor funds to schools

Kathuri (2004) states that donors delay in releasing funds to the Government of Kenya to support the Free Primary Education (FPE). When this happens, schools get late in placing orders from booksellers who have tenders to supply the required reading materials. Delayed funds to purchase educational materials impact negatively on publishers who have already spent huge sums of money producing books that have to wait in their warehouses for orders from schools. Delayed donor funds reduce the liquidity rate and cash flow of the book publishers that make it difficult for them to undertake new projects. According to Kathuri (2004), in 2004, the publishers claimed that they lost KShs 4 billion because books were not bought for the third quarter. Funds for purchase of educational materials were sent to schools late in the second term. Schools could therefore not procure the requisite books on time.

Withholding of funds by head teachers

Kathuri (2004) and Chesos (2005) observe that publishers have faced a situation whereby some head teachers withhold funds especially if they receive them late in the term from the government. The head teachers probably withhold the funds so that they can place combined orders in the beginning of the next term which may earn them a bigger discount. The delay in placing orders by some head teachers disrupts the smooth implementation of the new curriculum. This is because publishers lack money to print new books on time for the schools. The publishers have suggested that the officials in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should force the head teachers to spend the funds meant for purchasing books and other educational materials immediately they receive them from the government in order for the Free Primary Education programme to run smoothly.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are some suggestions that can be implemented in order to address the challenges encountered by the book publishers:

- The Government of Kenya, with support from its development partners, should increase funding of the education sector as well as provide more facilities and teaching and learning materials. The funds allocated to schools to purchase textbooks should be released in good time and monitoring done to ensure that head teachers do not withhold the funds. These measures will be a big boost to the growth of educational publishing in the country.
- The Kenyan government needs to put a mechanism in place to ensure that all children, including those from disadvantaged background, receive primary and secondary education.

- The MOES&T needs to review the limitation of approving six books per subject per class, with a view to giving teachers and parents the freedom to choose textbooks from a wider selection for their schools. The publishers will also be encouraged to submit more books for evaluation and approval if the “recommended list” is abolished. The fees charged for the whole approval system may also be revised downwards in order to give the small and undercapitalized publishers a chance to participate.
- The use of dummies in the evaluation of textbooks by the KIE is not a satisfactory quality assurance approach. The evaluation of the finished textbooks would be more objective and would be easier to ensure that the quality attributes are not compromised.
- The book publishing houses need to explore cheaper sources of printing services which will translate into lower cost of production, and ultimately, affordable prices for the teaching and learning materials.

7 CONCLUSION

This article examined the impact of policy changes in the education sector on the development of the book publishing industry in Kenya. It demonstrates clearly that education policies and curriculum changes indeed influence and shape the development of the book publishing industry. Some of the remarkable developments in the education sector in Kenya, which had a profound influence on the book publishing sector, were the introduction of the new textbook policy in 1998, and the Free Primary Education (FPE) policy in 2003. The new textbook policy set the stage for the liberalization of the book publishing industry and a unified approach to the provision of textbooks to primary schools. The introduction of the FPE in 2003 by the Government of Kenya, supported by the donor community, resulted in an unprecedented increase in the number of textbooks published because the publishing houses were assured of a ready market. Although the sustainability of the donor funding has been doubted by some stakeholders of the book publishing industry, its positive impact on the education and the book publishing sectors is evident. It can therefore be concluded that as long as the book publishing industry will remain the source and supplier of educational materials for the education sector, changes in the latter will continue to affect the development of the former considerably. This is especially so in African countries, Kenya included, where educational publishing continues to be the dominant sub-sector of the book publishing industry.

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