

## Abstract

Universalization of primary education has been a global issue since early 1960's. It has also received such great attention particularly in developing countries that governments feel threatened when they do not talk about it in Economic Development Plans and documents. Kenya is one of the countries that has a longstanding commitment to provide educational opportunities to all primary school going children. The goal of UPE was first articulated in the KANU Manifesto of 1963 and was further emphasized in Ominde Report of 1964. Over the years the government has accentuated this in all its development plan and the various Education Commission Reports. The main objective of the assessment is to examine the extent to which UPE policy implementation promoted literacy among school age children between the years 1974-2000. Factors investigated comprised of: Enrolment, participation, promotion and completion and factors hindering UPE programme implementation. The results indicated that to a large extent, UPE program had failed to achieve its goals of promoting enrolments and subsequently completion rates in primary schools. It instead promoted attrition rates in primary schools. There are however a myriad of obstacles hindering the attainment of UPE. They consist of: the parents' level of education, poverty levels and socioeconomic and social-cultural related issues.