

The impact of free primary education in Zambia (A case study of Chipata district)

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Abstract

The purpose of study was to investigate and establish the impact of Free Primary Education in Zambia (advantages, disadvantages, challenges, opportunities etc.) in eastern province of Zambia, Chipata. The studies done in other countries have shown that this Free Primary Education is very good as it lays a good foundation for the development of the nation. This could have been due to a gap between the rich and the poor people that existed when time came to take their learners to school. The gap theory used in the study suggested that the poor parents would fail to take their children to school but the rich would do that without any problem. This could lead to many street kids, poverty, diseases, crime, early marriages, and underdevelopment and dependence syndrome in the country.

Free primary education comes as a solution to all these problems and helps bring equality in development and education in the nation. The problem of street kids is easily sorted out as children have easy access to education. Poverty and diseases, crime and early marriages are also prevented as children will be busy with school work and use their basic knowledge to do a lot of developmental activities like entrepreneurship that has been introduced and also just becoming responsible children who are well informed about their rights not to involve themselves in early marriages and crime.

The children learn a lot at primary level to make them self-dependent when they grow up and help develop the nation. In addition free Primary Education policy has the following advantages: reduced illiterate rate, prostitution, relationships, communication, community development, easy access to education, improved standard of education and brought economic development in the country just to mention but a few.

The researcher recommended that the government should do the following activities, the government should build many schools to cope with this increase in enrolments, should employ many teachers to cope with this increase in enrolments, should increase the funding to primary schools to meet the needs of the primary schools, should maintain the quarterly funding and give it on time to primary schools so that school managers can manage schools effectively, should employ qualified head teachers of the institutions to effectively use the funding and manage the school properly and should sensitise the chiefs on the dangers of early marriages and the importance of education to the subjects.

Keywords: primary education, Chipata district, Zambia

1. Introduction

This paper discussed the impact of free primary education in Zambia and identifies its advantages, disadvantages, challenges, opportunities etc.

Education is the process of facilitating learning. Knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits of a group of people are transferred to other people, through storytelling, discussion, teaching, training, or research. Education frequently takes place under the guidance of educators, but learners may also educate themselves in a process called autodidactic learning. Any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels, or acts may be considered educational.

Education is commonly and formally divided into stages such as preschool, primary school, secondary school and then college, university or apprenticeship. The methodology of teaching is called pedagogy. A right to education has been recognized by some governments. At the global level, Article 13 of the United Nations' 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recognizes the right of everyone to an education. Although education is compulsory in most places up to a certain age, attendance at school often isn't, and a minority of parents choose home-schooling, sometimes with the assistance of modern electronic educational technology (also called e-learning). Education can take place in formal or informal settings.

Free education refers to education that is funded through taxation or charitable organizations rather than tuition fees. Primary school and other comprehensive or compulsory education is free in many countries, for example, all education is mostly free (often not including books (from primary) and a number of administrative and sundry fees in university) including post-graduate studies in the Nordic countries.

However, serious challenges have bedeviled the implementation of the FPE policy, (UNICEF & World Bank, 2009) ^[14]. They include congested classrooms, limited physical facilities and shortage of qualified teachers, which negatively impacted on the quality of teaching and learning on one hand and contributed to indiscipline in schools on the other Okwach & George, (1997) ^[11]. This paper therefore reviews the FPE policy highlighting its achievements and challenges. The paper also assesses the progress of the free primary education and identifies the advantages and disadvantages.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

It is disheartening to note that despite the government's commitment to eradicate poverty through free education policy the poverty levels have continued increasing. This has been attributed to poor pupil teacher ratio in the nation and lack of many learning infrastructures. It is sad to note that

there was a lot of early marriages, crime, and increase number of street kids in the nation. It was for this reason that this research was designed to find out the extent to which free primary education had impacted on the social welfare of the nation and also give advantages and disadvantages, challenges and opportunities of free primary education in Chipata district, Eastern Province of Zambia.

1.2 The Purpose of Study

The purpose of study was to investigate and establish the impact of Free Primary Education (advantages, disadvantages, challenges, opportunities etc.) in Chipata, eastern province of Zambia.

Main Objective

This study was designed to explore challenges and impact facing implementation of FPE in Zambia, a case study of Chipata District.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To establish factors that would lead to successful implementation of free primary education in Chipata District.
2. To determine impact of free primary education policy on the performance of pupils
3. To identify challenges of free primary education policy in Chipata District.

1.4. Research Questions

1. What are the factors that would lead to successful implementation of free primary education in Chipata District?
2. What is impact of free primary education policy on the performance of pupils?
3. What are the challenges faced in the implementation of free primary education in Chipata District?

1.5 Research Variables

| Dependent Variables | Independent Variable |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Enrolment levels | Free primary education |
| Literacy levels | Free primary education |
| Pregnancy rate | Free primary education |
| Crime rate | Free primary education |

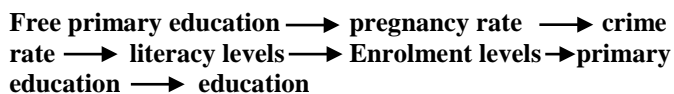
1.6 Significance of study

The study would assist the government to assess the impact of free primary education policy in Zambia so that the decision to continue or stop it can be made. In addition the study would provide valuable information to government and other interested parties like the NGOs, Civic organisations who would like to come on board to help poor children get their education.

1.7 A conceptual framework

Conceptual framework is an analytical tool with several variations and contexts. It is used to make conceptual distinctions and organize ideas. Strong conceptual frameworks capture something real and do this in a way that is easy to remember and apply. In this paper the concepts are free education, primary education, and education itself. We look at

free education as a situation where learners learn without paying for education. Primary education is seen as where learners learn from grade one to seven. Education is looked at as the empowering of learners with knowledge to help them have a good life in future.



Theoretical framework

The study was based on the expectancy theory and the socialization theory. Looking at the attitude of the pupils who are poor, their behavior is focused on academic performance where the pupils wish to increase academic and social integration within the academic community. For instance, the pupils wish to maintain their societal status quo. According to Oliver (1974), Victor Vroom’ expectancy value model suggests individuals make choices based on estimates of how well the expected results of a given behavior are going to lead to desired results and calls this as valence V(R).

In other words, the theory explains that individuals become part of an ongoing reciprocal process of response and change between themselves and their surrounding contexts as they move through time (Lawrence *et al*, 1992). Therefore, they can be motivated towards goals if they believe that there is a positive correlation between efforts and performance, where the outcome of the performance will result in a desirable reward making the effort worthwhile (ibid).The expectancy theory explains why individuals choose one behavioural option over others.

Consequently, individuals are uniquely endowed with the potential to think rationally. However, society has the responsibility of grooming children either consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly into either irrational or rational and moral persons. Thus, every individual is a product of the society (Nweke, 2014). Thus, the type and quality of education one receives shapes his/her personality. Broadly speaking therefore, meaningful education includes the formation of character, the acquisition of the requisite linguistic competence as well as technical and vocational skills that will enable someone discover and develop him/herself, meet his/her needs, co-exist and interact peacefully with others (ibid.). This explains how important the education system of any nation was and why Free primary education must be promoted by every responsible citizen.

1.8 Operational Definitions

- Basic School**-a school comprising grade one to nine classes
- Primary school**-a school comprising grade one to seven classes.
- Gate:** Government Assisted Tuition Expenses Programme
- Upper Basic School** – lower secondary school comprising grade eight and nine
- Professional Qualifications-** the level of training acquired to enable one to work effectively in his field of specialty.
- Free Primary Education-** learning without paying school fees from grade one to seven.
- Poverty-** is a situation of not having anything or sufficient supplies of basic needs.
- Standard of living**-average resources that is measurable on one’s life.

Quantitative Data-a subjective formulated pieces of information.

Participatory Study- is where everybody is involved in solving the problem

Respondents- are men are women who are interviewed or given questionnaires to answer.

Population- is the number of people living an area

Sample - a group drawn from total population that the researcher uses for the purpose of study, which must represent the total population.

Unstructured Interviews-interviews conducted without following any order of questions

Observations – Finding out but looking at the activities taking place

Instruments- tools used to gather data.

Questionnaires- a tool that is made up of questions used to gather data

The Qualitative Data- Objective type of information
FPE- Free Primary Education

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Chapter one presented the introduction and background of the study, this chapter presents the literature related to the study focusing on the global perspective, Zambian perspective, comparative studies and the personal critique summary.

Etymologically, the word education is derived from educare (Latin) "bring up", which is related to educere "bring out", "bring forth what is within", "bring out potential" and ducere, "to lead". Education in the largest sense is any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual. In its technical sense, education is the process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another.

Webster defines education as the process of educating or teaching (now that's really useful, isn't it?) Educate is further defined as "to develop the knowledge, skill, or character of..." Thus, from these definitions, we might assume that the purpose of education is to develop the knowledge, skill, or character of students.

According to the Ministry of Education Policy document 'Educating our future' of 1996, the quality, and effectiveness of education system depends heavily on the quality of its teachers. Teachers are the key persons in determining access in meeting the system goals. The educational well-being of children in schools lingers crucially on the competency, commitment and resourcefulness of a teacher. In view of this, the caliber of teachers and teaching profession is of paramount importance.

Therefore the ministry of education has an important task to sustain the quality of pupils education and of their well-being to learn effectively. The document further explains that the ministry of education will accomplish this by attracting many pupils to go back to school, equipping them with initial education and providing them with food especially the lower classes up to grade five.

The government is doing everything to help bring back those pupils who drop out due to financial difficulties. However, culture is working against the good policies of the government to provide education to all to meet the needs of the nation.

Many parents prefer to have their boy child look after cattle and girl to get married.

The needs of low literate people could be due to environmental forces that may well affect perceived needs among population. It is the frequency with which a task is encountered. It seems illiterate adults have little choice, but to develop alternative strategies. For instance they may rely on friends or relatives. When this need is not met they become educational needs. The need to learn represents a combination of demand and skill efficiency. Once learners define their own functional literacy needs these can promote an attitude among both learners and teachers that concerns and experiences are a control of importance in instruction, leading to greater mutual respect, enhanced learner self-esteem, increased motivation and ultimately improved literacy education.

Havighust, (1972:47) ^[8] says: "Motivation hence is impinged upon experiences, situations, life cycles as well as biological, psychological and social influences. The government policies have forced the demand for education to increase greatly. Many children are forced to go back to school so that they get jobs and have their status changed. Others are going back to school to maintain their jobs, while others desire to be promoted after getting a good grade in their academic studies".

On this issue Subiya and Rooyed (2005:481-84) says: "vocational and economic expectations, children's education, family relations, health, social motives and gender issues as well is simply the hope for a better future motivates learners to go back to school". Beder and Valentine (1990:78-94) ^[2] also say that: "Tabulated reasons for motivation as self-improvement, family responsibilities, diversions, literacy development, community and church involvement, job advancement, launching, economic needs, educational advancement and urging by others". Workers Education association (1960:67) says: "education should equip the individual to meet the varied challenges the adult faces in his or her everyday life and help him or her solve problems which different facts of life present".

Examinations become the pre-qualification for entry to formal jobs rather than as a primary vehicle for human resource development. This makes learners to choose to pass the examinations even if they do not learn because what is needed is a certificate and not the knowledge.

The structure adjustment programme that took place in 2003 in Zambia and the effects of globalization made the desire to upgrade to grow. Walter and Walters (2000:59) says: "there is a strong correlation between stimulation in work places, levels of literacy used, and levels of position and workers learning attributes".

2.2 Global Perspective

The Review of Countries' Experiences with FPE was conducted and this is what was reviewed. There is clearly a lot of similarity across the five different countries' experiences with introducing free primary education. What is indisputable is that abolishing tuition fees overcomes some of the obstacles to attending school, as can be judged by the gross and net enrolment rate increases experienced in all the countries following FPE, but for Zambia.

However, as the case study summaries show, a series of problems (some created or exacerbated by the FPE policies) remain. Added to these are the effects that HIV/AIDS has had

on the education sectors of all these countries.

Malawi, the first country to implement FPE, attempted a radical transformation, not dissimilar from its neighbour, Zimbabwe, at an earlier stage, at its Independence, when, unlike most of the continent, whose countries had achieved political independence much earlier, Zimbabwe attempted to catch upon its lost educational progress by expanding its system to achieve UPE virtually overnight. The enrolment increases of the order of doubling in only two years that were unique in the early 1980s were not to be repeated until the introduction of FPE, which comes as a resurrection of the educational trajectories of these five countries that failed to produce educated and literate populaces following their own independence. Yet, the lessons of this earlier rapid expansion in Zimbabwe ring true today. Access to education is highly coveted, and can be achieved rapidly by various combinations of policies - building more schools, lowering the costs to parents, supplying instructional materials, etc. But, access to quality education is what keeps pupils in those schools to which they've gained access. Unless quality is attended to from the beginning, high enrolment rates will not necessarily lead to an educated population.

The Zimbabwe experience of one-third of its new schools becoming on-viable within the first five years of independence provides a warning for the more recent, rapid, quantitative educational expansion of these other countries in recent years. Yet, educational quality is both elusive and difficult to achieve with anything like the rapidity that physical educational expansion can more rapidly achieve.

ACTIONAID-Zambia (2004) ^[1]. "Strategic plans can lay out, using key indicators, what is meant by 'quality', for instance, through the percentage of qualified teachers, pupil teacher ratios, pupil textbook ratios, increases in learning achievement, etc."

The five countries have all realised the importance of educational quality; the challenge has been to create sufficiently quickly the increases in human resources, the networks of communication, management practices and behaviour that can reinforce, complement and build on the increased physical resources that have been provided, be they classrooms, textbooks, or, indeed, teachers.

With respect to what it is agreed is the linchpin of educational quality, the teachers, the five countries have adopted different policies toward teacher deployment. Malawi appointed untrained teachers, orientated them briefly, and only subsequently created MIITEP to provide the professional development they lacked. Zambia decided not to deploy untrained teachers at the start of FPE. Zambia developed a new teacher education programme, ZATEC, and FPE as announced subsequently, and Zambia decided to map its teacher requirements before deploying new teachers. Tanzania recruited 9 - 10,000 teachers per year and then began to address their necessary upgrading.

Uganda, similarly, focused on deployment before comprehensive, professional teacher development. However, with the exception of Zambia, FPE was announced with teacher development plans only detailed afterwards. We know that teachers require not only training, but also supervision and support. They also need the respect of the communities whom they serve, especially if decentralized Management of educational development is to be realised. In Uganda, this has been understood, if not addressed satisfactorily to date:

Currently, most teachers enter the profession because they do not see any other alternative apart from unemployment, which also impacts negatively on the public perception and status of the profession. (Pfaffe, p.23)

There are issues here that go beyond the professional training of the teachers and have to do with the reinforcement and support given to them in ways that were taken for granted when teachers were role-models in society and when education was for the few, not for all.

The challenge in bringing about free primary education for all that encompasses the quality dimension is that these support systems are not sufficiently developed when the support needs to be given, so that the access that is afforded on the one hand is often negatively counter-poised with poor quality on the other.

What has been challenging in all the five countries studied is that governments have had to weave their policies between the Scylla and Charybdis of satisfying development agency predilections whilst teasing out indigenous educational visions.

They have had to do this in the context of developing their own expertise than has been prevalent (or retained) in most ministries of education for some time. If we consider the circumstances surrounding the policy decision to introduce FPE in each of the five countries under study, there are many similarities. First, in four of the five cases, FPE was announced following the election of a new government. Uganda, the exception, was already in the process of seeing through major economic development following its civil war. The political kudos for announcing FPE, of course, is tremendous, irrespective of any larger design.

Secondly, in all five cases, primary education was already a significant marker on development agencies' road maps for helping to contribute to poverty eradication, so introducing free primary education would likely attract the necessary external finance. Thirdly, the education sectors of all five countries had suffered similar declines due to a variety of factors, not least their indebtedness and poor economic prospects. Thus, the macro benefits of introducing FPE would seem to have been great in all five cases.

It is, indeed, the macro benefits of FPE which are the focus of donor and recipient countries alike, but it is the micro challenges which loom large and require differential treatment. These micro challenges cover all aspects of educational development, from the vision of the educational system as a whole, to the relevance of the curriculum, the appropriateness of the examination system for recognising achievement and enabling selection for post-primary education, to teacher education, textbook production and distribution, school health and nutrition, to reaching the marginalised and most disadvantaged, to language policy, monitoring and evaluation, community participation, financial management, supervision, etc. Whilst the macro policies have been put in place, the micro challenges have not been addressed sufficiently.

As could be seen in the summary of Uganda given above, quality considerations have been eclipsed by the quantitative push toward UPE, and the situation is not dissimilar across the other countries.

In understanding the greater policy leverage of development agencies, one usually thinks of policy writ large and its associated indicators, e.g. percentages of budgets going to

primary education, the prioritization of girls' education, etc. In practice, however, underlying any adoption of such overall policies are many smaller, sometimes implicit adjustments in the direction of the development agencies' requirements. These 'adjustments' can be seen in the language in which business is conducted. It is a language of economic and financial management rather than the language of an older, more traditional educational management. Thus, it is about indicators and performance, and value for money, and explaining expenditure patterns rather than patterns of learning and language and pedagogy. It is about analysing whether targets are achieved and not about the appropriateness of the targets in directing educational development. It is a language that only a few have learned, to their advantage and in their use of the language, to the advantage of the country's Treasury, where effectiveness brings additional finance.

To point this out is not to be overly critical, for major benefits have clearly occurred. It is necessary, however, to highlight the considerable behavioural changes that are required at all levels to achieve long-lasting and 'embedded' results, as individuals not only learn the language of external finance, but also its management. Reviewing the key documentation on each country's experience with FPE has to lead to the observation that one is witnessing earlier concerns about educational development resounding through the much louder discussions of targets, especially qualitative ones, not being met. Kendall has put her finger on this in commenting in the case of Malawi that, "civil society' in Malawi is too underdeveloped, too beholden to donors for support, and too politically vulnerable to really discuss forging a vision of education different than the donor vision." She goes on to detail a litany of characteristics, some positive, but many negative, that describe the current situation in Malawi, nine years after the introduction of FPE: Loss of national vision, Corrosion of pupil, teacher, and parent relations, Corruption (education for MP's poverty alleviation), Politicization of the school and its staff, Decline in "respect for authority", Increase in educational access, Decline in educational quality for the poor (increase in private schooling for the rich), Breakdown in school/state communication, Decline in teacher professionalism, Decline in the value of "being educated", Few jobs; educated people are "just sitting", More business opportunities for youth since democratization

Many of these characteristics could also be used to describe the experience of other countries under review and the changes resulting in part from their externally-financed educational development. Planning the backward and forward linkages of FPE clearly must involve economic, political and social considerations that would seem often not to be well orchestrated down at the village/school level.

There are certain lessons emerging from these different studies that need to be highlighted. First of all, it is clear that whilst implementing free primary education is seen as a sound macro policy, it needs to be integrated within a poverty reduction (and economic growth) strategy that anticipates and provides for the forward and back ward linkages of the expanded system as well as of those children afforded education.

This has implications for textbook production and distribution, school construction and maintenance, teachers' conditions of service, the relevance of the curriculum, the role that examinations play, the provision of early childhood education as an important route into primary education, the transition

rates to post-primary education, etc. Thus, a focus solely on primary education is but a starting point and not sufficient in itself. Secondly, community participation should not be abused and used merely as a legitimization of policies from on high, nor as a 'quick fix' for school construction nor as a less than transparent and "least-cost" form of cost-sharing. Village-level concerns do need to be heard, participation needs to be engendered, two-way communication needs to be developed, and the language of educational development should not be alienating. Satisfying the external financiers of free primary education should not have to mean that in effect, the system is fashioned to their designs rather than national ones, even though all parties' intentions may be otherwise. Development agencies, therefore, should not be blinded by the political agreements that enable them to invest heavily in free primary education unless the efforts to involve those thousands of teachers and students and their families in the regeneration of their national education systems are deeply rooted in the achievement not merely of "free education" but a form of education which maximizes the human resource capacity of the country and the individuals who are educated

A vulnerable child was seen as someone who has little or no access to basic needs or rights. They may have both parents, but the child might be compromised in other ways. The definition of vulnerability was felt to reflect certain aspects of the context of the child.

As for the term orphan, the researchers found the following: An orphan is a child who has lost either one or both parents. The remainder of the definition needs to centre around three core areas. The relative importance of each will be defined by context: Material problems, including access to money, food, clothing, shelter, health care and education; Emotional problems, including experience of caring, love, support, space to grieve and containment of emotions; Social problems, including lack of a supportive peer group, of role models to follow, stigma or of guidance in difficult situations, and risks in the immediate environment; Vulnerability may be defined according to what is immediately seen in a situation and what is more easily measurable.

Given the multiple factors within the social context where children become orphaned or vulnerable, definitions require flexibility so that they can be both context dependent and context specific. The broad categories of material, emotional, and social challenges added on to a child's social status as an orphan improve the understanding of the vulnerability of this group of children and can refine the targeting process within efforts to provide assistance.

According to Kendall (2008), how children are identified as vulnerable, and the terms used to define them as such, are connected to a wider web of meanings and relationships that may, in some situations, increase rather than alleviate vulnerability:

Evidence and analysis presented in this paper and elsewhere suggest that current discourses and frameworks may at times operate in practice to make the lives of children targeted by development interventions harder and less secure.

This extends to the 'universalist' framing of children's realities within the context of a borderless conception of children's rights: The child's experiences are therefore viewed through the lens of this particular rights framework, making visible those aspects of their experiences that relate to these rights, but obscuring those that do not. Because of the framing

of children as rights holders and adults as duty-bearers, if a child's current life situation does not guarantee their rights, then it is the duty of adults, not the right of the child, to change the child's life situation.

Such framing has the tendency to place children in a passive position as needing sustenance and support from service providers or adults. At worst, it can 'de-centre' the lived experiences of children from the perspective of the child itself. Kendall (2008) nevertheless identifies positive trends in naming and framing the approach to children and vulnerability:

There is a growing call to shift from a model of individual vulnerability to one of communal or geographic vulnerability in which all members of a heavily AIDS-affected community are targeted for programming....Such models view children as members of multi-generational communities.

As a result of this shift, a broader analysis and understanding of the vulnerability of children is emerging. Consensus is growing that orphanhood on its own is not necessarily a marker of vulnerability. Variables such as poverty, sero-status, physical ability, household composition and gender have greater predictive value for identifying and assessing degrees of childhood vulnerability and their consequent needs for assistance. In a sense, then, a vulnerable child could be defined as one that is disadvantaged in distinct and tangible ways on two or more dimensions of children's vulnerability – orphaned and destitute, for example, or destitute and disabled.

In support of Kendall's (2008) conclusions, evidence is emerging about which aspects of children's vulnerability interfere with access to education and successful attainment of educational goals. In a study on the impact of the introduction of free primary education in Lesotho, a World Bank (2005) research team found that the economic or wealth status of the child, for example, affected participation in education regardless of social status as orphan or non-orphan. The study found that, in 2002, 10 percent of 6 to 14-year-old children had never been in school. For boys the proportion was 13 percent; for girls it was 7 percent. However, between wealth quintiles, a 10 percent difference emerged for overall non-attendance in this age group. Moreover, it appeared that orphanhood itself did not prevent children from going to school as 10.6 percent of orphans and 10.4 percent of other children had never been in school.

The same study found that other factors had a greater influence on children's participation in education. The educational attainment of the head of the household predicted school attendance in that the lower the attainment, the less likely children were to be in school. Children from poor households were less likely to attend school than others. The distance to the nearest school was also found to have a significant influence on school attendance. Furthermore, while orphans and non-orphans had similar rates of participation in education, orphans were more likely to drop out. Examining on-going barriers to participation in education in Lesotho, more than five years after the introduction of free primary education, Nyabanyaba (2009) showed that there continued to be high repetition rates, high drop-out rates, and a significant portion of school-aged children who did not attend school. The impact of HIV was one of the causes of this but it was really the on-going effect of poverty and deprivation that was the more proximal cause.

In a study of ten sub-Saharan countries, using data from

demographic and health surveys, Case *et al.* (2004) made similar findings that, "...gaps between orphans and non-orphans are dwarfed by gaps in enrolment between poor and non-poor children."

In an earlier study, Filmer and Pritchett (1999) demonstrated that enormous differences arise with regard to wealth status and school enrolment. Despite a considerable variation across the 35 countries included in their analysis, they constantly found that poor children either begin school and drop out in droves, or never attend school at all.

Within the household (rather than between households), differences in school participation can arise between orphans and non-orphans. Case *et al.* (2004) found that orphans were less likely to be attending school than non-orphans within the same households because of differences of investment in children's education. The larger the distance in kinship between a child and the household head, the lower the investment and the greater the likelihood of not being in school:

As a general pattern, the probability of school enrolment is inversely proportional to the degree of relatedness of the child to the household head – whether the child is an orphan or not. Kurzinger (2008), using data on 20,000 children in 7,000 households in Tanzania and Burkina Faso, found that variables such as age, religion, family of origin, the relationship between the child and the head of household, and the dependence ratio of the household better explained differences in educational participation more than orphan status alone. Overall, no significant difference was observed in Tanzania between orphans and non-orphans regarding school enrolment or school delay. Similarly in Burkina Faso, orphans were no less likely than other children to be enrolled in school.

Similar findings arose for Mishra *et al.* (2007) in Kenya, but their study also demonstrated that children living with single mothers were likely to be more disadvantaged than other children on all indicators. Within South Africa, Operario *et al.* (2008) found that there was a reduced likelihood of school attendance and completion, particularly for females, in households experiencing the death of either parent. Oleke (2007) found that, in Uganda, the more elderly the heads of households, the more likely that all children would be in school compared to younger household heads. Moreover, households headed by widowed or single females were more likely to have all children in school than married females. In focus group discussions with caregivers, who were 50 years or older and caring for school-aged children, Kakooza and Kimumna (2005) found that maintaining support for children's participation in school was paramount for this group.

In earlier research in eastern Zimbabwe, Nyamukapa, Foster and Gregson (2003) documented the catastrophic impact of the death of the mother on children's access to education in comparison to the death of the father or of both parents within a household. These observations were subsequently affirmed in additional research (Nyamukapa and Gregson 2005) where it was observed that maternal orphans, rather than paternal or double orphans, continued to have lower school enrolment rates. The authors concluded that low primary school completion among maternal orphans must result from the lack of support from fathers and stepmothers, as well as other less prominent factors related to household composition, and social or economic status. Bhargava (2005), in an assessment of 1,000 children in Ethiopia whose households had experienced

maternal death, found that in these settings, “variables such as income, good feeding and clothing conditions were significant predictors of school participation.” Conversely, the presence (or absence) of the father, household income, feeding and clothing conditions, and attitude of the fostering family were found to be significant inhibitors to school participation for dependent children. Similar findings were made by Kobiane, Calve and Marcoux (2005) using data from Burkina Faso, and Evans and Miguel (2007) in Kenya.

In a systematic review conducted by Richter *et al.* (2008), the researchers found that in a significant proportion of the published literature, methodological gaps and challenges significantly discounted the strength and scope of what the studies claimed to have found in terms of understanding children’s vulnerability factors and their influence on access and completion of educational programmes. Of the 15 studies included in the review with acceptable methodologies, most identified negative impacts on some aspect of education, whether it was enrolment, attendance, performance or completion, due to children’s status as orphans. Gender, poverty, and age had confounding effects meaning that when combined with a child’s status as an orphan, the negative impact on education increased.

Finally, as this evidence has emerged of the multi-factorial nature of the vulnerability, there is growing consensus to move away from a too narrow targeting of OVC interventions, both because not all orphans are vulnerable and because targeting orphans specifically risks identifying and consequently stigmatising children with this social status. As more and more experience has been gained with social and child protection schemes, using extreme poverty with one or two other factors, such as food security or kinship relations, appears to identify more clearly those children in need without the problem of linking children so explicitly to HIV and AIDS in their social environment. The evidence is legion that identifying children as orphans and either infected or affected by HIV and AIDS brings upon them stigma and discrimination in both the educational and community settings.

With regard to efforts to address, mitigate and resolve children’s vulnerability and the barriers to participating in education that arise from this, a large range of interventions have been documented (Subararo and Koury 2004, O’Grady *et al.* 2008, UNICEF 2009) ^[14]. Richter *et al.* (2008) have systematically reviewed this literature and pointed out that in many instances a lack of evidence underpinning the development and implementation of interventions compromised any assessment of their effectiveness: “Overall, there is very weak evidence to support programming, with only a small minority of studies having sufficient methodological rigor to support the conclusions drawn.” Schenk (2007). However, a significant number and type of interventions have been published in the literature to provide at least some guidance on what have emerged as more effective approaches than others.

2.3 Zambian Perspective

Zambia’s free primary Education (FPE) was declared and instantaneously introduced in 2002. The introduction of FPE was supported by Zambia’s 2002 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), which outlined the elimination of user fees for basic education as a way to reduce poverty (Government of the Republic of Zambia, 2002). The 2003-2007 Strategy Plans

for Education also called for the abolition of schools fees (MOE, 2003).

WWW.state House gov.Zm 28th March, 2009 indicated that:

“the government introduced Free Primary Education(FPE) in order to increase access for poor members of various communities to access basic education”.

Studies by Mulenga Mambwe (2010) indicated that, the introduction of free basic education (FBE) in Zambia in 2002 during the Basic Educational Sub-sector Investment Programme (BESSIP), significantly improved access to primary education, especially after declining enrolments in the 1990s. In addition, Mulenga Mambwe (2010) said that, the Zambian government’s decision to introduce free primary education arose from the three main principles of the ministry of education, quoting MOE (1996) he had mentioned them as protecting the right of individuals, to promote the social economic well-being of all citizen and to achieve a good quality of life for every citizen. The FPE has been received with mixed feelings from different sections of the society.

“While some have expressed feelings of discontentment, failure, betrayal among others, many low income members of the population view it as a God sent opportunity” (Onyango, 2003).

2.4 Personal critique summary

Many studies have been carried out on FPE in many countries which include Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe just to mention but a few and a number of factors that cause poor implantation of free Primary Education policy have been highlighted like poor funding, lack of Managers, Lack of trusted Managers, lack of school infrastructure just to mention but a few. A common phenomenon was that the FPE policy has negative effects not only on the academic performance of the learners but also on the standard and quality of education being offered. In view of the aforementioned, studies that have been conducted in Zambia revealed that the problem of FPE policy has failed. For instance, the studies conducted by Simwayi (2014) and Hang’andu (2005) revealed that adequate guidelines were in place especially on the implementation of FPE policy but could not come up with the factors that caused it to fail. In addition they did not also research on the impact of FPE policy on teachers and pupils performance. The persistence of the problem therefore demands for further studies such as this one so that eventually lasting solutions could be found.

From what has been said above it is clear that no one has researched on the impact of free primary education in any part of Zambia to help the government to review it. This gives me the impetus to do a thorough study on this topic and give my findings, conclusion and recommendation to the government.

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the literature related to the study and this chapter describes the methodology that was used in collecting data and how the data was analysed; the chapter shows the research design, the target population, the sample size, sampling procedures as well as the data collection procedure and analysis and the instruments that were used.

3.2 Research Design

In order to provide accurate account of the situation of the

impact of free education and find a way of improving it, the study used a descriptive design. The research used both quantitative and qualitative approaches to describe the existing situation.

It was participatory study because it aims at involving the respondents in the process of research. To collect data it used interviews, observations, questionnaires and group discussions. To obtain information, the researcher established good relationships with respondents by working in non directive manner aimed at making respondents feel free to contribute to the discussion.

3.3 Choice of Study Area

The choice of Chipata district did not however make other district less important, but it was just appropriate because of the following factors: Easy transport, availability of communication network facilities, lack of enough funds to go to other towns and accommodation.

3.4 Limitation of the Study

The population of study is made up of teachers, members of the community, provincial education officer, district board secretary, pupils, and head teachers.

The choice of Chipata district did not however make other district less important, but it was just appropriate because of the following factors: Easy transport, availability of communication network facilities, lack of enough funds to go to other towns and accommodation.

3.5 Scope of Study

This research paper would assess the impact of Free Primary Education in Zambia and identify the advantages, disadvantages, challenges, opportunities etc. in eastern province of Zambia, Chipata and give conclusion and recommendations.

3.6 Population of Study

CSO 2010 shows that there about 1,592,661 people in Eastern province but Chipata alone has about 455,783 people. The population of study was made up of teachers, members of the community, provincial education officer, district board secretary, pupils, and the police and head teachers.

3.7 Sample Population

The sample consisted of fifteen (40) teachers, and 10 pupils, Seven (7) from chipata school, four (4) from Anoya, seven (7) from Mpezeni, two (7) from Hillside, four (4) Nadalisika, ten (10) katopola, four (4) from Lunkwakwa, seven (7) pupils from St. Andrews, were sampled randomly. A total of fifty (50) questionnaires were distributed.

3.8 Instruments for Collecting Data

The principal instruments for data collection were self administered questionnaires using open ended and closed questions, group interviews and group discussion.

3.9 Observations

This was done by observing teachers conducting their lessons and see how many pupils in each class. Teachers and learners

were told in advance that an observer was to come to observe the lesson. At the end a review was done by looking at the way the lessons are conducted and how preparations are done. Any challenges observed was told to the teacher involved and suggestions on how to solve the problem was relayed to the Head teacher in-charge.

3.9.1 Group Discussion

Group discussions were held with learners to find out from them how they felt about Free Primary Education. Their responses enriched the data base to be used to write a good dissertation.

3.9.2 Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed the collected data manually using descriptive statistics, using totals, percentages and frequencies. The qualitative data was analyzed and summarized using narrations. Simple analysis was done using STATA Programme and Rhema-forms.

3.9.3 Triangulation

Triangulation is a method of checking data collected for correctness. It is a technique that is common in qualitative research, in which the researcher relies on multiple sources of data (Cresswell, 1998). This technique has gained a wide acceptance among qualitative researchers as a mean to strengthen the research rigor through the combination of multiple methods, measures, researchers, theories and perspectives (Denzin, 1979).

In This research we used the first type of triangulation in which the researcher used a variety of sources to collect data. The researcher used many methods in collecting relevant data through the distribution of questionnaires to respondents. It also used another type of triangulation by carrying out interviews, group discussions and observations. The researcher also reviewed literature on free education policy implementation. All this was done to make sure that collected data is correct and verifiable.

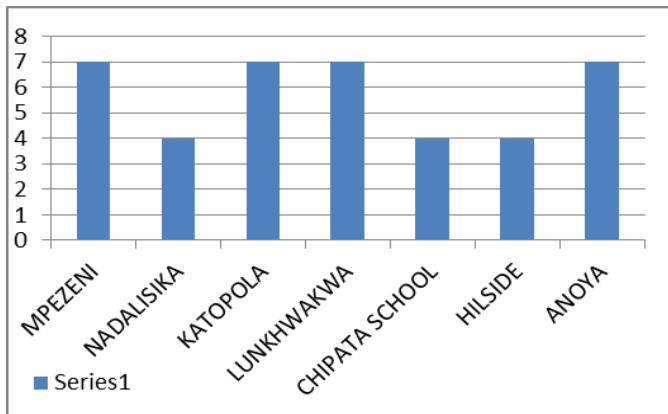
4. Presentation of Findings

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the methodology that was used in the study. This chapter presented the background characteristics of the respondents and further presents the findings of the study and the purpose of study was to investigate and establish the impact of free Primary Education in eastern province of Zambia, Chipata.

Table 1: Respondents Distribution by Schools/Locations

| School | Number Pupils | Education Officials | Total |
|----------------|---------------|---------------------|-------|
| Mpezeni | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| Nadalisika | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Katopola | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| Lunhwakwa | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| Chipata School | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| St Andrews | 5 | 5 | 10 |
| Hilside | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Anoya | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| | | Total | 50 |



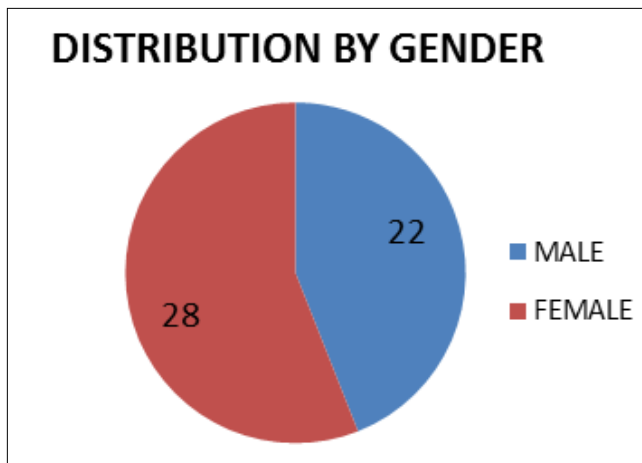
Source: Field Work 2015

Fig 1: Shows Respondents Distribution by Schools/Locations

The Fig and the table above shows that the researcher had 7 respondents at Mpezeni, respondents at 4 Nadalisika, 7 respondents at Katopola, 7 respondents at Lunxhwakwa, 4 respondents at Chipata School, 4 respondents at Hillside, 10 respondents at Kasenengwa, and 7 respondents at Anoya.

Table 2: Respondents Distribution by Gender

| Gender | Number | Percentage |
|--------|--------|------------|
| Male | 22 | 44% |
| Female | 28 | 56% |



Source: Field Work 2015

Fig 2: shows distribution of respondent by Gender

The Fig above shows that the number of females in this research was twenty-eight (28) and males were twenty two (22) giving a percentage of 56% to 44% respectively. There were many females than males because population distribution in the area is made up of many females than males. This is similar to what is happening all over the nation, females are more than males.

The tables and Fig below identified the numbers and percentages of respondents on challenges faced by FPE policy implementation. The challenges highlighted were shortage of teachers, embezzlement of fund, delays in funding, over enrolment, lack of learning facilities and lack of managerial skills by managers.

Table 3: Shows Characteristics of Respondents on Delays on Funding

| Responcies | Percentage | Number of Respondents |
|------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Agreed | 64% | 32 |
| Disagreed | 36% | 18 |

Source: Field Work 2015

The table above shows that 64 % (32) of the respondents agreed to the assertion that delayment of funding affected the implementation of Free Primary Education policy and 36 % (18) of respondents disagreed that funding affected the implementation of Free Primary Education Policy.

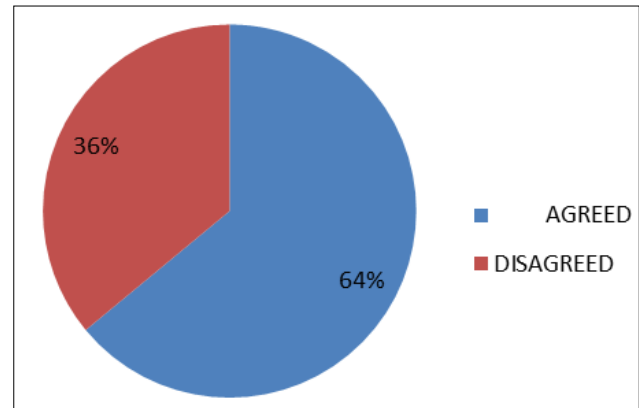
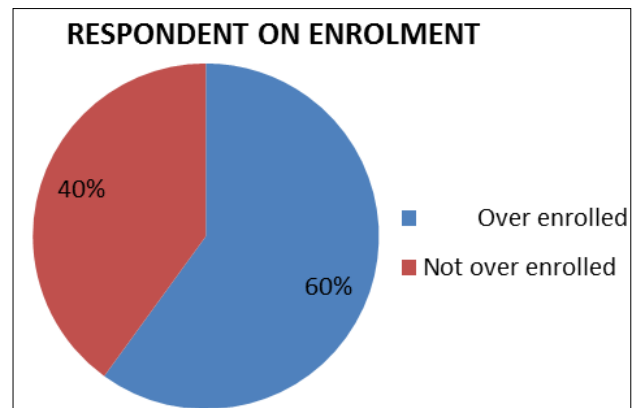


Fig 3: Respondents on Delayment of Funding

Table 4: below shows the number of respondents and percentages on those with views of over enrolment and no over enrolment.

| Responcies | Percentage | Number of Respondents |
|-------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Over enrolled | 60% | 30 |
| Not over enrolled | 40% | 20 |



Source: 2015 field work

Fig 4

The Fig above indicated that 60% (30) of the respondents agreed that pupils were over enrolled in their class room because of the implementation of FPE. 40% (20) of the respondents disagreed that pupils were over enrolled in their class room because of the implementation of FPE

Table 4: Shows Characteristics of Respondents on Teacher Shortage

| Responses | Percentage | Numbers of Respondents |
|-----------|------------|------------------------|
| Agree | 72% | 36 |
| Disagreed | 28% | 14 |

Source: 2015 field work

The table above indicated that 72% (36) of the respondents agreed that there was shortage of teachers in their class room to do the implementation of FPE. 28% (14) of the respondents disagreed that there was shortage of teachers in their class room to do the implementation of FPE.

Shows Characteristics of Respondents on Teacher Shortage

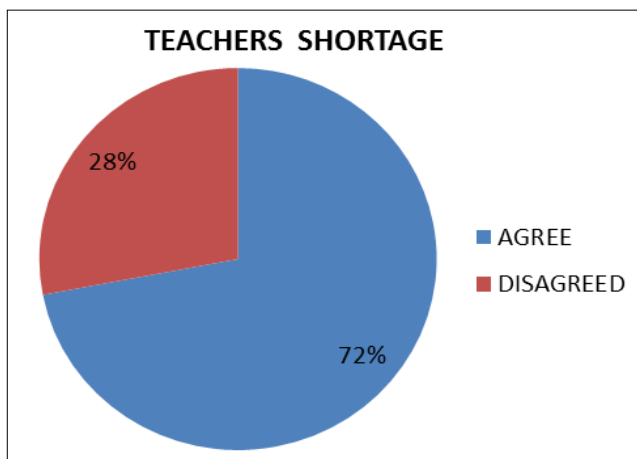


Fig 5

Table 5: Shows Characteristics of Respondents on Learning Facilities

| Responses | Percentage | Number of Respondents |
|--------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Not Adequate | 76% | 38 |
| Adquate | 24% | 12 |
| Total | 100% | 50 |

Characteristics of Respondents on Learning Facilities

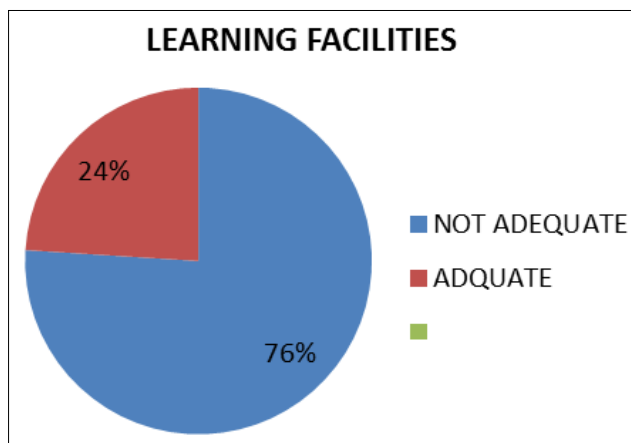
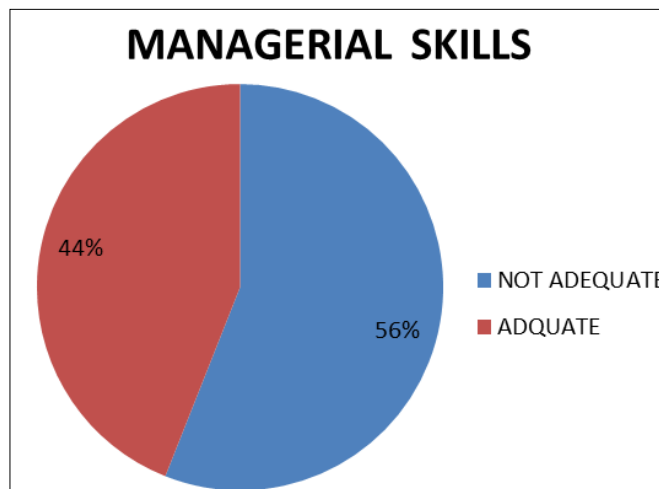


Fig 6

From the Fig above 24% (12) of the respondents disagreed that learning facilities were enough and 76% (38) of the respondents agreed that there were adequate learning facilities to help implement Free Primary Education policy.

Table 6: Shows Characteristics of Respondents on Managerial Skills

| Responses | Percentage | Number of Respondents |
|--------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Not Adequate | 56% | 28 |
| Adquate | 44% | 22 |
| Total | 100% | 50 |



Source: Field Work 2015

Fig 7

The Fig above shows that 44% (22) of the respondents disagreed that the managers had less managerial skills to implement FPE policy, while 56%(28) of the total population said that the managers had less managerial skills to implement FPE policy.

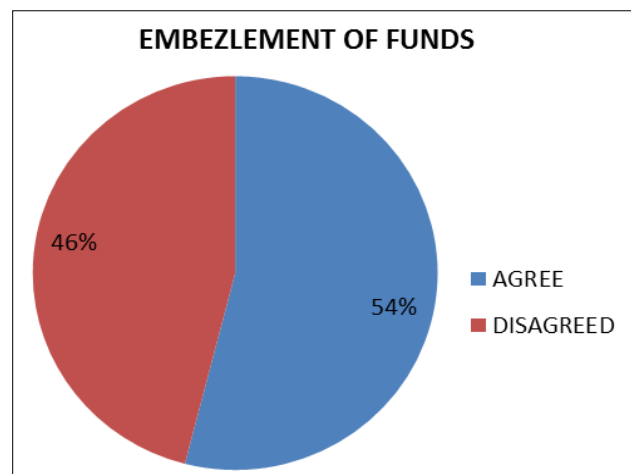
Table 7: Shows Characteristics of Respondents on Embezzlement of Funds

| Responses | Percentage | Number of Respondents |
|-----------|------------|-----------------------|
| Agree | 54% | 27 |
| Disagreed | 46% | 23 |
| Total | 100% | 50 |

Source: field work 2015

This table above indicated that 27 out of 50 (54%) respondents agreed to the assertion that FPE funds were embezzled by the implementers of FPE and 23 out of 50(46%) disagreed to this assertion.

Fig below shows distribution of those who agreed and disagreed to the assertion that FPE implementation funds were embezzled in Chipata district

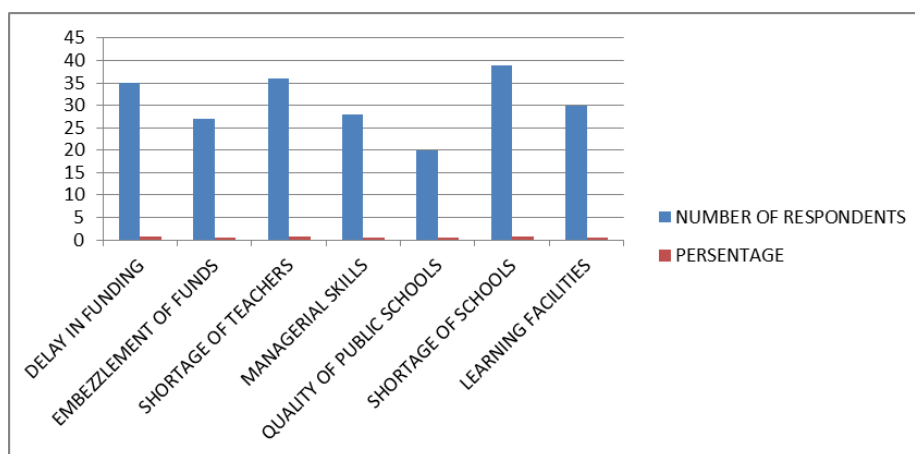


Source: 2015 field work

Fig 8

The Fig bellow summaries some of the finding the researcher found in Chipata urban district.

Factors That Affected Implementation of FPE in Chipata Schools



Source: Field Work 2015

The Fig above shows that 70% of the respondents said that FPE policy was not well implemented because of delays in funding, 72% say because of teacher shortage, 56% say because of lack of qualified managers, 54% say some managers embezzled the government funds, 78% say it's because of lack of many schools and lastly 40% of the respondents say the quality of education in government schools has gone down because it was free for all and lacked qualified personnel.

Table 8: Below Shows Respondents by Numbers Factors That Negatively Affected Free Education Policy

| Reason for the Failure of FPE | Number of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Delay In Funding | 35 | 70% |
| Embezzlement Of Funds | 27 | 54% |
| Shortage Of Teachers | 36 | 72% |
| Managerial Skills | 28 | 56% |
| Quality Of Public Schools | 20 | 40% |
| Shortage Of Schools | 39 | 78% |
| Learning Facilities | 30 | 60% |

Source: Fieldwork 2015

The table above shows that 35 out of 50 agreed that delay in funding affected FPE implementation, 27 out of 50 said that embezzlement of funds affected the FPE implementation, 36 out of 50 said that shortage of teachers affected the impact of FPE policy implementation, 28 out of 50 said managers skills affected, 20 out of 50 said that quality of public schools affected the implementation of FPE policy, 39 out of 50 said that shortage of schools affected the implementation of FPE policy and 30 out of 50 said that learning facilities affected the implementation of FPE policy

Table 9: Shows the Impact of FPE Policy on Pupils, Teachers and the Community

| Impact | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|-----------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Crime Rate | 26 | 52% |
| Enrolment | 35 | 70% |
| Illiterate Rate | 42 | 84% |
| Early Pregnancy | 36 | 72% |
| Education Standards | 25 | 50% |
| Community Development | 20 | 40% |
| Relationships | 28 | 56% |

Source: Field Work 2015

From the table above it was discovered that 52% of the respondent said that FPE policy reduced crime rate in the communities because many pupils are busy with school work. Unlike what happened previously when youth had nothing to do but just cause trouble in the communities.

70% of the respondent said that enrolment levels have increased due to the introduction of FPE policy. This has helped the orphans, poor, underprivileged people to access education and thus improving education standards in the country.

50% of the respondents indicated that education standards have improved tremendously here in chipata due to the introduction of FPE policy in the province. They said that currently it is very difficult to find a person who does not know how to read and write. This has also helped communication to be come easy when the government or the chiefs want to disseminate information.

84% of the respondents said illiterate levels have gone down both in villages and in towns making it easy to control any bad vice but communicating either in written or orally about the dangers it possesses. For instance it is easy now to disseminate information on the dangers of AIDS, cholera, Malaria, and other diseases to people in schools and communities.

72% of the respondents said early pregnancy rate has reduced because pupils are educated and are able control their sexual desires because they know the consequences of becoming pregnant at a tender age. Pupils also spend most of their time busy at school and in the evening they are busy doing their home works given to them by their teachers' daily following homework policy.

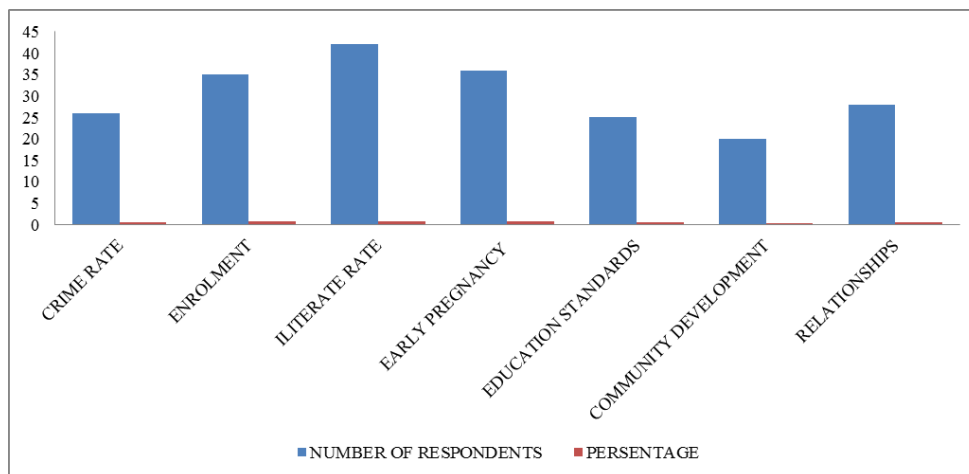
56% of the respondents also said that relationship were also enhanced as communication became easy at any level in English or local language. English is a barrier in communication if you communicate to illiterate people and this also cause divisions but with this FPE policy all these barriers are eradicated completely making people in communities relate very well at all levels.

Summarized Positive Findings on Free Primary Education

- 84% of the interviewees said Free Primary Education has reduced illiteracy level.
- 70% of the interviewee said Free Primary Education has increased enrolment
- 52% of the interviewees said that Free Primary Education

- has reduced crime rate.
- 56% of the interviewees said that Free Primary Education has helped to improve relationship in the communities.
- 72% of the interviewees said that Free Primary Education has helped reduce early pregnancy rate
- 50% of the interviewees said that Free Primary Education

- has improved education standard in Chipata district
- 40% of the interviewees said that Free Primary Education has helped to increase community development.
- Below is the Fig that shows the summary of positive findings about the impact of Free Primary Education in Chipata Urban.



Source: Field Work 2015

5. Discussion of Findings

The previous chapter presented the findings that were discovered by the researcher on the challenges and factors involved in the implementation of FPE in Chipata District. This chapter presented the discussion of the challenges and factors faced by free Primary Education in eastern province of Zambia, Chipata. In addition, it also presented the merits of free primary education in Chipata District.

5.1 Challenges

The introduction of free primary education in 2003 was received with mixed reactions across the country, UNESCO, (2005) [13]. The government’s task force reported that the implementation of the program was faced with a number of glaring challenges that required to be addressed. The following are some challenges that FPE is facing here in Chipata District:

5.2 Delays in Funds Disbursement

64% of the teachers interviewed complained that funds are delayed in being disbursed by the government making it very difficult to implement the FPE policy in schools. One Head teacher who did not want to be identified lamented that he has not received funding since June 2015.

“The road to true learning is thinking. Yet, children have no spare time to engage in this necessary practice, known for creation of knowledge, development of social skills and cognitive growth”, UNESCO, (2005) [13].

In most schools, there is a widespread failure with respect to teachers and the teaching profession.

“The government controls the remuneration and may often see no urgency in encouraging seamless implementation of a progressive reward system”, Okwach & George, (1997) [11].

The failure on the part of the public to recognize the fact that teaching requires great skill and talent compounds the matter. Delays in disbursing funds to support free primary school education have frustrated many teachers, put pressure and on parents financial burdens.

5.3 Teacher Shortages

Teacher: pupil ratio, for instance, it emerged that in some schools the ratio was 1:70 which was far beyond the recommended maximum rate of 1:40. Such a high ratio has got its own challenges also, Okwach & George, (1997) [11]. For instance, teachers find it impossible to pay attention to all learners, especially the slow ones. Also teachers were not able to give adequate assignments to the pupils, as they could not cope with the marking and teaching workload (UNESCO, 2005) [13]. This was proved by the sentiments of the DESO at the Chipata District Board Secretary office who said teachers are very few making very difficult for him to manage the schools properly.

In addition 60% of the persons interviewed said that the schools were over enrolled and that increased the teacher pupil ratio to about 1 to 67.

5.4 Teacher-Learning Facilities

There was also an issue associated with teaching- learning materials as a major challenge facing the system, Okwach & George, (1997) [11]. Under the FPE programme, every pupil is entitled to free writing materials e.g. pencils, pens and exercise books. It emerged that textbooks were being shared in the ratio of one textbook to five pupils. Sharing of textbooks affected their accessibility to the books while at home and many have to do their homework early in the morning the next day when in school. This says something about the amount of work the teachers have to give to the pupils. Shortages of supplementary reading books were also identified in the study. The heard at Chipata Day secondary school said that:

“School are very few such that they are very overcrowded i.e. in each class at Chipata School there are 120 pupils against one teacher”.

There was also the issue of inadequate physical facilities. It emerged that most schools did not have adequate classroom to accommodate the large number of pupils enrolled under the FPE programmes. For instance, classrooms appeared to be generally congested and there was hardly any space for free

movement during lessons. Also a number of classroom conditions were poor, for instance, lighting depended only on sunlight, which was sometimes inadequate. Also in some schools they had introduced school mats for children to sit on since there were no sufficient desks. But a majority of the teachers felt that the sitting on the mats affected the children's writing skills and general physical development.

5.5 Managerial Skills

An effective and efficient manager must possess the technical, human and conceptual skills in order to be a good organizer, Ngaroga (2001) ^[10]. Technical knowledge and skill include understanding and being proficient in using specific activity such as a process, technique, or procedure. The school managers should be equipped with relevant knowledge and skill to perform administrative duties which include planning daily routine, among other duties. This implies that school managers need to be trained to equip them with the relevant skills and techniques to prepare them to be effective in implementation of educational policies. A school manager, who accepts that people are the key to successful implementation of policies and changes, is cognizant of the barriers that people place between themselves and the changes required Ngaroga (2001) ^[10]. One teacher at Katopola Basic School (who did not want to be named) said that many senior members of staff are not qualified to hold the offices they are in, so making it very difficult to implement the FPE effectively.

The implementation of free primary education in Zambia however, found school managers off guard; they had not been prepared for the change and so they found it challenging. Many schools had an overwhelming increase in enrollment while others witnessed mass exodus. Average class sizes rose from 40 to 70 while the facilities remained the same. It's notable that in Zambia today, approximately 50% of all the country's primary schools are housed in temporary and/or semi-permanent buildings; others are on split sites. The declaration of free primary education witnessed the rise in student enrollment which in turn led to strain in the existing physical resources.

These changes required changes in the managerial skills of school managers. Orora (1997) points out that a change agent is a person who attempts to influence proposed change and its adoption as well as decisions in a direction which beneficiaries have indicated desirable. An advisory committee on supply and education of teachers observe that education service has been operating in a climate of rapid change and that this climate is likely to continue to the foreseeable future Glatter (1988). Such a rapid change requires a continuous process of adjustment on the part of all those involved in the education system.

This view is supported by Wideen (1987) who pointed out that teachers need continued professional growth and development in order to be competent to handle changes. School managers are judged with the responsibility of interpreting educational policies to the parents and other stakeholders; they are also responsible for obtaining, directing and utilizing resources available for successful implementation of education policies and programs.

5.6 Poor quality Public Schools

Parents cited quality of school as their main reason for

transferring their children from one school to another, UNICEF & World Bank, (2009) ^[14]. But this is based on their perception of quality rather than an actual measure of quality. Unfortunately, unacceptably high numbers of transfers are still into private schools because of perceptions of poor quality in public schools following the implementation of free primary education, UNESCO, (2005) ^[13]. The number of transfers in the non-slums is fewer and the likely explanation for this is that there is sufficient supply of public schools to match demand and parents are able to make a choice between public and private schools depending on their disposable income (Oketch *et al*, (2008) ^[12]).

One respondent at Anoya schools said

“Due to limited public investment in education in the slums (there are fewer public schools in the slums), room has been created for the ‘mushrooming’ of private informal schools which can operate in any structure, usually of unacceptable condition for a school. The quality of these slum informal private schools is likely to vary, itself a likely explanation of the transfers from one school to another in search of perceived school of better quality”.

Teachers complained that pupils' frequent transfers from one school to another at any point of the term and in any class affect content delivery, (Eldah *et al* 2005) ^[5]. They observe some pupils who joined a particular school may have missed out for a term or several months and were likely to find some topics that had already been covered in their new school, (Eldah *et al* 2005) ^[5]. This suggests that the teachers had to look for ways of providing them with remedial lessons but their efforts were hampered by the large workload due to overcrowded class. The head at Saint Andrews primary school said that

“Due to free primary education the schools do not have money to buy training materials for the school in spite of the increase in enrolments. He also said that the quality of education in public schools is very low as compared to private schools”.

5.7 Embezzlement of Funds

Some government officials were corrupt and hence they mismanaged or misallocated the funds that are allocated to them, (UNESCO, 2005) ^[13]. For instance, the sponsor's funds; this makes some children who are poor miss the opportune moments of schooling.

Senior officials in the Ministry of Education, in Zambia have been accused of protecting corrupt headmasters and members of PTA (Parents Teacher Association) suspected of embezzling funds because they are also indirectly benefiting from incentives that are being paid by parents, disgruntled senior education officials have revealed, (UNESCO, 2005) ^[13]. One teacher at a named school said,

“My head teacher is not transparent in the way he is handling government grants because every year he does not buy any training material to help teach effectively”.

They allege that several internal audit reports as well as complaints by parents and teachers to the ministry against certain school heads and PTAs have been swept under the carpet. Many officials say the payment of incentives to teachers had resulted in an upsurge of fraud by school heads that are now exposed to huge amounts of money which they were not used to handling.

In addition the researcher discovered that Free Primary

Education (FPE) policy has both negative and positive impacts. The negative ones are those of lack of teachers, lack of managers to implement the FPE policy, Lack of financial controls making some manger to steal the moneys used to implement FPE, over enrolments, poor quality education, just to mention a few.

The positive impacts are that it has reduced illiterate levels, reduced crime levels, improve relationships, brought development in communities, reduce child pregnancies rates, etc. this was both in rural areas and urban areas.

Teachers were not enough to teach effectively that is why we can see a situation where 3 teachers could manage the classes from grade one to seven. This is what was reviewed at a named school whose headteacher declined to be named. He said

"I don't have teachers at my school so I would appreciate to receive at least 10 teachers for the five classes that I have here, even that is not enough but it could help".

5.8 Positive Effects of free Education in Chipata District

5.8.1 Crime Rate

The respondents reviewed that crime rate has been reduced due to free education which provide easy access to schools in any part of eastern province. Pupils are educated of good morals and well-being so as to live well together in the communities. Learners learn a lot at school for example tolerance, love and forgiveness that are taught in religious education, civic education and business studies. All these studies if applied well by the learners can help them live well in the community and reduce crime. One respondent on the same said:

"Crime has gone down in the community and at schools because learners have been educated in way of behaving, living, sharing and tolerating each other's views to live in unity despite of the religious groupings, race, culture and language".

5.8.2 Enrolment

The respondent said that free primary education has increased enrolment in schools and reduced idle children in the community. This has cleared the community of many children who have nothing to do but lazing around and doing petty stealing and doing other unacceptable things in the community.

One respondent on this topic said:

"Pupils have increased from 56 in each class to 75, but the problem now is lack of teachers to match this increase in enrolment being experienced".

The PEO also said *"enrolments have increased by 75% since the inception of free primary education"*. Paramount Chief Mpezen "NKOSI YAMA NKOSI" disclosed that his subjects are poor and FPE policy has helped them to easily send their children to school. He said

"A lot of pupils are now in schools but only the schools are few, overcrowded and small".

5.8.3 Early Pregnancy

The respondent said that free primary education has reduced early pregnancy in schools and reduced idle children in the community. This has cleared the community of many children who have nothing to do but lazing around and doing petty prostitution and doing other unacceptable things in the

community.

The head at a named school said: *"I am happy to note that this year the girl child has behaved very well such that the number of girls drop out due to pregnancies has reduced from 15 last year to just 2 who have been given leave to go and deliver"*.

The head teacher at Katopola basic school said *"the free primary education has helped reduce the rate of pregnancies in schools as children are educated on the dangers of early sex encounters which read to pregnancies. He also said that the rate of prostitution among young girls has reduced tremendously"*.

From the Provincial education Officer it was reviewed that early pregnancy and early marriages has reduced to about 45% since Free Primary Education was introduced. He said: *"the many challenges are the culture of people in Eastern province who believe in early marriages and farming and not education."*

5.8.4 Education Standards

The respondent said that free primary education has helped improve education standards in the province where literate levels have improved tremendously. People in villages and towns are easily communicated to in any official language and they respond accordingly as people who are educated. This has helped the community to improve sharing, communication and delivering announcements on relevant information like voting, prevention of diseases, and any urgent message to be sent.

The minister of education, Mr John Phiri, was very pleased when he heard a grade three pupils delivering a speech on ICT implementation in Chipata in English, clearly and efficiently. He said

"This is what we expect of learners, first and for most I will personally see to it that the issue of computers is dealt with so that pupils enjoy their ICT lessons from grade one to nine"

The District Board secretary also reviewed that the illiteracy levels has reduced from 70% to about 25% today. He said: *"previously villagers could come to school so that they can be helped to write a letter to their relatives in town but now they write on their own with the help of their primary school pupils"*.

6. Conclusion

Serious challenges have been reviewed on the implementation of the FPE policy. They include congested classrooms, limited physical facilities and shortage of qualified teachers, which negatively impacted on the quality of teaching and learning on one hand and contributed to indiscipline in schools on the other. It has also been reviewed that many head teachers are not qualified and some head teachers embezzle funds to help implement the FPE policy and that the government delays to fund the school funds which are also very small. However, the positive part of FPE is that it has brought a reduction in crime, early marriages, illiteracy, prostitution rates, HIV transmission rate, easy access to education, increase in developmental activities, good relations in communities, just to mention a few as alluded to above.

7. Recommendations

For free primary education to be easily implemented the following should be taken into consideration:

- The government should build many schools to cope with

this increase in enrolments

- The government should employ many teachers to cope with this increase in enrolments.
- The government should increase the funding to primary schools to meet the needs of the primary schools
- The government should maintain the quarterly funding and give it on time to primary schools so that school managers can manage schools effectively
- Those who miss appropriate the funds should be jailed for a long period of time with hard labour.
- The government should employ qualified head teachers of the institutions to effectively use the funding and manage the school properly.
- The government should sensitise the chiefs on the dangers of early marriages and the importance of education to the subjects.

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