

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

**CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FREE
BASIC EDUCATION POLICY: A SURVEY OF
SELECTED BASIC SCHOOLS OF SOLWEZI DISTRICT**

By

Museba Robert Ellison

A dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Education in
Educational Administration.

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DECLARATION

I, Museba Ellison Robert, declare that this dissertation represents my own work and that it has not been previously submitted for a degree at the University of Zambia or at

any other University and that all published work or materials incorporated in this report have been acknowledged.

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APPROVAL

This dissertation of Museba Ellison Robert has been accepted as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Educational Administration of the University of Zambia.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated challenges in the implementation of Free Basic Education Policy in Solwezi District of the North-Western Province. The study objectives were to determine the challenges encountered by schools in implementing the policy; assess the impact of the challenges on education delivery; establish the effects of the challenges on demand and supply in education; and identify the strategies that schools employed to cope with the challenges. Being a descriptive survey, the study population consisted of 1223 teachers, 178 head teachers in all the basic schools and the entire management team at the District Education Board Secretary's office. Out of this population, a sample size of 125 teachers was stratified and randomly selected while the 32 key informants were purposively selected.

The quantitative and qualitative research paradigm was used for data collection. The teachers responded to a questionnaire while the key informants were interviewed using structured interview schedules. The observation checklist was used to record the schools' enrolments, equipment and facilities that were available. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically as themes and sub themes emerged from the data, while quantitative data were analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics in form of percentages and frequencies.

The findings were that the introduction of the Free Basic Education Policy resulted into the abolishment of fees and left the schools to depend largely on government funding. However, budgetary allocation to schools was very meager and remittance of funds was very erratic. Furthermore, there was increased access to education as demonstrated by increased enrolment figures from 62810 in 2002 to 91937 in 2011. These increased enrolment figures were mainly attributed to the introduction of the Free Basic Education Policy. The increased enrolment figures in basic schools in Solwezi may also be attributed to increase in-migrants into the district due to the mining industry.

Additionally, the introduction of free basic education resulted into other challenges in education delivery. The challenges included: high enrolment levels, inadequate educational supplies, low staffing levels, inadequate classrooms and desks, and dilapidated infrastructure. The teachers were demotivated due inadequate staff accommodation, low housing allowances to rent decent houses, teachers were being overworked, and were unable to attend to individual needs of pupils, and they assigned inadequate home work and remedial work due to large classes and big volumes of books to mark. Consequently, the central government had failed to meet the needs of schools to satisfy the surge enrolments. The quality delivery of education had been compromised. The literacy levels had gone down and the majority of pupils proceeded from one grade to the other unable to read and write.

In order to overcome these challenges, and deliver quality education, the study recommends that there is need to increase funding, expand existing schools, build more schools, employ more teachers, supply enough desks, educational materials and provide enough free materials like exercise books. Furthermore, the study recommends that the government should improve staff retention through improved conditions of service.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my dearest wife, Maggie, my late parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ellison Mupwaya, and to all my children: Constance, Prudence, Chibale and Changwe.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BESSIP	Basic Education Subsector Investment Program

DEBS	District Education Board Secretary
DESO	District Education Standards Officer
EFA	Education for All
ESIP	Education Sector Investment Program
ESO	Education Standards Officer
FBE	Free Basic Education
FPE	Free Primary Education
FNDP	Fifth National Development Plan
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPI	Gender Parity Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IOB	Policy and Operation Evaluation Department
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MIITEP	Malawi Integrated In-service Teacher Education Project
MOE	The Ministry of Education
MSTVT	The Ministry of Science, Technical and Vocational Training

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NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PBR	Pupil-book ratio
PDR	Pupil-desk ratio

PPET	Post-Primary Education and Training Policy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PTA	Parent Teachers' Association
PTR	Pupil-teacher ratio
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
SFA	School Fee Abolition
SNDP	Sixth National Development Plan
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UPE	Universal Primary Education
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Education Fund
USA	United States of America

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This chapter focuses on the introduction of the study which is aimed at establishing the problem that led to the study. It also reflects the study area, its significance and the information concerning the initial review of literature. The chapter further outlines the objectives and the research questions to be answered in the study. Additionally, the purpose, delimitations, limitations and operation definition of key terms of the study are discussed.

1.2 Background to the Study

Zambia's Education Policy has gone through a number of changes. According to Sikwibele (2003), before 1964, the climate allowed for the existence of a parallel system of education which was justified on racial and other lines. In 1965, the new Zambian Government introduced a "Free Education Policy" to reverse the many years of injustice imposed on the Africans through the introduction of education fees and other charges they could hardly afford.

The Ministry of Education (1967) Report on Educational Developments in 1966-1967 states that, on 2nd September 1966, a new Education Act (Number 28 of 1966) came into effect. The act legalized changes from "fee paying" or "non-fee-paying" to "scheduled" or "non-scheduled" in order to take care of equity issues. Tuition fees were not charged in all government schools except for a small number of primary

schools where nominal fees were charged. Boarding fees were not charged in the vast majority of the secondary schools.

To support the free education policy, the government increased funding to the education sector. For example government provision for bursaries increased from 230 000 US dollars in 1965-66 to 605 000 US dollars in 1966-67 (MOE, 1967). Through the policy, the government also ensured that all the schools were well stocked with education supplies. These included exercise books, textbooks, pens, pencils, rulers, mathematical instruments, science kits, art, music, physical education equipment and all other needed materials and equipment (Sikwibele, 2003). It is also revealed that the teachers were adequately provided for. For example the shortage of teachers in primary schools was met by reducing the teacher training course to a one year residential course. Two new training colleges were opened and two more were at the planning stage. This enabled government to ensure that adequate numbers of teachers were recruited to all schools (MOE, 1967).

However, with the declining economic situation in the 1980s, education policies were affected and policy reversals were implemented (Kaulule, 2006). Additionally, it was expected that the re-introduction of boarding fees in 1986 was going to reduce the prominence of boarding expenses in public spending on secondary schools (MOE, 1992). It was argued that parents needed to be involved in the education of their children through cost sharing. The external forces had also an influence on the reversal of the policy. For instance, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank believed that the free education policy was going to be a catalyst for African Development Problems (Sikwibele, 2003).

As cost sharing and other Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) policies were reinforced, more children dropped out of school as their parents could not afford the fees as well as the school requisites. Many parents throughout the country could not make adequate use of the opportunities available for education of their children. Both the urban phenomenon of street children and the rural phenomenon of erratic participation and non utilization of facilities indicated low levels of explicit demand for education (MOE, 1996).

Additionally, family dependence on the economic activities of their children, the impact of HIV/AIDS on family organization and income, the increasing number of

orphans (estimated to have exceeded half a million by the year 2000), the growing number of child headed households (estimated in 1994 at 7% of all households in Zambia), and the levels of poverty were among the newer circumstances that may have reduced explicit demand for education (MOE, 1992).

Sikwibele, (2003) argues that due to the above problems, the numbers of out of school children in Zambia increased to over 700 000 towards the end of the 1990s but without sustainable signs of government interventions. This resulted into a crisis and communities took it upon themselves to find interventions that would assist their children. Hence the emergence of the Community Schools, which were characterized by low fees, participation by communities, increased access to education, provision of relevant knowledge as well as a focus on orphans and vulnerable children.

The increase in the number of out of school children did not portray a good picture to the world with a spirit and requirements for Education for All, whose advocacy started at the Jomtien World Education Conference in Thailand (UNESCO, 2003a). In fact, the Dakar Framework for Action, item 7 (ii) states that countries should be committed to ensure that by 2015, all children of school going age should have free, affordable and accessible education, with special emphasis on girls, children in difficult circumstances and from minority ethnics. These should have access to basic and completely free and compulsory primary education of good quality (UNESCO, 2009). Basing on these global dictates, on 15th March 2002, the Ministry of Education re-introduced and announced the “free education policy” but this time covering grades 1-7. In terms of justification, one section of the policy circular stated that, “The announcement should be seen in the context of unprecedented decline in enrollment rates and increasing dropout rates even after the introduction of Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Programme implemented between 1999 and 2002” (MOE, 2006:21). The objectives of BESSIP were to increase enrollment and improve learning achievement (MOE, 2002).

There were several other factors that necessitated the change in thinking by the government which included: the increasing levels of poverty, the increasing numbers of orphans due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the increasing exclusion of orphans and vulnerable children from the formal school system (Sikwibele, 2003). To support this policy announcement, the Ministry of Education committed itself to providing all

schools with grants ranging from 500 to 600 US dollars per term through the funding of the Basic Education Sub-sector Investment Program (BESSIP). The funds were meant to support school requisites such as books, chalk, paper, and other learning and teaching materials.

However, there are a number of challenges that were not taken into consideration in the implementation of the FBE policy. The studies by Mwansa et al. (2004), Kaulule (2006) and others did not clearly bring out these challenges and hence a gap. It is from this background that this study was conducted to determine the challenges in the implementation of the FBE policy. At the time of this study, it was ten years since the policy was introduced but there were still a lot of imbalances. For instance, a lot of school going age children were enabled access and enrollments were high in many basic schools especially those in urban areas. Nevertheless, it is argued that expanding access to basic education is a central tenet of EFA. But access is not enough; there must be an emphasis on quality which is as important as quantity (World Bank, 2003).

All available evidence indicates that improvements in education quality contribute to greater efficiency. Children who attend schools of better quality learn more, repeat less, stay in school longer and drop out less (UNESCO, 2004a). The long term goal of education is nothing less than to ensure everyone completes a basic education of adequate quality, acquires foundation skills- literacy, numeracy, reasoning and social skills such as teamwork and has further opportunities to learn advanced skills. In addition, children need to acquire a range of skills, attitudes and behaviors that are consistent with their development as persons and which enhance full participation in their communities, economies and nations.

Regrettably, even when FBE was in force in the country, there were still a number of dropouts, a number of youths still roam the streets, some schools especially in rural areas were still recording low enrollments, too many grade 7 school leavers were not able to proceed and complete school. What is most serious and saddening is the fact that most of the grade seven pupils were proceeding to upper basic without knowing how to read and write. Additionally, some of the children who failed to break through literacy, they found themselves in high schools with the same status of being unable to read and write. This implied that at the end of their course, the education obtained

did not have an effect on the school leavers, resulting in so many illiterates in the community. This is very common in rural areas of this country.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The Free Basic Education Policy (Grades 1-7) was announced in February 2002 by the President of the Republic of Zambia, late Dr. Levy P. Mwanawasa. This was followed up by a circular (ME/71/126 No.3; 2002 dated 15th March, 2002) from the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education to all schools and education offices explaining what Free Basic Education entailed (MOE, 2003). This was in an effort to improve access and equity. According to (MOE, 2002), the annual school census for the period from 2001 to 2002, including the declaration of Free Middle Basic Education, indicated a significant growth of 7% in pupil enrollment. This was a sharp contrast to previous trends when enrollments were increasing at lower than 2% every year (MOE, 2003).

Despite the increased access and enrolment to education at both lower and middle basic levels, there were still a lot of imbalances. Currently, the major challenges concerning the policy implementation seem not to have been researched adequately, hence this study.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The study was aimed at determining the challenges encountered by schools in implementing the Free Basic Education policy.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

Following the purpose above, the specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the challenges encountered by schools in implementing FBE Policy.
2. Assess the impact of the challenges on education delivery.
3. Establish the effects of the challenges on education demand and supply.
4. Identify the strategies that schools employed to cope with the challenges.

1.6 Research Questions

To help investigate the research problem, the following research questions were answered:

1. What challenges do schools encounter in implementing FBE Policy?
2. How do the challenges impact education delivery?
3. What effects do the challenges have on education demand and supply?
4. What strategies do schools employ to cope with the challenges?

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study would bring to light the challenges schools encountered in implementing Free Basic Education Policy. The findings of this study might assist the policy makers in Government and the Ministry of Education to find better ways of implementing the policy. The findings would further help to minimize the challenges and enable schools deliver quality education. Additionally, it was hoped that the information from this study would be useful to the Ministry of Education in that no significant study had been conducted to look specifically at the challenges of implementing Free Basic Education Policy in the country.

1.8 Delimitations of the Study

The study was limited to thirty (30) schools out of one hundred twenty (120) basic schools and fifty eight (58) community schools in Solwezi District of the North-Western Province. The schools were purposively selected from both rural and urban areas of the district so as to get balanced results.

1.9 Limitations

The limitations were that a survey was used hence a limited number of respondents. While in the field collecting data, the researcher faced some difficulties. The schools had just closed and most of the teachers were not found in school. The researcher had difficulties in following up teachers in their homes. Furthermore, some teachers were not cooperative to answer the questionnaire saying that it was during the holiday and

they were resting. Some teachers could not fill in the questionnaire in time, the researcher made several trips to the respective schools to plead for the respondents to fill in the questionnaire.

In addition, this was the period for elections hence most of the teachers were preparing for elections. Most of them were serving as polling assistants and presiding officers. This prompted some respondents to hurriedly answer the questionnaire. However, the head teachers and the management at the DEBS' office were very cooperative. The results were entirely depended on how genuine the respondents were. The schools were also purposively selected ensuring that both rural and urban schools were included hence the results may not be so representative.

1.10 Operational Definition of Key Terms

Access: An opportunity or a right of a person to be in school.

Basic Education: The whole range of educational activities that aim to meet basic learning needs and in this study is formal education at lower and middle basic level (grades 1-7).

Challenges: The difficulties the schools are going through in implementing Free Basic Education.

Disparities: Lack of equality in the provision of school opportunities to the school age population.

Dropout Rate (by grade): The percentages of pupils or students who dropout from a given grade in a given school year.

Education for All: The provision of basic education for all children, youth and adults.

Enrollment: The number of pupils enrolled at a given level of education regardless of age.

Gross Enrollment Ratio: Total enrolment as a percentage of the official school age population.

Inequities: The state of unfair in the provision of school opportunities to the school age population.

Learning Achievement: The actual skills, attitudes, values and level of knowledge acquired by the individual; it implies some measurement or demonstration that learning has occurred.

Literacy: The ability to read and write with comprehension, as well as to make simple arithmetical calculations (numeracy) or basic cognitive skills enabling one to obtain and process information in a meaningful manner.

Net Enrolment Ratio: Enrolment of official age group expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population.

Primary Education: The provision of first level instruction to children usually in the 6-11 age groups.

Pupil Teacher Ratio: The average number of pupils per teacher, based on headcounts for both pupils and teachers.

Repetition Rate: The proportion of pupils from a cohort enrolled in a given year and study in the same grade in the following school year.

Surge: Sudden increase in value or number of pupils in a class or school in a given school year.

1.11 Summary

Zambia's Education Policy has gone through a number of changes. Before independence, Zambia's Education Policy was a parallel one justified on racial and other lines and it was not free. After independence free education was introduced and lasted up to the nineteen eighties. Due to economic decline during this period in question, fee paying in schools was introduced and a lot of children dropped out of school. Disparities and inequities were exacerbated hence the introduction of free education in 2002 but this time from grades 1-7.

Despite the introduction of Free Education Policy, disparities and inequities still continued. This state of affairs necessitated this study so as to investigate challenges in the implementation FBE in Solwezi District of the North Western Province. The

purpose of the study was to determine challenges faced by schools in the implementation of Free Basic Education Policy.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

This chapter looks at the significant literature documented on the challenges encountered in implementing Free Basic Education Policy in schools. It also presents a review of available information on countries that have implemented the policy in the world and the challenges they have encountered. Finally the review dwells on the strategies used in various countries to cope with the challenges.

2.2 World Statistics of Countries Implementing Free Basic/Primary Education Policy

In recent years, there has been enough evidence globally on the negative impact of user fees on the poor that many governments, often with the support of development agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations, have begun to champion user fee elimination for basic public services, including primary education. This is rooted in the November 1948 declaration of human rights where members of the United Nations declared the right to education for all people (Siaciwena and Lubinda, 2008).

Worldwide, the aspect of “Investment in Primary Education” has been a key element in the development process. Knight and Sabot (1990), established that primary education improves the earnings of its graduates by 19 percent in Kenya and 13

percent in Tanzania. In such a noble process, there is always apparent social benefit that accrues from primary schooling, which includes reduced fertility, better health care and decreased child mortality. Due to social benefits of primary education, most countries Worldwide have prioritized primary education. In the United States of America (USA) elementary schooling is free and compulsory to all children (World Education Services, 2004). In India, the Central government provides 80 percent of financing Free Primary Education, while the local states implement and provide the rest of financing (Government of India, 1994).

2.2.1 Negative Impact of User Fees on School Enrolment Globally

A wide body of evidence shows that the costs of schooling inhibit school enrolment.

Parents in Indonesia, China, the Solomon Islands and many African countries like Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, Uganda and Tanzania cite user fees as a major obstacle to enrolling their children in school (Saroso, 2005; Yardley, 2005; Pacific News, 2005). In 2001, parents and teachers in Tanzania observed that non-payment of fees was the principal reason why children did not attend school (Oxfam, 2001). In Zambia it is estimated that at least 45 percent of the children who drop out of school do so because they cannot pay school fees (Tembo and Ndhlovu, 2005).

However, there are few empirical studies on the ways in which user fees impact enrolment. In Kenya, absenteeism and drop-out rates have been shown to rise and fall in line with user fees (Mukudi, 2004). User fees accounted for 31 percent of the time that children did not attend school. Before user fees were eliminated, children who did not pay school fees were often locked out of school or sent home. An econometric analysis of the impacts of Uganda's Universal Primary Education (UPE) Policy showed that parental income became a less important determinant of enrollment after school fees were eliminated (Deininger, 2003). In 1992, the proportion of children in Uganda who were not enrolled in school due to costs related to schooling was estimated at 71 percent. After direct fees were eliminated this figure dropped to 37 percent.

Additionally, the global survey results on the impediments of user fees have helped policy makers to understand their effect (user fees) of limiting education opportunities for the poor. The survey conducted by the World Bank and published in 2004, showed

user fees to be especially burdensome to poor families in countries experiencing slow economic growth and inflation (Kattan, 2006). Prior to the above survey, the study under the United Nations Project “Task Force on Education and Gender equality” revealed that the support by donors to ensure quality basic education was not adequate. According to Kaulule (2006), the study further acknowledged that there were more than 100 million children out of school at that time. Therefore, the study made recommendations of alleviating the problem, which included interventions and actions such as removing school fees.

In support of this move, the School Fee Abolition Initiative was launched by UNICEF and the World Bank in 2005 and has grown into partnership between government representatives, agency partners, and research and academic institutions (Nielsen, 2009). This was to re-emphasize the Jomtien 1990, Dakar 2000 and other educational conferences which insisted on Education for All by 2015. The focus was exclusively on elimination of basic education fees because it is at this level that the Education for All movement had declared that education should be free (World Bank and UNICEF, 2009). The basic or primary level is also the only level at which most governments’ constitutionary pledge to provide state-sponsored schooling due to the reasons stated above.

To reinforce EFA, Nielsen (2009), states that in 2002, the World Bank and UNICEF, together with development partners launched the Education for All Fast Track Initiative to help low-income countries in their efforts to meet the education related MDGs and the EFA goal that all children complete a full cycle of basic education by 2015. By 2005, 32 countries joined the School Fee Abolition Movement. These include 19 from Africa, 5 from Europe/Central Asia, 4 from Asia, 3 from Latin America and 1 from Middle East/North America (Nielsen, 2009). Some of the countries mentioned are Central African Republic, Haiti, Nepal, Saotome, Norway, France, Sweden, Denmark, Brazil, Finland, Belgium and Austria (Kaulule, 2006). Others that moved earlier on to eliminate school fees include Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique and Uganda (Kattan, 2006). Most of the middle income countries especially those from Europe provide free education for children at the age of three and almost 100 percent of children enroll in school (Kaulule, 2006).

However, globally, there is an overall recognition that elimination of basic school fees must be carefully planned and widely negotiated if it is to make a positive and sustainable impact on access to schooling and improved student teaching (Das et al, 2004). Therefore, the school fee abolition is a complex undertaking that cannot be done well without careful planning and policy adjustments on multiple fronts (Chukwumelum, 2007). It is for this reason that out of the 93 countries worldwide, almost all (81%)-77 countries who have implemented FBE/FPE have some type of fee. Only sixteen (16) countries have no type of fee at all and these are Bangladesh, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Iraq, Nepal, Peru, Senegal, Srilanka, St. Kitts and Nevis, Tanzania, The Gambia, Tunisia and Zambia. In these countries, basic/primary education is completely provided by the government (World Bank, 2008).

The types of fees mentioned above include: tuition, textbooks, uniform, Parent Teachers' Association/community contributions and other school based activities. The 16 countries mentioned do not officially charge any of these fees while the rest charge one or more of these fees globally due to challenges. Some of the challenges that have arisen as countries endeavor to abolish school fees include:

- Providing for sustainable financing to cover the lost revenue for School Fee Abolition and the likely enrolment surges.
- Maintaining or improving school quality in the face of changed funding flows and increased access.
- Reaching the most vulnerable groups.
- Reconciling School Fee Abolition and private education.
- Planning for downstream education demands.
- Decentralizing education management and empowering communities.

However, Obinaju (2001) argues that, there are global generalized solutions to the above stated challenges that have been applicable to most of the countries worldwide namely:

- Maximizing classroom construction.
- Improve teachers/pupils supervision to increase teachers' service delivery.
- Establish more schools to compete with increased enrolment rate.

- Regular provision of teaching materials/aids government.
- Proper implementation of the education reforms of the education ministries.
- Improved funding of the basic education sub-sector by government.
- Adequate provision of instructional materials to enhance teaching/learning effectiveness.
- Regular payment of teachers' salaries and proper motivation of teachers through loans to increase in-puts to the success of FPE.

2.3 Implementation of Free Primary/Basic Education Policy in Africa

Literature has revealed that a number of countries in Africa have introduced the Free Education Policy at Basic School levels (UNESCO, 2003a). Some countries and the years they introduced FBE/FPE are shown on the table below.

The African Countries that have introduced Free Education Policy recognized the many implications of reducing the cost of education to parents, reacting to the enrollment surge and the provision of quality education (Kaulule, 2006).

Table 1: Countries that have Implemented FPE/FBE in Africa

Country	Year Free Education Introduced
Malawi	1994
Ethiopia	1994
Uganda	1997
Lesotho	2000
Tanzania	2001
Zambia	2002
Kenya	2003

Source: World Bank, 2007.

2.3.2 Free Primary/Basic Education in Sub-Saharan Africa

Over the past decade several countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have abolished Primary School tuition fees typically as part of renewed attempts to resurrect their education systems which have been in decline, and even suffering reduced enrollments after the

initial growth following independence (Verspoor, 2006). Whereas from the eighties and early to mid-nineties, cost-sharing had been a policy promoted by international financial institutions such as the World Bank, the direct (and indirect) costs to parents of their children's education became obstacles to their attendance and continued enrollment. The inability of parents to afford such costs fell on girls disproportionately, typically being the first to be pulled out or allowed to drop out of school (UNESCO, 2003b).

Although, the FBE/FPE was introduced with the good intentions of increasing access to education, a number of African countries have had problems regarding financing of the program. These include Malawi, Kenya, Uganda and Zambia due to declining economies. The FBE/FPE Policy has enhanced access leading to an increase in enrollment in number of pupils while bringing about decline in quality of education. While it is good that enrollment increased for example from 2.7 million to 7.5 million, this has defied the reality because teachers are not able to cope with the numbers and as a result quality is compromised (UNESCO, 2004b). It has been argued that before the introduction of FBE/FPE, it has been easier to have individual pupil attention but this is not the case now (Duncan, Macmillan and Simutanyi, 2003). Additionally, the teaching and learning resources are inadequate due to insufficient funding. For example, in the Delta State of Nigeria, the intent of the UBE as declared in the policy statement that education should be free. The financial burden of government often forces parents to get involved in the funding of basic level of education. Since most of the parents are poor, the children remain poorly equipped to learn (Kamla, 2009).

2.3.3 Free Primary Education in Malawi

Free Primary Education was introduced in October 1994 following its announcement in June by the newly elected Government brought into power through the first multi-party elections since independence. Just prior to that time, the Banda Government had brought in tuition waivers, in phases, from standard 1, but parents were expected to pay book fees and to contribute to school funds. From 1994, however, Government was supposed to be responsible for all costs, though in practice it continued to expect communities to contribute to school construction.

Given the lack of an overall policy framework and an analysis of the resource implications of embarking on this route, it is not surprising that even today critics

allege that the expansion of primary education has been at the expense of quality. Indeed, it is worth noting that the sudden introduction of Free Primary Education by the new administration was opposed by the development community which preferred the more gradual, phased (Kadzamira and Rose, 2003). This move increased enrolments from 58 percent for both girls and boys in 1994/5 to 158.1 percent in 1999/2000. Male and Female gross enrolment rates were comparable in 1999/2000: 157.1 and 158.3 percent, respectively. Such rapid enrolment increases challenged an already weak system that even before expansion had a pupil-teacher ratio of 70:1 with 13 percent of teachers being unqualified and an average of 100 pupils crowding existing classrooms. The biggest challenges were, not surprisingly, pressure on classroom facilities, insufficient teachers and an inadequate supply of instructional materials (Kadzamira and Rose, 2003).

Some measures taken to overcome challenges were the creation of the Malawi Integrated In-service Teacher Education Project (MIITEP) designed to produce more teachers in a short time, build teacher's resource centers, engaging communities in school and teachers' housing construction and providing instructional materials. At the same time, the administration and management capacities of the Ministry of Education were to be developed to cope with such undertakings. Alongside these reforms, other policies were introduced such as allowing no uniforms, prohibiting corporal punishment, revitalizing parent-teachers associations, introducing curriculum changes and a new language policy and decentralizing to district level.

The impact of the new commitment to FPE was on the doubling of government expenditure devoted to education. The expenditure rose from 11 percent to 24 percent. Primary education's share of total educational expenditure went up from 45 percent to 65 percent in early years of FPE, not least because of the conditions attached to external funds, which themselves constituted about 40 percent of the primary education budget (Kadzamira and Rose, 2003).

The circumstances surrounding the rapid quantitative expansion of the primary sector, together with this donor dependence has raised a number of issues regarding the long term impact of the 1994 FPE policy of the Malawi Government (Kendall, 2003). The continued lack of access of some sub-groups (street children, out-of-school youth; those with special needs, orphans and illiterate adults) pose a challenge. Further, they

point to continuing disparities between different income groups. Whilst the enrolment expansion has been remarkable, the quality of education and many would say, even the 'value' of education has deteriorated. Even more worrying is the fact that repetition rates are over 20% and 55% of primary enrolment are over-age thus requiring non- formal education (Kendall, 2003).

2.3.4 Universal Primary Education (UPE) in Uganda

Universal Primary Education was introduced in January 1997 in Uganda. Education was seen as an important foundation of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan, the indigenous PRSP of which the Education Sector Investment Program (ESIP) was a key building block. Tuition fees were abolished for 6-12 year-olds. In addition, disabled and orphaned children were to be given special consideration. Primary enrolment in 1996 was 2.7 million. By 2002, this had surged to 7.2 million pupils. Gross enrolment in 1995 was 74.3%. By 2001/2, gross enrolment had reached 135.8 %, indicative of the considerable number of over and under-age pupils enrolled. Net enrolment in the same year was 109.5%. Universal Primary Education had been achieved (Government of the Republic of Uganda, 2003).

The challenges of sustaining UPE will relate to the matching of the quantitative expansion with qualitative improvement as well as in improving access to post-primary schooling. The systematic monitoring of various qualitative indicators has underlined many of these challenges, such as reducing pupil teacher ratio, pupil classroom ratio and pupil book ratio. Various measures have been introduced to help qualitative improvement. Teachers' needs are now being met in some respects through hardship allowances given to teachers in remote areas. The policy dilemma of moving toward increased post-primary access whilst still addressing primary quality will remain for some time. In April, 2002, the Ministry of Education in Uganda instituted a task force to design a Post-primary Education and Training (PPET) policy and costed framework to make provisions for absorbing the UPE bulge into the post primary sector of education (Deininger, 2003).

2.3.5 Free Primary Education (UPE) In Lesotho

Lesotho's Free Primary Education (FPE) Programme began in January 2000. The program's main goal was to provide the minimum and basic resources to enable

children to enter and complete the primary education cycle. The program was being implemented in phases, beginning with standard 1 in 2000, standard 2 in 2001 and so on until 2006, when the whole primary cycle was to be covered. In implementing the program, the government committed to assisting schools that opted to join the program with teachers' salaries and provision of textbooks, classrooms and equipment, and meals. In anticipation of increased enrolments, the Ministry of Education created an additional 460 teaching positions, with grants distributed to schools. Beginning in 2000, the Government has gradually taken over the cost of textbooks and stationery in primary schools and has implemented a centralized procurement process. In addition, food services were provided by existing programs, such as the World Food Program, or through local catering contracts, paid directly by the Ministry. School maintenance was also managed at the central level (World Bank and Lesotho's Ministry of Education and Training, 2005).

The program seems to have had a positive impact on enrolment rates. The gross primary enrolment rate increased from 109% in 1996 to 127% in 2003. Net primary enrolment rose by 33% alone in year following implementation of FPE, from 60% in 1999 to 80% in 2000. Furthermore, the most recent data available suggest that the increases in enrolment had been sustained and that children who entered the system in 2001 were gradually advancing to subsequent levels.

FPE has also been credited by head teachers with ensuring access to education for thousands AIDS orphans. A policy of free and compulsory education also helped to entrench popular demand for schooling as a right, and put positive pressure on both local and national governments to deliver (Lerotholi, 2001).

However, the households continued to bear certain education costs including uniforms and non-teaching staff salaries. Also since most transactions were handled by the central government and some schools' financial needs exceed the government allocations, schools continue to struggle to raise funds (Lerotholi, 2001). In addition, the school management component of FPE has met with little success. It has been plagued by budget constraints, the burden of vouchers, and individual schools' inability to account for funds received. Furthermore, the maintenance expenditure guidelines are not flexible enough to account for individual school needs.

2.3.6 School Fee Abolishment at Basic School Level in Kenya

Another case is Kenya where the abolishing of basic school fees was done in 2003. This resulted in a major jump in enrolment for the first term of 2003 (1.2 million new students) indicating that the previous costs were the biggest constraint on many children attending school. By 2003, the gross primary enrolment was 104%. The net primary enrolment rate rose from 80% in 2003 to about 82% in 2005 (World Bank, 2003; World Bank, 2005). Most of the new enrollees were children who had never attended school or who had previously dropped out.

This showed that Kenya was on the track to meet the Universal Primary Education (UPE) MDG, but many challenges remained. For instance, disparities still existed between boys and girls, with a net enrolment rate for girls of 81%. In addition, about 1 million school-age children still did not have access to schooling (IOB, 2008). This is because of the socio-economic factors which many communities faced in Africa. In most cases, the schools' infrastructure was not sufficient enough to meet the increased demand for schooling, buildings were in disrepair and there were not enough classrooms and latrines. The specific needs of girls and orphans were not being met. Improving the quality of education was also a major challenge (Akech and Simatwa, 2010). Student teacher ratios had risen, class sizes were extremely large and there was a problem of inefficient of resources (World Bank, 2005).

To meet these challenges, the steps had been taken to improve the situation. These include curriculum changes of reducing the number of primary subjects taught. The government had also agreed to use multi-grade teachers in some schools. The recruitment of teachers has been moved down to district level. In addition, the government has developed an education sector plan spanning the period 2005-2010 in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. Furthermore, extensive cost and budget analysis has been carried out for the Kenya Education Sector Support Project (World Bank, 2005).

2.4 The Free Basic Education Policy in Zambia

Zambia like any other country following this free education policy adhered to the call by the world organizations that had been insisting on Education for All. Free Basic Education (FBE) was announced and immediately introduced in Zambia in 2002. FBE 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 Plan for Education also called for the abolition of schools fees (MOE, 2003).

Although Free Basic Education was a political decision, it was expected to be implemented immediately. There was little time to adequately plan for the transformation (Mwansa, et al, 2004). Within a short period of time the Ministry of Education had to revise a grants scheme to compensate all schools. In 2002, the schools received a grant of (US \$4909) 27 billion kwacha divided over 5,081 schools and 597 Community Schools. Initially schools received equal amounts each of (US \$1418) 7.8 million kwacha divided over three equal installments of (US \$473) 2.6 million kwacha (Mwansa et al, 2004). This policy favored the smaller schools and many of these were in rural areas (IOB, 2008:35).

Before the introduction of Free Basic Education, the rate of school dropouts kept on increasing because the majority could not pay user fees. This is because about 80% of the population lived below the poverty datum line (Chengo and Musonda, 2005). National estimates indicate that in 2000, over 570 000 or 30% of school-age population were not in regular schools. By 2003, this number decreased to 480 000 or 23.4 percent. With the coming of community schools, the number reduced further to 340 000 or 16.6% of the school age children (MOE, 2004). Additionally, as years progressed, the Government of the Republic of Zambia (2011:94) states that, “Pupil school enrolment increased to 3.6 million in 2009 as compared to 2.9 million in 2005 for basic education.” Net Enrolment Ratio increased from 93% in 2005 to 97% in 2009, while the Gender Parity Index (GPI) improved from 0.95 in 2005 to 0.99 in 2009 indicating an insignificant GPI of 0.04.

Due to this rise in enrolment, the grants could not purchase critical resources needed for effective teaching and learning. Moreover, the grants were often and are still not released on time and are inadequate (Duncan, Macmillan and Simutanyi, 2003). It is from this background that in 2003, the Ministry of Education developed a new allocation scheme which took school size into account. “The largest schools (Grades 1 and 2) received 3 million kwacha (US \$600), where as smaller schools (Grades 3, 4 and 5) and Community Schools received 2.6 million kwacha (US \$520) per quarter” (Mwansa et al, 2004:38).

Despite this step, for many schools, the grants were still not sufficient enough to meet the overwhelming needs and several schools reacted by raising PTA fees at the upper basic school level (Grades 8 and 9). “The pupil teacher ratio increased from 49:1 between 2002 and 2003 to 57:1 in 2005” (IOB, 2008:68). In some cases, there was congestion in classrooms with an average number of 77 pupils per class. The pupil book ratio rose to 18:1 and six pupils could share a desk and in extreme cases eleven children could use one desk (Chengo and Musonda, 2005). Additionally, grants could not meet costs for utility services like water, electricity and security. To make matters worse, many schools were not decided on what type of fundraising ventures to embark on to raise additional funds. The pupil performance in numeracy and literacy was and is still poor with only 33% pass rate due to overcrowding.

Additionally, during the year 2010, 341,326 (182,320 boys and 159,006) registered for Grade Seven Examinations. Out of this number, only 42% performed better while 58% did not do well. It was noted with concern that 34,621 pupils (17,700 boys and 16,921 girls) were recorded to be absent during the examination giving a national percentage of 10.14% (MOE, 2011a). The contributing factors to the poor performance and absenteeism at basic level were, delayed disbursement of funds, inadequate teaching and learning materials and desks, reduced pupil teacher contact time, inadequate funding for bursary support to meet ever increasing demand due to increase in the number of orphans and vulnerable children and continued existence of classroom congestion due to limited infrastructure and this has continued to compromise the quality of education, leading to poor quality being seen as a major challenge facing Zambia in education (World Bank, 2006).

Furthermore, the budget allocation to education in Zambia is the lowest in the sub-region. In 2001, just over 20% of the total budget was allocated to education compared to 25% - 30% in other countries (MOE, 2003). On the overall, education allocation as a proportion of GDP increased from 2.3% to an estimated allocation of 4.1% in 2002, this included external funding (MOE, 2003:18). In the 2011 budget, the estimated allocation to education slightly went up to about 6% but even then, this is below as compared to the overwhelming needs of these schools. This indicates difficulties in the operation of the schools to date.

On the other hand, more pupils have moved from government schools to community schools since the introduction of Free Basic Education implying that Community schools are addressing other constraints that are equally important to families than the direct cost of schooling (MOE, 2004). Therefore, enrolments increased partly because of community schools that attracted pupils and are still attractive as compared to public schools.

2.5 Access and Quality

The Gross Enrolment Ratio for grades 1-9 rose from 75.1% in 2000 to 104.6% in 2005 while the Net Enrolment Ratio rose to 92.3% from 68.1% in 2000 due to the introduction of FBE. However, this development does not correspond to the high schools, which was only 21.5% meaning that less than 30% of children that should access to high schools education had no such opportunity (Ministry of Science, Technology and Vocational Training, 2009). Again, it is noted with dismay that where as Zambia was successful in improving access to education, the quality of education, as measured by test and examination results is still poor. The weaknesses are related to severe underfunding, large differences in pupil teacher ratio and pupil classroom ratio that exist between and within schools (IOB, 2008). Pupil teacher ratios are considerably higher in remote rural areas. Enrolment rates are higher in the highest wealth quintiles and the wealthiest regions.

2.6 Summary

The review of literature has shown that the introduction of the Free Basic Education Policy was well intended and has resulted into increased enrolments at grades 1-7 since its inception. However, there still existed a disparity between male and female pupils in enrolments and completion rates. Additionally, despite the interventions such as recruitment of teachers and building of schools and addition of classrooms in existing schools by the government, the gains in the quality of education have not matched the levels achieved in terms of access. The quality and access do not match due to numerous challenges encountered at basic school level that surfaced during the review. The major ones included insufficient funding to the education sector to meet the overwhelming needs in schools.

Additionally, although many African countries have decided to abolish school fees, experience has shown that many challenges remained and that there were also consequences and hidden costs. Fee creep (the persistence of some kind of fees and other private costs of schooling) remains a worldwide phenomenon, even when countries have officially and legally abolished fees.

The challenges and strategies taken in different countries globally were generalized. For the case of Zambia, during the literature review, we did not find studies conducted specifically to explore the challenges schools encountered in implementing Free Basic Education Policy, and the strategies they use to overcome the challenges. For instance, we did not find information on measures taken to mitigate the challenges of erratic and inadequate funding. Further, the alternative ways of sourcing income by schools did not come out. Finally the means of bridging the big gap of the disparity between girls' and boys' enrolments in schools did not surface and the ways of coping with this situation.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This section describes the methods used in collecting data and how the data was analyzed. It also outlines the research design employed, the target population, sample size and sampling method. Data collection procedure and analysis as well as the instruments used and the reason for choosing the stated instruments are also discussed.

3.2 Study Area

The study was done in Solwezi District of the North-Western Province covering thirty (30) schools out of one hundred seventy eight (178) basic schools in the district. All schools sampled were basic schools and were of both rural and urban setting.

Figure 1: Location Map of Solwezi District



Source: Government of the Republic of Zambia, 2004b.

3.3 Research Design

This study was a descriptive survey on the challenges of implementing the Free Basic Education Policy in basic schools of Solwezi District in the North-Western Province. The reason for choosing a survey was to allow for a full description of the state of affairs on the stated topic in the district. The description was based on the views collected from District Education Board Secretary, District Education Standards Officer, Head teachers and teachers. From literature, scholars have revealed that descriptive survey seeks to describe the state of affairs as it exists and can be used when collecting information about peoples' attitudes, opinions, habits or any of the variety of education or social issues (Orodho and Kombo, 2002). The study was conducted in thirty (30) basic schools of both rural and urban setting of the District.

3.4 Target Population

The target population of this study comprised all teachers (1223), all head teachers (178) in all the basic schools and community schools of Solwezi, and the entire management of Solwezi District Education Board Secretary's Office (20).

Table 2: Study Population and Sample Size

Study Population				Sample Size			
	Female	Male	Total		Female	Male	Total
Teachers	769	454	1223	Teachers	56	64	125
Head teachers	20	158	178	Head teachers	5	25	30
DEBS' office	4	16	20	DESO		1	1
				DEBS		1	1
Total	793	628	1421	Total	61	91	157

The sample size was one hundred and twenty five (125) teachers, thirty two (32) key informants who included 30 head teachers, 1 DESO and 1 DEBS. The teachers responded to a questionnaire while the key informants were interviewed. Finally, an observation checklist was used to record the schools' equipment and facilities.

3.5 Research Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample was both purposively and stratified randomly drawn to ensure that specific groups were represented according to the researcher's discretion. These methods help target a group which is suitable to bring out rich information related to the central issue being studied for in-depth analysis (Black, 1999; Kombo and Tromp, 2009). The participants of this study comprised 157 respondents from respective basic schools and the DEBS' Office. The DEBS, DESO and head teachers were purposively selected because of their involvement in the FBE implementation. On the other, teachers were selected using stratified random sampling so as to get proportionate figures of informants from both rural and urban schools. The selection was based on the researcher's discretion and knowledge. The head teachers and the district management were key informants. The District Management and the Schools were

targets because they are the ones responsible for the implementation of the FBE policy.

3.6 Research Instruments

Since the study was intended to be a descriptive survey, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and three instruments were employed in data collection for the study. These included: Questionnaire, Structured interviews and Observation. For the sake of obtaining unbiased data, books, official records and reports for the District were consulted as well.

3.6.1 Validity of the Instruments

The questionnaire, the structured interview schedules and the observation checklist were validated by the researcher, the supervisor and other experts in Educational Research Methods at the Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies (DRGS), who critically examined the face and content values of the instruments. Necessary corrections were made in order to improve the instruments.

3.6.2 Reliability of the Questionnaire

In this study, the test re-test method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. Test re-test reliability is concerned with the internal consistency of the instruments. The method has the advantage of being administered twice to one group of respondents (Singer, 2009). The 28 item questionnaire was administered to some basic school teachers in Solwezi District outside the sample of the study. To ensure high percentage return of the research instrument, the researcher administered the questionnaire personally to the respondents and retrieved them immediately. This was repeated to the same respondents after one week. This was in quest to make the questionnaire more reliable.

The data collected were tested and correlated by applying the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. A reliability coefficient of 0.89 was obtained which showed that the Questionnaire had a high internal consistency.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Primary data were collected through face to face interviews with the key informants. During the interviews, the researcher took notes based on the conversation between the researcher and the respondents. The interviews were used to get opinions from the stated respondents on the challenges of implementing the FBE policy. The questionnaire was also administered to get data from teachers on the state of affairs. The researcher also observed the schools' equipment, facilities and enrolment levels and recorded on the observation checklist. Secondary data were obtained from official records, reports, internet, dissertations, and books available in the libraries and from organizations such as UNDP and UNESCO where data related to the topic could be obtained. The Ministry of Education Headquarters Documentation Center was also used to collect data.

3.8 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitative data which were collected from open-ended items in the questionnaire were analyzed thematically using content analysis, as themes and sub themes emerged from the data. The quantitative data which were collected from closed-ended items in the questionnaire were analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics in form of percentages and frequencies. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to enhance the analysis. The responses from subjects were put into categories according to the emerging themes. This allowed objective and critical interpretation, so as to make decisions that were valid for proper conclusion and recommendations of the study.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

To facilitate smooth collection of data as per requirement in research, permission to conduct this study was sought from relevant authorities at the University of Zambia Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies, the Ministry of Education Headquarters, the Provincial Education Office, the District Education Board Secretary's Office and the Head teachers' of respective Basic Schools. All data collected during this study were used specifically for the purpose of the study, and were kept strictly confidential. Consent was sought from respondents and no informant was forced to participate in the study. The names of the respondents and institutions were not disclosed in any way and the names used in this report were

pseudonyms. Furthermore, the research was fully explained to the subjects in advance and “de-briefed” them afterwards.

3.10 Summary

The study was done in Solwezi District of the North Western Province. A descriptive survey was employed to allow for a full description of the state of affairs on the stated topic. The researcher targeted all the teachers, head teachers in all the basic schools in Solwezi and the entire management at the District Education Board Secretary’s Office. One hundred and twenty five teachers were stratified and randomly selected while the 30 head teachers, 1DEBS and 1DESO were purposively selected because of their involvement in the implementation of the FBE policy.

Questionnaires, structured interviews and observation were the instruments employed in data collection. Data were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Permission was sought at all levels that is from the University, the Ministry of Education up to the school level and consent was sought from all the respondents. All the names of respondents were not disclosed in any way and instead pseudonyms were used in the entire report.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

This chapter presents the findings of the study. It is divided into five sections namely demographic characteristics of respondents, the challenges of implementing Free Basic Education, the impact of challenges on education delivery, the effects of challenges on demand and supply in education, and the coping strategies adopted by the schools to overcome the challenges. The chapter begins by presenting the demographic characteristics of the respondents, followed by the presentation of the responses of teachers and the key informants on the challenges of implementing the

FBE policy. The responses were based on the research questions and variables which were related to the study in question.

The research questions that were investigated were:

1. What challenges do schools encounter in implementing the FBE policy?
2. How do the challenges impact education delivery?
3. What effect do the challenges have on education demand and supply?
4. What strategies do schools employ to cope with the challenges?

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

A hundred and twenty five questionnaires were distributed to teachers, out of which 120 were returned, giving a response rate of 96%. Furthermore, 32 key informants were interviewed. These included 30 head teachers, 1 DESO and 1 DEBS. Sixty four (53.3%) teacher respondents were male while 56 (47.7%) were female. Among the key informants, 27 (84.4%) were male while 5 (15.6%) were female. With regard to the age of the teacher respondents, 28 (23.7%) were aged between 20 and 30 years, 68 (57.6%) were aged between 31 and 40 years, 18 (15.3%) were aged between 41 and 50 years, and 4 (3.4%) were aged between 51 and 60 years (See table 3).

Table 3: Age of Teacher Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20-30	28	23.7%
31-40	68	57.6%
41-50	18	15.3%
51-60	4	3.4%
Total	118	100%

The results revealed that most of the teachers who participated in the study were aged in the range of 31 and 40 years and most of them were male. This meant that the

majority of class teachers were in the youthful stage and very few old teachers were still class teachers. Another observation was that there were more male teachers since most of the schools where the survey was conducted were of a rural setting.

The age of the key informants was also analyzed and the findings were that 23 (71.9%) were aged between 41 and 50 years, 3 (9.4%) were aged between 31 and 40 years and 6 (18.8%) were in the age range of 51 and 60 years. Therefore, the majority of the key informants were aged between 41 and 50 years which meant that most of the schools were run by people who were mature, thus adding value to the findings of the research.

The qualifications of teacher respondents were also analyzed and the results indicated that 49 (40.8%) had primary teachers' certificates, and 71 (59.2%) had primary teachers' diploma. Additionally, 21 (65.6%) key informants had primary teachers' diploma, 4 (12.5%) were primary teachers' certificate holders, and 7 (21.9%) were university degree holders. Therefore the majority of the key informants were diploma holders and very few had primary teachers' certificates or university degrees. The existence of few certificate holders could be a result of the teachers' response to the Government's plan to phase out all the primary teachers' certificates in basic schools by 2014.

The teaching experience of teacher respondents was analyzed as well to add value to the findings. The results were that 23 (20.5%) had a teaching experience of between 1 and 5 years, 49 (43.8%) had a teaching experience of between 6 and 10 years, 20 (17.9%) had between 11 and 15 years of teaching experience, and 9 (8.9%) of the respondents had been teaching for over 21 years (See table 4).

Table 4: Teaching Experience of Respondents

Years	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	23	20.5%
6-10	49	43.8%
11-15	20	17.9%
16-20	9	8.0%
21 yrs and above	10	8.9%
Total	112	100%

The findings were that 88 (79.5%) respondents had teaching experience of 6 to 21 years and above, followed by those who had been teaching for 1 to 5 years representing 20.5%. This meant that the majority of the respondents had been teaching for more than 5 years and could have a positive effect on the performance of pupils. Furthermore, the findings on administrative experience of key informants showed that 15 (46.9%) had between 1 and 5 years experience, 8 (25%) had between 6 and 10 years, 5 (15.6%) had between 11 and 15 years, 3 (9.4%) had 16-20 years and 1 (3.1 %) had administrative experience of 21 years and above (See table 5).

Table 5: Administrative Experience of Key Informants

Years	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	15	46.9 %
6-10	8	25.0 %
11-15	5	15.6 %
16-20	3	9.4 %
21 yrs and above	1	3.1 %
Total	32	100 %

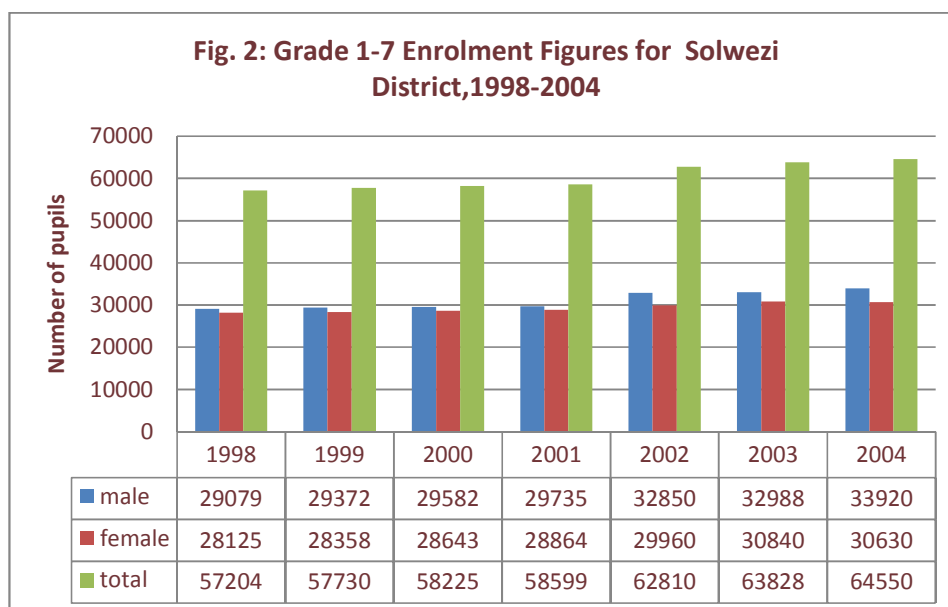
As shown in the table above, the majority of the key informants had administrative experience of between 1 and 5 years. This implied that most of the administrators interviewed were recently appointed but with a vast, and appropriate working experience and maturity levels to manage schools and their complex problems in the implementation of the FBE policy.

4.3 Challenges in the Implementation of Free Basic Education Policy in Schools

4.3.1 Increased Enrolments

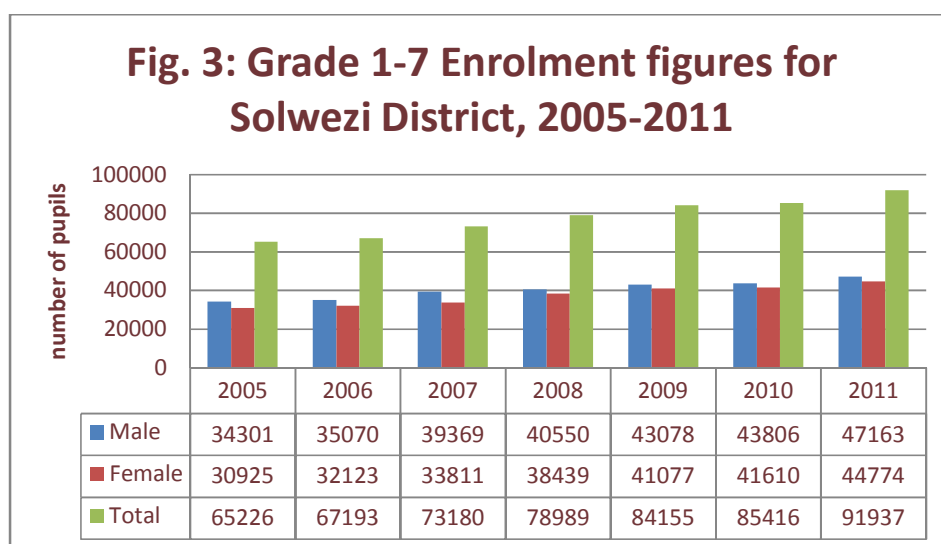
The study observed that between 1998 and 2001, the pre-FBE period, the enrolment figures for the district under study were increasing in the range of 1% to 2% annually, and this increase was lower than that of 2002 which rose to 7.2% (See figure 2). This rapid increase which was shown by a sharp contrast in enrolment figures during the stated period was to a large extent attributed to the introduction of FBE in the period

in question. The second reason for this increase during the post FBE period could have been the re-opening of Kansanshi mine in 2004 which resulted in large numbers of migrants who came to the town in search of employment. Thirdly, the increase could have been due to natural increase in the population of the area in question. It is because of these three reasons that the enrolment levels kept on rising sharply between 2002 and 2011.



Source: Government of the Republic of Zambia, 2004a

Furthermore, the study revealed that the years that followed 2002, the enrolment levels continued increasing at the rate which was in the range of 6.5% and 7.9% annually (See figure 3). The male pupils' number was always more than that of the females during the entire period in question. This showed that the disparities and inequities in education accessibility continued despite all the interventions by the government.



Source: Government of the Republic of Zambia, 2011a

The rapid increase in enrolment levels resulted in large numbers of pupils in classes which eventually led to high pupil-teacher ratios, overcrowded classes in schools, inadequate desks in classes, high pupil-book ratios, and small proportions of classes able to read and write due to abnormal teaching loads for the teachers.

Table 6: Numbers of Pupils in Classes

Numbers of pupils	Frequency	Percentage
21-40	6	5.2%
41-60	45	39.1%
61-80	42	36.5%
81-100	22	19.1%
Total	115	100 %

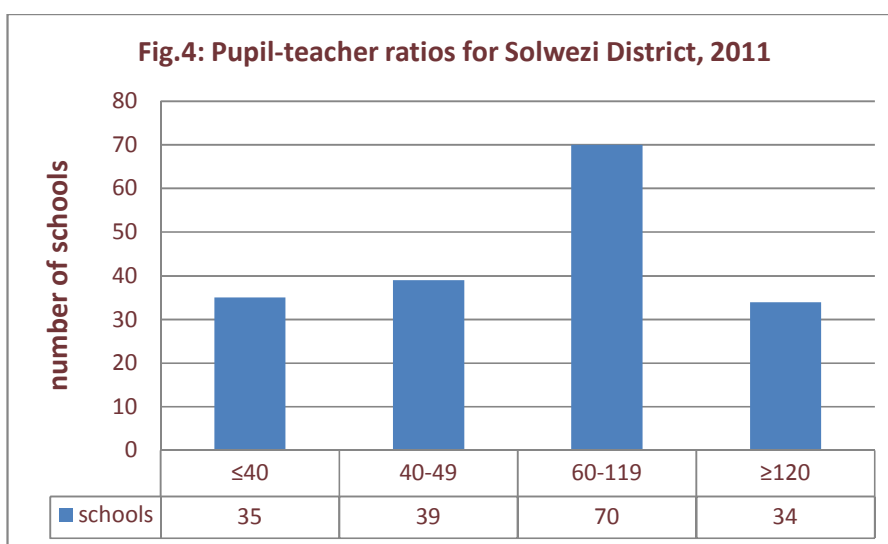
The numbers of pupils in classes were analyzed and the findings indicated that 6 (5.2%) teachers handled classes of sizes ranging from 21 to 40, 45 (39.1%) handled class sizes ranging from 41 to 60, 42 (36.5%) handled class sizes ranging between 61 and 80, while 22 (19.1%) handled class sizes ranging from 81 to 100. As indicated by the statistics, the majority of the teachers handled large numbers of pupils in classes which were in the range of 61 and 100, representing 55.6%, while 44.4% handled class sizes of below 60 pupils per class (See table 6).

As a result of large numbers of pupils in classes in most schools, 104 (58.4%) schools in the district had pupil-teacher ratios (PTR) of between 60 and 120 during the period under review. The study further revealed that the 2011 PTR was higher than that of 1998- 2001 which was in the range of 25:1 to 35:1 in rural schools, and between 40 and 50 in densely populated urban areas (See table 7 and fig. 4).

Table 7: Basic Schools Pupil Teacher Ratios 1998-2001

PTR	$\leq 25:1$	25:1-35:1	40:1-50:1	$\geq 60:1$
Schools	30	45	30	15

Source: Government of the Republic of Zambia, 2000.



Source: Government of the Republic of Zambia, 2011a.

The majority of the schools had PTR exceeding the government PTR standards of between 35:1 and 40:1 pupils per class.

However, not only did the high numbers of pupils lead to high PTR but the findings indicate that this condition also led to overcrowding of classes. Out of the 120 teachers that took part in the study, 107 (89.2%) of the respondents indicated that their classes were overcrowded. This revealed that the majority of the schools had overcrowded classes; which further exacerbated other challenges such as inadequate desks and high pupil-book ratios.

The respondents were asked to state the numbers of desks that were in the classes they handled. The findings revealed that 6 (5%) teachers handled classes with 5 desks each, 17 (14.3%) teachers handled classes with 10 desks each in their classes, 50 (42.0%) indicated 15 desks each, 27 (22.7%) had 20 desks each, 15 (12.6%) indicated 25 desks each, and only 4 (3.4%) of the teachers indicated that they had 30 desks each in their classes (See table 8).

Table 8: Numbers of Desks in Classes

Number of Desks	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
5	6	5.0 %	5.0%
10	17	14.3 %	19.3%
15	50	42.0 %	61.3%
20	27	22.7 %	84.0%
25	15	12.6 %	96.6%
30	4	3.4 %	100.0%
Total	119	100 %	

As reflected in the table above, the findings showed that 73 (61.3%) schools that were surveyed had desks between 5 and 15 per class, against the increased enrolments of between 60 and 120 pupils per class. This resulted in pupils' inability to sit comfortably.

Furthermore, the pupil-book ratios (PBR) for the schools selected for the survey was analyzed and the findings revealed that 1 (0.9%) of the teachers reported handling classes with pupil-book ratio of 1:2, 18 (15.4%) handled classes with PBR of 1:3, and 20 (17.1%) handled classes with PBR of 1:4, 22 (18.8%) handled classes with PBR of 1:5, 29 (24.8%) had a ratio of 1:10, while 27 (23.1%) handled classes with PBR of 1:15 (See table 9).

Table 9: Pupil Book Ratios

Ratios	Frequency	Percentage
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1:2	1	0.9%
1:3	18	15.4%
1:4	20	17.1%
1:5	22	18.8%
1:10	29	24.8%
1:15	27	23.1%
Total	117	100 %

Following the figures in table 9, the results showed that 78 (66.7%) of the respondents reported pupil-book ratios of between 1:5 and 1:15. Thirty nine (33.3%) indicated ratios of between 1:2 and 1:4, as compared to the pupil-book ratios of 1:1 or 1: 2 recommended by the Ministry of Education. This situation impacted negatively the teaching learning process in all the surveyed schools.

4.3.2 Irregular Provisions of Free Exercise Books and Other FBE Materials.

The provision of FBE materials in the schools surveyed was analyzed and the results showed that 76.5% of the respondents indicated that the free exercise books and other materials were provided but were not adequate. On the other hand 15.1% of the respondents indicated that they did not receive FBE materials while 8.4% reported that the free materials were provided but not regularly. The majority of respondents revealed that materials were provided in an irregular manner and were inadequate. These findings were in consistent with those reported by the key informants on the inadequacy and irregular supply of FBE materials by the government.

4.3.3 Major Challenges of Implementing FBE Policy in Schools

Respondents were asked to identify the major challenges schools were facing with regard to the implementation of FBE. The challenges identified were: absenteeism, large classes, pupils proceeding to higher grades while they were still illiterate, inadequate teaching staff, inadequate toilets, imbalanced education demand and supply, enrolment of over-aged pupils, high dropout rates, and poor water and sanitation (See table 10).

Table 10: Major challenges of FBE implementation

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Absenteeism	114	95.0%
Large classes	107	87.5%
Pupils proceeding to other grades while illiterate	93	77.5%
Inadequate teaching staff	91	75.8%
Inadequate toilets	91	75.8%
Education demand and supply not balanced	90	75.0%
Over aged pupils enrolled	84	70.0%
High dropout rate	77	64.7%
Poor water and sanitation	59	49.2%

Table 10 above shows the nine identified major challenges arranged in their order of magnitude in a descending order, namely: absenteeism, large classes(overcrowding), pupils proceeding to higher grades while illiterate, inadequate staffing, inadequate toilets (see figure 5), inequalities between education demand and supply, enrolment of over aged pupils, high dropout rates and poor water supply and sanitation. Generally, most schools were not adequately stocked with teaching and learning materials. These challenges had a big impact on the implementation of the policy.

The study also revealed that with the new policy, all pupils were proceeding to upper basic irrespective of their performance. There was no cut off point for Grade 7 pupils in the province. This did not encourage pupils to work hard and proceeded to other grades without breaking through literacy.



Figure 5: Pupils' Toilet at Mirriam Basic School

Additionally, the respondents were asked to identify the causes of high dropout rates of pupils in the schools surveyed despite the FBE implementation. The causes identified were: lack of money or nonpayment of Parents Teachers' Association (PTA) Project funds, pregnancies, early marriages, long distance from schools and lack of school uniforms.

Table 11: Causes of dropout rates

Causes of high dropout rates	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of money/nonpayment of PTA fund	102	85.2% (1)
Pregnancies	99	82.5% (2)
Early marriages	88	73.3% (3)
Long distance from school	60	50.0% (4)
Lack of school uniform	16	13.3% (5)

As indicated in table 11, the majority of respondents revealed that the major cause of high dropout rates was lack of money to pay for school, buy books, and uniforms and other school requisites. The schools were still charging fees in form of PTA project funds. This meant that learners were still inhibited from accessing education due to lack of money, even when it was free education.

Another major challenge identified in this study was the teaching of over aged learners. This challenge as analyzed was associated with difficulties that included: absenteeism, rudeness, difficult to control (unruly), fighting, early marriages/pregnancies, beer drinking, bullying young ones, late coming, use of abusive language, theft, prostitution, lack of cooperation, lack of concentration in school work, and noise making (See table 12).

Table12: Challenges of Teaching mature learners

Challenges/Difficulties	Frequency	Percentage
Absenteeism	31	20.1%
Rudeness	21	13.6%
Difficult to control (unruly)	18	11.7%
Fighting	15	9.7%
Early marriages/pregnancies	14	9.0%
Beer drinking	12	7.8%
Bullying young ones	8	5.2%
Late coming	7	4.5%
Abusive language/sarcastic	7	4.5%
Theft	6	3.9%
Prostitution	5	3.2%
Lack of cooperation	4	2.6%
Lack of concentration on school work	4	2.6%
Noise making	2	1.3%
Total	154	100%

As indicated in the above table, the results revealed that the most frequent challenges identified in teaching these kinds of learners were: absenteeism, rudeness, and unruly.

4.3.4 Administrative Challenges of Implementing Free Basic Education Policy

The key informants were asked to bring out the administrative challenges in the implementation of the FBE policy. The challenges established were: inadequate and delayed funding from the government, over enrolment, inadequate and irregular supply of educational materials, inadequate staff accommodation, inadequate staffing,

and limited classroom space, irregular provision of FBE free learning and teaching materials, and inadequate desks. These responses were consistent with those given by the teacher respondents on the challenges encountered by schools (See table 13).

Table13: Administrative Challenges of Implementing FBE

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate funding	30	100%
Delays of the grant	30	100%
Over enrolment	28	93.3%
Inadequate stocks of educational supplies	28	93.3%
Inadequate teachers' accommodation	28	93.3%
Inadequate staffing	18	60.0%
Limited classroom space	18	60.0%
Irregular provision of FBE free materials	14	46.7%
Inadequate desks	12	40.0%

The findings above revealed that inadequate funding, delay in the provision of the grant and poor staff accommodations (See figure 6) were ranked among the serious challenges that inhibited smooth operations of schools. These were mentioned by both the teacher respondents and the key informants.



Figure 6: A teacher's house at Mergafason Basic School

Additionally, the key informants reported that funding was not only delayed but it was also not regularly given to schools as planned.

Looking at the funding of the FBE programmes, the key informants were asked to ascertain if the FBE policy was sustainable in Zambia. In response to this question, one key informant was of the view that:

The policy is supposed to be sustainable in the country. The only setback is that the policy is not adequately funded. The country has the capacity to sustain the policy if only a big percentage of the national budget was allocated to the programmes of the Free Basic Education activities.

As stated above, funding was cited as an important factor in the implementation of the policy. Therefore, most of the respondents were of the view that as long as the policy was not well funded, the intended purpose for the policy would be defeated and whatever efforts school managers may put in cannot yield the expected results and achieve the set goals.

4.3.5 Inadequacy in Schools' Equipment and Facilities

The study, through observation of the thirty schools by the researcher, revealed all the 30 schools surveyed did not have water borne toilets, laboratories, industrial arts or technology equipment, 20 (66.7%) did not have physical education equipment, 17 (56.7%) did not have home economics equipment and libraries, 11 (36.7%) did not have science kits, and 5 (16.7%) did not have Production units. These findings have revealed inadequacies in the provision of schools' equipment and facilities.

Additionally, it was observed that, only 7 (23.3%) schools were adequately staffed, 4 (13.3%) had adequate desks, 3 (10%) of the schools observed had piped water with good sanitation, 2 (6.7%) of the schools surveyed had water borne toilets and only 1 (3.3%) school had classrooms that were equivalent to the available number of classes. According to these findings, almost all the schools surveyed did not have all the required equipment and facilities. Where available, they were either inadequate or they were not of the required standard to enhance teaching and learning activities.

Furthermore, the key informants were asked to state the conduciveness of schools' environments for teaching and learning activities. The results from key informants and the observation of schools surveyed were that most of the schools' environments were not conducive for the teaching and learning process. Most of the classrooms had

no “talking walls”, the reason being that schools did not have adequate money to buy materials for charts and other related teaching aids. The researcher also observed that most of the classrooms were dilapidated; floors were cracked and others with pot holes (see figure 7).



Figure 7: Condition of Classrooms at Jackson Basic School

It was reported that lack of comfort due to inadequate desks and dilapidated classrooms, poor sanitation, broken window panes contributed to pupil absenteeism and ultimately high dropout rates (See figure 8).



Figure 8: Classroom at Johnson Basic School

The desks were inadequate with an average number of 5 to 10 desks per class and others with 15 desks each (See figure 9).



Figure 9: Desks at Fordson Basic School

The toilets were inadequate with poor sanitation. The classroom windows did not have glass panes (See figure 10).



Figure 10: Classroom Windows at Laymond Basic School.

For example one school had more than three thousand (3000) pupils against six (6) pit latrines (3 for girls and 3 for boys). Another school had four thousand (4000) pupils against ten (10) pit latrines, five (5) for each gender of the pupils (See figure 11).



Figure 11: Type of Toilets at Samuel Basic School

Through interviews and observations, it was further revealed that most schools did not have adequate clean water. For instance, a school with four thousand (4000) pupils had one water point and it was a well (See fig. 12).



Figure 12: Water Point at Markdown Basic School

4.4 The Impact of the Challenges on Education Delivery

The respondents were asked to bring out the major impact of the above challenges on education delivery. The negative impacts brought out were: poor quality education delivery, low literacy levels, teachers unable to teach effectively, poor performance, lack of comfort resulting into high pupil absenteeism, reduced learning time because of several sessions, teachers not motivated, no remedial work, teachers were overworked, and irregular home work policy (See table 14).

Table 14: The Impact of the Challenges on Education Delivery

Impact of challenges	Frequency	Percentage
No quality education delivery	15	19.7 %
Low literacy levels	12	15.8 %
Teachers unable to teach effectively	10	13.2 %
Poor performance	10	13.2 %
Poor school environments causing absenteeism	10	13.2 %
Use of sessions reduce time for learning	7	9.2 %
Teachers not motivated	6	7.8 %
No remedial work	5	6.5 %
Teachers are over worked/no regular homework	1	1.4 %
Total	76	100 %

As revealed in table 14, the frequent major negative impacts of the challenges were: poor quality education delivery, low literacy levels, poor performance and teachers' inability to teach effectively. These findings correlated with the results brought out by the key informants on low literacy levels. Concerning the low literacy levels, one key informant reported that,

The literacy levels are in the range of 15% and 45%. This is a big challenge in almost all schools. The statistics at the office reveal that, in most schools, less than a quarter of class is able to read and write effectively. Pupils' performance has been declining from the time the policy was introduced. The reasons for this situation are

that the kits for the New Breakthrough to Literacy are not available; where available, they are not adequate due to abnormal numbers of pupils. Secondly, the classes are too large such that teachers are not able to attend to individual needs of pupils. The inadequate desks and dilapidated classrooms with no window panes also negatively affect pupils' performance and attendance.

4.4.1 Small Proportions of Classes that were able to Read and Write

The respondents were asked to state the proportions of classes that were able to read and write. The results were: a quarter of a class, less than half class, half a class, and three quarters of a class. None of the respondents reported handling a whole class that was able to break through to literacy.

Table15: Proportions of classes able to read and write

Proportion of Classes	Frequency	Percentage
A quarter of a class	45	37.5%
Less than half of a class	26	21.7%
Half of a class	36	30.0%
Three quarters of a class	13	10.8%
Total	120	100%

As shown in table 15 above, the findings were that 89.2% of the respondents revealed that very few learners in their schools were literate. The ratings of a quarter, less than half, and half of classes being able to read and write were very insignificant as compared to the numbers of pupils in those classes.

Respondents were also asked to identify the contributing factors to the low literacy levels. Some of the factors identified included: teachers taught more than one class with large sizes of classes which resulted in the teachers' inability to attend to individual pupils, inability to assign adequate home work, inability to teach all subjects on the time table per day, and inability to execute remedial work.

The numbers of classes taught by each teacher were analyzed and the study revealed that 37 (30.8%) of the respondents taught one class each. Fifty-eight (48.3%) taught 2

classes each and 10 (8.3%) taught 3 classes each, and 15 (12.5%) respondents taught 4 classes each.

Table 16: Number of Classes taught by each teacher

Number of Classes	Frequency	Percentage
1	37	30.8%
2	58	48.3%
3	10	8.3%
4	15	12.5%
Total	120	100%

The results in table 16 above indicate that the majority of teachers (69.1%) in the selected schools surveyed taught more than one class each. This suggests that many teachers were over worked and were not able to attend to individual needs of pupils. To support this assertion, when the respondents were asked to state their position concerning teachers' inability to attend to individual pupils, the findings revealed that the majority (71.7%) of the teacher respondents indicated that they were not able to attend to individual pupils as they executed duties. This meant that the majority of teachers in schools did not attend to individual needs of learners which could have contributed to low achieving levels by pupils.

The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they gave home work to their classes. The study revealed that 12 (10.1%) of the respondents executed home work daily, fifty (42.0%) of the subjects gave home work twice per week, and 31 (26.1%) indicated that home work was given three times per week while 26 (21.8%) indicated once per week.

Table 17: How often respondents assigned home work to their classes

Categories of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Twice per week	50	42.0%
Thrice per week	31	26.1%
Once per week	26	21.8%
Daily	12	10.1%
Total	119	100 %

The study further revealed that only 10.1% of the respondents were able to assign home work to their classes on a daily basis (See table 17) while 89.9% gave irregular home work to their learners which was not a good sign of quality education delivery. However not only did the teachers fail to execute home work regularly but they also failed in some way to teach all subjects on the time table per day. This was confirmed by the study results which established that 49.2% of the respondents were able to teach all the subjects as scheduled on the time-table each day while 50.8% did not manage. Since the majority of respondents did not teach all the subjects per day, this suggested that the syllabi were often not completed and very little benefits for the pupils were attained.

4.4.2 Inability of the FBE to Address the Problems of Inequities and Disparities

The views of the key informants were that the FBE policy was well intended as it was designed to solve the problem of inequities and disparities existing in the education system. It was meant to ensure that both the vulnerable and the privileged pupils had access to schooling. One key informant stated that,

At the beginning, funding for the implementation of the policy was regular and adequate; each school was receiving not less than three million kwacha (US \$545) per term. The FBE free materials were also supplied adequately at the beginning of each term and each child received exercise books equivalent to the number of subjects learnt. But of late, the policy is inhibited and characterized by erratic funding and irregular and inadequate supply of FBE free materials and the maximum number of exercise books received by

each child does not exceed four (4). At times the free materials are only given to the vulnerable. The grant for most schools is between one million two hundred thousand kwacha (US \$218) and one million nine hundred thousand kwacha (US \$345), and only four schools receive the grant of between two million kwacha (US \$364 US dollars) and three million kwacha (US \$545) for all school requisites.

It was further reported that the funding from the government which was erratic and inadequate led to the policy's inability to fully address the problems of inequities and disparities in education at basic school level in the District. The vulnerable and the underprivileged were not accessing school due to hardships they were facing in accessing money to pay for school. Furthermore, dropout rates were high, particularly among girls, who were more vulnerable and needed a lot of care and support. This resulted in the persistence of inequities and disparities.

4.5 The Effect of Challenges on Education Demand and Supply

The key informants were asked to state the effect of challenges with regard to education demand and supply. The responses were that due to the introduction of FBE policy coupled with the mining activities in the district, the population growth has had a negative effect on education demand and supply. The numbers of school age children in need of school had outnumbered the available resources such as classrooms, text books, exercise books, desks, toilets, and water points. The key informant observed that,

The population growth has put pressure on the few education facilities and resources in the district. The resources include financial, material and human resources. The teacher pupil ratio, the desk pupil ratio and the pupil book ratio have increased abnormally. This has resulted into ineffective teaching/learning activities in the schools. This has in turn compromised the quality delivery of education and created an imbalance between education demand and supply in the district.



Figure 13: Overcrowded Class at Jameson Basic School

From the above observation, the results revealed that classes were overcrowded which indicated that there was lack of balance between education demand and supply (See figure 13).

During the interview with the key informants on the balance between access and quality in education delivery in Solwezi, one key informant also observed that,

There is no balance between access and quality in education delivery due to high enrolment levels. The classes are overcrowded with average teacher pupil ratios of 1:100. This is worse in mining areas. During monitoring, one school in the urban centre has more than four thousand (4000) pupils and the average number of pupils per class is 120.

The results indicated that in such circumstances it was almost impossible to deliver quality education.

4.6 Strategies Employed by Schools to Cope with the Challenges

As indicated in table 18 below, the study established diverse responses about the copying strategies from key informants. To solve the problem of inadequate funding, the key informants revealed that the schools depended on PTA project funds which they levied all the pupils and some parents paid in kind as a contribution to schools' infrastructure development and other needs. The study further indicated that schools built temporal accommodation in order to solve the problem of staff accommodation.

Some schools combined classes by employing multi-grade system that is putting children of different classes in one room to be taught by one teacher. Sometimes just keeping very large groups of pupils engaged in peer learning. Furthermore, some respondents indicated that some schools educated parents on the importance of education, they also emphasized Continuing Profession Development (CPDs) and they emphasized remedial work and home work policy as a means of boosting pupil performance. Additionally, some schools encouraged the teachers to be resourceful as they executed the teaching and learning process.

To solve the problem of inadequate classroom space, the schools introduced double or more sessions; they involved cooperating partners in funding of classroom and staff accommodation construction; and they made use of local church buildings as classrooms. To address the problem of low literacy levels, the key informants revealed that the schools' management allowed pupils to repeat and they did not encourage automatic progression. To improve on staffing levels, the schools requested for student teachers. Furthermore, they requested the office of the DEBS to send more teachers to the respective schools in need.

In quest to increase the number of desks, the schools were involved in repairing the broken desks and in making new desks using available resources, and from time to time, they requested desks from the DEBS' office. Additionally, the schools' management closely monitored and safe guarded the few books and desks that were available. Finally, the study revealed that schools solicited for funding from government and others used home economics and production unit funds to run the day to day school activities including repair and purchase of desks.

Additionally, the results through the interview with one of the key informants showed that the district deployed teachers, and supplied school requisites but could not meet the population needs. The district also sensitized the communities and the pupils on the importance of education. Regular visits were also conducted to monitor schools on how they were using the FBE funds. However, due to limited resources, only 20 schools were visited per quarter. This meant that 80 out of 178 schools were visited per year implying that 98 (55.1%) of the schools were not visited for the whole year.

Table18: Coping Strategies Employed by Schools against the Challenges of FBE Policy Implementation

Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Levying all pupils PTA project fund	21	19.5 %
Repaired desks	8	7.4 %
Emphasized on remedial work/ home work policy	7	6.5 %
Educated parents on the importance of education	7	6.5 %
Emphasized on CPDs	7	6.5 %
Introduced sessions in schools	7	6.5 %
Requested for teachers from government	6	5.6 %
Used HE and production unit funds	6	5.6 %
Combined classes/multi-grade system	5	4.6 %
Involved cooperating partners for funding	5	4.6 %
Local church buildings were used as classrooms	5	4.6 %
Improvised when teaching	4	3.7 %
Pupils were allowed to repeat	4	3.7 %
Requested for desks from government	4	3.7 %
Solicited for funding from government	4	3.7 %
Built temporal accommodation for teachers	3	2.8 %
Safe guarded the few books available	3	2.8 %
Solicited for student teachers	2	1.9 %
Total	108	100 %

According to the results in table 18, the majority of key informants opted for levying pupils PTA project fund as a way of raising extra income to overcome the challenges for running the day to day schools' activities. This was defeating the purpose of which the FBE was introduced.

4.6.1 Views on the successful way of implementing the FBE policy

The key informants were asked to bring out views concerning the best way to implement the FBE policy. The study revealed the views in order of their importance as stated below. First and foremost, there was need for increased and regular funding to schools. Secondly, the study revealed that there was need for a continuous process of building new schools and expansion of the existing ones. This is in quest to increase classroom accommodation to cater for the surge enrolments, especially in urban areas to reduce the imbalance between education demand and supply. Thirdly, other respondents had the view that there must be regular and adequate provision of free teaching and learning materials to schools.

Table19: Views on the Best way to implement FBE Policy in Schools

Key informants' Views	Frequency	Percentage
Regular and increased funding for FBE	25	20.3 %
Build/Expand existing schools to cater for surge enrolments	17	13.7 %
Regular and adequate supply of free educational materials	15	12.1 %
Cost sharing to be encouraged at a minimum levy	11	9.0 %
Funding should go direct to schools	8	6.5 %
Employ more teachers	7	5.7 %
The policy must be evaluated and closely be monitored	6	4.9 %
Supply more desks to schools	5	4.1 %
Provide adequate accommodation for teachers	5	4.1 %
Pay adequate housing allowance	3	2.4 %
Schools' budgets to be honored	3	2.4 %
Provide all the needed school requisites in place of money	2	1.6 %
Find donors/organizations to fund Free Basic Education	2	1.6 %
Educate the community on where free education ends	1	0.8 %
Staffing must be balanced in schools	1	0.8 %
Total	123	100 %

Additionally, to address funding problems, the study indicated that cost sharing with an introduction of a minimum levy must be encouraged. Furthermore, in order to increase efficiency in running FBE programs, the study revealed that funding should go directly to schools instead of receiving it through the DEBS office's account.

Focusing on the problem of inadequate staffing as one of the challenges, the study indicated that more teachers should be employed and not only to be employed, but the numbers of teachers should be balanced in all the schools. It was also argued that for the policy to be effective, it must be evaluated and closely monitored. Furthermore, not only should the policy be evaluated but it should be supported through the provision of adequate desks, adequate classroom accommodation and provision of decent and adequate staff accommodation or pay adequate housing allowance to enable teachers pay for decent accommodation.

The study further revealed that the budgets which schools submit to government must be honored, that is the grants given to schools must correspond to schools' needs and budgets. However, if the budgets are not honored, the study indicated that the government should provide all the needed schools' requisites in place of money. Alternatively, the government should find donors or organizations that can adequately fund Free Basic Education. Additionally, the community should be educated adequately on where free education ends and the parents' role in the education of their children.

To consolidate on the above views, one key informant was of the strong opinion that,

There must be an expansion of school infrastructure especially of the existing schools to match with the current population explosion. There must be regular and sufficient supply of both educational and FBE free materials to schools. The government should employ more teachers and create incentives for the rural teachers so that more teachers are retained in rural schools. Funding should be regular and adequate for all the school requisites.

Furthermore, the key informants were asked to state ways to deliver quality education in the district. The responses included: teacher deployment, construction of more classrooms and build new schools, cooperate with Lumwana and Kansanshi mining

companies to assist in infrastructure development, encourage teachers to attend in-service training, encourage lesson study and planning, appropriate budgeting for school requisites and encourage teachers to use a variety of methods/techniques in teaching.

As noted in table 19 above, the majority of respondents pointed out the fact that there was need for regular and increased funding; building new schools and expanding existing ones in order to cater for the increased enrolments.

4.7 Conclusion

The findings were that the implementation of the FBE policy in Solwezi District was associated with challenges. The challenges included inadequacy and delay of funding, over enrolment, inadequate educational supplies, inadequate FBE free materials, inadequate school equipment and facilities, enrolment of over aged learners, children dropping out of school, shortage of classroom space, inadequate toilets and water points, inadequate desks, under staffing, problem of accountability and transparency in the use of FBE funds and dilapidated school infrastructure. These challenges brought about inequality between access and quality, exacerbation of low literacy levels, non compatibility between education demand and supply and the perpetual presence of inequities and disparities in education accessibility.

Furthermore, the existing facilities and the current provision of educational requisites in schools, revealed inadequacies of the Free Basic Education programme. It was found out that many head teachers were seriously constrained to improve the state of learning facilities and the teaching/learning activities because of the government's abolition of fees in schools. The policy had created considerable problems which exacerbated the non compliance to the provision of quality education in the District.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 Overview

This chapter presents a discussion of the research findings in relation to the research objectives on the topic in question. The discussion has been grouped into four main themes as in the research objectives. These include the following: challenges schools encounter in implementing the FBE policy, the impact of challenges on quality education delivery, the effects of the challenges on education demand and supply, and the strategies schools employ to overcome the challenges. Furthermore, the findings were discussed according to the statement of the problem that was raised.

5.2 Challenges Encountered by Schools in the Implementation of the FBE policy

5.2.1 Challenges related to Increased Enrolments

The study findings revealed that between 2002 and 2011 there was a rapid increase in enrolments. The increase was rated between 6.5% and 7.9% per year and it was higher than that of the 1998 to 2001 enrolment levels which were in the range of 1% and 2% annually (See figures 2 and 3). This increase was to a large extent attributed to the introduction of free basic education and partly to the re-opening of the Kansanshi Mine which attracted a lot of migrants to the town under study. Additionally, all the participants of the study (teachers and key informants) reported abnormal enrolments and they were of the opinion that this increase was attributed to the FBE policy.

The findings further indicated that the increased enrolments in schools resulted in increased pupil teacher ratios, pupil book ratios, pupil desk ratios and overcrowded classes. As a result, this increase became a challenge in that, most schools visited, enrolments were above normal, there was overcrowding in classes, the supply of teaching and learning materials underwent a severe strain, the teachers encountered abnormal teaching loads and the desks were also few as compared to numbers of pupils in classes.

These findings were consistent with those reported by USAID/Zambia (2007) on *Zambian Education*. The Ministry of Education was supportive of Free Basic

Education which resulted in a massive increase in enrolment and led to overcrowding. Furthermore, the findings were also similar in some way to Kamla (2009) who found that due to the introduction of free education, schools in Malawi had become overcrowded, poorly staffed, while teaching learning materials and other facilities were inadequate and sometimes not available.

The findings on surge enrolments in Solwezi were consistent with those cited by (UNESCO, 2004a, Kamla, 2009 and Duncan, Macmillan and Simutanyi, 2003) as having been available in Malawi, Kenya and Uganda in the process of implementing FBE/FPE in those countries. In addition, the findings were also in conformity with those by Plank (2007) who reported that after school fees were abolished in Malawi, the ratio of pupils to classrooms increased to 119:1, the ratio of pupils to teachers increased to 80:1, and the ratio of pupils to text books increased to 24:1. The same author also reported that the abolition of school fees in other countries including Uganda, Cameroon and Mozambique resulted in rapid increase in the pupil teacher ratios.

5.2.2 Challenges of Inadequate Educational Materials

The study further revealed that there was a challenge of irregular and inadequate provision of free exercise books and other FBE materials. The findings revealed that 76.5% of the respondents indicated that the free exercise books and other materials were provided but were not adequate. It was also revealed that even though school was free, the Government was unable to provide all the school requisites. For example, in some schools, the government was only able to provide a maximum of four (4) exercise books per pupil. The rest of the exercise books and other requirements were to be provided by the parents, but most of the parents were unable due to economic reasons.

Furthermore, the materials supplied were not only inadequate but they were also irregularly supplied. This contributed to the problems of inequities and disparities to continue because those pupils who were not able, they dropped out of school. These findings are in agreement with IOB (2008) who report that disparities and inequities still exist between boys and girls, the privileged and the poor in Malawi and Kenya. As a result, the policy was not able to fully meet the communities' educational needs

and was not showing a good sign in the attainment of the Global Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that have emphasized Education for All by 2015.

5.2.3 Challenges related to Discipline

The findings further revealed that as a result of the introduction of FBE, enrolment was also characterized by over aged pupils who were regarded to be mature in terms of their age. These posed a challenge to the smooth running of the schools. The over aged pupils were sometimes counterproductive in that they could not cooperate with teachers, they did not want to be controlled, some became bullies, and the majority could not concentrate on school work. The serious difficulties revealed were: absenteeism, rudeness and unruly behavior. These have serious implications on the performance of a learner at every level of education. This circumstance brought about indiscipline in schools. When it came to academic work, they were given the same work and at times the results were made public, this discouraged some of them who even dropped out of school. These findings were in conformity with those identified by UNESCO (2006) in Kenya. Furthermore, some of these learners dropped out of school because of early marriages, prostitution and unwanted pregnancies. This is why absenteeism and low literacy levels were ranked among the major challenges in the implementation of the FBE policy.

5.2.4 Socio-economic Challenges

The study further revealed that absenteeism, pupils proceeding to higher grades while illiterate, inadequate staffing, inadequate toilets and high dropout rates were considered among the major challenges. These impacted negatively on the implementation of the policy as planned. The findings further showed that 107 (85.2%) respondents attributed high dropout rates to lack of money to pay for school, buy books, and uniforms and other school requisites. It was established that schools were still charging fees in form of PTA project fund to raise extra income.

In addition, the study revealed that this extra income or fund which pupils were levied enabled schools to function though in a small way. However, a good number of parents found it difficult to raise the extra levies demanded by the schools. This affected the learners negatively because, according to the findings, some schools sent away pupils from school for nonpayment of PTA project fund and other funds. The

parents were encouraged to pay PTA project fund during open days and PTA meetings, but even when the idea came from them, some parents could not cooperate. One of the reasons for not complying was that some parents were of the view that since education was free the government was supposed to provide all the schools' requisites. This meant that learners were still inhibited from accessing education due to lack of money despite free education. This state of affairs was attributed to the inadequate funding from the government.

The study revealed other reasons for inhibiting or dropping out of school for some pupils. These included lack of uniforms, nonpayment of PTA project fund, early marriages, pregnancies, long distance from school, lack of money and other socio-economic reasons. In rural schools, the main reasons for dropping out of school were non appreciation of education by both parents and children coupled with socio-economic challenges. For instance, some of the pupils dropped out of school because parents sent them to the fields known as "Majimi" in Kaonde or shifting cultivation. This is a system where communities shift from the villages to the fields covering long distances. The system disadvantaged school going children and resulted in high dropout rates. These findings were in line with those mentioned by Arenstrop (2004) on the experiences in Malawi, Uganda, Mozambique and Lesotho in the process of FBE/FPE implementation.

5.2.5 Funding related Challenges

The study revealed that inadequate funding, poor accommodation, and delay in funding were ranked among the most serious challenges that inhibited the implementation of the FBE policy in schools that were surveyed. All the teachers and key informants revealed that funding for the FBE was inadequate. As a result parents were being made to contribute extra levies in the name of the PTA project fund, civilian day, cobra fee, and security fee to pay the watchmen, sanitary workers and other service bills in schools. The study findings were confirmed by Meki (2004), who found out that grants though provided to schools, they were not adequate especially for most urban and big schools to pay for utility bills.

The above findings were to a large extent in conformity with those cited by Kasonde (2003) who conducted an Assessment of the Education Policy, and observed that even if schools were ordered not to charge fees at lower and middle basic school levels,

some schools were reported to be asking for various payments under different “labels” because government funds to schools were either not forthcoming or inadequate.

Furthermore, the study revealed that funding was not only inadequate but it was also delayed. As per plan on the implementation of the FBE policy, funding was supposed to be given to schools quarterly at the beginning of each term but unfortunately the findings indicated that funding was received irregularly. At the time of this study, schools had just received funding for the third and fourth quarter of 2010. The delay or irregular provision of funds made it extremely difficult for schools to buy the school requirements. Furthermore, the office of the DEBS also encountered some difficulties in monitoring the FBE activities in schools.

There was also a problem of accountability for the FBE funds. One of the findings was that some head teachers did not use the funds for the intended purpose. In some cases, money used was not retired in time; the office of the DEBS had to make several follow-ups in order for them to retire and be given some other money. This state of affairs contributed to the inadequacy of school requisites which impacted negatively the implementation of the FBE policy. These findings were consistent with those cited by Akech and Simatwa (2010) as having been happening in the implementation of FPE in Kisumu Municipality, Kenya.

Additionally, the findings indicated that the inadequacy and delay in funding resulted in a delay in purchases of the materials needed for the running of the FBE policy like chalk, text books, exercise books, mathematical instrument sets, pencils, rulers, rubbers and other school requisites. The schools’ infrastructure could not be maintained resulting in dilapidated schools. Some schools reported to have used PTA project funds and reimbursed later. This was in an effort to pay for extra costs in the school and to maintain schools’ infrastructure and could not yield positive results.

This caused the schools’ environments to be unfavorable for teaching and learning activities. For instance, the classrooms had no “talking walls”; the classrooms were dilapidated with cracked floors, windows with no window panes, unpainted walls and others with potholes. The toilets were inadequate with poor sanitation, the water points were inadequate, for example one school with 4000 pupils had one water point and it was a well (See figures 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12).

5.2.6 Challenges related to Infrastructure

The study further revealed that the unfavorable conditions in classrooms and around the schools made learning to be unfavorable. Furthermore, the shortage of desks was also experienced in many schools because of over enrolment. In most schools , not only were the desks few but they were also observed to be in poor condition, which made them to be uncomfortable for the learners, making the classrooms unsuitable places for learning. This situation discouraged learners from attending lessons regularly and others, though present, could not participate in class because they were uncomfortable and unhappy. Therefore, some pupils dropped out of school because they could not cope with these poor prevailing conditions.

5.3 Impact of challenges on education delivery

The findings showed that the challenges of high ratios of the “3” Rs that is Pupil Book Ratio (PBR), Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) and Pupil Desk Ratio (PDR) impacted negatively on the delivery of education. The impact included: poor educational attainment, sessions reduced time for learning, teachers not motivated, teachers being over worked, no regular home work and remedial work and lack of pupil comfort which caused absenteeism and high dropout rates. Additionally, according to table 14 the findings of the study were that the frequent and major negative impacts of the challenges on education delivery were: poor performance due to teachers’ inability to teach effectively. These resulted in small proportions of classes that were able to read and write.

The study also revealed that staff accommodation was available in schools but inadequate and it was not only inadequate but most of it was not of the required standard. This was crucial in urban centers where staff houses were less than the number of teachers available. For example one school had two (2) staff houses against seventy one (71) teachers, another school had eighty nine (89) teachers with literally no staff houses, the other school had eighteen (18) teachers but without staff houses and another school had fifty three (53) teachers with only 12 staff houses.

Furthermore, the housing allowance paid to teachers was between two hundred thousand kwacha (US \$36) and two hundred fifty thousand kwacha (US \$45). These amounts were not adequate enough to rent decent houses and as a result most of the

teachers were dictated by the limited financial resources to rent sub standard houses. As a result, some teachers did not live comfortably and covered long distances to and from their work places and by the time they reached their respective schools they were tired. Coupled with high workloads, they were demotivated and became ineffective in their performance leading to poor quality education delivery in the implementation of the FBE policy.

Another impact as indicated by the study was inadequacy in teaching staff which prompted head teachers to rely on student teachers. This did not work well because student teachers only came during certain periods of the year and could not cater for all the schools in need. Therefore, the only way out was to combine classes while waiting for teacher deployment. These findings were in line with those stated by Sifuna (2003) on the illusions of UFP education in Kenya. The combining of classes was bad in that teachers found it difficult to monitor pupils' work and this made it very difficult for head teachers to monitor closely the daily progress and eventually poor performance was attained.

Furthermore, according to table 15, the findings were that 89.2% of the respondents revealed that very few learners in their schools were literate. The literacy levels were in the range of between 15% and 45%. The study indicated that the contributing factors to such a situation included: teachers taught more than one class which were large in proportions. This resulted in the teachers' inability to attend to individual pupils, inability to execute adequate home work, and inability to teach all subjects on the time table per day and inability to conduct remedial work. The study confirmed that the majority of the teachers representing 69.1% taught more than one class. This meant that many teachers were overworked and were not able to attend to individual needs of the pupils.

The findings further revealed that 71.7% of the respondents were not able to attend to individual needs of pupils as they executed their teaching duties, 10.1% were able to execute home work on daily basis, and 50.8% did not manage to teach all the subjects per day. This was not a good sign of quality education because the syllabi could not be completed and very little pupil attainments. These findings were consistent with those cited by (IOB, 2008) as being encountered in most developing countries.

On the other hand, high dropout rates led to the continued existence of the inequities and disparities on educational accessibility. This was shown by the statistics of the enrolment of the district that was studied. The number of boys was higher than that of girls which meant that even when education was free at both lower and middle basic, the girl child was still disadvantaged. The number of girls dropping out of school was higher than that of boys because girls needed more comfort than boys hence boys tended to be more resistant to unconducive prevailing conditions in schools.

The overcrowding crippled effective teaching and learning. A class of 100 pupils for example, was difficult to manage though head teachers talked about individual attention to pupils, frequent home work and remedial work. The research findings showed that teachers were unable to attend to individual needs of pupils, they could not execute remedial work neither could they administer frequent home work. Furthermore, teachers could not teach all the subjects as scheduled on the time-table per day. This situation exacerbated the lowering of standards in education delivery resulting in low educational achievement by pupils.

In addition, shortage of classrooms was a common feature in both rural and urban schools. In almost all schools surveyed, the number of classes was not corresponding to the number of classrooms. This led to most of the schools to introduce several sessions to enable every class in the school to have a chance of using the few classrooms. This system did more harm than good in the sense that time was limited and the amount of work done every day did not guarantee learning having taken place. The subjects on the time-table could not be completed; congestion in the limited classrooms hindered the teachers' ability to teach effectively. These findings were in agreement with those mentioned by Sweetly (2004) and Government of India (1994) as having been experienced in Indonesia and India.

In addition, the study revealed that there were fewer text books and other materials compared to the number of pupils. They had to share books at a ratio of 1:5 and some 1:10 and this made it hard for them to do home work on time. Teaching and learning had definitely been compromised by large classes, shortage of text books and shortage of teachers. It was found out that some teachers handled classes with 60 and 120 pupils. In such circumstances pupils hardly got attention they deserved, hence many

were not learning much. Teacher-pupil interaction was minimal and teachers could only move with faster learners leaving out the slow learners.

Some pupils (especially the over-aged) were reportedly transmitting negative influences from the world outside of school like smoking cigarettes, chewing bubble gum or sniffing glue. Some of them who had been expelled for disciplinary reasons were back to School. Bullying, rowdy behavior, fighting, rudeness, harassment, defying teachers and refusing to do assignments were among the problems of the over-aged pupils.

5.4 The Effects of Challenges on Demand and Supply in Education

The study findings indicated that the population growth had had pressure on the education facilities and resources. The resources included: financial, material and human. The Pupil Teacher Ratio, the Pupil Book Ratio and Desk Pupil Ratio had increased abnormally. This had led to ineffective teaching and learning activities in schools and had compromised on education access and quality delivery and created an imbalance between education demand and supply.

Findings also revealed that the school requisites supplied did not correspond with the enrolment levels in schools. Teacher Pupil Ratios were very high, access and quality could not match, accommodation for teachers was inadequate, the housing allowance was also not reasonable enough to pay for decent accommodation and this situation did not motivate teachers. The desk- pupil ratios were also so high that learners did not sit comfortably in classes and were discouraged leading to rampant absenteeism. In most schools, the Desk Pupil Ratio was 1:10; most of the pupils sat on the floor and on bricks. The Pupil Book Ratios were also very high, such that in many schools the ratio was 1:15. This made the work of teacher's very difficult leading to ineffectiveness in their execution of duties.

In addition, teachers were over worked, they could not attend to individual pupils' needs, they could not use a variety of methods, and it was not easy to have effective remedial work. This compromised the quality education delivery hence access and quality could not match. These findings were consistent with those cited by Podmore (1998) on the effects of class size that was obtaining in New Zealand. The findings

were that there was a relationship between class size and children's achievement, motivation, teaching methods used, classroom management and assessment.

5.5 Strategies employed by Schools to cope with the Challenges of FBE

According to table 16 the majority of the key respondents opted for levying pupils PTA project fund as a way of raising extra income to overcome the challenges in running the day to day school activities. This system defeated the purpose of which the FBE was introduced. The study further revealed that to cope with the challenges, the majority of the respondents pointed out the fact that there was need for regular and increased funding and build or expand the existing schools to cater for the increased enrolments.

Furthermore, the study indicated that attempts had been made by the district to deploy more teachers to schools but at a very limited level; materials had been supplied to schools but were inadequate. The communities have been sensitized concerning the value of education. Regular visits to schools were conducted to monitor schools on how the FBE funds were being used in terms of teaching and learning. However, the study revealed that due to limited resources, only 20 schools were visited per quarter. This meant that 80 out of 178 schools were visited per year which implied that more than half (55.1%) of the schools were not visited for the whole year.

In addition, some key informants stated that as a coping strategy, there was need to cooperate with Lumwana and Kansanshi mining companies to assist in infrastructure development, encourage teachers to attend in-service training, encourage lesson study and planning, appropriate budgeting for school requisites and encourage teachers to use a variety of methods and techniques in teaching.

Furthermore, the study indicated that other coping strategies could be employed in order to overcome the challenges. These included: encouraging cost sharing at a minimum levy, funding from central government to be deposited in school accounts, the policy to be evaluated and be monitored closely, provide adequate accommodation for teachers or pay adequate housing allowance, school budgets to be honored, to find donors to fund FBE, and educate the community on where free education ends. These findings were in conformity with those stated by Obinaju (2001) on the global coping strategies on challenges of implementing free education.

5.6 Summary

The main purpose of this chapter was to discuss the findings of the study, which was focused on the challenges schools encountered in the implementation of the FBE policy. The discussion was that the policy implementation was characterized by challenges which included: increased enrolments, irregular and inadequate provision of FBE materials, absenteeism, high dropout rates, teaching over aged pupils, delayed and inadequate funding, inadequacy in schools' equipment and facilities, and unconducive schools' environments. These challenges had negative impact on education delivery. The impacts included: low quality education delivery, low literacy levels, poor performance and teacher' inability to teach effectively, and persistence of inequities and disparities.

Furthermore, these challenges exacerbated negative effects on education demand and supply. The negative effects included: population pressure on few educational resources, ineffective teaching and learning activities in schools which had compromised the access and quality delivery of education and finally created an imbalance between education demand and supply. To overcome these challenges the study revealed some coping strategies which included: levying pupils a PTA project fund as a way of raising extra income for schools, repairing broken desks, educating parents on the importance of education, introducing sessions in schools, combining classes, used local church buildings as classrooms, improvised when teaching. However, in many incidences success was not attained in the absence of funding from government. Therefore the study indicated that there was need for regular and adequate funding to enable the FBE policy bear the intended results.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Overview

The general purpose of this study was to determine the challenges schools encountered in the implementation of the FBE policy. The study therefore aimed at filling in the knowledge gap by finding out what challenges the schools were facing as they implemented the stated policy; what negative impact these challenges bore on the quality education delivery and what the coping strategies were for the challenges encountered so as to deliver quality education in schools and the district as a whole. Therefore it is from this background that this chapter proposes to make the conclusions and recommendations of the said study.

The conclusions and the recommendations are based on the research findings from respondents. The sample target of the respondents was 125 teachers and 32 key informants. The key informants included 30 head teachers, 1 DESO and 1 DEBS. The teachers responded to a questionnaire while the key informants were interviewed. Additionally, an observation sheet was used to record the equipment and facilities that were available. The analysis and presentation of results were organized around the research questions and objectives that were formulated. Therefore, the conclusions and recommendations are based on the findings that are anchored on research objectives.

6.2 Summary of Findings

The findings of the study were summarized as follows:

6.2.1 Outcomes of the implementation of the FBE policy

The study revealed that:

- The policy resulted in increased enrolments in schools.
- The disparities and inequities in education accessibility were exacerbated despite the implementation of free education.
- The surge enrolments resulted in overcrowded classes, high PTR, high PBR and high desk pupil ratios.

- There was an imbalance between school enrolments and available resources (human, material and financial resources).
- Abolishing school fees made it easier and less costly for children to enroll.

6.2.2 Challenges of Implementing the FBE policy

The research findings were that:

- Even after the fees were abolished there were still out of school children from the poorest population; the poor, excluded and the vulnerable groups were still not going to school.
- There was a challenge of providing more teachers, more classrooms, more text books, more desks, more toilets, enough clean water, more free exercise books and other educational materials to meet the increased enrolment. When educational materials were provided, they were irregular and inadequate.
- The implementation of the FBE policy was characterized by inadequate and erratic funding from the government.
- The schools' environments were unconducive for teaching and learning purposes as most of the schools were dilapidated with cracked floors, no classroom window panes and unpainted walls.
- Almost all schools were characterized by inadequate equipment and facilities for teaching and learning.
- There were over stretched facilities like classrooms which were congested with pupils squeezing on few available desks.
- There was inadequate teaching staff which forced schools to combine classes.

6.2.3 Impact of the Challenges on Education delivery

The study revealed that:

- Schools experienced high dropout rates and absenteeism.
- The schools had continued levying pupils but using different labels such as PTA project fund, "cobra fee", "security fee", "civilian day fee"; these have inhibited some pupils from accessing school.
- There was an imbalance between education accessibility and quality.

- The challenges impacted negatively on the education delivery, and the negative impacts included: low quality education, low literacy levels, absenteeism, demotivated teachers, and teachers overworked.
- There was a compromise on education delivery which created an imbalance between demand and supply in education.
- There were fewer text books and other materials compared to the number of pupils.
- Teachers handled more and congested classes to the extent that slow learners were not taken care of and they gave fewer assignments resulting into poor quality delivery in education.
- The FBE caused more students to enroll in schools and put a strain on schools, teachers, desks and educational materials.
- The FBE had caused many children not to become literate, not to complete basic school and not to proceed to high schools and not to enter paid employment.
- Funding spread more thinly across a larger pool of students and affected the quality of education on offer.
- Teachers could not devote much time to their students or even cater for individual needs.

6.2.4 Coping strategies for the Challenges

The study established that:

- Almost all schools levied pupils PTA project funds to overcome the challenge of inadequate and delayed funding from government which defeated the purpose of FBE.
- Some schools used local church buildings as classrooms.
- There was an introduction of sessions and multi-grade system to solve the problem of inadequate classrooms and teachers.
- Other schools, using meager resources and in conjunction with government, attempted to expand school infrastructure to match with the current population explosion and surge enrolments.
- Those schools near Kansanshi and Lumwana mining areas seek financial assistance for infrastructure development and for other school requirements.

- Some schools work with the corporate world such as non-government organizations in the provision of educational requisites in order to improve the state of learning facilities and activities.
- The schools educate the communities on the role of stakeholders, and parents in their children' education.
- In order to match the surge enrolments and share out the workloads in schools government recruits more teachers while in some schools the PTA employs part-time teachers.
- Other schools build temporal houses in order to address the challenge of inadequate staff accommodation.

6.2.5 Implications of the Implementation of the FBE policy

The findings were that:

- More classrooms, more desks, more text books, more free exercise books, more toilets, more teachers and more water points were needed to cater for the increased population of school going children.
- There was need for increased funding to cover up for the lost income due to the FBE policy.
- The parents became reluctant to give money for construction, maintenance and repairs in the school because they were told that education was free.
- The parents developed apathy towards all PTA activities including meetings.
- In some schools, development projects that were initiated before the FBE by parents and school committees had come to a standstill.

6.3 Conclusion

Despite the fact that FBE had enabled many pupils to enroll in school regardless of their socio-economic status, the implementation of the policy was associated with challenges. Among which were inadequacy and delay of funding, over enrolment, inadequate educational supplies, inadequate FBE free materials, inadequate school equipment and facilities, enrolment of over aged learners, children dropping out of school, shortage of classroom space, inadequate toilets and water points, inadequate desks, under staffing, and dilapidated school infrastructure. These challenges brought about inequality between access and quality, exacerbation of low literacy levels, no

balance between demand and supply in education and the perpetual presence of inequities and disparities in education accessibility.

Furthermore, the existing facilities and the current provision of educational requisites in schools, did not meet the Free Basic Education programme implementation. It was found out that many head teachers were seriously constrained to improve the state of learning facilities and the teaching/learning activities because of the government's abolition of fees in schools. The policy had created considerable problems which have exacerbated the non compliance to the provision of quality education in the District.

To cope with the challenges, the schools had to come up with some strategies namely levying pupils PTA project fund, combining classes, introducing sessions, making new desks and repair old ones, educating parents on the importance of education, including parents in the school infrastructure development by asking them to pay in kind, involving cooperating partners such as Kansanshi and Lumwana mining companies in funding staff and classroom accommodation, emphasizing on lesson study and Continuous Professional Development (CPDs), sending teachers for further training, close monitoring of work done every day and continuing lobbying for teachers from government and at times depended on student teachers from the colleges.

6.4 Recommendations

In view of the findings and conclusions of this study, it was recommended that:

6.4.1 Funding

- Additional funds should be allocated for needy schools to enable them put up infrastructure since it was no longer mandatory for parents to pay for school projects.
- The disbursement of FBE funds should be sent to schools on time preferably during holidays so that schools can plan and purchase school requisites in time.
- Teachers, head teachers and school committees to be trained in financial management to ensure accountability.

- Flexibility should be allowed in the use of funds on condition that parents, communities and school committees agree on what they want to be supported.
- Funding should be regular and adequate for all the schools' requisites including an allocation for school assessments and sporting activities and in order to increase efficiency the FBE funds should be deposited to schools' accounts directly from government.
- The schools in collaboration with government should put in measures to ensure accountability and transparency in the use of FBE funds.
- There is need for increased and sustained budgetary allocation by government to FBE programme.

6.4.2 Staffing and Staff Retention

- The government could consider employing more teachers to ease the shortages.
- The government should create incentives for rural teachers so that more teachers are retained in rural schools to cater for the increased enrolments.
- The government should consider engaging teachers on contract who will be cheaper to maintain.
- Parents and communities should also be encouraged to engage part-time teachers especially, the unemployed trained teachers.
- There should be community recruitment of teachers by government in rural areas of the district as teachers posted to these areas do reject their posting.
- There should be an improvement in the welfare of teachers by government in the quest to improve on their dedication, commitment and assure quality education delivery.
- There is need for continuous training of teachers and head teachers in schools by government for successful implementation of the FBE policy.
- The government and stakeholders should devise ways of motivating teachers, including promoting and rewarding best-performers and sponsoring them for higher education.
- The government should carry out a thorough staff balancing exercise to ensure that all schools have enough teachers.

6.4.3 Learning and Teaching materials/activities

- The Ministry of Education should intensify on monitoring and evaluation of the FBE programme in the country.
- There must be regular and sufficient supply of both educational and FBE free material supplies to schools.
- Government should create learner friendly environments in schools to promote effective learning.
- There is need to develop quality assurance framework and strategies for FBE in Zambia.

6.4.4 Infrastructure

- There must be an expansion of school infrastructure by government in conjunction with the community, especially in existing schools to match with the current population explosion and decongest the classes to a normal enrolment of between thirty five (35) and forty (40) pupils per class.
- The government should provide clear policy guidelines on how parents and communities could provide physical facilities like classrooms, toilets, desks and water points/tanks.
- Part of the constituency development funds from government should be used to put up classrooms and toilets or rehabilitate facilities in schools to provide pupils with a favorable learning environment.

6.4.5 Cost-sharing

- Communities should be encouraged to raise funds to provide buildings and other physical facilities to schools.
- The government should be frank and specify what it can provide and what it cannot provide. This should be effectively communicated to parents and other stake holders.
- Some form of cost sharing between government and parents is required to ensure quality.
- There is need to have a study replicated in other districts in the country, in order to give a general picture of schools' and districts' experiences on FBE in the whole country.

6.5 Recommendations for future research

The following were identified as areas of possible future research:

1. To find out the sustainability of Free Basic Education in Zambia.
2. To determine the relationship between decentralization, community empowerment and free basic education programme.
3. To determine the role of School Management Committees and Parents' Teachers' Associations in the management of FBE funds.
4. To establish the challenges of extending Free Education up to grade twelve (12).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND POLICY
STUDIES

Interview Schedule for Head Teachers

Title of the Research:

Challenges in the implementation of Free Basic Education Policy: A survey of
selected Basic Schools of Solwezi District

1. Do you experience any over enrollment in your school?
2. Is your school well stocked with educational supplies?
3. Are there adequate teachers in your school?
4. How often do you receive grants if any from government to support the FBE policy?
5. Does the grant come in time?
6. How much grant do you receive?
7. Is the grant enough for all the requisites for the school?
8. How do you raise extra income and run the school in times when the grant is not sent?
9. What challenges do you face as a school in running day to day activities?
10. Do the challenges you have stated have an impact on the quality delivery of Education?
11. What are some of the measures you have taken as a school to mitigate these challenges?
12. What do you think could be the best way of implementing the FBE policy?

APPENDIX II

UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND POLICY
STUDIES

Interview Schedule for the District Education Standards Officer

Title of the Research:

Challenges in the implementation of Free Basic Education Policy: A survey of selected Basic Schools of Solwezi District

1. Do you think access and quality are matching as the FBE policy is being implemented?
2. Do you observe overcrowded classes in schools during monitoring?
3. How do you rate the pupils' performance in basic schools in the district on yearly bases from the time the FBE policy was introduced? Is it upward or downward?
4. Suggest ways of implementing the FBE policy that can promote quality education.
5. Are the teachers in schools able to use a variety of teaching strategies as they teach?
6. Are the schools' environments conducive enough for the teaching and learning process?
7. Are schools well staffed and adequately stocked with teaching and learning materials?
8. According to your statistics, are most of the pupils from middle basic schools able to proceed to upper basic schools?

APPENDIX III

UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND POLICY
STUDIES

Interview Schedule for the District Education Board Secretary

Title of the Research:

Challenges in the implementation of Free Basic Education Policy: A survey of selected Basic Schools of Solwezi District

1. In your opinion, was the Free Basic Education policy well intended?
2. Is the FBE policy addressing the problems of inequities and disparities in education in your district?
3. What challenges do you encounter in implementing the FBE policy?
4. Is there equilibrium between access and quality in education delivery?
5. With the introduction of FBE policy, is education demand and supply balanced?
6. Do you experience any disparities and dropouts in enrollments between girls and boys?
7. How do you harmonize decentralization and community empowerment policy with FBE?
8. Is there any problem of accountability of FBE funds in schools?
9. If so, state some the problems encountered_____
10. Are there any strategies of coping with any negative impact of the FBE policy that you have put in place as a District?
11. Do you think the FBE policy is sustainable in Zambia?
12. Has the population growth due to the mining activities got any impact on the implementation of the FBE policy in your district?
13. If the answer is yes in 12, what is the impact?
14. What are some of the solutions to the problems you have identified as you implement the FBE policy in your district?

APPENDIX IV

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND POLICY STUDIES

Questionnaire for Teachers

Title of the Research:

Challenges of the implementation of Free Basic Education Policy: A survey of selected Basic Schools of Solwezi District

Dear respondent,

We are surveying on the challenges encountered by schools in implementing Free Basic Education Policy. The findings of this research will help us with information to assist policy makers in Government and the Ministry of Education to find better ways of implementing the policy and enable schools to deliver quality education. You have been purposively selected to give us information. All information you give us is confidential and will be used for research purposes only. We will not use or publish anything that could identify you to anyone else. Kindly, fill in this questionnaire to the best of your ability and return it to: Mr. E.R. Museba of Zambia College of Open and Distance Education in Luanshya.

A. PERSONAL DETAILS

Gender.....

Age.....

Qualification.....

Position.....

Experience.....

B. CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN IMPLEMENTING FREE BASIC EDUCATION POLICY

Tick [] the answer of your choice and in some cases fill in the blanks.

1. Are the classes overcrowded in your school? (a) Yes [] (b) No []
2. If the answer is yes in 1, state the average number of pupils in your class. (a) 21-40 [] (b) 41-60 [] (c) 61-80 [] (d) 81-100 []
3. How many desks are in your class? (a) 5[] (b) 10[] (c) 15[] (d) 20[] (e) 25[] (f) 30[]
4. What is the pupil book ratio? (a) 1:1 [] (b) 1:2 [] (c) 1:3 [] (d) 1:4 [] (e) 1:5 [] (f) 1:10 [] (g) 1:15 []
5. How many classes do you teach? (a) 1[] (b) 2 [] (c) 3 [] (d) 4 []
6. Are you able to attend to pupils individually in your class? (a) Yes [] (b) No []
7. How often do you give homework in a week? (a) daily [] (b) once [] (c) twice [] (d) thrice []
8. How many subjects do you have on a time-table per day? (a) 2[] (b) 3[] (c) 4[] (d) 5[]
9. Do you manage to teach all subjects for the day as per time-table? (a) Yes [] (b) No []
10. If the answer is no in 9, explain how this affects pupil performance?

11. Does your school provide the following requisites to pupils as per FBE policy?

(a) exercise books	Yes [] No []
(b) text books	Yes [] No []
(c) pencils	Yes [] No []
(d) pens	Yes [] No []
(e) rulers	Yes [] No []

- (f) mathematical instrument sets Yes [] No []
- (g) science kit Yes [] No []
- (h) physical education equipment Yes [] No []
- (i) crayons and other art materials Yes [] No []

12. If the answer is no to some of the items listed above, list down some of the contributing factors to this state of affairs_____

13. Are the toilet facilities adequate for the pupils? (a) Yes [] (b) No []

14. Are there any over aged pupils enrolled in your class? (a) Yes [] (b) No []

15. If the answer is yes in 14, are there any difficulties encountered in executing duties?

(a) Yes [] (b) No []

16. State some difficulties and disciplinary cases you do encounter_____

17. What is the situation like on sanitation in your school? (a) Poor [] (b) Good []
(c) Very good []

18. How many pupils are able to read and write effectively in your class?

(a) Less than a quarter of a class []

(b) A quarter of a class []

(c) Half of the class []

(d) Three quarters of a class []

(e) All the pupils in the class []

19. Are there any pupils in your school that proceed from grade seven to upper basic without knowing how to read and write? (a) Yes [] (b) No []

20. If the answer is yes in 19, what could be the problem?

21. Do you experience any of the following problems in your school?

- (a) Inadequate funds Yes [] No []
- (b) Inadequate teaching staff Yes [] No []
- (c) Large classes Yes [] No []
- (d) Adult learners Yes [] No []
- (e) Mult-grade system Yes [] No []
- (f) Absenteeism Yes [] No []
- (g) High dropout rates Yes [] No []

22. Tick the reasons for dropping out of school for some pupils: (a) Lack of money [] (b) Lack of school uniform [] (c) Pregnancies [] (d) Long distance from school [] (e) Early marriage [] (f) any other specify_____

23. Are there any pupils that are sent away from your school because of nonpayment of school fees? (a) Yes [] (b) No []

24. Are there any negative impacts of these problems on the quality delivery of education? (a) Yes [] (b) No []

25. If the answer is yes in 24, list some of the negative impacts experienced in your school_____

26. Briefly state coping strategies the school is employing to lessen the problems resulting from the FBE policy_____

27. Do you think there is a balance between education demand and supply in your school from the time the FBE policy was introduced? (a) Yes [] (b) No []

28. Suggest some ways in which the FBE policy can be implemented to promote quality in education delivery_____

Thank you for answering the questions.

APPEDIX V

Schools' Observation Checklist on Enrolment, Equipment and Facilities

SCHOOL	NUMBER OF PUPILS		NUMBER OF TEACHERS	NUMBER OF CLASSROOMS	NUMBER OF DESKS	NUMBER OF TOILETS		NUMBER OF LABS	LIBRARY	PLAY GROUNDS	SCIENCE KIT	P.E EQUIPMENT	INDUSTRIAL ARTS EQUIPMENT	H.E EQUIPMENT	PRODUCTION UNIT
	B	G				B	G								
1															
2															
3															
4															
5															
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