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"FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION IN KENYA",

A study of the effect of the Abolition of School Fees in Machakos District: //

By

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Officially 64% of Kenyan Primary - School - age children were attending Primary Schools in 1973 but taking repeaters into account, it could be argued that only about 60% of the Children were really receiving Primary Education. If dropout rate is also considered, a still smaller proportion was actually completing the seven years of Primary Education. More than 35% of the School-age Population were not getting any Primary Education, and another equal proportion was not furnishing the seven years of Primary Education. Hence regional imbalances in the Provision of Education.

KABIRU KINYANJUI

DISCUSSION PAPER NO: 208: THE DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES  
AND OPPORTUNITIES IN KENYA.

## A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

(iii)

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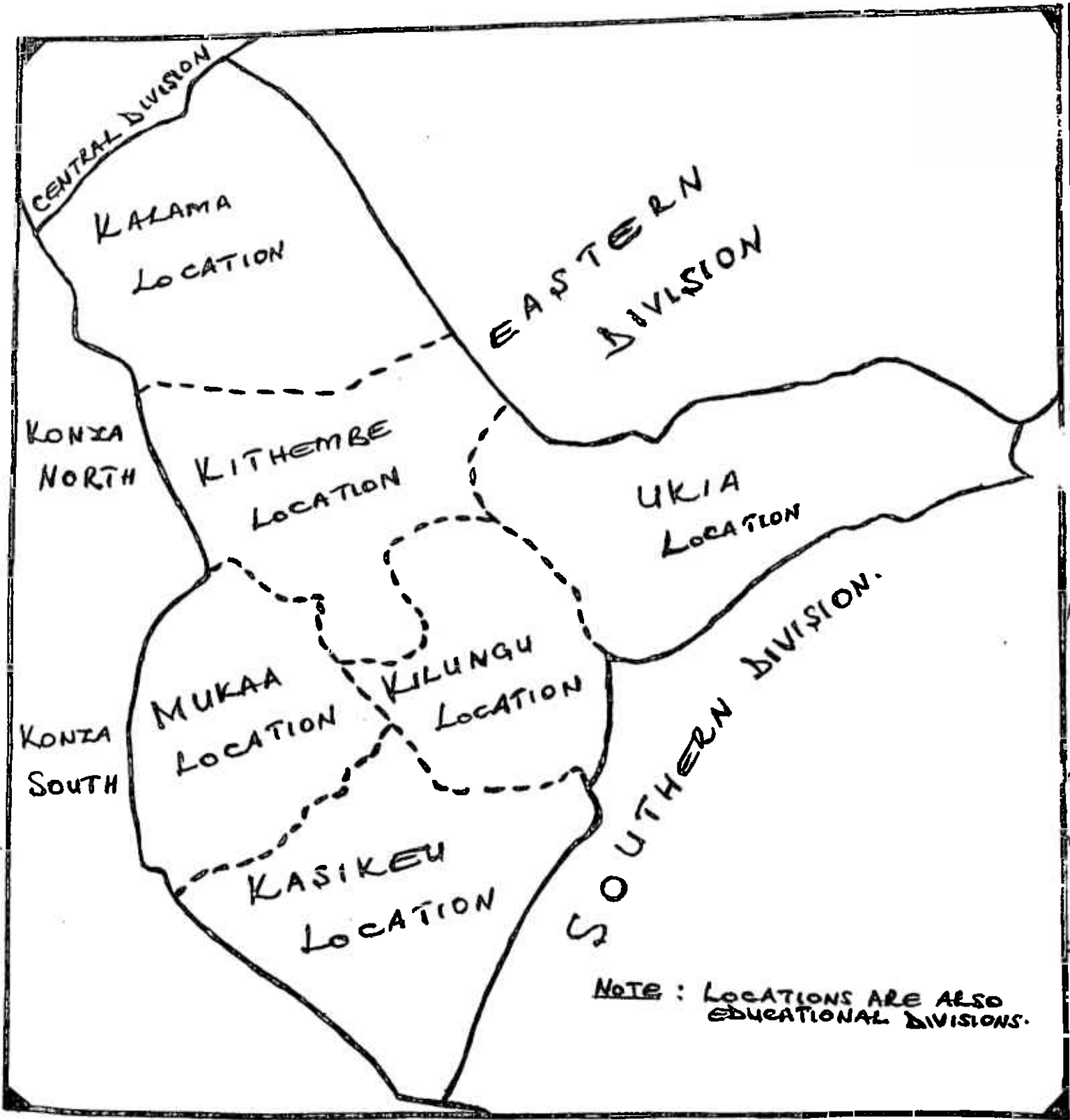
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AREA OF STUDY

KILOME DIVISION: MACHAKOS DISTRICT



PROBLEM STATEMENT AND LITERATURE REVIEW1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Free education was introduced in Kenya in 1974 with the removal of fees for the first four grades of the primary school and completed in 1978 when a Presidential decree abolished fees for the remaining three grades. The major aim of the removal of fees was to facilitate universal seven years education. This was to be achieved through the enhancement of enrolments of primary school aged children by catering for those who could not afford the cost of education. Free education was therefore to open the doors of primary schooling to all Kenyan children regardless of their socio-economic background. Through the new education system the government also hoped to wipe out alarming rates of absenteeism which in most cases led to poor performances, repetition and eventually premature withdrawal. This was thought to be caused by payment of school fees among other factors. Despite free education and its objectives however, its successes have been limited; most of its objectives are yet to be fully realized.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study aims mainly at finding out how far the abolition of primary school fees has gone in providing seven years of universal primary education for all. In so doing it will be established whether free education has increased enrolments and wiped out high absenteeism rates, poor performance, high rates of repetition and high rates of premature withdrawal from school. After establishing the successes and failures of free education the study will suggest solutions to fight the problems.

The study will also examine what impact the government's decision to 'abolish' primary school fees has had on facilities which are crucial in the success of the education system. In addition, the study will also try to assess the importance of financial problems as a factor that accounts for high absenteeism, poor results, high repetition and premature withdrawal. These problems if not checked can act as hindrances to the realisation of the government's objective of seven years of universal education for all.

1.3 NEED FOR THE STUDY: IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM

The Kenya government places a lot of emphasis on the development of education. This is evident in the large proportion of the country's annual budget allocated to education. For a poor country like Kenya

spending such large sums of its financial resources on education is a clear indication of its importance. Therefore, incidences of high repetition, poor performance and premature withdrawal can not only be seen as a failure of universal primary education but also as a wastage of scarce resources for both the family and the nation.

Literacy for all is one of Kenya's objective. This requires that all children get a minimum of seven years of primary education (Kenya Development Plan 1970 - 74). But the problem of withdrawal undermines the declared aim of the government to give a minimum of seven years primary education for all. Education aims at training suitable man power for industries and personnel to increase output and efficiency of agriculture (Raju, 1973:21). It should promote social and political development. Education should prepare and equip the youth of the country so that they can play an effective role in the life of the nation by ensuring that opportunities are provided for the full development of talents (Report of Commission of Enquiry, 1971:146).

The Kenya Development Plan 1979 - 83 emphasises the primary stage of education as the most important for any child for it is here that basic knowledge is gained and foundations for an economically productive and satisfying life are laid. This view is similar to what is contained in paragraph 539 of the Ominde Commission of 1964 which sees 'a primary education as a minimum basic requirement for the take-off into the modern sector of our economy'. The above two reports therefore, suggest that every Kenyan child should acquire at least the seven basic years of education if he has to benefit from the economy and at the same time be productive. However, this is not always the case; not all children go to school and even those who attend, not all complete the seven prescribed years.

Primary education can help cultivate in the children positive attitudes towards rural development and population growth control (Waka, 1974:71). Presently the Kenyan government is urging the youth to develop a liking for rural life and jobs. The emphasis is that schooling should not be seen as an outlet to jobs in towns but also as a preparation for rural jobs. The government is emphasising the need for rapid population growth control through planned families. Family planning can be learned through attending school of which primary schooling is the most basic. Hence, one realizes that there is a lot primary education can do for the individuals and the society. It is therefore necessary that every Kenyan school aged child should get an opportunity to acquire some education;

at least the first seven years of schooling. Because of this, an evaluation of the free education system becomes necessary to show whether or not it is serving the purpose of providing at least seven years of basic education to every Kenyan child and to suggest solutions on how failures can be corrected.

#### 1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

##### 1.4.1 Background to the Introduction of Free Primary Education

The initial conception of the idea of universal primary education in Africa can be traced from a conference held in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) in 1961 whose outcome was the Addis Ababa Report (on African Nations). Referring to the conference's report Sheffield (1973:69) wrote:

... primary and Adult education were to be developed at the same time with a goal of universal literacy in 1980.

In Kenya after independence KANU made a promise of free universal education. The development Plan of 1966 - 70 declared its ultimate aim to be universal primary education and higher and secondary education for all with the requisite ability. As a major step towards the government's fulfillment of this objective the fees for standards one to four were to be removed and those for standards five to seven to be standardized throughout the country at sixty shillings per year (Kenya Development Plan 1974 - 78:40). Removal of fees for the first four grades was to constitute an important step towards universal primary education.

The need for a free and universal education was also stressed in 1977 during an Assembly of the World Confederations of Organisations of the Teaching Professions (WCOTP). Focussing on compulsory education the Assembly declared that:

The youth of the world has an inherent right to participate in a free education system. Universal education should be made available for all children and the wealth of the world be harnessed to enable the nations to provide free compulsory education (WCOTP's Assembly, 1977:1).

##### 1.4.2 Problems Free Education was Expected to Solve

In the 1950's and 1960's the major problem of primary schools was wastage. Students would dropout before completing the primary school cycle (Brownstein; 1972:158). Studying the Maragoli Court (1974:115) found that:

Dropouts were caused by lack of payment of fees by parents. This attendance drop-off was most prominent in standard one and two; many students spent several years popping in and out of the lower standards marking time until elder siblings

completed their education.

This shows that the payment of school fees hindered parents with more than one child from sending all their children to school at the same time. They could only afford to send them to school in turns and therefore, some eventually ended up by not completing primary school due to this delay.

At independence some 50% of the children in the primary school age group were attending school, and there were pressures to increase that proportion, in fact to move as rapidly as possible towards universal primary education (Stabler, 1969:25). Kenya inherited an education system designed to serve colonial and minority interests. It was going to be the role of the independent government to terminate the racial structure of education and expand formal education opportunity (Court, 1974:8,9). Most parents could not meet the cost of educating their children. Limited income among low income families therefore restricted provision of tuition fees, school books and other necessary material which could ensure good performance (Levin; 1976).

Free education, it was hoped, was not only going to cater for those who could not finance their education; it was also going to curb mass absenteeism, improve performance and check repetition and premature withdrawal rates.

#### 1.4.3 The successes of Free Primary Education:

##### 1.4.3.1 Enrolment

The Kenya government's attempt to increase school enrolment dates from the early years of independence. No wonder therefore the 1970 - 74 Development Plan aimed at increasing the number of students in schools despite the occurrence of a great discrepancy between the Plan Projections and actual enrolments. As outlined in 'Trends in Primary Education' enrolments in primary schools rose from 891 533 in 1963 to 1 816 617 pupils in 1973 an increase of over 100%. From 1969 to 1973 the growth in school enrolments ranged from 7% to 8% per annum (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1977:5). Raju says that the enrolments in 1969 of school-going age (5 - 19 years) was 38.6% of males and 26.2% of females (Raju, 1973:15).

School enrolments had been increasing since independence. In 1969 there were 1 282 297 pupils in 6 111 primary schools; 762 827 were males and 519 470 females. In 1971 there were 1 525 498 pupils and 6 372 primary schools, and in 1972 the enrolments were 1 675 919 pupils

(956 620 males and 719 299 females) and 6 657 primary schools (Ministry of Education Annual Reports, 1969 and 1972). The enrolments fell below projections but free education was to improve this considerably as the government speculated. With the removal of fees from standard one to four in 1974, for example, the annual growth of standard one enrolment was projected at 12% until 1978. The projected enrolments were 2 116 000 for 1974, 2 371 000 for 1975, 2 672 000 for 1976, 2 951 000 for 1977 and 3 232 000 for 1978 (Republic of Kenya Development Plan 1974 - 78:410)

The aim of the Kenya Government was however to increase enrolments to the extent of catering for over 95% of those of ages 6 - 12 years by 1983 as compared to 1978 enrolments of 3 million which included only 85.6% of those these ages (Republic of Kenya Development Plan 1979 - 83:103). To achieve this the government found it necessary to abolish all major fees and levies and to make primary education free and universal as early as possible. The Presidential decree of 1978 which accomplished this also provided children with free milk as an added incentive in order to realise the 1979 - 1983 enrolment projects<sup>1</sup> (Kenya Development Plan 1979 - 83).

That considerable increases in enrolment have occurred since the introduction of free education in 1974 cannot be denied. With the removal of fees for the first four grades of primary education and the standardization of fees for standard five to seven at 60 shillings, save in a few high cost schools, enormous enrolment was witnessed. The total enrolment as a result shot from 1 816 000 in 1973 to 2 765 000 at the beginning of the term, an increase of over 51%. Enrolments in standard one alone went up by 145% for boys and 161% for girls over the previous year; a national average increase of about 155%. Enrolment increase also occurred for other classes (Kenya, Ministry of Education Annual Report 1974:13 and Central Bureau of Statistics, 1977:7). However by the end of the year this enrolment had fallen to 2 734 400 because of considerable dropout rates. The increase in enrolment in standard one was not repeated in most districts in subsequent years. But this is understandable since those entering standard one then included many older siblings who were taking advantage of the 'abolition' of school fees to begin primary schooling. Nevertheless, compared to pre 1974

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<sup>1</sup>The Projections were as follows: 1979 - 3 274 000, 1980 - 3 409 000; 1981 - 3 433 000; 1982 - 3 531 000 and 1983 - 3 683 000.

figures post 1974 enrolments were still high. Many new schools were opened and at the end of 1974 the country had 8 000 schools accomodating 2 734 398 pupils of whom 1 449 490 were males and 1 234 908 were females. (Ministry of Education, Annual Report 1974:14, 16).

In 1977 there were 2 974 849 pupils in primary schools of whom 1 587 420 were boys and 1 387 429 were girls (Ministry of Education, Annual Report 1977: 31, 32). By 1982 enrolments had increased considerably reaching 4.3 million pupils (Daily Nation June 2, 1982:6).

#### 1.4.4 Limitations of Free ~~Education~~ Primary Education

The introduction of free primary education implied that the government had to face substantial increases in cost in providing new teachers, new buildings, and equipment to accomodate the extra pupils who would come to school. It was going to lose revenue from fees estimated at £3 million per annum and face the danger of the standard of primary education deteriorating due to the cost of financing free primary education. For example, the proportion of untrained teachers had to rise probably as high as 50 and 60% of the total primary teaching staff (Sheffield 1967: 277). Under such circumstances it required the government extra efforts in financing primary education and also to keep the standards upto date. Failure to do so meant that free education was not going to effectively solve some of the problems it was intended to solve. For instance, the loss of revenue from fees required the government to seek an alternative source of the lost revenue if schools were to run smoothly. Increase in untrained teachers could mean a defeat in the governments objective of improving performance. The shortage of buildings and equipment could lead to frustrations of both the teachers and the pupils due to overcrowding in classrooms and sharing of the very few facilities which existed like textbooks. This was bound to affect the functioning and effects of primary education negatively.

##### 1.4.4.1 Performance

The expansion of school enrolment is likely to affect pupil performance negatively. As court points out:

As mass education becomes a reality, it is likely that the quality differences between schools will take on an increasing significance. Getting into school will become less important and getting to the right school more important while family background will still continue to be an advantage and disadvantage (Court,1974:212).

This means that student performance in examinations will still continue to be highly correlated with socio-economic background.

Available evidence shows that as enrolments expand it becomes difficult often impossible for education systems to maintain levels of quality and efficiency. Generally facilities like classrooms, teaching materials, equipment, have not kept pace with expanding numbers of pupils, teacher training has lagged behind and the qualifications of the teaching force has declined and consequently there has been a serious manifest gap in the organisation, planning, evaluation and supervision needed to meet the challenge of expansion (I.B.R.D, 1971, 1974). The cumulative effect of all these has been reflected in higher dropout rates, repeaters and poor performance. In Kenya, for example, the move towards a primary teacher corps composed entirely of professionally qualified personnel has received a setback. In 1973 78% of the teaching cadre were qualified compared to 63% in 1976. However, the expansion of teacher training programmes increased the proportion of trained teachers to 66% in 1977 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1977: 21). The high proportions of untrained and therefore professionally unqualified teaching personnel is detrimental to the required high standards of education since it can lead to poor performance at all grades of the primary school.

#### 1.4.4.2 Repetition and Withdrawal

The magnitude of repetition and withdrawal is much higher than is often thought and despite promotion of enrolments by free education, there is evidence to show that during the 1970s government policies acted both as cause and result of much repetition and withdrawal (Nkinyangi, 1980b: 2, 4). The objective of curbing educational wastage reflected in repetition and withdrawal, has not been fully realized. Several reasons have been advanced to explain repetition and premature withdrawal. Nkinyangi (1980a: 4, 26 27) argues that, these, especially in many developing, are as a result of distances from school and opportunity cost of student time which influences attendance and therefore repetition and dropout. However, he also explains the incidence of repetition and dropout as a demonstration of general socio-economic disparity in the country. This is true of Kenya where most repeaters and dropouts are likely to be from rural than urban schools and from agricultural and pastoral communities than professional families.

{ African Ministers of Education meeting in Nairobi, in 1968 and again in Lagos in 1976 described high repetition and withdrawal rates as some of the major educational problems facing the African continent. Repeating is certainly not a new phenomena in Kenya. High repetition rates occur virtually at all grades in the primary school. In the upper primary, for example, repetition rates range between 15 and 30%. By 1971 the number of pupil .....



years required to produce a standard seven pupil was 8.4 years rather than ostensible seven years of the primary school cycle (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1977: 17). An examination of the mean age of students in the first three years during 1976 and 1977 further suggests that it takes four years of schooling to complete the first three standards which in turn yields an estimated repetition rate of 30%. Repetition figures of post 1974 as shown in table 1, produce an annual repetition rate of 6% which is consistent with trends reported prior to 1974 (Central Bureau of Statistics 1977: 7).

TABLE 1: PERCENTAGE REPEATERS PER CLASS 1975 - 77

STD. 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1975 76 77	75 76 77	75 76 77	75 76 77	75 76 77	75 76 77	75 76 77
5 6 6	0.3 5 6	4 4 6	5 5 5	4 5 5	7 6 7	16 15 10

Source 'Trends in Primary Education 1973 - 77'  
(Central Bureau of Statistics, 1977:17), table 2.4  
summarised.

NOTE:

The number of repeaters in Turkana District were not compiled.

Every year thousands of children leave primary school in Kenya without reaching standard seven. This is a problem which is not limited to Kenya but affects every continent and many countries. In Kenya withdrawals can be traced right from the beginning of western formal education reaching alarming proportions by the mid twentieth century (Briggs, 1973:3) Retention of primary school students has particularly become a problem in many developing countries. In a number of these countries one quarter of the educational budget is spent on students who dropout before reaching grade four; without having had any lasting benefits from education (I.B.R.D., 1974:5). Besides there is a problem of relapsing into illiteracy among these early dropouts.

In Kenya the lower primary, standards one to four, is the worst hit by the dropout problem. Dropout rates range between 10 and 40% but varying by district due to the unequal distribution of resources. This means that poor districts experience higher dropout rates than economically advantaged districts. The dropout rates have been explained in terms of looking after cattle, assisting in family farms, or helping in the house. In other words parents of children prefer their labor to going to school. But this has much to do with the cost of primary school education.

(Nkinyangi, 1980b:2). Children from poor families and district are more exposed to chances of withdrawing from school prematurely because of financial burdens. Even the rising post 1974 dropout rates can be explained mainly through the same phenomenon.

#### 1.4.5 The Existing Hidden costs of Primary Education

The abolition of school fees made schooling more expensive than before and did not therefore lead to an era of completely free schooling. Primary schools were flooded by many pupils than usual thus necessitating the school committees to raise a new levy in the form of building fund to cater for highly increase in enrolments. From 1974 through 1978 primary schools collected an equipment levy of ten shillings from every child in standard one through standard seven in addition to supplementary fees collected by many schools for items as activity costs, feeding schemes, totalling in most cases to Kenya Shillings 30/= per annum. The cost in most cases was therefore on the average the cost of sending a child to school during the fee paying period (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1977:8).

Towards the end of 1978, payment of extra fees was abolished through a presidential decree. Funds for schools were to be raised through voluntary fund raising efforts through harambee collections (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1977:8). But this only favours economically advantaged districts. In spite of the presidential decree however, the supplementary charges continued to be collected especially in the economically disadvantaged districts.

According to Elisha Peter from Homa Bay, Education in Kenya is not free at all in specific schools if not parts of the country. He mentioned cases where primary school children were being pestered and disturbed by headmasters for failing to pay money for night studies (Sunday Nation, May 23, 1982:7). Besides, in some schools pupils had been denied their C.P.E. results and school leaving certificates unless they paid KShs.50 each as building fund (The Standard, January 23 1984:1). This evidence indicates that the difficult of paying for the education of children in many families still remains a major problem. This problem worsens when a child has to repeat a year because repetition will mean an additional outlays to scarce financial resources (Nkinyangi, 1980b:3). The general implication is that only children of relatively richer

parents have an opportunity for a second chance through repetition because their parents can afford to raise money which can meet their educational cost for extra years.

### 1.5 HYPOTHESES

In the study the following three hypotheses are investigated:-

- 1.5.1 Free Primary Education has improved enrolments in primary schools of school-aged children (6 - 12 years).
- 1.5.2 The abolition of primary school fees has increased the problems of:-
  - 1.5.2.1 Premature withdrawal,
  - 1.5.2.2 Absenteeism,
  - 1.5.2.3 Poor performance, and,
  - 1.5.2.4 Repetition.
- 1.5.3 The removal of primary school fees, led to a deterioration of facilities in primary schools.

### 1.6 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

#### 1.6.1 Primary Education

Refers to the first seven years of learning in the primary school. This is the stage in the schooling system that precedes secondary schooling. In Kenya it is characterized by sitting for the Certificate of Primary Education (C.P.E.) examination at the end of the seven prescribed years. The Kenya Examination Council awards all students who sit for the examination a certificate regardless of their performance. The pass mark is however, 15 points. The C.P.E. is a tool for selecting and sorting the candidates for future educational and training opportunities.

#### 1.6.2 Free Education

Free education is taken to mean an education which involves no financial burden to the parents of the pupils. This means that no fees should be charged and also there should be no hidden costs which can hinder any pupil from benefiting from it. All financial responsibilities should be taken by the government and the only responsibilities left to the parents should be the provision of school uniforms for their children.

#### 1.6.3 Enrolment

The concept is taken to connote the number of pupils who register as members of the different grades at the beginning of every year

#### 1.6.4 Premature withdrawal

Premature withdrawal will be used to describe pupils who drop out of school before completing the seven set years of primary

schooling. Some of these pupils even leave before completing the first year of schooling. They are forced by certain circumstances such as the socio-economic and health problems to leave school.

#### 1.6.5 Absenteeism

The concept will refer to the act of some pupils failing to attend classes on some school days.

#### 1.6.6 Performance

This will mean the academic achievement of the individual pupils through examinations taken at the end of the academic year.

#### 1.6.7 Repetition

The implication of the concept is that one pupil does a particular grade of the primary education supposed to take only one year in more than this one prescribed year. Such pupils are termed repeaters.

#### 1.6.8 Facilities

Facilities in the study will refer to the educational amenities to be enjoyed by students and which are key in determining their performance. The main facilities include teaching personnel, classrooms, educational materials, desks, libraries and laboratories, games and sports.

## CHAPTER TWO

### METHODOLOGY

#### 2.1 SITE OF STUDY

The study covered schools selected from all primary schools in Kilungu and Kithembe educational divisions which cover Kilungu and Kithembe locations, in Kilome division, Machakos district. However some neighbouring schools in both Mukaa and Ukia educational divisions were also included. This was because the study only dealt with schools which had attained standard seven by 1970 and there were not enough such schools in Kilungu and Kithembe educational divisions. A big number of the schools in these two educational divisions (Kilungu and Kithembe) are new schools which had not started by 1970 or had not attained standard seven by then.

The inclusion of schools from Mukaa and Ukia educational divisions extended the site of the study to cover around four locations and educational divisions out of the six locations and educational divisions of Kilome administrative division.

#### 2.2. THE SAMPLE

The study covered 30 schools. From these schools observations on facilities were made and additional data was obtained from school records. Out of the 30 schools 15 were from Kilungu educational division, 10 from Kithembe, 3 from Ukia and 2 from Mukaa educational divisions. Observation and school record data covered the first two sections of the questionnaire used in the study. The third section of the questionnaire entitled 'Hidden Costs in Schooling' used a sample of 300 informants, ten from each of the 30 schools.

### 2.2.1 Units of Study

All headmasters and five randomly selected assistant teachers of the schools from which records were utilised as sources of data were used as respondents. Four pupils, two from standard six and two from standard seven, based on random selection also served as respondents. This brought the number of informants from each school to ten and the total sample to 300 since the study covered 30 schools in all. A total of 178 teachers, 110 males and 68 females; and 112 pupils, 77 males and 45 females, were interviewed.

The respondents were selected using the random sampling technique. Small pieces of paper equal to the number of teachers (excluding the headmasters) or equal to the number of pupils per class were used; some bearing numbers from one to the last number of the required respondents and others being blank. These were shuffled in a box and the teachers/pupils were asked to pick one each. Those who picked papers with numbers written on <sup>them</sup> constituted the sample.

(P.T.O. for continuation)

### 2.3. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION:

The study used a questionnaire classified into three sections:

- 2.3.1. Observation data,
- 2.3.2. School records data, and
- 2.3.3. Hidden costs in schooling data.

#### 2.3.1. Observation Data.

This covered the first section of the study questionnaire. The researcher made and recorded observations of the facilities and conditions of the schools. These included the state of buildings, library and laboratory facilities, sitting patterns, text books and sharing patterns and the provision of exercise books, and games and sporting facilities. Headmasters were also requested for lists of teachers showing their qualifications. From the total number of pupils and teachers the teacher-pupil proportion was calculated.

#### 2.3.2. School Records Data.

The class attendance registers were used as sources of data for total enrolments, absenteeism, repetition and premature withdrawal. Where specific records of these were found like admission registers, yearly records on absenteeism, repetition and premature withdrawal, they were utilized instead.

Yearly records on C.P.E. results were used as sources of data on performance. Data was obtained for the years 1970-1982, which is the period covered by the study.

#### 2.3.3 Hidden Costs in Schooling Data.

To supplement observations and school records a questionnaire was administered to 300 respondents, ten from each of the 30 schools studied. The questionnaire had 8 classification (factual-type) questions, and 9 major pre-coded questions. The questionnaire was self-administered, that is, it was presented to the selected respondents by the researcher (interviewer), instructions given and the respondents just filled in the gaps or ticked where applicable. No time limit was given. This hopefully enabled the respondents to skim through the questionnaire and familiarise themselves with what was needed before filling it. But clarifications were made where necessary and above all the purpose of the study was explained in the simplest language possible to the respondents so that they could provide the correct information.

The major purpose of the questionnaire was to determine whether financial problems was still a major cause of mainly absenteeism, poor performance, repetition and premature withdrawal. It was designed purposely to test the significance of finance as a cause of any of the above problems. The questionnaire contained both open and closed questions (see appendix):

#### 2.4 FIELD WORK.

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The research was carried on during the months of, May, June and July which are rainy months. Long distances between schools had to be covered on foot due to lack of transport.

The research involved observations made by the researcher of the facilities and conditions of the schools, the extraction of school records data and the administering of questionnaires to teachers and pupils respondents. In some schools records were hard to trace. One had therefore to cross-check many sources of fragmented information to arrive at the desired information. This process was not only tiring and nerve wrecking but also time consuming.

Some informants especially headmasters and teachers were sometimes very reluctant to give the information required because of suspicion. It was only after long explanations that I managed to convince them to allow me to distribute questionnaires to the sampled pupil and teacher respondents. Even after being convinced that the research was not going to affect them negatively some headmasters and teachers were still reluctant to reveal information on what they considered as sensitive issues. For example, some headmasters went as far as instructing informants to withhold information on means used to enforce payment of school charges.

As implied above, not all respondents were unco-operative. Headmasters and teachers who had had previous experiences with researchers accorded me maximum assistance. Only those who were totally ignorant about research work casted doubts as to the purpose of the research. Pupil respondents were very co-operative and frank even where some headmasters had instructed them to withhold some information on what they considered as sensitive issues.



## 2.5. HYPOTHESES VARIABLES AND THEIR MEASUREMENT.

### 2.5.1. Independent Variable: Free Education.

Free education was measured in terms of contributions in the form of finance. It was assessed in terms of the presence or absence of hidden costs in schooling as replies from questionnaire revealed.

### 2.5.2 Dependent Variables.

The study included six dependent variables namely:-

#### 2.5.2.1 Enrolment.

The study considered all levels of primary education in trying to arrive at yearly total enrolments. But stress was placed on standard one enrolments where it is mainly affected by newly registered beginners who join school at the beginning of each year. This way the total enrolments for pre 1974 years, 1974 (the year of the introduction of free education), and post 1974 years were extracted. Since not all years could be covered from 1970 to 1982 because of time factor, the study only considered seven selected years, that is, 1970, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1978, 1980 and 1982.

#### 2.5.2.2 Absentecism.

The variable was measured in the number of school days the particular pupil did not present himself/herself for lessons. The school days for the whole year and the number of pupils in each class were recorded. These two were multiplied to give the pupil school days out of which holidays within the school terms were subtracted. The number of school days in which any pupil was absent were totalled for all the absentees for the whole year per class. This was done for all the classes for pre 1974, 1974 and post 1974 years. Years selected were similar to those for the enrolment variable.

#### 2.5.2.3 Performance.

Emphasis was placed on C.P.E. examination results. Grades scored by each pupil in the various C.P.E. subjects were extracted. This followed the order of English, Mathematics and General Paper - combining History and Civics, Geography, and Science and Nature Study. Years covered included 1970, 1972, 1973, as pre 1974 years, and 1977, 1979, 1980 and 1982 as post 1974 years.

#### 2.5.2.4 Repetition

The number of pupils doing a particular grade of primary education for the second or more year was recorded for each class by sex. The selected years covered were 1970, 1972 and 1973 as pre 1974 years, 1974 and 1978, 1980 and 1982 as post 1974 years.

#### 2.5.2.5 Premature Withdrawal.

For comparison with the total number of pupils per class, the number of pupils who withdrew yearly per class by sex were extracted. Years similar to those mentioned above were covered. The age composition of the withdrawers was also taken into consideration.

#### 2.5.2.6 Facilities.

Facilities were measured in terms of adequacy or inadequacy of classrooms, class sizes, overcrowding, the provision of textbooks and sharing patterns, the provision of exercise books, and the size and quality of the teaching force. Library, Laboratory and games facilities were reviewed and sitting patterns, that is, the sharing of desks among pupils in the various classes were also observed.

### 2.6. DATA ANALYSIS.

During data analysis percentages and averages (means) were used as major methods. In some cases frequencies were used to compute percentages.

#### 2.6.1. School Records Data: The Use of Percentages and Means.

In analysing school records data - which covered data on enrolment, absentecism, performance, repetition and premature withdrawal - percentages were utilised to establish comparison between years. For performance, however, averages (means) were used.

For enrolment the year of the take-off of the study (1970) was the year from which first percentage increases were based. Figures for this year were taken as 100% and from this, percentage increase for 1972 (over 1970 figures) was calculated. Percentage increases for the rest of the years were similarly based on the figures for the preceding year. This way the year to year percentage increases for the selected years were arrived at. Percentage increases were compared on a pre 1974, 1974 and post 1974 basis to test for fluctuations in enrolment trends.

Comparison was also done at year to year level as well as at pre 1974 versus post 1974 years level and by sex.

To arrive at percentage absenteeism rates pupil school days were taken as 100% for each year and class. The pupil school days had been got by multiplying the total number of pupils registered per class and the total number of days per year. Using the total number of days in which pupils were absent in each class and the pupil school days, an absenteeism percentage was calculated for all the selected years from 1970 to 1982. Pre 1974 percentage rates were then compared with post 1974 rates to test for the impact of free education on this variable.

Percentage repetition rates were calculated by expressing the repeaters as a percentage of the total number of pupils in the class they were members of before repeating. Repetition rates were calculated for the seven grades of the primary school and for all the selected years from 1970 to 1982. Comparison was done on a pre 1974, 1974 and post 1974 basis and by sex.

As concerns premature withdrawal, the number of withdrawals with regard to age and sex were expressed as a percentage of the whole class for the particular year. This was done for all the grades in all the selected years. A pre 1974, 1974 and post 1974 comparison was done to test for any impact of free education on this variable.

In analysing data on performance, means were used. Mean scores were calculated by averaging the points contained in grades scored by all pupils in particular subjects in C.P.E. Mean scores were compared for pre 1974 and post 1974 years for the three C.P.E examination subjects - English, Mathematics and General Paper - to establish whether free education has helped to better performance in primary education and in particular C.P.E performance.

#### 2.6.2. Observation Data: The Use of Percentages and Averages.

In analysing most of the data realised in this section of the research, percentages and averages were used. Frequencies were recorded in certain cases, for example in the area of classrooms, laboratory and library

facilities, and teaching staff. Out of the frequencies percentages were calculated. For sitting patterns and the sharing of textbooks averages were utilised to determine, for instance, how many pupils shared one desk or textbook in the various classes.

From this kind of analysis the percentage<sup>of</sup> schools with and without adequate classrooms, with and without library and laboratory facilities, and the percentage<sup>of</sup> trained and untrained teaching personnel were established. The average sharing of textbooks and desks were also reached with maximum and minimum records compared.

### 2.6.3 Data on Hidden Costs in Schooling: The Use of Frequencies and Percentages.

Percentages were used in analysing data got from the questionnaires administered to respondents. In coding this data frequency tables were drawn to show how many times a certain cause of a prescribed variable had been chosen.

The number of respondents were used as a basis for the calculation of percentages. The number of respondents who had chosen a particular cause that is, the frequency of occurrence, was expressed as a percentage of the total respondents denoted by N. By comparing the strength of causes as depicted by frequency percentages, it was established whether finance was still among the key causes of absenteeism, repetition, poor performance and premature withdrawal despite free education. Comparison was also done for pupil and teacher percentage responses.

## CHAPTER THREE

### MAJOR FINDINGS

The findings are reported under six headings namely:-

- 3.1 Fluctuation in enrolments,
- 3.2 Premature withdrawal
- 3.3 Absenteeism,
- 3.4 Changes in performance,
- 3.5 Repetition, and,
- 3.6 State of facilities.

In the presentation of the findings in the first five headings three periods, that is, pre 1974, 1974 and post 1974, are compared. Pre 1974 period will include 1970, 1972, and 1973 and post 1974 will include 1978, 1980 and 1982 as the years of study. For changes in performance however, the 1974 period does not apply and the post 1974 period will comprise 1977, 1979, 1980 and 1982 as the years of study.

#### 3.1 FLUCTUATION IN ENROLMENTS

Fluctuation in enrolments will be reported as percentages of increase or decrease over a specified period. Reporting of findings will cover the highest and lowest increments and comparison by sex in the three periods, that is pre 1974, 1974 and post 1974.

##### 3.1.1 Enrolments Before 1974

Reasonable levels of increment were experienced in the different schools before 1974. The highest increments in total enrolments of 1972 over 1970 figures in standard one was 120%. This was however, experienced by only one school. The highest increments recorded for boys and girls for the same period were 87.1% and 173.7% respectively (see table 2). The lowest increments in total (overall) enrolments for the period was 2.4%. For males it was 3.7% and for females it was 2.4%.

The highest increments in total enrolments for 1973 over 1972 figures was 79.5%. For males the highest recorded was 127.3% and for females it was 121%. Lowest overall increment recorded for the same period was 2.7%. For boys and girls it was 4% and 3.4% respectively.

TABLE 2: HIGHEST AND LOWEST PERCENTAGE INCREMENTS BY TOTAL AND SEX ENROLMENTS

SEX	YEARS/HIGHEST AND LOWEST PERCENTAGE INCREMENTS			
	1972 over HIGHEST	1970 LOWEST	1973 over HIGHEST	1972 LOWEST
MALES	87.1	3.7	127.3	40
FEMALES	173.7	2.4	121.0	3.4
INCREMENT ON TOTALS	120.0	2.4	79.5	2.7

All figures in all tables are percentages of the total observations of the total number of schools observed.

During the years preceeding 1974 not all schools experienced increased enrolments. Some schools were either stagnant or experienced decreased enrolments. During the 1972 over 1970 period, for example, only 15 schools out of the 30 studied experienced increased total enrolments; 14 had decreased enrolments ranging between -2 to -30% and one school was stagnant. Male enrolments during the period show 16 schools which had increased enrolments, 12 decreased enrolments ranging between -5.3 and -35% and two schools were neutral. For female enrolments 16 schools had increased enrolments, 13 decreased enrolments ranging from -4.8 to -42.9% and one school was stagnant.

For the 1973 over 1972 enrolments, 20 schools had increased total enrolments, 9 had decreased enrolments and one school experienced, no change at all. The decrease in percentage ranged from -2 to -20.6%. In terms of sex 16 schools had increased enrolments and 14 experienced decreases ranging from -1.7 to -28.6% for boys whereas 22 schools experienced increases, 7 decreases ranging from -5 to 37.5% and one school experienced no changes for girls' enrolments.

### 3.1.2 1974 Enrolments

The 1974 school year experienced enormous enrolment increments over 1973 enrolment figures. This was especially so in standard one where total enrolments went up with an average of 117.5% over the previous year's enrolments. The enrolment for boys that year showed an average increase of 94.5% whereas the average increment for girls enrolment was 134.5%. Although, as indicated earlier, emphasis was placed on standard one enrolments, it was also noted that high rates of enrolment increments were experienced in standards two to four but they were not as high as in standard one.

The standard one total enrolment increments fell between 24 and 275%. For males increments ranged from 20.7 to 253.8% whereas those for females ranged from 40.5 to 462.5%. All schools except one realized increased enrolments in totals and by sex in 1974. Out of the 29 schools with increased enrolment totals 27 had increments of over 50% and two had increments of between 20 and 50%. For boys 23 schools had increments of over 50% and the rest 6 had increments ranging between 20 and 50% whereas for girls 26 schools realized increments of over 50% while 3 experienced increments of between 20 and 50%.

### 3.1.3 Post 1974 Enrolments

The high percentage increments realized in 1974 over 1973 enrolment figures were not repeated again during the following years. In some cases enrolments kept on declining year after year to the extent of going below pre 1974 year to year increments (see table 3). This was particularly so in areas where new schools had been built within reach of old schools such that the particular school's catchment area was now being shared by two or more schools. The above could also have resulted because the backlog of children who could not join school because of the inability to raise school fees had been absorbed in 1974 with the abolition of fees. Out of the 30 schools studied, for example, 8 experienced competition from new schools with the result that enrolments declined.

TABLE 3: AVERAGE INCREASE IN STANDARD ONE ENROLMENTS OVER SELECTED YEARS BY TOTALS AND SEX

S E X	YEAR AND AVERAGE PERCENTAGE INCREMENTS					
	1972 over 1970	1973 over 1972	1974 over 1973	1978 over 1974	1980 over 1978	1982 over 1980
M A L E S	7.3	9.6	94.5	-32.4	19.0	5.3
F E M A L E S	11.6	20.5	134.5	-36.2	5.7	-0.4
INCREMENT ON TOTALS	9.8	11.8	117.5	-31.6	8.2	0.6

For 1978 over 1974 enrolments all schools except two had decreased overall and male enrolments. Increments for the two schools were 11.7 and 18.7% for totals and 42.4 and 56.7% for males. For females only one school showed increased enrolments of 29.6% for this period and the rest 29 had decreased enrolments. Decreases were high and ranged as high as -66.7% for total enrolments, -62.5% for boys and -71.2% for girls.

As shown in table 4 the 1980 over 1978 enrolments also showed fluctuation between increases and decreases. The highest increment recorded for the period was 73.1% and the lowest was 2.3% in overall enrolments. For males the highest and lowest increments realized were 143.8 and 1.6% respectively whereas for females they were 86.6 and 2.9% in the same order.

For the 1982 over 1980 enrolments the highest and lowest overall increments recorded were 118.6 and 3%. For males they were 150 and 2.8% compared to 96 and 4.2% for females.



TABLE 4: HIGHEST AND LOWEST PERCENTAGE INCREMENTS BY SEX AND TOTALS.

SEX	YEARS/HIGHEST AND LOWEST PERCENTAGE INCREMENTS			
	1980 HIGHEST	over 1978 LOWEST	1982 HIGHEST	over 1980 LOWEST
MALES	143.8	1.6	150.0	2.8
FEMALES	86.6	2.9	96.0	4.2
INCREMENT ON TOTALS	73.1	2.3	118.6	3.0

Not all schools realized increased enrolments for 1980 over 1978 and 1982 over 1980 enrolment. Only 18 schools experienced increased overall 1980 over 1978 enrolment figures. For males and females only 20 and 16 schools respectively had increased enrolments. Decreases for males and females ranged between -3.4 and -35.7% for males and -5.5 and -52.9% for females. In the 1982 over 1980 enrolment figures 11 schools had, increased overall enrolments. For males and females 17 and 12 schools respectively had increased enrolments. Decreases in enrolments for boys and girls ranged from -2.1 to -44.4% for boys and from -2.6 to -36.1% for girls.

Despite the many cases of decreased after 1974 year to year enrolments, enrolments were still higher than in the years prior to 1974 (see table 5). Only 8 schools recorded lower after 1974 overall enrolments than those realized in the years preceding 1974.

TABLE 5: STANDARD ONE ENROLMENT COMPARING PRE 1974 WITH POST 1974 YEARS

SEX	YEAR AND PERCENTAGE INCREASE			AVERAGE
	1978 over 1970	1980 over 1972	1982 over 1973	
MALES	41.0	53.0	47.0	47.0
FEMALES	73.3	72.6	63.6	63.5
INCREMENT ON TOTALS	53.0	41.8	42.9	45.9

Throughout the period covered by the study, 1970 - 82, enrolments were higher for girls than for boys. Over 80% of the schools covered showed higher female than male enrolments for before 1974, 1974 and after 1974. For example, in 1973 over 1972 enrolments, average female increment was 20.5% compared to 9.6% for males, and in 1974 over 1973 enrolments average increments were 117.5% for girls compared to 94.5% for boys. Even after 1974 more females were enrolled than males.

Nkinyangi (1980) argues that male enrolments in Kenya were higher than females in the year preceeding 1974 and showed a trend towards parity 50:50 in the years proceeding 1974. According to the data realized by the study, this is not the case in the area of the present study, and Machakos district in general. To explain the differential enrolments for boys and girls, Nkinyangi argued that parents were biased in providing education to their children and favoured males to females. But since this was not reflected in the enrolments in the area studied, where females always outnumbered males, the variables of population composition and demands for early employment migration (as advocated by Weisner, Mbithi, and Porter) became important. This might mean that there are more school aged girls than boys in the area and also that boys migrate in early ages to find employment and hence the higher number of females than males enrolling in schools.

In summary it is evident that free education has <sup>resulted in</sup> increased enrolments. The main problem however, remains that of retaining those who enrol until they complete the prescribed years of primary schooling. The findings on premature withdrawal present a sad picture.

### 3.2 PREMATURE WITHDRAWAL

Premature withdrawal is the first dependent variable of the second hypothesis investigated in the study. The findings here are presented in the order of pre 1974 withdrawal rates, 1974 rates, post 1974 withdrawal rates and the causes of premature withdrawal. The highest and lowest percentage drop-out rates by sex per class are presented. The presentation also deals with averages in overall and sexual withdrawal rates per class.

#### 3.2.1 Pre 1974 withdrawal rates

An analysis of the withdrawal data in the years preceeding 1974 showed considerable premature withdrawal rates in all classes and virtually in

all schools studied. The highest withdrawal rates recorded in standard one in any one school were 22.7% for males and 19% for females. The lowest rates were 1.7% for boys and 2.4% for girls (see table 6). In standard two the highest rates recorded were 23.7% for males and 30.4% for females. The lowest records were 2.1% and 1.7% for males and females respectively.

TABLE 6: HIGHEST AND LOWEST PERCENTAGE WITHDRAWAL RATES PER CLASS BY SEX

CLASSES	SEX/HIGHEST AND LOWEST PERCENTAGE RATES			
	H I G H E S T		L O W E S T	
	MALES	FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES
STDS. 1	22.7	19.0	1.7	2.4
2	23.7	30.4	2.1	1.7
3	17.2	14.3	0.9	0.9
4	31.6	21.0	1.7	2.0
5	30.6	26.5	0.3	1.6
6	27.8	14.3	1.9	2.0
7	20.0	13.6	2.0	2.0

The highest rates ever recorded were 31.6% for boys recorded in standard four and 30.4% for girls recorded in standard two whereas the lowest rates realized were 0.3% for males recorded in standard five and 0.9% for females recorded in standard three. During the years before 1974 less than 5% of the schools were recorded as having experienced no withdrawals for either boys or girls.

The average percentage dropout rates per class per year tended to be higher for females than for males. This was especially so in standard one to six; in standard seven the averages for the three years were higher for males than for females (see table 7).

**TABLE 7: AVERAGE PERCENTAGE WITHDRAWAL RATES IN SELECTED YEARS BY SEX OF PUPILS PER CLASS**

CLASSES	YEARS, SEX AND AVERAGE PERCENTAGE WITHDRAWALS					
	1970		1970		1973	
	MALES	FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES
STD. 1	5.6	7.5	6.3	7.0	6.5	7.4
2	5.1	5.9	4.7	5.9	6.0	8.1
3	4.8	6.3	5.3	6.3	6.2	4.5
4	5.5	5.6	4.4	5.8	7.5	6.4
5	5.4	5.8	4.8	4.6	5.6	4.7
6	4.0	4.8	3.7	4.7	4.3	4.4
7	3.0	2.6	3.9	3.0	3.0	2.8

**3.2.2 1974: Withdrawal Rates**

The abolition of primary school fees did not seem to have brought an end to high rates of premature withdrawal from primary schools. Indeed, 1974, the year of the removal of primary school fees, experienced withdrawal rates higher than those in the years before. For the first four standards overall rates ranged as high as 35%, 25%, 23% and 22% respectively varying with schools. About 84% of the schools studied had lost about 25% of those who entered in standard one in 1974 at the end of the year.

The highest withdrawal rates experienced in standard one were 22.2% for males and 17.7% for females. The lowest rates realized were 2.1 and 3.2% for males and females respectively (see table 8).

**TABLE 8: HIGHEST AND LOWEST PERCENTAGE WITHDRAWAL RATES PER CLASS BY SEX**

CLASSES	SEX/HIGHEST AND LOWEST PERCENTAGE RATES			
	H I G H E S T		L O W E S T	
	MALES	FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES
STD.1	22.2	17.7	2.1	3.2
2	15.1	17.7	1.9	2.8
3	21.1	30.0	1.3	3.2
4	15.6	13.9	2.4	3.7
5	23.5	17.6	2.1	2.0
6	23.1	23.1	2.6	2.4
7	8.3	15.4	1.9	2.0

Table 8 shows that the highest records ranged between 8.3% and 23.5% for boys and between 13.9% and 30% for girls. The lowest withdrawal rates ranged from 1.9% to 2.6% for males and from 2.0% to 3.7% for females. Only 5% of the schools studied retained all the enrolled pupils, that is, had no withdrawals for either males or females, in standard one to five. In standard six 16.7% of the schools had no male withdrawers while only 10% had no female withdrawers, and in standard seven 43.3% of the schools had no male withdrawers compared to 33.3% with no female withdrawers.

The average withdrawal rates for girls were higher than for boys in all classes in 1974. They were higher in the lower primary, standard one to four, for both sexes than in the upper primary (see table 9).

TABLE 9: AVERAGE PERCENTAGE WITHDRAWAL RATES PER CLASS BY SEX OF PUPILS

YEAR/SEX	CLASSES AND AVERAGE PERCENTAGE RATES						
	STD.1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1974 MALES	7.7	6.9	7.3	7.2	6.3	4.3	2.3
FEMALES	10.2	8.6	9.4	8.0	7.2	5.9	3.4
TOTALS	17.9	15.5	16.7	15.2	13.5	10.2	5.7

3.2.3 Post 1974 withdrawal rates

Looking at after 1974 withdrawal rates it is revealed that rates were still as high as those recorded during the years prior to 1974. In standard one for example, rates ranged between 1.6 and 17.7% for males and between 1.4 and 14.8% for females. In standard two they ranged between 1.1 and 16.9% for boys and between 1.4 and 18.6% for girls (see table 10).

TABLE 10: HIGHEST AND LOWEST PERCENTAGE WITHDRAWAL RATES PER CLASS BY SEX OF PUPILS

CLASSES	SEX/HIGHEST AND LOWEST PERCENTAGE RATES			
	HIGHEST		LOWEST	
	MALES	FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES
STD. 1	17.7	14.8	1.6	1.4
2	16.9	18.6	1.1	1.4
3	20.0	13.9	1.2	1.9
4	15.8	14.3	1.1	2.2
5	12.7	14.3	1.4	1.4
6	12.5	21.9	1.3	2.1
7	5.0	14.3	1.7	2.0

Post 1974 average withdrawal rates like pre 1974, and 1974 average rates were higher for females than for males (see table 11) In 1978, for example, the average rates were 6.4% for males compared to 8.7% for females in standard one; in 1980 they were 6.4% and 7.7% for both males and females respectively and in 1982 they were 6.3% for males and 4.6% for females in the same class.

The averages showed a decline as one moved from the lower primary to the upper primary. They were highest in standard one to four and decreased through standard five to six reaching their lowest in standard seven. The highest averages recorded in any one class and year were 6.4% for boys and 8.7% for girls whereas the lowest realized were 0.6% for boys and 2.0% for girls.

TABLE 11: AVERAGE PERCENTAGE WITHDRAWAL RATES IN SELECTED YEARS PER CLASS BY SEX OF PUPILS

CLASSES	YEARS, SEX AND AVERAGE PERCENTAGE RATES					
	1 9 7 8		1 9 8 0		1 9 8 2	
	MALES	FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES
STD.1	6.4	8.7	6.4	7.7	6.3	4.6
2	7.0	8.0	5.6	6.2	5.0	6.0
3	5.8	6.4	5.7	5.6	5.0	6.7
4	5.9	6.8	4.8	6.4	5.5	6.3
5	5.0	6.6	3.7	4.8	4.3	5.3
6	3.7	5.7	3.9	5.3	3.3	5.2
7	1.2	2.0	0.6	2.0	0.7	2.6

To consider free education as a solution to the high withdrawal rates experienced in primary schools by 1974 is misleading. According to the findings from this study what free education seems to have done is to have intensified and widened the magnitude of the problem.

Why then do pupils leave school before completing the primary school cycle? Before answering this question I would first answer the question, "who leaves school and <sup>at</sup> what age?". As indicated earlier more girls than boys leave school prematurely. About 60% withdrawers from 86.7% schools studied were females. The age group of those who leave school prematurely differ with grades from which pupils dropout. In the area of study the distribution was as follows (see table 12):-

TABLE 12: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF DROPOUTS IN AGE GROUPS PER CLASS

AGE GROUPS	CLASSES AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION						
	STD.1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6 - 9 years	92.6	89.4	15.7	-	-	-	-
10 - 13 "	7.4	10.7	82.9	91.3	82.0	59.9	6.2
14 - 16 "	-	0.9	1.4	8.7	16.6	35.3	84.8
Over 16 "	-	-	-	-	1.4	4.8	9.0

In standard one about 93% and in standard two about 89% of the withdrawers are in the age group 6 - 9 years. In standard 3, 4 and 5 about 83%, 91% and 82% are in the age group 10 - 13 years, and in standard six about 60% are in this age group. In standard seven about 85% of the withdrawers are aged 14 - 16 years. What are the causes of this high wastage rates from primary schools which has continued even after the removal of primary school fees?

3.2.4 Causes of Premature Withdrawal

Teachers and pupils were asked to choose from a list of given causes the ones they considered as major causes of premature withdrawal from schools (see appendix). From the choices of the 300 respondents a frequency table was drawn and from it the relative frequency (percentage) for each was calculated.

From the distribution of relative frequencies for the various reasons a rank ordering of causes based on importance was prepared (see table 13).

TABLE 13: ALL RESPONSE ITEMS ANALYSED AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL RESPONDENTS

Reason for withdrawal	Percentage respondent giving the reason.
1. Failure to pay dues in time (financial problems),	90.7
2. Pregnancy among girls,	81.3
3. Dancing parties and association with wrong friends,	74.3
4. Lack of encouragement by parents,	53.7
5. Health problems,	49.0
6. Decision that school work will not be beneficial in future life,	43.3
7. Unsuitable conditions for studying at home,	37.0

Reason for withdrawal	Percentage respondent giving the reason
8. Fear of failing examination,	36.0
9. Need for domestic and family holdings labor	28.3
10. Fear of punishment by cruel teachers	22.7

The ranking of failure to pay dues in time, <sup>as number one cause of premature withdrawal</sup> shows that despite the removal of primary school fees there are some hidden costs which parents have to meet in order for their children to remain in school.

Out of the 300 respondents interviewed 96% felt that education is not actually free. Among pupil respondents 97.5% felt that there is no free education and 94.9% of the teachers and headmasters held a similar view. The respondents identified some of the major dues parents have to pay which as a result burdened them more heavily than did the tuition fee of KShs.60 paid in the past. From the number of times the various expenses were mentioned a rank ordering was done and they emerged as follows in order of importance (see table 14):-

**TABLE 14: DUES PARENTS STILL PAY RANKED IN ORDER TO IMPORTANCE  
BASED ON PERCENTAGE RESPONDENTS SUPPORTING EACH:**

Dues	Percentage respondents supporting
1. Activity fees	100.0
2. Examination fees	100.0
3. Building and harambee funds	95.0
4. Mocks and trial tests fees	83.3
5. Charges on watchmen salaries	61.0
6. Equipment levy	18.3
7. Charges for feeding schemes	16.0
8. Dues for night studies	13.3

Another important charge which was not provided on the list but was listed by 85.7% of the respondents was payment for desks. Parents also have to buy exercise books for their children.

'Failure to pay dues at all or in time' was supported by 96.7% of the pupils respondents and by 86.5% of the teacher respondents. Pupils who do not pay dues in time are sent away from school. About 87% of the respondents pointed out that pupils are always sent home to collect dues they have not paid. Being sent home interferes not only with ~~academic progress~~ ~~academic progress~~ ~~academic progress~~ ~~academic progress~~



performance but also with the pupil's morale for schooling and if it continues repeatedly it might make the student despair and withdraw from school. Some poor parents cannot meet the dues at all and this forces their children to leave school without completing standard seven or to keep on popping in and out of school.

Pregnancy among girls emerged as the second major cause of premature withdrawal from school. About 81.3% of the respondents, 79.5% of the pupil respondents and 82.6% of the teacher respondents supported it. Attending dancing parties and association with wrong friends emerged as the third major cause of premature withdrawal supported by 74.3% of the respondents. About 72.1% of the pupil respondents and 75.8% of the teacher respondents shared this view.

Some students may not appreciate the need and importance of education in their life. Such student need to be encouraged by either parents or friends to continue schooling. Parents who therefore show little concern over their children's attitude toward education may encourage the pupils to withdraw from school. About half the respondents (53.7%) were of this opinion which emerged fourth in importance. About 50.8% of the pupil respondents and 55.6% of the teacher respondents shared the view.

'Health problems' and 'decision that school work will not be beneficial in future life' emerged as the fifth and sixth major causes of premature withdrawal being supported by 49% and 43% of the respondents respectively. The former was supported by 44.3% of the pupils and 52.2% of the teachers and the latter by 51.6% of the pupils and 37.6% of the teachers. Ranked seventh and eighth were 'unsuitable conditions to study at home' held by 37% of the respondents and 'fear of failing examinations' supported by 36% of the respondents. Supporters of the former cause included 31.1% of the pupils and 41% of the teachers whereas those of the latter one included 41.8% of the pupil respondents and 32% of the teacher respondents.

The 'need for domestic and family labor' received very little support as a major cause of premature withdrawal. It was ranked ninth with only 28.3% of the respondents choosing it. This small percentage included 27.9% of the pupil informants and 28.6% of the teacher informants.

The last cause according to the ranking by respondents was 'fear of punishment by cruel teachers'. Only 22.7% of the respondents supported it a percentage which included 31.1% of the pupil informants and 16.8% of the teacher informants.

The informants also offered other important causes they thought had been left out. Over 78% of them gave poor facilities like overcrowding in classrooms, lack of text books, inadequate teaching personnel among others, as an added major cause of premature withdrawal. Poor facilities can make some students despair when the schools fail to meet their expectations.

### 3.3 ABSENTEEISM

As in premature withdrawal findings are presented following the order of pre 1974, 1974 and post 1974 absenteeism rates, and the causes of absenteeism. Findings in the first three stages will cover the highest and lowest percentage rates recorded and averages in total absenteeism rates.

#### 3.3.1 Pre 1974 Absenteeism Rates:

During the period in question, absenteeism rates ranged from 1.7% to 26.3%. The highest absenteeism rates recorded in standard one was 22.3% and the lowest was 5.1% (see table 15). For standard two the highest and lowest rates were 26.3% and 3.9% respectively; and for standard three they were 22.2% and 3.6% in order.

Absenteeism rates declined as one moved from the lower to upper primary.

TABLE 15: HIGHEST AND LOWEST PERCENTAGE ABSENTEEISM RATES CLASS

HIGHEST/ LOWEST	CLASSES PERCENTAGE RATES						
	STD. 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
HIGHEST	22.3	26.3	22.1	17.3	19.6	17.1	8.9
LOWEST	5.1	3.9	3.6	4.0	2.6	4.2	1.7

Average absenteeism rates per class per year are also higher in the lower primary, standards one to four, than in the upper primary,

standard five to seven. They range between 5.1% and 9.1% for 1970, 4.6% and 10.4% for 1972 and between 5.5% and 10.9% for 1973 (see table 16).

For standard one absenteeism averages are 8.2% for 1970, 10.4% for 1972 and 10.9% for 1973. Compare these to averages in either standard six or seven of 6.5%, 7.4%, and 7.1% for standard six and 5.1%, 4.6% and 5.5% for standard seven in order of three years.

**TABLE 16: AVERAGE PERCENTAGE ABSENTEEISM RATES PER CLASS IN SELECTED YEARS.**

YEAR	CLASSES AND AVERAGE PERCENTAGE RATES						
	STD. 1.	2	3	4	5	6	7
1970	8.2	9.3	9.1	8.6	8.9	6.5	5.1
1972	10.4	8.7	9.9	9.1	7.7	7.4	4.6
1973	10.9	10.2	8.4	7.2	8.0	7.1	5.5

**3.3.2. 1974 Absenteeism Rates.**

Absenteeism rates for 1974 ranged between 1.8% and 22.9%. The highest and lowest rates recorded however, differed from class to class being higher in the lower primary than in the upper primary (see table 17). For standard one and two for example, the highest and lowest absenteeism rates realized were 19.8% and 8.4% and 20% and 6.7% respectively. Compare this to rates in standard five and six of 18.9% and 4.6% and 13.6% and 3.6% respectively. The higher classes are slightly better.

**TABLE 17: THE HIGHEST AND LOWEST PERCENTAGE ABSENTEEISM RATES PER CLASS IN 1974.**

HIGHEST/LOWEST	CLASSES AND PERCENTAGE RATES						
	STD. 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
HIGHEST	19.8	20.0	22.3	17.2	18.9	13.6	22.9
LOWEST	8.4	6.7	5.9	7.7	4.6	3.6	1.8

Average rates recorded for the year tended to be higher than those recorded in the years prior to it. They were higher in the lower primary than in upper primary. For standards one to four for example, the average absenteeism rates were 12.2%, 13.6%, 10.9% and 12.1% respectively compared to 7.8%, 6.9% and 5.9% for standards five to seven in that order.

**3.3.3 Post 1974 Absenteeism Rates**

Absenteeism rates occurring after 1974 were either higher or consistent with those which occurred by 1973. They ranged between 2.4% and 23.7% and were also higher in the lower primary than in the upper primary classes. In standards one and two, for instance, the highest and lowest recorded rates were 22.2% and 8.5% and 23.7% and 5.9% respectively (See table 18). In standard six and seven, contrary, the highest and lowest were 13.6% and 4.8% and 11.4% and 2.4% in that order.

**TABLE 18: HIGHEST AND LOWEST PERCENTAGE ABSENTEEISM RATES PER CLASS**

HIGHEST/LOWEST	CLASSES AND PERCENTAGE RATES						
	STD. 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
HIGHEST	22.2	23.7	17.1	15.2	15.2	13.6	11.4
LOWEST	8.5	5.9	5.0	6.0	4.5	4.8	2.4

(P. T. O. for continuation)

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Average absenteeism rates recorded for the period per year per class were also high. They differed from year to year and from grade to grade. But they were higher for the lower grades than for the upper ones (see table 19). For instance, averages records realized in standard one were 11.5%, 10.5% and 11.7% for the three years in order as opposed to those for standard five of 9.1%, 8.6% and 8.3% for the same years, that is, 1978, 1980 and 1982 respectively.

**TABLE 19: AVERAGE PERCENTAGE ABSENTEEISM RATES PER CLASS IN SELECTED YEARS**

YEAR	CLASSES AND AVERAGE PERCENTAGE RATES						
	Sts. 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1978	11.5	11.6	11.6	9.6	9.1	7.8	4.9
1980	10.5	10.9	10.1	8.9	8.6	8.1	5.8
1982	11.7	10.2	13.2	10.3	8.3	7.8	5.4

Average absenteeism rates are not only higher in the lower than in the upper primary classes but also for post 1974 years. In standard one, for example, the average rate for the years preceeding 1974 was 9.8% compared with that for the years after 1974 of 11.5% (see table 20).

Certain days in the week seem to show high absenteeism rates. About 78% of the headmasters interviewed said that very few pupils are absent on milk-drinking days ( in most schools milk is distributed in specific days of the week ). According to the headmasters the highest absenteeism rates are experienced during coffee harvesting seasons in coffee-growing areas meaning that children assist in picking coffee.

**TABLE 20: PRE 1974 AND POST 1974 AVERAGE PERCENTAGE ABSENTEEISM RATES PER CLASS**

PERIOD	CLASSES AND AVERAGE PERCENTAGE RATES						
	STD.1	2	3	4	5	6	7
PRE 1974	9.8	9.4	9.1	8.3	8.2	7.0	5.1
POST 1974	11.5	11.6	11.5	10.2	8.4	7.6	5.5

What then are the major causes of the high absenteeism rates experienced in primary schools even with free education?

#### 3.3.4 Causes of absenteeism

A list of possible causes similar to those used for premature withdrawal was presented to the pupils and teachers. An additional two causes not included in the premature withdrawal list were included here. These are 'Fear of tiring school work' and 'Ignorance of pupils'. From the choices of respondents a rank ordering was done based on relative frequencies of the causes (see table 21).

**TABLE 21: RANK ORDERING OF CAUSES FOR ABSENTEEISM BASED ON TOTAL RESPONDENTS**

Reason for absenteeism	Percentage respondents giving the reason
1. Failure to pay dues in time.	77.7
2. Health problems.	74.0
3. Lack of encouragement by parents.	69.3
4. Dancing parties and association with wrong friends.	56.7
5. Ignorance of pupils.	51.3
6. Need for domestic and family holdings labor.	27.7
7. Fear of punishment by cruel teachers.	23.7
8. Fear of tiring school work.	23.7

'Failure to pay certain dues in time' emerged number one cause of absenteeism with about 77.7% of the respondents giving it. This percentage included 70.8% of the pupil respondents and 87.7% of the teachers and headmasters. Pupils are sent home if they don't pay dues in time. Those whose parents can't pay up end up by

spending several days at home. According to 96% of the Headmasters interviewed the only effective way to ensure parents pay dues is to send children home. They argued that the voluntary harambee system has not been effective and in fact most parents can only use it to evade paying essential dues. Thus, unless the government started financing most schools activities and projects, <sup>parents</sup> have to be forced to give contributions.

Emerging second as a major cause of absenteeism was "health problems" identified by 74% of the respondents. These covered 78.7% of the pupils interviewed and 70.8% of the teachers interviewed. About 69.3% of the informants felt that some parents do not encourage children to attend school regularly. This third major cause of absenteeism was supported by 65.6% of the pupils and 71.9% of the teachers.

Based on the rank ordering "dancing parties and association with wrong friends" was placed fourth in importance with 56.7% of the respondents giving it. Among the respondents 59.8% of the pupils and 54.5% of the teachers attributed absenteeism to this cause. About 51.3% of the respondents (including 40.2% of the pupils and 59% of the teachers) saw "ignorance of pupils" as a major cause of absenteeism. This ranked fifth in importance.

The causes ranked sixth to eighth had very little support from the respondents. These were "Need for domestic and family holding labor" (27.7%), "Fear of punishment by cruel teachers" and "Fear of tiring school work" all supported by 23.7% of the informants.

The respondents provided other causes of absenteeism they felt were important but had not been included in the list provided. These included indiscipline in the school, ignorance of parents and the lack of uniforms and exercise books.

#### 3.4. CHANGES IN PERFORMANCE.

Performance in C.P.E will be reported as grades 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', and 'E'. These are the grades scored by the pupils in the official examinations. But to get average scores per subject the grades have been converted into points ranging from 12 points for 'A' to one point for 'E' according to the formular used by the Ministry of Education which is as follows:

- |       |             |        |            |
|-------|-------------|--------|------------|
| 1. A  | = 12 points | 7. C   | = 6 points |
| 2. A- | = 11 points | 8. C-  | = 5 points |
| 3. B+ | = 10 points | 9. D+  | = 4 points |
| 4. B  | = 9 points  | 10. D  | = 3 points |
| 5. B- | = 8 points  | 11. D- | = 2 points |
| 6. C+ | = 7 points  | 12. E  | = 1 point  |

Reporting of findings on performance covers pre 1974, and post 1974 (C.P.E.) performance and the causes of poor performance. Findings in the first two stages will include the highest and lowest average scores per subject per year recorded in any one school. Average scores per subject per year for the 30 schools studied will also be reported.

**3.4.1 Pre 1974 Performance**

Looking at pre 1974 average C.P.E. performance records ranged between 1.8 points (D-) and 7.8 points (B-) in English; 1.7 points (D-) and 8.5 points (B-) in Mathematics and between 2.2 points (D-) and 6.9 points (C+) in General Paper. Of course, the highest and lowest averages per subject per year differed (see table 22). Average scores per subject per school for the different years also differed.

**TABLE 22: AVERAGE HIGHEST AND LOWEST C.P.E. SCORES PER SUBJECT PER YEAR IN SELECTED YEARS**

GRADES	YEARS, SUBJECTS AND POINTS/ GRADES								
	1 9 7 0			1 9 7 2			1 9 7 3		
	ENG.	MATHS	G.PAPER	ENG.	MATHS	G.PAPER	ENG.	MATHS	G. PAPER
HIGHEST	7.4 C+	8.5 B-	6.9 C+	7.7 B-	6.0 C	6.9 C+	7.8 B-	7.8 B-	6.3 C
LOWEST	2.8 D	1.7 D-	3.0 D	2.3 D	2.9 D	2.2 D-	1.8 D-	2.5 D-	2.9 D

The average C.P.E scores per subject per year for the period ranged from 3.4 points to 5 points. They differed from year to year and from subject to subject as shown in table 23. For English, for example,



they were 5 points (C-), 4.6 points (C-), and 4.6 points (c-) for the three years ( 1970, 1972 and 1973) respectively.

**TABLE 23: AVERAGE C.P.E. PERFORMANCE PER SUBJECT PER YEAR IN SELECTED YEARS**

SUBJECTS	YEARS AND POINTS/GRADES					
	1 9 7 0		1 9 7 2		1 9 7 3	
	PTS.	GRADE	PTS.	GRADE	PTS.	GRADE
English	5.0	C-	4.6	C-0	4.6	C-
Maths	3.4	D	4.1	D+	4.4	D+
G.Paper	5.0	C-	3.9	D+	4.7	C-

According to the table the average performance for the 30 schools per subject were never higher than a 'C-' and were as low as 'D' English kept a constant average grade of 'C-' for the three years whereas Maths fluctuated between D in 1970 to D+ in 1972 and 1973. Performance in General Paper dropped from an average score of 'C-' in 1970 to 'D+' in 1972 and then rose again to 'C-' in 1973.

**3.4.2 Post 1974 Performance**

The average C.P.E. scores for the years proceeding 1974 ranged from 3.4 points (D) to 8 points (B-). These too differed from year to year and from subject to subject (see table 24). In 1977, for example, the highest average scores were 7.8 points (B-), 7.3 points (C+), and 7.5 points (B-) in English, Maths and General Paper respectively. The lowest average scores in the same subject order were 4.4 points (D+), 4.8 points (C-), and 4.1 points (D+).

**TABLE 24: AVERAGE HIGHEST AND LOWEST C.P.E. SCORES PER SUBJECT IN SELECTED YEARS**

HIGHEST & LOWEST GRADES	YEAR, SUBJECTS AND POINTS											
	1 9 7 7			1 9 7 9			1 9 8 0			1 9 8 2		
	ENG.	MAT.	G.P.	ENG.	MAT.	G.P.	ENG.	MAT.	G.P.	ENG.	MAT.	G.P.
HIGHEST	7.8 B-	7.3 C+	7.5 B-	7.5 B-	7.7 B-	7.3 C+	7.7 B-	7.7 B-	7.4 C+	8.0 B-	7.7 B-	7.4 C+
LOWEST	4.4 D+	4.8 C-	4.1 D+	3.5 D+	3.7 D+	3.6 D+	4.1 D+	3.6 D+	3.9 D+	3.4 D	4.1 D+	4.5 D+

The average C.P.E. scores per subject per year for the after 1974 period ranged from 5.3 points (C-) to 7.4 points (C+). For 1977, for instance, the average scores were 6 points (C), in English and Maths and 5.9 points (C) in General Paper (See table 25).

**TABLE 25: AVERAGE C.P.E PERFORMANCE PER SUBJECT PER YEAR IN SELECTED YEARS**

SUBJECTS	YEARS AND AVERAGE POINTS/GRADES							
	1 9 7 7		1 9 7 9		1 9 8 0		1 9 8 2	
	PTS.	GRADE	PTS.	GRADE	PTS.	GRADE	PTS.	GRADE
ENGLISH	6.0	C	5.6	C	5.7	C	6.4	C
MATHS	6.0	C	7.4	C+	5.8	C	6.0	C
G. PAPER	5.9	C	5.6	C	6.0	C	6.0	C

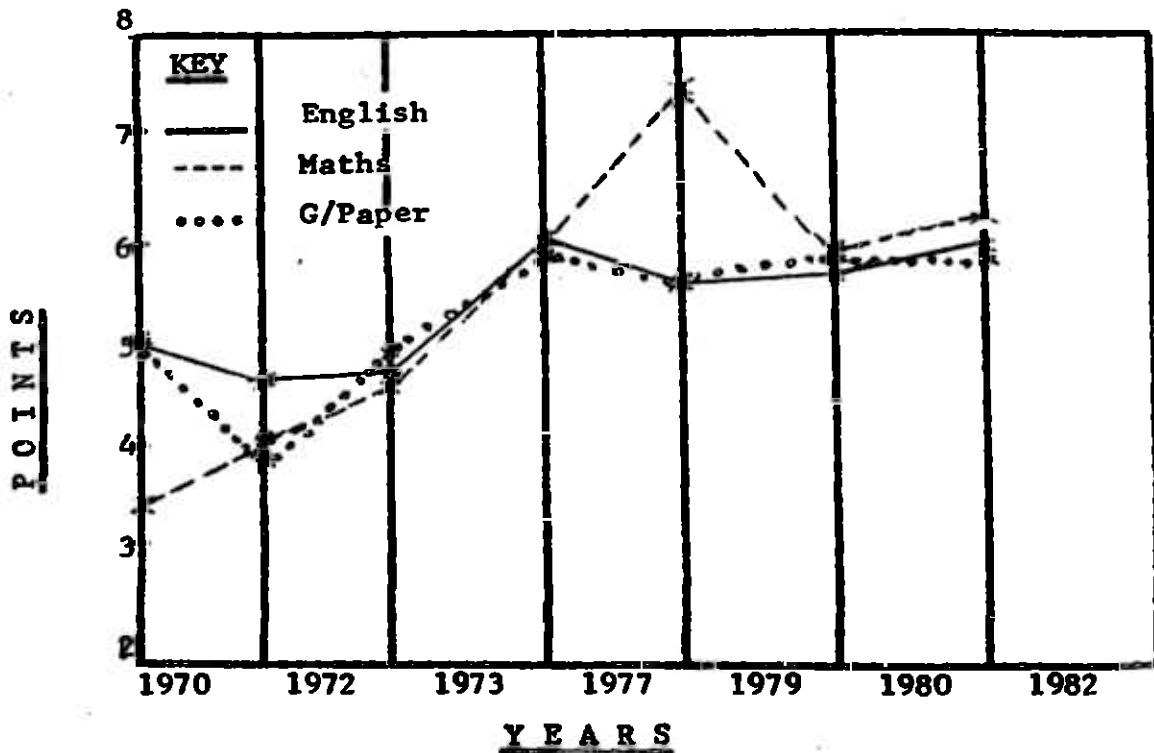
Compared with the pre 1974 scores post 1974 scores showed some improvements. Averages for before 1974 years, for example, ranged between 'D' and 'C-' whereas those for after 1974 years ranged between 'C' and 'C+'. The pre 1974 average scores per subject realized by the study were 4.7 points (C-), 4 points (D+), and

4.5 points (D+) in English, Maths and General Paper respectively compared to the post 1974 average scores per subject in the same order of 6 points (C), 6.3 points (C), and 6 points (C).

From 1977, on top of the average performance showing some improvements, it was noted that less than 25% of the schools studied recorded any one or more 'E's' in any subject ~~and in~~ and in over 72% of the schools the grade 'A' was scored in one or more subjects by one or more students. Before 1977, the grade 'E' characterized over 80% of the schools studied and in some years and schools about a quarter of the students who sat for the C.P.E examination scored this grade in one or more subjects. Despite improved results during the years after 1974 however, it is important to note that in over 70% of the schools over half of the candidates still scored in the 'C' category of scores.

An analysis of the trends in changes in performance by subject showed that average performance in Mathematics has improved more than any other subject reaching its peak in 1979 (see graph). English and General subject showed only slight improvements before 1974. But in 1977 the improvement over 1973 performance was remarkable falling again in 1979 only to rise again in 1980 and 1982.

**GRAPHIC PRESENTATION OF AVERAGE PERFORMANCE TREND BY SUBJECT PER YEAR**



The improvements in after 1974 C.P.E. examination results were not very high especially when compared to the leading districts in C.P.E. performance such as Nyeri. The standard of performance had shown some improvements since 1973 but not high enough ~~was not as high~~ in the area of study and in Machakos district in general since about 60% of the pupils scored only 'C's and less than 10% could manage 30 points and over to secure a place in government schools which are the best schools in the country.

Performance standards were also not high in all other grades of the primary school. According to the headmasters of the schools studied, pupils tended to do worse with mass education. It is therefore in the lower primary classes which are very crowded that performance is worse. What then can be the cause of low standards of performance.

**3.4.3. Causes of Poor Performance.**

Again respondents were presented with a list of causes and required to choose the ones they considered as major causes of poor performance (see appendix). Out of their responses a rank ordering of causes in order of importance emerged as follows (see table 26).

**TABLE 26: RANK ORDERING OF REASONS FOR POOR PERFORMANCE BASED ON TOTAL RESPONDENTS.**

Reason for poor Performance	Percentage responses
1. Poor facilities (no textbooks, overcrowding in classrooms etc)	88.7
2. Being sent home due to failure to pay dues in time	83.0
3. Poor teaching in schools,	75.7
4. Unsuitable conditions to study at home,	73.3
5. Dancing parties and association with wrong friends,	61.7
6. Health problems leading to absenteeism,	57.7
7. Lack of encouragement by parents,	54.0
8. Lack of student interest in academic work,	47.3
9. Repetition,	10.0

Poor facilities in schools which emerged as the first major cause

of poor performance refers to things like lack of adequate classrooms leading to overcrowding in the classrooms, lack of textbooks, poor sitting patterns and inadequate and inexperienced teachers. The cause received 88.7% support from the respondents which encompassed 81.1% of the pupils and 93.3% of the teachers interviewed. Ranked second in importance was 'being sent home due to failure to pay dues in time'. The resultant continued or even short-term absenteeism from school definitely affects pupils performance. This feeling was held by 83% of the informants, a percentage which included 91% of the pupils and 77.5% of the teachers.

About 75.7% of the respondents blamed poor performance on 'poor teaching in schools'. Poor teaching can be caused by inadequate teaching materials, high numbers of untrained teachers and even understaffing. Among the pupil respondents the cause received a popularity support of 77% and among teachers it was given by 74.7% of them. Fourth on the list emerged 'unsuitable conditions to study at home'. About 73.3% of the respondents felt that it is a major cause of poor performance. The percentage included 72.1% of the pupils and 74.4% of the teachers. 'Unsuitable conditions to study at home' can include lack of proper lamps, and tables, poor overcrowded housing lacking in privacy and quietness essential for effective studies and also overworking of pupils by their parents after school (interfering with studying time).

Being supported by 61.7% of the respondents, that is, 72.1% of the pupils and 54.5% of the teachers, 'dancing parties and association with wrong friends' emerged as the fifth cause of poor performance. Next to it was 'health problems' which was chosen by 57.7% of the respondents. It was supported by 58.2% and 57.3% of the pupils and teachers respectively.

About 54% of the respondents felt that poor performance is also caused by the 'lack of parent encouragement' to their children. The cause was given by 41% of the pupils and by 62.9% of the teachers. Following it in importance was 'lack of student interest in academic work' seen as a major cause of poor performance by only 47.3% of the respondents. These included 45.1% of the pupils and 48.9% of the teachers interviewed. Accorded least importance as a cause of poor performance was 'repetition'. Only 10% of the pupils and 7.9% of the teachers chose it. Where it occurs it might imply that some pupils who repeat do worse either because they lose interest in academic

respondents including 13.1% of the  
A

work or because repetition makes them despair.

Other causes given by the respondents included indiscipline among pupils, misunderstandings among teachers and pupils, and among teachers and headmasters. Over 69% of the respondents stressed imbalanced staffing, and frequent changes in curriculums as very important causes of poor performance.

### 3.5 REPETITION

The reporting of findings will be done in four major steps, that is, pre 1974, 1974 and post 1974 repetition rates, and the causes of repetition. Findings in the first three steps will cover the highest and lowest rates per class by sex recorded in any of the years included in each period. Average repetition rates per class per year by sex will also be covered.

#### 3.5.1 Pre 1974 Repetition Rates

Repetition rates experienced during the period ranged between 2.1% and 37.5% for males and 2.7% and 34.3% for females. In standard one for example, the highest and lowest repetition rates recorded in any one year and school were 19.4% and 4.8% for boys and 28% and 2.7% for girls (see table 27).

**TABLE 27: HIGHEST AND LOWEST PERCENTAGE REPETITION RATES PER CLASS BY SEX OF PUPILS**

CLASSES	HIGHEST AND LOWEST PERCENTAGE RATES AND SEX			
	H I G H E S T		L O W E S T	
	MALES	FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES
Std. 1	19.4	28.0	4.8	2.7
2	23.1	33.3	2.8	4.8
3	33.5	25.0	2.4	2.9
4	17.9	30.0	2.1	3.1
5	23.5	30.8	2.2	2.8
6	30.8	34.3	2.6	3.8
7	37.5	21.6	3.0	2.7

The average repetition rates per class by sex experienced before 1974 ranged from 6.1% to 15.6% for males and from 9.1% to 14.3% for females. In standard one, for instance, the average rates per year were 10.4% for males and 12% for females in 1970, 10% for males and 11.3% for females in 1972, and 11.1% for males and 11.4% for females in 1973 (see table 28). The average rates tended to be higher for girls than for boys in all classes and years except in standard seven where they were higher for boys than for girls. Generally rates were higher in standard one to three and highest in standard six.

**TABLE 28: AVERAGE REPETITION RATES IN SELECTED YEARS PER CLASS BY SEX OF PUPILS**

CLASSES	YEARS, SEX AND AVERAGE PERCENTAGE RATES					
	1 9 7 0		1 9 7 2		1 9 7 3	
	MALES	FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES
Std. 1	10.4	12.0	10.0	11.3	11.1	11.4
2	10.0	10.4	10.3	11.0	9.4	11.8
3	10.0	8.3	9.1	10.0	9.1	10.2
4	8.3	9.8	8.8	8.8	6.1	10.2
5	7.7	9.9	8.6	9.5	7.1	8.2
6	12.5	13.6	13.1	14.3	11.1	13.8
7	15.8	11.4	12.8	10.7	12.0	9.8

### 3.5.2 1974 Repetition Rates

Repetition rates for 1974 were still consistent with those reported before then. Rates ranged from 2.4% to 22.2% for boys and from 2.3% to 33.3% for girls. In standard one, for example, the highest and lowest rates recorded were 19.1% and 6.7% for males and 20.2% and 5.7% for females (see table 29)

**TABLE 29: HIGHEST AND LOWEST PERCENTAGE REPETITION RATES PER CLASS BY SEX OF PUPILS**

CLASSES	HIGHEST AND LOWEST PERCENTAGE RATES			
	H I G H E S T		L O W E S T	
	MALES	FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES
Std. 1	19.1	20.2	6.7	5.7
2	16.7	21.2	4.8	6.7
3	18.0	18.0	3.6	3.6
4	18.9	18.6	2.6	4.1
5	13.8	25.7	2.4	2.3
6	22.2	33.3	4.3	5.1
7	21.6	25.0	3.2	2.4

Average repetition rates in 1974 ranged between 7.7% and 12% for boys and 9.1% and 14.4% for girls (see table 30). Rates were again higher for girls than for boys and were higher in standard one to three and highest in standard six.

**TABLE 30: AVERAGE PERCENTAGE REPETITION RATES IN 1974 PER CLASS BY SEX OF PUPIL**

YEAR/ SEX	CLASSES PERCENTAGE AVERAGE RATES						
	STD. 1.	2	3	4	5	6	7
MALE 197	11.5	11.3	10.4	8.6	7.7	12.0	9.8
FEMALE	12.9	12.1	10.7	10.3	9.1	14.4	9.8

**3.5.3 Post 1974 Repetition Rates**

During the years after 1974 repetition rates were either higher or consistent with those recorded before 1974. They ranged from 1.6% to 55.6% for males and from 2.4% to 36.4% for females. In standards one and two, for example, the highest and lowest rates recorded were 20.2% and 4.2% for boys and 23.1% and 6% for girls, and 24.6% and 3.6% for boys and 21.5% and 4.6% for girls respectively (see table 31). The very highest rates were recorded in standard six and were 55.6% for males and 36.4% for females.

**TABLE 31: HIGHEST AND LOWEST PERCENTAGE REPETITION RATES PER CLASS BY SEX**

CLASSES	HIGHEST AND LOWEST PERCENTAGE RATES/SEX			
	H I G H E S T		L O W E S T	
	MALES	FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES
STD 1	20.2	23.1	4.2	6.0
2	24.6	21.5	3.6	4.6
3	19.8	21.7	4.8	2.7
4	20.0	23.4	2.3	2.9
5	23.1	25.5	2.2	2.9
6	55.6	36.4	3.8	5.9
7	28.1	25.0	1.6	2.4



The average repetition rates for the years proceeding 1974 ranged from 5.1% to 17.4% for males and from 5% to 19.3% for females. In standard one average rates realized were 10.5%, 10.9% and 10.3% for males and 12%, 12.1% and 12.2% for females in 1978, 1980 and 1982 respectively (see table 32). Generally rates were higher for girls than for boys. They were highest in standard six and lowest in standard seven.

**TABLE 32: AVERAGE PERCENTAGE REPETITION RATES IN SELECTED YEARS PER CLASS BY SEX OF PUPILS**

CLASSES	YEARS/SEX AVERAGE PERCENTAGE RATES					
	1 9 7 8		1 9 8 0		1 9 8 2	
	MALES	FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES
STD.1	10.5	12.0	10.9	12.1	10.3	12.2
2	10.8	10.8	10.6	11.2	11.0	11.1
3	9.7	10.3	9.9	10.5	9.5	10.1
4	9.5	10.4	9.0	10.5	8.9	9.2
5	9.0	9.3	8.4	9.6	8.9	9.3
6	15.5	16.3	17.4	17.4	16.0	19.3
7	6.6	6.5	5.1	5.9	5.0	5.0

Although free education did much in promoting enrolments, the findings of the study show that the rates of repetition remained high after 1974. The rates recorded after 1974 were either higher or consistent with rates recorded prior to 1974. After 1974 repetition rates were higher than before 1974 rates in all grades except in standard seven where pre 1974 rates were higher than post 1974 rates (see table 33).

Repetition rates varied from school to school. According to all headmasters, where rates were low it was due to pushing caused by parental and politicians' pressure on the headmaster. In standards one and two rates ranged as high as 50%. In standard six where rates were highest they ranged as high as 60%. In fact in about 87% of the schools studied standard six repetition rates were 40% and over after 1974.

**TABLE 33: PRE 1974 AND POST 1974 AVERAGE PERCENTAGE REPETITION RATES PER CLASS BY SEX OF PUPIL**

PERIOD	CLASSES/SEX/AVERAGE PERCENTAGE RATES													
	STD.1		2		3		4		5		6		7	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
PRE 1974	9.8	11.6	9.9	10.6	9.9	9.9	9.8	9.9	7.7	9.9	12.2	13.6	13.3	12.9
POST 1974	10.8	12.4	10.8	11.1	9.7	13.3	9.0	10.3	8.3	9.3	5.4	17.3	6.4	7.0

According to all headmasters repetition rates were highest in standard six because many pupils were not ready for standard seven and repeated rather than continued with a possibility of failing C.P.E. The desire for a better position in divisional and district C.P.E score boards was also another reason given by headmasters explaining why they have to make alot of students repeat standard six. They argued that they have to select the best and most competent students to join standard seven so that the school can occupy a better position on the division and district score lists.

In standard seven repetition rates are contrary to other grades especially when we view them from a pre 1974 and post 1974 perspective. During the years before 1974 repetition rates in standard seven were higher for boys than for girls. But by 1978 the rates were not only declining but also reaching some balance for males and females. The many harambee secondary schools, private schools and village polytechnics which have been built can be used to explain this. These help absorb some primary school leavers who cannot get a place in government schools.

Commenting on the balanced sexual repetition rates in standard seven, about 72% of the headmasters argued that sexual bias in education existed before 1978 where most parents preferred boys to girls in the provision of higher education. Hence, after their first C.P.E attempt the females were regarded as educated enough whereas the males could proceed for higher education. Those males who could not get places in government schools went back to standard seven for another C.P.E attempt so as to secure a place in secondary school.

Since the findings reveal that repetition rates are still consistent with

those recorded by 1974 except in standard seven, then there is need to answer the question, "What are the major causes of the higher repetition rates in primary schools?."

3.5.4 Causes of Repetition

The list <sup>of</sup> causes presented to respondents was similar to that of causes of poor performance. The presentation of findings in this part will also be similar to that in causes of premature withdrawal, absenteeism and poor performance.

Analysed as a percentage of the total respondents the causes emerged out in the following rank order (see table 34):-

TABLE 34: ALL RESPONSES ANALYSED AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL RESPONDENTS BY RANK

Response	Percentage giving the response
1. Constant absence due to financial problems leading to poor performance,	83.6
2. Poor facilities in schools and thus poor examination results,	79.7
3. Unsuitable studying conditions at home leading to poor performance in exams,	67.7
4. Lack of encouragement by parents to study hard,	63.3
5. Poor teaching in schools,	62.3
6. Lack of student interests in academic work and therefore poor performance,	62.0
7. Health problems,	59.0

Earlier it was indicated that primary schools are still characterized by certain dues which parents have to pay. These have been termed "hidden costs" in schooling and students who cannot meet the date lines are sent home forcing them to be absent from school for a certain duration. According to 86.3% of the respondents such absence based on dues leads to poor performance and therefore repetition. This number one cause of repetition was supported by 95.1% of the pupil respondents and by 80.3% of the teachers.

Ranked second in importance as a major cause of repetition was 'poor facilities in schools and thus poor examination results'. About 79.7% of the respondents supported it. These included 68.8% of the pupil respondents and 87.6% of the teachers interviewed.

'Unsuitable studying conditions at home leading to poor examination results' emerged as the third major cause of repetition. About 67.7% of the respondents felt that poor studying conditions at students' homes yields poor examination results and therefore promotes repetition. Included in the percentage was 64.8% of the pupils and 69.7% of the teachers interviewed.

The fourth major cause of repetition given by 63.3% of the respondents was 'lack of encouragement by parents to study hard'. The pupils gave it 67.2% support whereas the teachers gave it 60.7% support. Next to emerge was 'poor teaching in schools' held by 62.3% of the interviewed which included 60.6% of the pupil respondents and 63.5% of the teachers. 'Lack of student interest in academic work and therefore poor performance in exams' was placed sixth in importance as a major cause of repetition. This cause was given by 62% of the respondents which covered 68.8% of the pupil respondents and 57.3% of the teacher respondents.

'Health problems' was given the least weight being supported by 59% of the respondents. These included 49.2% of the pupils and 65.7% of the teachers. Respondents also added to the list of given causes by mentioning other causes they felt were major but had not been included. These included the 'need to do better in national examinations, lack of money for secondary school fees and understaffing'.

From the analysis of causes of premature withdrawal, absenteeism, poor performance and repetition, it is evident that school dues is number one cause of these. Only in poor performance was it placed second as a major cause; in all the others it was ranked first. Generally therefore, despite the removal of tuition fees the payment of other dues still interferes with pupil's learning, leading some to leave school, others to be continuously absent and hence perform poorly and possibly repeat classes. Poor facilities was viewed as number one cause of poor performance.

### 3.6 STATE OF FACILITIES

In measuring the success of any education system one cannot overlook the importance of facilities afforded by the system as indicators of its strength. During the study the following indicators were assessed namely:-

**3.6.1 Classroom and Sitting Facilities**

Many schools are experiencing shortages of facilities. About 43.3% of the schools studied, for example, had shortages of classrooms. Although classrooms were permanent, that is built of bricks with iron sheet roofs, over 80% of them had earth floors and unplastered walls; pupils have to continuously water them to curb the dust. About 25% of the schools had none of their classrooms with cemented floors and plastered walls.

Although over 70% of the classrooms had steel frames for windows, less than 25% of these had the glasses. Nevertheless, about 65% of the classrooms had lockable doors. Classrooms were big in size averaging about 72 metres square.

Findings on sitting facilities show that about 60% of the schools studied had poor sitting facilities. In about 69% of the schools the desks were old, very weak and crooked. Sitting patterns differ from class to class and from school to school. In standard one for instance, sharing patterns ranged from 2 to 6 pupils per desk whereas in standard two they ranged from 2 to 5 per desk (see table 35).

**TABLE 35: SITTING PATTERNS PER DESK, PER CLASS BY PERCENTAGE SCHOOLS**

Number per desk	CLASSES/PERCENTAGE SCHOOLS						
	STD.1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 pupil	-	-	-	-	-	-	6.7
2 pupils	6.7	3.3	10.3	16.7	23.3	43.3	56.7
3 "	36.7	56.7	46.7	60.0	60.0	46.7	33.3
4 "	40.0	26.7	36.7	20.0	16.7	10.0	3.3
5 "	13.3	13.3	6.3	3.3	-	-	-
6 "	3.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The table shows that the minimum sharing patterns recorded were 2 pupils per desk in standard one to six and one pupil per desk in standard seven while the maximum recorded were 6 pupils a desk in standard one, 5 pupils per desk in standard two to four, and four pupils a desk in standard five to seven.

Taking any sharing of four and over pupils per desk as overcrowding, there was overcrowding on desks in about 56.6% of the schools in standard one, 40% of them in standard two, 43% in standard three, 23.3% of them in standard four, 16.7% in standard five, 10% in standard six and 3.3% in standard seven (see table 35). However, according to the headmasters interviewed the Ministry's directive is to have two pupils per desk from standard one to six and a pupil per desk in standard seven. Basing our criteria for overcrowding on the Ministry's directive therefore, the percentage schools with overcrowded desks rises. In standard one 93.3% of the schools would be labelled overcrowded, in standard two 96.7%, in standard three 89.7%, in standard four 83.3%, in standard five 76.7%, in standard six 56.7% and in standard seven 93.3% of the schools (see table 35).

### 3.6.2 Library Facilities

Library facilities are essential in any education system. They assist pupils to broaden their perception in various topics in the process of learning. But only 57% of the schools studied had any library facilities, however poor.

None of the schools had any building for a library and about 43% of the schools did not have any library books. Out of the 57% schools which had some library books about 77% had only fiction readers and about 23% had a mixture of fiction readers and textbooks in the three major examination subjects: English, Maths and General Paper. But in all cases the number of library books ranged between 100 and 750 in total.

### 3.6.3 Laboratory Facilities

All primary schools studied had no laboratories. Only 16.7% of them had some very, very simple equipment for practical demonstrations. These only included test tubes, thermometers, sine coils, wire gauzes, mercury and some magnets.

### 3.6.4 Teaching Personnel

For better performance at all grades of the primary school the teaching force should not only be adequate, but also made up of mainly trained and experienced personnel. The research revealed high rates of untrained personnel in primary schools. Out of the 324 teachers found in the 30 schools studied, 97 of them (29.4%) were untrained.

The distribution of untrained teachers varied. The highest rates recorded for any particular school was 55.6% untrained and the lowest was zero percent followed by 7.6%.

For the trained staff rates ranged as high as 100% (only in one school) followed by 92.4% to a minimum of 44.4%. The grade distribution of trained teachers varied widely too. Some schools had over three quarters of their trained force within the P<sub>1</sub> and P<sub>2</sub> grades, while others have majority P<sub>3</sub>s and one or so P<sub>4</sub>s<sup>1</sup>.

The average teacher pupil ratio is one teacher for every 40 pupils. But since classes are not equally big, some teachers handle bigger classes than others. Teacher pupil allocations range from as low as 25 pupils in certain classes (especially standard 7) to as high as 60 and over pupils in the lower primary. The calculation of the 1:40 teacher-pupil ratio also took into account headmasters who because of their administrative responsibilities should not be counted as full time class teachers.

### 3.6.5. Provision of Textbooks and other Pupil Facilities like Geometrical Sets and Exercise Books.

The Ministry of Education still provides textbooks and geometrical sets to primary schools. But the quality of these facilities has been affected adversely by mass education. According to the headmasters, the problem has been worsened by the reduction of the yearly pupil budget from Kshs.21/- 19.25/- despite inflation by the Ministry of Education. Most schools are facing acute shortage in textbooks. Even where textbooks are found they are very old with most pages either falling off or missing. The constant supply exercised before the removal of fees from primary schools is no longer carried on and parents are forced to purchase textbooks for their children.

The sharing of textbooks ranged as high as 7 pupils per science book, 15 pupils per English and Mathematics book, 17 pupils per History book and 18 pupils per Geography book (see table 36). *Patterns differed from class to class.*

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<sup>1</sup> P<sub>1</sub> P<sub>2</sub> P<sub>3</sub> are grades acquired based on ones level of Education but after passing a college examination. P<sub>1</sub> is the best grade.

The highest rates were found in the lower primary in English and Mathematics, and in upper primary in History, Geography and Science textbooks, General Paper subjects are the worst hit by book shortages. For instance, none of the schools had History or Geography textbooks for standards one and two. About 96.7% of the schools had no science textbooks for these two grades. In the upper primary school science was the worst hit; 63.3% of the schools lacked science textbooks for standard four, 93.3% for standards five and six and 90% for standard seven.

**TABLE 36: PATTERNS OF SHARING AND DISTRIBUTION OF TEXTBOOKS PER SUBJECT BY PERCENTAGE SCHOOLS**

SUBJECT, AVERAGE, HIGHEST AND LOWEST RECORDS PLUS PERCENTAGE SCHOOLS LACKING TEXTBOOKS												
STD	E N G L I S H				M A T H E M A T I C S				H I S T O R Y			
	AV.	L.R.	H.R.	%S.W	AV.	L.R.	H.R.	% S.W	AV.	L.R.	H.R.	%S.W
1	3	1	10	20.0	3	1	7	3.3	-	-	-	100.0
2	3	2	15	6.7	3	1	8	-	-	-	-	100.0
3	3	1	8	-	3	1	4	6.7	5	1	18	20.7
4	3	1	13	3.3	3	1	9	3.3	3	1	7	36.7
5	4	1	7	3.3	4	1	15	10.0	4	2	6	20.0
6	3	1	6	3.3	3	1	6	6.7	3	1	6	43.3
7	2	1	4	6.7	2	1	3	3.3	3	1	4	70.0
STD	G E O G R A P H Y				S C I E N C E							
	AV.	L.R.	H.R.	%S.W	AV.	L.R.	H.R.	%S.W				
1	-	-	-	100.0	7	1	1	96.7				
2	-	-	-	100.0	3	3	3	96.7				
3	4	2	18	40.0	6	5	7	93.3				
4	3	1	6	40.0	2	1	6	63.3				
5	4	1	3	16.7	3	2	3	93.3				
6	4	2	6	46.7	2	2	3	93.3				
7	3	1	4	63.3	3	2	3	90.0				



KEY FOR TABLE 36:

AV = AVERAGE, L.R = LOWEST RECORDED, H.R. = HIGHEST RECORDED  
% S.W = PERCENTAGE SCHOOLS WITHOUT

All schools studied provided no exercise books to pupils. Parents therefore, have to buy exercise books for their children. The few exercise books which the schools occasionally receive from the district school equipment stores are kept for the teachers to use for their lesson preparation. Some students spend several days without adequate exercise books and this forces them either to mix different subjects in one small exercise book (parents usually buy the 32 pages Kasuku exercise books which is not only relatively cheap but also very small) or stop taking notes and doing exercises in certain subjects. This leads to disorganisation in students' work and eventually affect performance in examination.

Whenever any exercise books are available at the district equipment store they are not distributed equally. According to the headmasters, some schools are favoured in the distribution of equipment. The storekeepers give first preferences to friends and nearby schools. As a result schools which are far from the district store or whose headmasters are not friends to the storekeeper do not get books.

3.6.6 Sporting and Games Facilities

All schools studied offered sports and games including football, netball volleyball and track and field events. However, only 60% of the schools had sizeable flat playgrounds where all these games and sports could be carried on. The rest 40% had to migrate to the neighbouring schools for practice especially during the inter-schools competition seasons. Such schools have small fields where only games like volleyball and netball, which do not require big courts, could be played.

Every school was characterized by an acute shortage of balls, nets and sporting equipment like javellin, discuss, shotput, among others.

3.6.7 Other Essential Facilities

For example typewriters, duplicating machines, transport and radios. Only 36.7% of the studied schools had typewriters, 46.7% had duplicating machines, 93.3% had radios for broadcasts (although most of them were very old and gave alot of technical problems), 6.7% had telephone, and none had any means of transport. Most of the radios found in the schools had been supplied in the 1960's and early 1970's.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

#### 4.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The government's decision to introduce free primary education in Kenya was a move whose main objective was universal education for all Kenya primary school aged children regardless of their social and economic background. By abolishing school fees therefore the Kenya government aimed at increased enrolments in primary schools and the retention of those who enrol until they complete the primary school cycle. With free education the government also aimed at a reduction in mass wastages through withdrawal and repetition rates experienced by primary schools. It too aimed at improved examination performance and low absenteeism.

The study findings show that the abolition of primary school fees led to increased enrolments in primary schools. In 1974, the year of the removal of fees for the first four grades, enrolments went up by over 100% in some cases. Although enrolments were highest in standard one, the number of children enrolled in grades two, three and four also increased. But these were not equally as high as standard one increments. Enrolments after 1974 fell compared to 1974 enrolments. But still they were higher than those recorded prior to 1974. Enrolments were higher for girls than for boys before 1974, in 1974 and after 1974 in the area of study. The findings indicated that more females than males have been enrolling in primary schools since 1970.

Free education however, has failed to solve <sup>also</sup> the problems of premature withdrawal, absenteeism and repetition, and to solve effectively the problem of performance. The primary schools are still characterized by high withdrawal rates, and the retention of those who enrol is still a major problem. Withdrawal rates recorded after 1974 are either consistent with or higher than those recorded before 1974. Withdrawal rates range as high as 30% especially in the lower primary grades. Majority of the school withdrawers are females.

High absenteeism rates are still prevalent in primary schools. Absenteeism rates are higher in the lower primary classes than in the upper classes. They range as high as 24% and are either higher than or match those recorded in the years preceeding 1974.

Repetition rates are still high in primary schools. In fact the problem is more acute than before 1974 and is worse in the lower primary classes one to three, where they range as high as 35% and worse in standard six where in some cases as many as 60% of the pupils repeat the grade. In standard seven however, rates are very low and rarely exceed 10%. In standards one to six majority repeaters are females, but in standard seven there is no sexual imbalance in repetition; as many boys as girls repeat this grade. Before 1974 most repeaters in standard seven contrary to other grades were males.

Performance in C.P.E. examination has shown some improvements since 1974 in the area of study. But generally speaking results are still poor compared to those achieved in ~~other~~ districts which ~~are rated~~ *are rated the best in the country*. Over half the candidates who sit for C.P.E. only manage to score grade C in all their subjects and cannot therefore secure places in government secondary schools which are the best schools in the country. Only less than 5% in the majority of the schools score 30 points and above to compete for places in government schools. Since performance standards are low in C.P.E. it also follows that they are low in general academics at all the grades of the primary school.

The schools have poor facilities which deteriorate year after year. The worst hit areas are the areas of textbooks, and exercise books. Acute shortages in textbooks are experienced by virtually all primary schools and the sharing of textbooks among pupils sometimes reaches as high as 18 pupils per textbook. General paper subjects are the worst hit. Where textbooks are found they are not only very few but also very old with falling off pages. Besides pupils have to buy their exercise books.

There is overcrowding due to shortages in classrooms. Some classes are as big as 60 pupils and are therefore hard to manage and teach effectively. Sitting patterns, sharing of desks, are also poor. Schools are also lacking in library and laboratory facilities. Coupled with understaffing, the proportion of untrained teachers is high and the trained personnel is unequitably distributed. Essential facilities like typewriters and duplicating machines are missing in majority schools. Games facilities are poor in the schools studied.

An analysis of the causes of premature withdrawal, absenteeism, poor performance and repetition revealed that financial problems ~~are~~ still the main cause of these <sup>problems</sup>. The findings identified 'failure to pay dues at all or in time' as number one major cause of all the above <sup>problems</sup> except poor performance where it ranked second as a major cause. 'Poor facilities in schools' emerged number one major cause of poor performance.

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#### 4.2. CONCLUSION

Although free education has increased enrolments in the lower primary school, some of the problems it was intended to solve still remain. The major problems include dropping out from school, absenteeism and repetition, and improving performance in academics in primary schools. Thus abolition of school fees did not improve access to all for a seven years primary education and retention of those who enrol in Kenya.

With free education schooling became more expensive and it costs parents more than it used to before 1974 due to the high harambee and building funds. There are cases where parents have paid as much as Kshs.500/- (sometimes per pupil) levied to cater for the swollen numbers. Other expenses met by parents include activity fees, examination fees, mocks and trial tests fees, watchmen salaries and charges on desks. Parents also have to buy textbooks and exercise books for their children and this adds to the financial burden.

There is still need for more coherent government thinking on matters pertaining to primary school dropout, absenteeism, poor performance and repetition. The removal of primary school fees has not offered a solution to these problems as was expected. Instead it has tended to heighten the problems.

Kenya does not therefore have a mass education; education for all. This is still a dream yet to be realized. Not even primary education is universal and very small proportions of the relevant age proceed into standard seven. A big proportion of those who enrol into standard one every year dropout; some even before reaching standard four. There is evidence to show that the opportunity to enter the formal education system is not equitably distributed across the different socio-economic class categories despite the "abolition" of school fees. To be a child of an educated and wealthy rural peasant still provides substantial advantages over those available to the child of the illiterate, impoverished rural resident.

#### 4.3. SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS.

Based on the study findings the following recommendations can be made in an attempt to make free education achieve all its objectives:-

4.3.1. The government should abolish all dues subsidiary to school fees for example harambee and building funds, activity and examination fees, mocks and trial tests fees, and step in directly to finance and support all school project and activities instead of substituting for them voluntary harambee system as an alternative of financing for schools. Such a step will ensure that no Kenyan child does not get primary education because of financial problems and will help bring an era of actual free schooling and hence universal education.

4.3.2 If the government cannot meet all the expenses of running a completely free primary education where parents need only buy school uniforms for their children, the burden of running and financing for schools should be divided equally ~~and in the actual sense of the word~~ between the government and the parents. Today much of the actual financing for education is done by the parents who not only pay exorbitant building and harambee funds but also buy text and exercise books for their children on top of paying examination fees, activity fees, charges on desks, to mention a few. The government, for instance, can help in the most demanding areas like constructing and maintaining classrooms while the parents are left with the responsibility of buying text and exercise books for their children and not with all the responsibilities as is practically happening currently.

4.3.3 There is also a need to educate parents about the need and importance of education for their children so that all parents can send their children to school and give them the necessary encouragement to continue schooling until they complete at least the primary school cycle. Educating parents will also instil a sense of responsibility in them and this will make functional and effective the voluntary harambee system of creating school funds initiated in 1980 by the President. This will in effect help to remove payment of fixed and compulsory harambee funds which put the poor man and his children at a disadvantage. It will also ensure that children are not sent home and this will be a major step toward the democratization of primary education.

4.3.4 The Ministry of Education Science and Technology should provide better and adequate equipment to primary schools and in good time. It should constantly supply textbooks, exercise books, teaching materials like wall charts, and maps, chalk, among others directly to the schools as it used to be done by the 1960's. This will not only ensure adequate supply but also equitable distribution of such facilities. Teaching materials should be made available to support curriculum changes and subjects' requirements.

4.3.5 Library facilities should be improved in all schools by building well equipped libraries where books include both fiction readers and examination subjects textbooks.

4.3.6 The Ministry should provide science equipment to all primary schools and consider the possibilities of building laboratories in primary schools to make the teaching of science practical. With the governments move towards eight years of primary education one understands the necessity of laboratories in primary schools if the gap between primary and secondary education which used to be bridged in form one will be adequately bridged in the science subjects.

4.3.7 The ~~inspectorate department~~ should strengthen the inspection of the equipment conditions in the schools. This will ensure constant, sufficient and in time supply of equipment in schools and also minimise the biased nature in which equipment is distributed to schools from the district stores where storekeepers give first priority to friends and schools within reach of stores.

4.3.8 Although the Ministry should streamline the provision of games equipment, parents can help better games and sports facilities in primary schools by helping physically in flattening play grounds where they are lacking. Certain of the schools studied had acquired their play grounds through such efforts by parents.

4.3.9 Staffing should be improved and more teachers should be trained to help fight the high proportions of untrained teaching personnel. The trained teaching force should be equitably distributed in all schools. Increased teaching force will mean small and sizeable classes which are easy to manage and can be taught effectively.

4.3.10 The headmasters should have their academic responsibilities reduced. Presently headmasters are both administrators and full time class teachers. Since they cannot perform the two duties efficiently and effectively, the academic duties are neglected whereas administrative duties take up most time.

4.3.11 School curriculums should be stabilised and whenever a change is necessary teachers should be inserviced to cope with the new curriculums. This will ensure high academic standards. The teaching personnel should be directly involved in planning and giving suggestions for new curriculums whenever they are necessary. Curriculums should

take into consideration both rural and urban environments to avoid previous biases where curriculums and therefore national examinations (C.P.E.) have tended to favour urban areas. Curriculums, especially in science subjects, should match the facilities available in all schools all over the country to ensure uniformity in the standards of education and examination performance.

4.3.12 School inspectors should visit schools regularly, learn the problems the schools are facing and report them to the Ministry concerned so that the appropriate actions can be taken to curb them and in good time before they become acute.

#### 4.4. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The research was not without limitations. With the resources and time available it was impossible to make a more detailed study and this limited the area of research to only one administrative division in Machakos district including only 30 schools out of the over 1,000 primary schools in the whole district. Also time could not allow for the inclusion of parents, who are the ones directly affected by the financing and upkeep of the education system, in the sample.

There is need for a more detailed and comprehensive research on the topic studied for a better understanding and analysis of the problem. Studies should be conducted which not only compare the depth of the problem under review within divisions, but also within districts. Comparative research between districts will paint a better picture of the intensity of the problem in different regions of the country. There is need for a research which covers more schools than those studied above and one which includes parents of the pupils in the sample. Including parents will paint a better picture especially in the area of hidden costs in schooling. A more detailed analysis should be done on the relationship between age and school withdrawal.

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A P P E N D I X

FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION  
RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION 1 - OBSERVATION DATA.

1. Date \_\_\_\_\_ 1983
2. Name of School \_\_\_\_\_
3. Educational division: 1. Kilungu \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Kalama \_\_\_\_\_  
                                   2. Kithembe \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Kasiket \_\_\_\_\_  
                                   3. Ukia \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Mukaa \_\_\_\_\_
4. Location: Kilungu \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Kalama \_\_\_\_\_  
                           2. Kithembe \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Kasiket \_\_\_\_\_  
                           3. Ukia \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Mukaa \_\_\_\_\_

QUALITY OF SCHOOLS (FACILITIES)

5. Library facilities: 1. Library building \_\_\_\_\_  
                                   2. Library books \_\_\_\_\_
6. Approximate number of Library Books \_\_\_\_\_  
                                   1. Less than 250 (very poor) \_\_\_\_\_  
                                   2. 251-500 (poor) \_\_\_\_\_  
                                   3. 501-750 (average) \_\_\_\_\_  
                                   4. 751-1000 (good) \_\_\_\_\_  
                                   5. 1001-2000 (very good) \_\_\_\_\_  
                                   6. Over 2000 (excellent) \_\_\_\_\_
7. Number of fiction readers \_\_\_\_\_
8. Number of Mathematics books \_\_\_\_\_
9. Number of English Grammer Books \_\_\_\_\_
10. Number of General Paper text books \_\_\_\_\_
11. Laboratory facilities: 1. Laboratory building \_\_\_\_\_  
                                   2. Laboratory equipment \_\_\_\_\_
12. Quality of the equipment: 1. Well equiped \_\_\_\_\_  
                                   2. Averagely equiped \_\_\_\_\_  
                                   3. Under equiped \_\_\_\_\_



CLASS	NUMBER OF DESKS	AV. NO. OF PUPILS PER DESK
STDS 1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

## 25. Stationery:

1. Number of textbooks per class and average number of pupils sharing each textbook:

CLASS	S U B J E C T S								
	ENGLISH		MATHEMATICS		HISTORY		GEOGRAPHY SCIE		
	BKS	AV. SH.	BKS	AV SH	BKS	AV	SH	BKS	AV SH
STDS 1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									

26. Students are provided with: 1 exercise books \_\_\_\_\_

2 Text books \_\_\_\_\_

3. Geometrical sets \_\_\_\_\_

27. The school owns: 1 A typewriter \_\_\_\_\_

2 A duplicating machine \_\_\_\_\_

3 A radio for broadcasts \_\_\_\_\_

4 Some means of transport \_\_\_\_\_

5 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

28 Enrolments

1. Before free Education data

1970

CLASS	MALES	FEMALES	TOTALS
STD 1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

1972

CLASS	MALES	FEMALES	TOTALS
STD 1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

1973

CLASS	MALES	FEMALES	TOTALS
STD 1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

2/ Free Primary Education Years:

1974

CLASS	MALES	FEMALES	TOTALS
STD 1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

1978

CLASS	MALES	FEMALES	TOTALS
STDS: 1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

1980

CLASS	MALES	FEMALES	TOTALS
STDS: 1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

1982

CLASS	MALES	FEMALES	TOTALS
STDS: 1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

29. Repetition:

1. Before free Primary Education.

1970

CLASS	MALES	FEMALES	TOTALS
STDS: 1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

1972

CLASS	MALES	FEMALES	TOTALS
STDS: 1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			



1973

CLASS	MALES	FEMALES	TOTALS
STDS: 1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

2. Free Primary Education years:

1974

CLASS	MALES	FEMALES	TOTALS
STDS: 1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

1978

CLASS	MALES	FEMALES	TOTALS
STDS: 1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

CLASS	MALES	FEMALES	TOTALS
STDS: 1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

1982

CLASS	MALES	FEMALES	TOTALS
STDS: 1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

30. Performance:

1. Before free Primary Education: 1970

GRADES	SUBJECTS			TOTAL
	ENGLISH	MATHS	G/PAPER	
A				
A-				
B+				
B				
B-				
C+				
C				
C-				
D+				
D-				
F-				

1972

GRADES	SUBJECTS			TOTAL
	ENGLISH	MATHS	G/PAPER	
A				
A-				
B+				
B				
B-				
C+				
C				
C-				
D+				
D				
D-				
E				

1973

GRADES	SUBJECTS			TOTAL
	ENGLISH	MATHS	G/PAPER	
A				
A-				
B+				
B				
B-				
C+				
C				
C-				
D+				
D				
D-				
E				

2. Free Primary Education:

1977

GRADES	ENGLISH	SUBJECTS MATHS	G/PAPER	TOTAL
A				
A-				
B+				
B				
B-				
C+				
C				
C-				
D+				
D-				
E				

1979

GRADES	ENGLISH	SUBJECTS MATHS	G/PAPER	TOTAL
A				
A-				
B+				
B				
B-				
C+				
C				
C-				
D+				
D				
D-				
E				

1980

GRADES	SUBJECTS			TOTAL
	ENGLISH	MATHS	G/PAPER	
A				
A-				
B+				
B				
B-				
C+				
C				
C-				
D+				
D				
E				

1982

GRADES	SUBJECTS			TOTAL
	ENGLISH	MATHS	G/PAPER	
A				
A-				
B+				
B				
B-				
C+				
C				
C-				
D+				
D				
D-				
E				

31

Withdrawals in relation to age/sex and class:

1. Before five education years

1970

AGE SEX	CLASSES (STDS)							TOTALS
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
6-9 yrs M								
F								
10-13 yrs: M								
F								
14 yrs r. M								
F								

1972

AGE/SEX	CLASSES (STDS)							TOTALS
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
6-9 yrs: M								
F								
10-13 yrs: M								
F								
14 yrs. r: M								
F								

1973

AGE/SEX	CLASSES (STDS)							TOTALS
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
6-9 yrs: M								
F								
10-13 yrs M								
F								
4 yrs. r: M								
F								

2. Five Education Years.

1970

AGE/SEX	CLASSES (STRG.)							TOTALS
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
6-9 yrs M								
F								
10-13 yrs M								
F								
14 yrs + M								
F								

1978

AGE/SEX	CLASSES (STRG.)							TOTALS
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
6-9 yrs M								
F								
10-13 yrs M								
F								
14 yrs + M								
F								

1980

AGE/SEX	CLASSES (STRG.)							TOTALS
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
6-9 yrs M								
F								
10-13 yrs M								
F								
14 yrs + M								
F								

1982

Age/sex	CLASSES (STBS)							TOTALS
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
6-9 yrs M								
F								
10-13 yrs M								
F								
14 yrs + M								
F								

32 Absence days:

1. Pre-fra education years.  
1970

CLASSES	PUPIL DAYS MISSED	OUT OF
STBS 1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

1972

CLASSES	PUPIL DAYS MISSED	OUT OF
STBS 1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		



1973

CLASSES	PUPIL DAYS MISSED	OUT OF
STDS 1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

2 Free Education Years:  
1974

CLASSES	PUPIL DAY MISSED	OUT OF
STDS 1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

1978

CLASSES	PUPIL DAYS MISSED	OUT OF
STDS 1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

1980

CLASSES	PUPIL DAYS MISSED	OUT OF
STDS 1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

1982

CLASSES	PUPIL DAYS MISSED	OUT OF
STDS 1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

NOTE:

Pupil days = Number of pupils per class X number of school days for the whole year.

SECTION III - HIDDEN COSTS IN SCHOOLING.

FOR TEACHERS AND PUPILS.

Fill in the gaps or tick where appropriate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ 1983

2. Sex 1. Male \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Female \_\_\_\_\_

3. Occupation: 1. Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Pupil \_\_\_\_\_

4. Post held: 1. Headmaster \_\_\_\_\_  
2. Deputy Headmaster \_\_\_\_\_  
3. None \_\_\_\_\_

5. Place of work \_\_\_\_\_

6. Educational division and locations:

- 1. Kilungu \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Kithembe \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Ukia \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Kalama \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Kasiken \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Mukaa \_\_\_\_\_

7. The abolition of primary school fees made schooling more expensive than before and did not therefore bring an era of actual free schooling  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_\_

8. Parents still have to pay (tick where applicable):

- 1. Building and Harambee funds \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Activity fee \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Equipment levy \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. For feeding schemes \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Dues on night studies \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Examination fees \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Mocks and trial tests fees \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Charges on watchmen salaries \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Others (list them down) \_\_\_\_\_

9. Are pupils sent home if they fail to pay any of the above dues in the time required? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ NO. \_\_\_\_\_

10. Do you think that being sent home of pupils interferes with the performance in examinations? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

11. If so, to what extent does it interfere with performance?

- 1. Very much \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Moderately \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Not much \_\_\_\_\_

12. Which among the following (if any) do you consider to be Major causes of premature withdrawal from school?

- 1. Failure to pay dues at all or in time (financial problems) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Health problems \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Fear of punishment by cruel teachers \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Dancing parties and association with wrong friends \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Need for domestic and family holdings labor \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Lack of encouragement by parents \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Fear of failing examinations \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Unsuitable conditions for studying at home \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Decision that school work will not be beneficial in future life \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. Pregnancy among girls \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. Other causes (list them down) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. Which among the following do you consider as major causes of absenteeism from school?

- 1. Failure to pay certain dues in time \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Health problems \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Fear of punishment by cruel teachers \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Dancing parties and association with wrong friends \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Need for domestic and family holdings labor \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Lack of encouragement by parents \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Fear of tiring school work \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Ignorance of pupils \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Other reasons (list them down) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. Choose among the following the ones you consider as <sup>Causes</sup> major of poor performance in primary schools especially in C.P.E ?

1. Being sent home due to failure to pay certain dues in time \_\_\_\_\_
2. Health problems leading to absenteeism \_\_\_\_\_
3. Lack of student interest in academic work \_\_\_\_\_
4. Dancing parties and association with wrong friends \_\_\_\_\_
5. Poor teaching in schools \_\_\_\_\_
6. Repetition \_\_\_\_\_
7. Poor facilities in schools (no textbooks, overcrowding in classrooms, etc) \_\_\_\_\_
8. Lack of encouragement by parents \_\_\_\_\_
9. Unsuitable conditions to study at home \_\_\_\_\_
10. Other causes (list them down) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. Do you consider any of the following as major causes of repetition in primary schools? (Tick them).

1. Constant absence due to financial problems leading to poor performance \_\_\_\_\_
2. Health problems \_\_\_\_\_
3. Lack of student interest in academic work and therefore poor performance in exams \_\_\_\_\_
4. Poor teaching in schools \_\_\_\_\_
5. Lack of encouragement by parents to study hard \_\_\_\_\_
6. Unsuitable studying conditions at home leading to poor performance in exams \_\_\_\_\_
7. Poor facilities in schools and thus poor examination results \_\_\_\_\_
8. Other reasons (list them down) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_