

**CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION AND PROVISION OF QUALITY FREE  
PRIMARY EDUCATION IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NYIMBA DISTRICT**

**BY**

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**A dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in collaboration with Zimbabwe  
Open University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of  
Master of Education in Educational Management**

**YEAR: 2017**

### **Authors Declaration**

I, **ANDREW TEMBO** declare that: challenges in the implementation and provision of quality free primary education in public primary schools in Nyimba district, is my own work in both design and execution, and that all used sources have been duly acknowledged by complete referencing.

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## Certificate of Approval

This dissertation of Andrew Tembo has been approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Educational Management (M.Ed. Management) by the University of Zambia in collaboration with the Zimbabwe Open University.

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to my dearest wife, Vasty, my late father Mr. Ngulube Limbisani, my mother Miss Ngulube Agness and to all my children: Andrew, Taonga and Chimwemwe.

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I wish to thank the University of Zambia in association with the Zimbabwe Open University for giving me the opportunity to undertake a master of Education in Education Management course and for according me the necessary facilitation to enable my successful completion. I would wish to thank the University staff, both teaching and non-teaching for their support. I want to specifically thank my project supervisor, Dr Gift Masaiti for his invaluable guidance through the project work and for being available whenever i needed him. I greatly attribute the success of this project to him.I also sincerely thank all the respondents in various schools targeted for the study, for providing the necessary data to make this project a success. I further thank my head teacher Mr Ignitous Phiri for his understanding during my project and study period as well as my entire work colleagues and friends for their direct or indirect support. I specifically mention Mr. Phiri Wisdom, Mr Andrew Jere and Miss Thandiwe Ngulube for their support and encouragement as well as Mr Jacob Chisenga for helping me to beat the defence deadline.

## **List of Abbreviations**

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
EFA	Education for All
FBE	Free Basic Education
FPE	Free Primary Education
FNDP	Fifth National Development Plan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPI	Gender Parity Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IOB	Policy and Operation Evaluation Department
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	The Ministry of Education
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
PBR	Pupil-book ratio
PDR	Pupil-desk ratio
PTA	Parent Teachers' Association
PTR	Pupil-teacher ratio
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



## **List of figures**

Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework

Figure 4.3.1 Proportion of classes able to read and write

Figure 4.3.2 How often respondents assigned home work to their classes

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to explore challenges in the implementation and provision of quality free primary education in public primary schools in Nyimba District. The study objectives were to explore the challenges encountered by school managers in implementing FPE policy, to solicit proposals on how the challenges faced have affected education delivery, to identify the strategies employed by the school managers in an attempt to achieve quality education following the implementation of FPE. The study employed a qualitative approach and employed a descriptive survey design and data was collected using interviews, focus group discussion and observation method. The sample of the study was six Head teachers, eight two policy makers, fifteen teachers and fifteen pupils. The sample size of thirty eight (38) was drawn from the total population. The study found out that with the implantation of the free primary education policy, access to primary education had increased tremendously. However, This consistent increase in enrolment of pupils without increase in number of teachers, instructional materials as well as school infrastructure has paused a challenge to quality of education by undermining some quality benchmarks such as; ideal pupil teacher ratio, pupil classroom ratio, pupil textbook ratio and pupil toilet ratio among others. Based on these findings, the study recommends the need for the government to allocate additional funding to employ more teachers, to reduce pupil teacher ratio, improve on schools infrastructure such as classrooms so as to create conducive learning environment and avail more instructional materials among others.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Authors Declaration .....	i
Copyright.....	ii
Certificate of Approval.....	iii
Dedication .....	iv
Acknowledgements .....	v
List of Abbreviations.....	vi
List of figures .....	viii
CHAPTER ONE .....	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem .....	5
1.3 Purpose of the study .....	5
1.4 General Objective.....	5
1.5 Specific Objectives.....	5
1.6 Research Questions .....	6
1.7 Significance of the Study .....	6
1.8 Theoretical framework .....	6
1.9 Conceptual framework .....	7
1.10 Delimitation.....	8
1.11 Limitations .....	8
1.12 Operations of Definitions of Key Terms.....	8
1.13 Organization of the Dissertation .....	9
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATUREREVIEW .....	10
2.0 Overview .....	10
2.1 Studies on the challenges of FPE .....	10

2.2 Concept of Quality Education .....	12
2.3 Factors influencing the quality of Learning and teaching .....	13
2.3.1 Qualified Teachers .....	13
2.3.2 Availability of suitable learning and teaching materials .....	15
2.3.3 Conducive physical environment .....	17
2.4 Summary of Literature .....	18
<b>CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>19</b>
3.0 Overview .....	19
3.1 Research design.....	19
3.2 Study Site .....	19
3.3 Study Population .....	20
3.4 Study Sample.....	20
3.5 Sampling Procedure .....	20
3.6 Research Instruments .....	21
3.6.1 Interviews .....	21
3.6.2 Focus Group Discussions .....	21
3.6.3. Observation Checklist .....	22
3.6.4 Document Review .....	22
3.7 Data Collection Procedures .....	22
3.8 Data Analysis .....	22
3.9 Trustworthiness .....	23
3.10 Ethical consideration .....	24
3.11 Conclusion.....	24
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>25</b>
4.0 Overview .....	25

4.1 Research Findings .....	25
4.2 Research findings on Challenges in the Implementation of FPE.....	26
4.2.1 Findings on inadequate and delayed funding from the government .....	26
4.2.2 Findings on inadequate and irregular supply of educational materials .....	26
4.2.3 Findings on over enrolment.....	28
4.2.4 Findings on unconducive learning environment .....	28
4.3 Research findings on how the challenges affecting education delivery.....	29
4.3.1 Finding on low literacy levels .....	30
4.3.2 Findings on irregular homework .....	32
4.3.3 Findings on Overcrowding.....	33
4.3.4 Findings on Inadequate Teaching Staff.....	33
4.3.5 Findings on inadequate accommodation .....	34
4.4 Research findings on the strategies employed by the school managers.....	34
4.4.1 Findings on PTA project fund.....	35
4.4.2 Findings on Multi- Grade.....	35
4.4.3 Findings on Double or More Session.....	36
4.4.4 Findings on preventive maintenance.....	36
4.5 Summary of the chapter 4 .....	37
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>38</b>
5.0 Overview .....	38
5.1 Discussions on Challenges in the Implementation of FPE .....	38
5.2 Discussions on how the challenges affect education delivery .....	41
5.3 Discussions on the strategies employed by the school managers .....	43
5.6 Summary .....	44

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ..... 46

6.0 Overview ..... 46

6.1 Conclusions ..... 46

6.2 Recommendations ..... 47

6.4 Suggestions for future research ..... 48

RREFERENCES ..... 49

Appendices ..... 54

APPENDIX I ..... 54

APPENDIX II ..... 55

APPENDIX III ..... 56

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Education forms the basis upon which economic, social and political development of any nation is founded. Investment in education can help to foster economic growth, enhance productivity, contribute to national and social development and reduce social inequality (World Bank, 1998). UNESCO (2005) asserts that, the level of a country's education is one of the key indicators of its level of development. Globally education is recognized as a basic human right. Bishop (1989), indicates that in 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights laid down (Article 26) that everyone has the right to education and that education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages.

In the face of this, Zambia's education policy has gone through a number of changes. Sikwibele (2003) contend that 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.

Education for all has been discussed in international forums, for example United Nations for Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World conference at Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 and its follow up in Dakar, Senegal in 2000. Consequently, government around the world have invested huge amounts of their expenditure on education.

The Report on Educational Developments in 1966-1967 by the Ministry of Education (1967) states that, on 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 1966, a new Education Act (Number 28 of 1966) came into effect. The act legally recognized changes from "fee paying" or "non-fee-paying" 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 primary education policy, the government increased funding to the education sector. For example government provision for bursaries increased from 230 000 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, text books, 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 shortage of teachers in primary schools was met by reducing the teacher training course to one year residential course. Two new 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 situations in the 1980s, educational policy were affected and policy reversals were implemented (Kalaule, 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 sending in 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 example, 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 county could not make adequate use of the opportunities available for education of their children. Both the urban phenomenon of street children and non-utilization of facilities indicated low levels of explicit demand for education (MOE, 1996). 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.

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 the 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 states that countries should be committed to ensure that 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, the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) government in Zambia re-introduced and announced the free policy but this time covering grades 1-7 in February 2002 with emphasis mainly on the provision to access primary education because of its importance. This was followed by the circular (ME/71/126 No3; 2002 dated 15<sup>th</sup> march, 2002) from the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Education to all schools and education officers explaining what free primary education entailed (MOE,2003). In terms of justification, one of the policy circulars stated that, “The announcement should be seen in the context of unprecedented decline in enrolment 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 objective of BESSIP were to increase enrolment 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 per term through the funding of Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Programme (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 FPE policy. The study 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 and provision of quality free primary education policy. At the time of this study it was fifteen years since policy was

introduced but there were still a lot of imbalances. For instance, a lot of school going age children were enabled to access and enrolments 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).

The quality of education in Zambia has remained low as revealed by the test and examination results. The large increase in enrolments has been greeted by higher pupil teacher ratios and higher pupil classroom ratios, a state of affairs that has tended to compromise quality. 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 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 a 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.

In Zambia, households bear significant expenses related to education, even after the formal abolition of fees. Despite the Free Basic Education (FBE) mandate to eliminate obligatory uniforms, 46 percent of urban and 14 percent of rural schools still require students to wear uniforms, though this could be the result of ambiguity in FBE guidelines that allowed schools to use uniforms as long as they did not make a profit from them. Fees collected by government schools increased between 2002 and 2003 (Mwansa et. al. 2004). Some schools have begun to charge PTA fees again due to inadequate government funding (Global Campaign for Education 2004).There were still a number of drop outs, a number of youths still roam the streets, some schools especially in rural areas were still recording low enrolments, too many grade 7 school leavers were not able to proceed and complete school. What is most serious and saddening is the fact that is 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 the course, the education obtained did not have an effect on the

school leavers, resulting in so many illiterates in the community. This is common in rural areas of this country.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

While the free primary education (FPE) program has increased access to primary education especially among poorer households, the provision of quality education remains a challenge (UNESCO, 2009). This consistent increase in enrolment of pupils without increase in number of teachers, instructional materials as well as school infrastructure has posed a challenge to quality of education by undermining some quality benchmarks such as; ideal pupil teacher ratio, pupil classroom ratio, pupil textbook ratio and pupil toilet ratio among others. These emerging challenges have called for the need to take stock of the effects of the FPE on quality of education in primary schools. Meanwhile, there isn't any previous study known to the researcher carried out on effects of FPE policy on quality of education in public primary schools in Nyimba District. An important question to address is whether this increased quantitative access has been realized without decrease in quality. This study therefore will act as an important initial step towards finding an answer to this critical question.

## **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of the free primary education on quality of education in public primary schools of Nyimba District

## **1.4 General Objective**

The general objective of the study was to establish the effects of the Free Primary Education on quality of education in public primary schools in Nyimba district.

## **1.5 Specific Objectives**

1. The specific objectives of the study were to:
2. To explore the challenges encountered by school managers in implementing FPE policy.
3. To solicit proposals on how the challenges faced have effected education delivery.
4. To identify the strategies employed by the school managers in an attempt to achieve quality education following the implementation of FPE

## **1.6 Research Questions**

1. The study was guided by the following research questions.
2. What challenges do schools encounter in implementing FPE policy?
3. How do the challenges affect education delivery?
4. What are the strategies employed by the school managers in an attempt to achieve quality education following the implementation of F

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The study highlights various challenges that arose from the implementation of the free primary education policy in public primary schools in Nyimba District. It looks at various aspects of educational quality and how it has been impacted on by implementation of the FPE policy. It offers suggestions and recommendations that will seek to solve educational quality crisis resulting from the implementation of the free primary education policy in public primary schools in Nyimba District. It directly or indirectly offers valuable information to various education sector stakeholders such as Ministry of General Education, Nyimba Primary Schools Heads Association, and the DEBS office. This study offers reference material for future researchers in the field of education quality and also gives suggestions on possible areas for future research.

## **1.8 Theoretical framework**

This study will be guided by the theory of socialist economics of education (Selowsky, 1979), a theory that was propounded by a French writer and historian called Louis Blanc. The theory underscores the need to create an economy that redistributes income from the rich to the poor so as to create equality of well-being. The socialist economics theory also forms the basis of the Lorenz curve, which advocates for the geometric representation of the distribution of income among families in a given country for quality output, at a given time (Baumol and Blinder, 1979). According to the socialist economics of education theory, free education can help enhance equity in access to primary schools. Otherwise, if education were offered without bursaries. Only those who can afford to pay school fees and other related costs would enroll in school. Under such circumstances, inequalities would be perpetuated. Equitable quality and affordable education can help enhance those children from poor economic background access equitably quantity and quality education. As a consequence of these, an equitable society is created. This

theory is applicable to this study since primary school education is very basic and critical in any education system because of the crucial role it plays in catalyzing national development and thus the level and quality education achieved should never be compromised.

### 1.9 Conceptual framework

According to Mbwesa (2006) conceptual framework shows the variables under study as conceptualized by the researcher. The framework of this study is based on the system approach which relates the variables essential for the success of free primary education in Zambia. For the policy to succeed in producing quality education there is need to have improved student teacher ratio, adequate physical facilities and adequate instructional materials. Continuous improvement of these factors increase the effectiveness of teaching and learning and result in improved academic performance. The framework is presented in figure 2.1

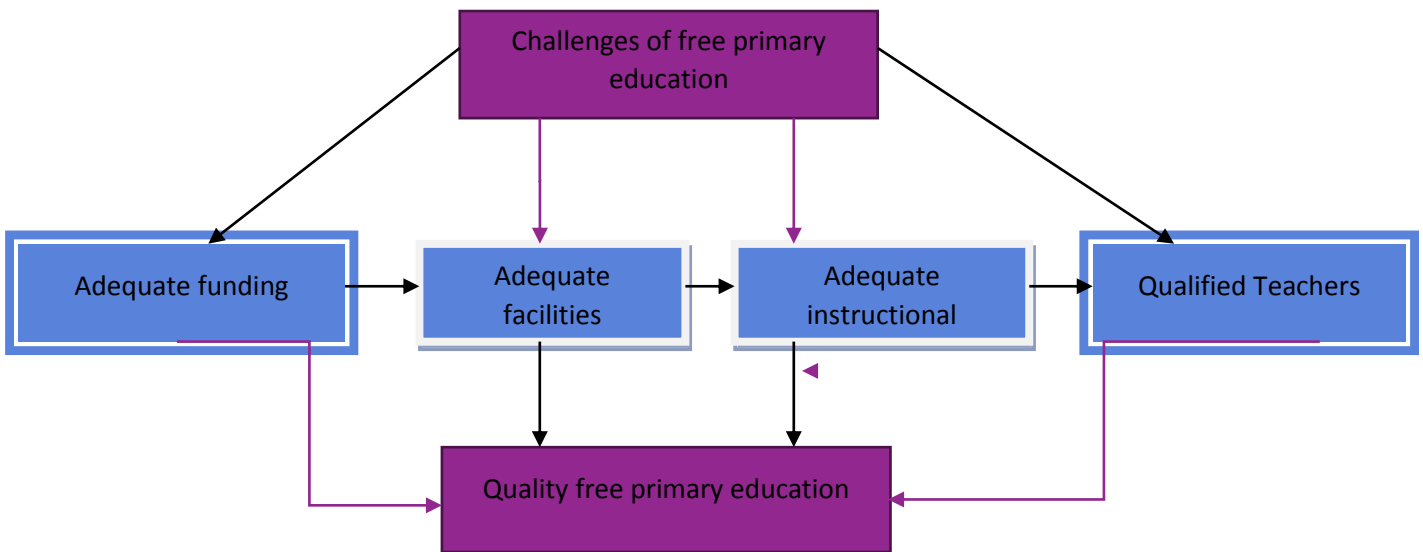


Figure 2.1

### **1.10 Delimitation**

Kombo and Tromp (2006) postulated that, limitation of study includes challenges anticipated or faced by the researcher. Likewise, this study could not be conducted without constraints. Therefore, one of the serious challenges faced in coming with this study was that some key respondents were very busy to be available for interviews because of their tight work schedules. To address these challenges, the researcher had to prolong the period for data collection to ensure that all the intended respondents were captured. Lastly, since the sample size of this study was too small (10 primary schools) its findings may not be generalized to other public primary schools in the district and Zambia at large.

### **1.11 Limitations**

This study was confined to ten Primary schools of Nyimba district owing to financial and time limiting factors. Due to that fact, the findings of the study shall not be generalized to all the primary schools in Zambia, let alone those in the district. The other limiting factor was that of literature as there was no any related research was ever conducted in the district, especially the zone.

### **1.12 Operations of Definitions of Key Terms**

**Free Education:** This refers to education that is funded through taxation, or charitable organisations rather than tuition fees.

**Quality Education** determines how much and how well children learn and the extent to which their education translates into a range of personal, social and developmental benefits.

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

**Instructional Materials:** These are class requirement, such as teaching aids, audio Visio materials, chalks, text books and exercise books among others used by the teachers to deliver subject content.

**Public Primary schools:** These are formal government schools that run from grade 1-7 only.

### **1.13 Organization of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. The following is a brief summary: Chapter one provides the background to this study, the statement of the problem, purpose and objectives of the study, research questions and significance of the study. It also provides the theoretical and the conceptual framework, operational definitions. Chapter Two reviews and analyses the literature important to this study topic which helped to determine the current state of research in the areas of free primary education. These areas have been reviewed from different subject perspectives among others, global perspective of free primary education provision, Enrolment rate due to free primary Education, funding issues and enrolment rates. Chapter three presents the methodology which is segmented into themes that include research design study population, sample size, and sampling techniques. The chapter also presents data collection methods and techniques and data analysis methods, study population, sample size, responses rate and sampling techniques. Chapter four provides the presentation of findings and interpretation in view of the research questions set at the beginning of the study. Chapter five discusses the findings presented in chapter four while chapter six provides the conclusion and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.0 Overview**

Chapter two presents a review of various literatures considered to be relevant to the study with a view of putting it into the context of similar works done so far thereby providing justification for the study. In doing so, studies carried out by other previous researchers in both developed and developing countries were reviewed to provide rich experiences to the current study. Therefore, literature review in this chapter was arranged as follows; Studies on the challenges of FPE, Concept of quality education, Factors influencing the quality of Learning and teaching and summary of literature

### **2.1 Studies on the challenges of FPE**

World statistics indicate that the cost of schooling inhibit school enrolment. From the eighties and early to mid-nineties, cost sharing has been a policy prompted by international financial institutions such as the World Bank, the direct and indirect costs to parents to their children's education became an obstacle to their attendance and continued enrolment. 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). Parents in Indonesia, China, the Solomon Islands, and many African countries cite user fees as the major obstacle to enrolling children in school (Saroso 2005; Yardly 2005; Pacific News 2005). In 2001 parents and teachers in Tanzania said that nonpayment of fees was the prime reason why children did not attend school (Oxfam 2007). Zambia's central statistics office estimated that at least 45 percent of children who drop out of school did so because they did not pay school fees (Tembo and Ndlovu 2005).

A study carried out by Elimu Yetu Coalition (2003) entitled 'reform agenda for education sector in Kenya' found out that 25% of primary- age- going schools were not attending school because of lack of fees. The study found out that even though there was increased access for children at primary school level, an insufficient budget was allocated to the sector, which undermined delivery and quality of education. This is also confirmed by the study done 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. This simply shows that a number of countries have had problems regarding financing of their education.



In order to provide education to all the children worldwide, handful of the countries between 1960 and early 1990s, embarked on the provision of free education typically as part of renewed attempts to resurrect their education systems which have been in decline, and even suffering reduced enrolments after the initial growth following independence (Arenstrop, 2006). For instance Barbados, Botswana, Costa Rica, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe were able to provide education without charging household for tuition (Mehro and Jolly 1997). Adding to this, a number of European countries such as Norway, France, Sweden and Finland, which recognized that education is fundamental human right provided free education (Norwegian Ministry of Education Research 2005).

One of the principles for the development of education in Zambia is for the government to enhance quality by eliminating sources of educational disadvantages such as gender, physical, social or economic factors (MOE, 1996). Zambia's Free Primary Education (FPE) was declared and instantaneously introduced in 2002. This means that education would be free for all pupils from grade 1-7. All user fees were abolished and uniforms were no longer compulsory.

The FPE policy directed heads of primary schools not to charge any kind of fees in recognition of various economic challenges facing the general population especially in rural areas. This was further compounded by the escalating numbers of orphans due to HIV/AIDS related deaths. The policy directive also barred schools from denying children from attending school on account of not having a uniform. For children that had dropped out of the education system, the FPE directed that schools invite them back with no questions asked. This requirement is fully articulated under the MESVTEE's Re-Entry Policy which encourages girls especially, to return to school in the event of falling pregnant (Central Statistical Office: 2012: 27). This has enhanced access leading to an increase in enrolment in number of pupils while bringing about decline in quality of education.

Studies by Mulenga Mambwe (2010) includes that, the introduction of free primary education (FPE) in Zambia in 2002 during the Basic Education Sub-Sector investment Programme (BESSIP), significantly increased access to primary education, especially after declining enrollment in the 1990s. Manzo (2006) also did a similar study and concealed that the introduction of free primary education in some Sub-Sahara African countries led to an increase

in enrolment such that classrooms in government primary schools were filled beyond normal capacity.

These observations were in tandem with the finding of the study by Boy, (2006) who indicated that over enrolment has caused poor performance in public primary schools in Kenya. The reality of teachers trying to teach 100 pupils has become common in public primary schools and has raised concern about academic standards and therefore questions on the quality of education provided. While it is good that enrolment 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 as a result quality is compromised (UNESCO, 2004b). Musonda (2010) also mention that in Sub-Saharan Africa, access to education is reported to be 100%, but the problem still remains with those accessing it reaching the last grade.

## **2.2 Concept of Quality Education.**

The goal of achieving UPE has been on the international agenda since the UDHR affirmed in 1948 that elementary education was to be made freely and compulsorily available for all in all nations. This objective was restated subsequently on many occasions, by international treaties and in United Nations conference declarations. Most of these declarations and commitments are silent about the quality of education to be provided (UNESCO, EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2005).

The concept of 'quality education' has been difficult to define. Debate on quality of education has focused on learning achievement, relevance of curriculum to the labour markets and the social, cultural and political environment in which the learner finds him/herself as well as conditions of learning including teachers and facilities. The notion of quality of education should go beyond students/learners results and look at determinants of such results including provision of teachers, buildings, equipment and curriculum among others. From this argument, the

quality of education comprises three interrelated aspects: quality of human and material resources available for teaching (inputs), quality of teaching practice (process) and quality of results (outputs and outcomes), (Ngware, Oketch and Ezeh, 2008).

The quality of education offered in a school is determined by the level of material inputs allocated to the school and the efficiency with which these materials are organized and managed

to raise student achievement. Provision of instructional materials including text books was identified as one key achievement of the FPE programme, particularly through reducing the cost burden of education on parents and thus leading to an influx of pupils to school. However, private schools provide better facilities to their pupils and teachers for instance; libraries and computer facilities among others. On the other hand in public primary schools provision of instructional materials were not commensurate with the rapid increase in pupil enrolment. It should be noted that, free primary education in public schools has stretched teaching and learning facilities as a result of high influx of new pupils (Sifuna 2003).

In the year 2000, the Dakar Framework for Action declared that access to quality education was the right of every child. Its expanded definition of quality set out the desirable characteristics of learners (healthy, motivated), process (competent teachers using active pedagogies), content (relevant curricula) and systems (good governance and equitable resource allocation). This is teaching and learning process that brings the curriculum to life and determines what happens in the classroom and subsequently the quality of the learning outcomes.

According to UNESCO (2005), the Education for All (EFA): Global Monitoring Report (GMR) 2005 - The Quality Imperative (EFA: GMR), two principles characterize most attempts to define quality in education: the first identifies learners' cognitive development as the major explicit objective of all education systems. The second emphasizes education's role in promoting values and attitudes of responsible citizenship and in nurturing creative and emotional development. Quality determines how much and how well children learn and the extent to which their education translates into a range of personal, social and developmental benefits. This study mainly focuses on the input aspects of quality of education which in turn influences all other dimensions of quality. These include aspects like; pupil enrolment, pupil teacher ratio, provision of instructional materials as well as school physical facilities/infrastructure among others.

## **2.3 Factors influencing the quality of Learning and teaching**

### **2.3.1 Qualified Teachers**

Quality in education must include change in the teachers. Teachers, next to students are the largest most crucial input of an education system. There is need for enough qualified teachers if

education standards are to be maintained. Education is a lifelong process through which people acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to improve their well-being (Njiru et al, 1997). Performance of pupils is critical in evaluating the quality of education. The performance of pupils in primary schools has been attributed to the fact that enrolment has far exceeded the school's resources.

Yah (2005) also observed that teachers are the principal factor in the educational provision and thus affect the provision of quality education in a significant way. Attributes of concern in this case include pupils-teacher ratios, and the personal characteristics of the individual teachers. Other personal characteristics include academic qualification, pedagogical training, content knowledge, ability or aptitude, years of service and many others.

The most relevant measure of education effectiveness is not the number of enrolled pupils as often used in evaluating educational process in developing countries. Rather, it is the number of completers that have achieved a required level of training (World Bank, 1980). The main reasons of Basic Education for All (BEFA) is to impart literacy, numeracy and manipulative skills. If the education system were to be judged solely by the size of the student enrolments, the question of a crisis in the content and quality of education would not rise. However, the education system exist to teach students, not to produce statistics (Coomds, 1996). Questions must be asked as to what the students have learned, how much and how well they have learnt.

The Finance development (2005) observes that without significant contingent commitments from the donors, Countries that undertake a major expansion of access to education can suffer serious declines in quality, the student teacher ratio may zoom to 100:1 from ill equipped countries. This is supported by Plank (2007) who states that when 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 book increased 24:1 (The same author also reported that the abolition of school fees in other countries including Uganda, Cameroon, and Mozambique resulted in increase in the pupil teacher ratios. In some schools the teacher pupil ratio was 1:70 which was far beyond the recommended maximum rate of 1:40 (Okwach & George, 1997).

While millions of poor children have clearly benefited from the elimination of these financial barriers to schooling, such dramatic expansion without an equivalent boost in resources to compensate for lost fees and support the increased numbers of students can create a quality

dilemma. In Uganda, for example, while more students gained access, the explosion in class sizes without more external assistance caused a dropping in the percentage of satisfactory scores in Mathematics and English. The answer to this dilemma is neither to forego efforts to eliminate fees nor to discourage such leaders from seizing such political moments to push their nations towards universal basic education. Instead what is needed is substantial continent donor funding to encourage well planned expansions (The finance and Development, 2005).

EFA can only succeed if teachers are treated as participants and not just as employees. Educators need to develop greater self-awareness, and how they may influence students and the learning process. Emotionally secure, competent and committed teachers are one of the most important assets for qualitative education in the future (UNESCO, 2000).

Dramatic expansions of primary school completion can only be accomplished with a comparable expansion in the number of teachers. Yet teacher salaries constitute the largest component of an expansion usually averaging over 80 percent of education budgets in major developing nations and they are recurrent cost. Yet teacher salaries constitute the largest component of an expansion- countries hesitate to hire teachers necessary to expand quality education because of lack of resources and a lack of certainty of those resources (UNESCO, 2000).

A study by the Economic Policy Institute revealed that wages and benefits for teachers have remained low in most countries probably including Zambia contributing to an industry with fewer new entrants, lower qualifications overall, and high turnover rates (Herzenberg, et al, 2005). The finding of this study suggests that most of the teachers are demotivated and as such they were likely not to deliver as per expected. In fact, if the status of secondary school teachers

in Zambia have drastically gone low, what more that of primary school teachers? Obviously it is likely to be worse, as they are likely to be marginalized by their fellow teachers and school administrators. All these factors are likely to affect the teaching and learning processes in most public primary schools.

### **2.3.2 Availability of suitable learning and teaching materials**

The availability of suitable materials, teachers and equipment for primary pupils' classrooms are extremely important for multiple developmental perspectives such as cognitive, social, physical, and language. In this respect, teachers need to be certain of what materials to use that suit the

needs and interests of the learners; hence all the materials and equipment must be appropriate to the age of learners (Education International, 2010).

According to Yah (2005) the success of teaching and learning is greatly influenced by the materials resources (textbooks, classrooms, libraries, school facilities and other non-human resources) made available to support the process and the direct ways in which these resources are managed. Hence, it is most likely that schools without appropriate textbooks or learning materials would not be as effective as the ones with such educational materials. In this sense material resources are seen as important for provision of quality education.

Miskel, & Wayne, (2009) argue that materials have a hidden curriculum that includes attitudes toward knowledge, attitudes toward teaching and learning, attitudes toward the role and relationship of the teacher and student, and values and attitudes related to gender and society. Materials have an underlying instructional philosophy, approach, method, and content, including both linguistic and cultural information. Choices made in writing textbooks are based on beliefs that the writers have about what language to use and how it should be taught. Writers may use a certain approach, for example, the aural-oral approach, and they may choose certain activities and select the linguistic and cultural information to be included. Improper planning of the free primary schools has resulted to inadequacy of teaching and learning materials in the public primary schools. Most of the teaching and learning materials in free primary school education are provided by the government through a set budget that is scheduled for each school for either a year or for a term.

According to studies by UNESCO (2005), Education materials are the key to the delivery of quality services to the students. Shikwasha (2014) also did a very similar study and acknowledged the importance of relevant educational materials in the provision of quality primary education. However, the implementation of free primary education in Zambia has got it all wrong on the provision of material. Little or nothing has been done to ensure that the influx of student is handled at a bigger capacity. The Zambian free primary Education scenario has seen high number of student enrolment but below per material to offer such numbers the quality education that they need.

### **2.3.3 Conducive physical environment**

The social context in which learning takes place has greater influence on the nature and effectiveness of the learning process. The family, the school, the teacher, the board of management and the local community form a social continuum and provide a context of social interaction in which the child's educational development takes place (Government of Ireland, 1999). The quality of the relationship that the teacher establishes with the child is of paramount importance in the learning process. The teacher's concern for the well-being and the successful development of the child is the basis for the creation of a supportive environment that can facilitate the child's learning. A relationship of trust between teacher and child creates an environment in which the child is happy in school and motivated to learn (Osakwe, 2009).

A good physical learning environment is a physical space that supports various and diverse teaching and learning programmes and pedagogies, including current technologies; one that demonstrates optimal, cost-effective building performance and operation over time; one that respects and is in harmony with the environment; and one that encourages social participation, providing a healthy, comfortable, safe, secure and stimulating setting for its occupants (ISSA, 2010). In this sense, the role of the physical environment is to support the activities and needs of the users. As such, the quality of the physical environment is strongly linked to the quality of the learning that can take place in a primary education facility.

Study conducted by Adewuyi (2002) indicates that, a conducive learning environment can effect on both the attitudes and achievement of students. He further added that a positive learning environment is found to be a very important factor of school effectiveness. Olutola (2008) further postulated that school learning environment which includes instructional spaces, circulation space, Administrative spaces, spaces for conveniences and accessories are essential in facilitating teaching and learning process. To a larger extent the manner in which the physical environment is designed and configured definitely influences how children feel, act, and behave. The physical environment allows growth and development through activities and materials in defined play areas. Earlier on Asiabaka (2008) observed that, poorly designed classrooms can cause disruptions and negative social interactions among students or between students and the teacher.

A number of studies have shown that many school systems, particularly those in urban and high-poverty areas, are plagued by decaying buildings that threaten the health, safety, and learning opportunities of students. Good facilities appear to be an important precondition for student learning, provided that other conditions are present that support a strong academic program in the school (Ohba, 2009).

## **2.4 Summary of Literature**

Like most developing countries, quality education is one of the key national development goals of the Zambian government (MOE, 2011). Indeed because of the FPE policy, more marginalized children could now go to school. They do not have to pay for their tuition, and can receive free text books and school supplies from the government. This policy increased access to education especially for children from marginalized families. However, increased enrolments have been blamed for larger class size and declining teacher morale (Sifuna, 2003). Despite increase increased access to education, there is growing inequality in academic performance of children from rich and poor backgrounds. The study attempts to evaluate the free primary education policy and its challenges on the provision of quality education in public primary schools in Nyimba District.



## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Overview**

This chapter describes the description of the research design and methodology to be used in carrying out the proposed study. It also describes the study site, target population, sample size and sampling procedure, data collection instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis techniques to be used and the conclusion.

### **3.1 Research design**

Bless and Chola (1988:54) states that a research design is a planning of any specific research from the first to the last step. It is also a programme to guide a research in collecting, analyzing and interpret observed facts. Yin (1994) defines a research design as an action plan for getting from here to there. He further mentions that it is the blueprint of any research. This plan describes in general terms when, where, and how data is to be collected in the researcher's efforts to answer the research questions. In order to provide accurate account of the situation of the challenges in the implementation and provision of quality free primary education, the study adopted a descriptive research design particularly a survey design under qualitative approach. This enabled the researcher to delve into details concerning the challenges in the implementation and provision of quality free primary education in public primary schools in Nyimba District. Further, Kirk and Miller (1986) suggest that qualitative research is a particular tradition in social science, which depend in watching people in their own territory. Qualitative research means that the researcher will study the participants in their natural setting therefore; qualitative approach of data collection was used in this study. It involves use and collection of a variety of materials that describe routine and meanings in individuals' lives (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

### **3.2 Study Site**

The site for this study was Lwezi and central zone of Nyimba district. This covered government schools namely; Ndake Primary School, Betele Primary School, Kalulu Primary School, Musima Primary School, Njalazi Primary School, Mulira Primary School, chikontha primary school, Nyimba primary school, Mfumbizi primary school, and Kampala primary were visited for this study.

The choice of Lwezi and central zone as a study site was because it is where the problem was observed, secondly, it is in close proximity to the researcher's residence and work area, hence a cut in cost of research and time saving. Furthermore, the researcher teaches at one of the stated school within the zone.

### **3.3 Study Population**

Zikmund (2000) defines a target population as a specific sample group relevant to the research project. On the other hand, Borg and Gall (1979) define population as members of the hypothetical set of people, event, or objectives to which to generalize the results of our research. This includes all individuals with certain specified characteristics. In support of the generalization aspect, DE Vos (1998) states that, the term population is used to refer to all the entities or the members which the conclusion or generalization to be made is to embrace. This includes all individuals with certain specified characteristics. In this regard, all public primary schools in Nyima District were potential respondents.

### **3.4 Study Sample**

According to Feuestein (1986) a study sample is a set of elements which are ideally representative of the population, a group of subjects on which information is obtained. Sample sizes should be selected in a way in which they will represent the larger group (population) from which they were obtained (Cohen and Mrrion 1994). Thus, this study had a total sample of 38 respondents which comprised of 10 Head teachers and all were interviewed individually. Furthermore, 28 teachers formed four focus groups comprising seven participants in each of the focus groups.

### **3.5 Sampling Procedure**

Defining sampling techniques is an important step in research because it indicates the quality of the inferences made by the researcher with regard to the research findings (Collins, Onwuegbuzie, & Jiao, 2006). Therefore, the sampling technique is a process of selecting units from the population of the researcher's interest so that by studying the sample we may generalize the results back to the population from which they were chosen. Borg and Gall (1979) states that, sampling is the selection of some units to represent the entire set from which the units were drawn. The issue of sampling in this study anchors on all the Head teachers and, teachers. The

Head teachers were purposively selected. This was because these respondents should have key issues and concerns to illuminate in the study. Purposive Sampling was used in order to achieve a rich and varied collection of information. According to Patton (1990), Purposive Sampling involves the selection of information-rich cases whose study will elucidate answers to the question under study. He holds that the logic and power of logic purposive sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for the study in depth. Singleton, et al, (1988) also indicates that, Purposive sampling is where elements which are included in the sample have typical characteristics or attributes of the population and selection is based on the judgment of the researcher. Teachers included in this study were selected using a Simple Random Sampling. Four Focus Group Discussions were conducted with each having 7 participants, bringing the total number of participants in the focus group discussion to 28. According to Feuerstein (1986:23), Simple Random Sampling means that, every element has an equal chance of being selected in the sample.

### **3.6 Research Instruments**

Field data was collected in a space of two weeks by the use of the following instruments.

#### **3.6.1 Interviews**

Coolican (2009) states that, interview method involves asking people direct questions. This study conducted face to face interviews with the sampled group of the population where the researcher asked specific questions to the subjects of the study. Thus, the researcher of this study used interview guide to generate primary data through individual interviews with 10 Head teachers. A voice recorder was used to record information during individual interviews.

#### **3.6.2 Focus Group Discussions**

This study employed focus group discussions where the researcher conducted four focus group discussions for the teachers which comprised 7 teachers in each focus group about the challenges in the implementation and provision of quality FPE education in public primary schools in Nyimba District. Wimmer and Dominic (1987) say, focus group interviewing is a research strategy for understanding audience/customer attitudes and behavior.

### **3.6.3. Observation Checklist**

This study employed the observation technique particularly the disclosed observation as the researcher was with the participants on the programme watching what they were doing. (Coolican 2009) indicates that indicate that observation method involves watching and being with the people. Disclosed observation is where people know exactly what the observer is doing.

### **3.6.4 Document Review**

According to Tesch (1990), document review is a good method of collecting secondary data when answering research questions. It provides a useful check of information that is in existence already that is relating to your study. For this study documents were collected and reviewed for this from the DEBS office. Data was collected from these documents answering certain questions especially those concerned with education delivery and supply and demand.

These techniques listed above entails that triangulation data collection strategy was employed which according to Yin (1994) is bused to validate the collected data. This view is also supported by Patton (1990) who indicates that, using the triangulation method of data collection entails that multiple sources of data are sought and used because there is no single source of information that can be trusted to provide a comprehensive perspective of the information collected on a particular research project.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedures**

A research permit will be obtained from the District Education Board secretary after approval by the University. The researcher personally will administer the questionnaires to the Head teachers and teachers. The selected head teachers and teachers will be visited in their schools and the questionnaires will be administered to the respondents. The respondents will be assured of strict confidentiality in dealing with the responses. The head teachers and the teachers will be given about one week to fill in the questionnaires after which the filled questionnaires will be collected. Face to face interviews will then be conducted with the head teachers, teachers and the pupils.3.8

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

Qualitative data analysis according to Kasonde, (2013), is a manipulation of the collected data for the purpose of drawing conclusions that reflect on the interest, ideas and theories that

initiated the study. She further holds that data analysis involves uncovering underlying structures and extracting important variables.

Hammersley, et.al (1995:209), suggests that in analyzing qualitative data, the initial task is to find concepts that help “make sense of what is going on”. Patton, (1990), seems to suggest that these concepts about data analysis start arising during data collection and that marks the beginning of the analysis and this continues throughout the study. This entails that unlike in quantitative research where data analysis only takes place after data collection, in qualitative research like this one, collection and analysis of data go hand-in-hand to build a coherent interpretation of the data (Sarantakos, 1995).

During data analysis in qualitative research, the researcher will have to put into consideration the following steps which can be found in interview, focus group discussions and observation transcriptions (Booth, 1997). Sjoström’s study, (2002), stated that the analysis includes seven steps. The steps he referred to, and which are to be used in this study are; The first step: familiarization, which means that the researcher will become familiar to the material by means of reading through the transcripts. This step is important as it facilitates the making corrections to the transcript, the second step: compilation stage, which involves the compiling of answers from participants to a certain question. The researcher should identify the most significant elements from the answers given by the participants, the third step: the consideration or reduction of individual answers to find the central part of the dialogue, the fourth step: the preliminary grouping or classification of the similar answers is done in this stage, the fifth step: the preliminary comparison of categories, the sixth step: this stage involves the naming of the categories made and the seventh step: the last step is the contrastive comparison of categories.

This study therefore, analyzed data from the interview guide and focus group discussions by grouping the Emerging Themes (Thematic Analysis) with emphasis on the main variables from the research questions and the objectives of the study

### **3.9 Trustworthiness**

This study used a combination of methods and sources of data. The study used three methods of data collection to enhance its trustworthiness. This examines the extent to which the results of the study could be generalized to the real world (Achola and Bless, 1988). The combination of

the methods increases credibility of the findings of the study. Multiple methods of data collection make the research trustworthy. This is because the methods complement each other without overlapping weaknesses (Brewer and Patton, 2002). Combination of methods ensures the inconsistencies are removed and thus, trustworthy data emerges. This is also known as triangulation.

In order to make the findings credible during field work, the researcher listened to the recordings at the end of each day so as to check for unclear material and then cross check with the respondents (Patton, 1990). While cross checking, the researcher also made use of the responses for the verification of the findings. This process is called Member checking.

### **3.10 Ethical consideration**

To make collection of data easier as per obligation in research, consent to carry out this study will be sought from pertinent authorities at the University of Zambia, the District Education Board Secretary's Office and the Head teachers of respective Primary Schools. All data collected during this study will be used exclusively for the intention of the study, and will be kept strictly secretly. Approval will be sought from respondents and no informant will be forced to participate in the study. Moreover, names of the respondents and institutions will not be disclosed in any way. Furthermore, the research will be fully explained to the subjects in advance and "be-briefed" to them afterwards.

### **3.11 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this chapter presented the Research Design that was used in the study, the Study Site, the Population, Sample, Sampling Procedure, Data Collection Methods and Instruments, Data Analysis and the Validity and reliability.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### **4.0 Overview**

The previous chapter provided the methodology used for the collection and analysis of data for this study. This chapter presents the findings of the study. The aim of this chapter is to report on the findings pertaining to the challenges in the implementation and provision of quality free primary education in public primary schools in Nyimba District. The views of the interviewees and information obtained from observations and other relevant documents constitute the focal point of this chapter. The findings herein have been segmented according to the categories under which the respondents participated. Therefore, this chapter brings out the findings of this study in accordance with the issues articulated by the respondents who were: six head teachers, 2 policy makers, fifteen teachers and fifteen pupils. The data is presented in line with the research questions of the study as presented in chapter one and these were the questions:

What challenges do schools encounter in implementing FPE policy?

1. How do the challenges affect education delivery?
2. What are the strategies employed by the school managers in an attempt to achieve quality education following the implementation of FPE?
3. The findings were presented in line with the research questions from the various categories of respondents.

### **4.1 Research Findings**

The findings of this research were presented according to the research questions. The data collecting instrument used were the focus group discussions, individual interviews, observations and analysis of relevant documents such as Education strategic Plan and the Seventh National Development Plan (SNDP). The content of the focus group discussion, individual interviews, observations were used in order to obtain comprehensive data analysis. The data collected was therefore, analyzed by coding it into themes.

## **4.2 Research findings on Challenges in the Implementation of FPE**

The first question to be responded to was meant to establish Challenges in the Implementation and provision of quality free primary Education Policy in public primary Schools in Nyimba District. To answer this question, data was collected from the 10 Head teachers and 28 teachers by the use of interview guide and focus group discussions which turned out qualitative data. From the eight individuals interviewed and all the four focus groups conducted, the following were the major themes that emerged based on the challenges schools faced: inadequate and delayed funding from the government, over enrolment, inadequate and irregular supply of educational materials, unconducive learning environment.

### **4.2.1 Findings on inadequate and delayed funding from the government**

Funding was expressed in form of grants and was supposed to be given monthly as per government regulation. Out of a total of ten (10) Head Teachers that were interviewed, findings show that all the 10 respondents confirmed that funding was not disbursed in time. As a way of emphasis on delayed funding as a challenge in the implementation and provision of quality free primary education, one of the Head teachers, being the key respondent stated that,

At the beginning, funding for the implementation of the Policy Was regular and adequate; each school received adequate funding. But of late, the policy is inhibited and characterized by erratic funding and irregular and inadequate supply of FPE free materials. At times the funding only comes once per term. The grant for most schools is one thousand kwacha. Which was not enough....”(Interview with a school Head teacher from school 1, June, 2017).

Interviews conducted from the sampled 28 respondents, findings show that 24 confirmed that funding was not disbursed in time and the remaining 4 said that they were not sure of government grants.

### **4.2.2 Findings on inadequate and irregular supply of educational materials**

Inadequate and irregular supply of educational materials was another prominent theme that emerged. Inadequate and irregular supply of educational materials was expressed in form of desks, pupil's books, pupil's exercise books, teacher's books. The findings on Inadequate and



irregular supply of educational materials indicated that out of the 10 Head teachers interviewed, four (4) respondents agreed to have adequate and regular supply of education materials while the remaining 6 confirmed that materials were inadequate, not only inadequate but they were also not regularly given to schools as planned. To qualify on the above responses on inadequate and irregular supply of educational materials, one Head teacher stated that:

At the beginning, materials for the implementation of the Policy was regular and adequate; the FPE free materials were 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 characterize by irregular and inadequate supply of FPE free materials. At times the free materials are only given to the vulnerable. (Interview with a school Head teacher from school number 4: June, 20017).

The provision of FBE materials in the school surveyed was analyzed and the results showed that out of the 28 respondents interviewed 5 of the respondents indicated that the free exercise books and other materials were provided but were not adequate. On the other hand 19 of the respondents indicated that they did not receive FBE materials while 4 reported that the free materials were provided but not regularly. The majority of the respondents revealed that materials were provided in an irregular manner and were inadequate.

On the question of whether the schools have enough equipment and facilities. The study through observation of the 10 schools by the researcher revealed that all the 10 schools surveyed did not have water borne toilets, laboratories, industrial arts or technology equipment did not have physical education and home economics equipment and 8 did not have science kits. These findings have revealed inadequacies in the provision of schools' equipment and facilities. Additionally, it was observed that, only 1 school was adequately staffed, 4 had adequate desks, 1 of the schools observed had piped water with good sanitation, all of the schools surveyed had no water borne toilets and only 1 school had classrooms that were equivalent to the available number of classes.

According to these findings, almost all the school 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.

#### **4.2.3 Findings on over enrolment**

Over enrolment was another theme that emerged prominent. Enrolment affects quality education. Higher numbers of pupils in a class that is supervised by one teacher can lead to overwork and tiredness hence reducing the productivity of such a teacher and reduce quality of education offered to pupils. According to the findings, 23 of the teacher respondents indicated that high number of pupils in a single classroom can increase strain, stress on both the teachers and pupils and eventually result in poor quality of education. However, 5 of the respondents believe that number of pupils in a classroom does not affect the quality of education. To illustrate on over enrolment as one of the challenges of implementing and provision of quality free primary education in public primary schools in Nyimba District, one teacher lamented that: .....

Enrolment affect the quality of education. He further stated that high strained syllabus coverage, difficulties in classroom management and overload to the teachers as they have to give all pupils assignment and homework and later ensure that they mark all those assignments and award marks. (Responses from a teacher during focus group discussion number 1: June, 2017).

#### **4.2.4 Findings on uncondusive learning environment**

Uncondusive learning environment was another theme that came out. It was expressed in form of the nature of the classroom such as cracked floors, no talking wall, poor sanitation, poor chalk board and the number of desks available. According to the findings, 34 of the respondents indicated that the learning environment was not conducive for learning and only 4 respondents were against stating that classrooms are conducive for learning. To illustrate the above findings, one teacher lamented that:

Most of the school's 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. He also lamented that most of the classrooms were dilapidated; floors were cracked and others with pot holes. He further said 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....(Response from a female teacher during a focus group discussion number 2 : June,2017).

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.

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. The desks were inadequate with an average number of 5 to 10 desks per class and others with 15 desks each.

#### **4.3 Research findings on how the challenges affecting education delivery**

The second objective of the study was to solicit proposals on how the challenges faced have affected education delivery in public primary schools in Nyimba District. In order to seek responses, the study was guided by the research question: How do the challenges affect education delivery? In trying to solicit on how the challenges have affected education delivery, the respondents were asked to bring out the major effects of the above challenges on education delivery. The negative effects brought out were, poor quality education delivery, low literacy levels, teacher unable to teach effectively, poor performance, lack of comfort resulting into high pupil absenteeism, reduced learning time because of several sessions, teachers not motivated, teachers were overworked and irregular homework policy.

### **4.3.1 Finding on low literacy levels**

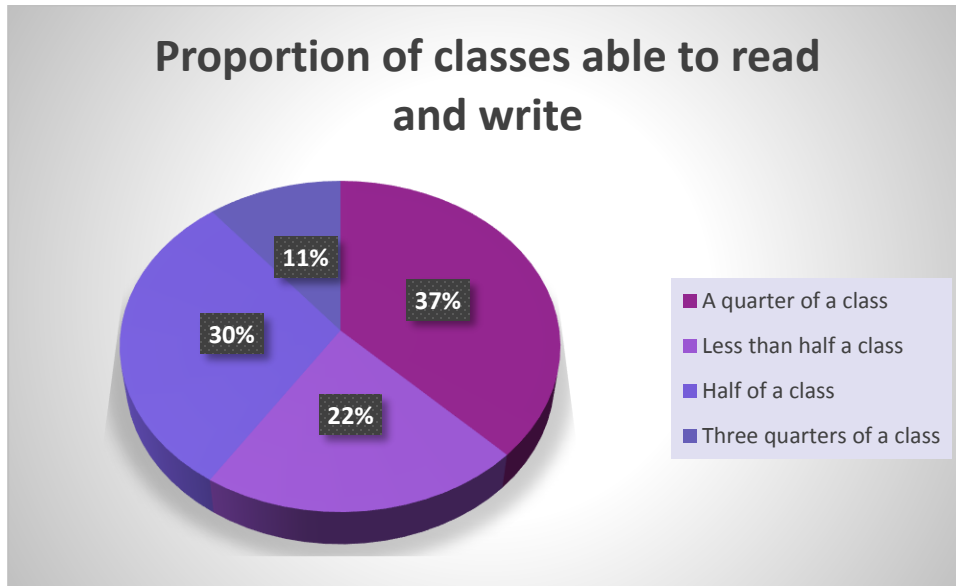
Low literacy levels were expressed in form of reading and writing. The Interviews conducted on the Head teachers on low literacy levels, the findings were that all the 10 respondents revealed that very few learners in the schools were literate. As a way of emphasis, one of the Head teachers, being the key respondent stated that:

The literacy levels are very low. This is the big challenge in almost all the schools. The statistics at the office reveal that in most schools, less than a quarter of a class is able to read and write effectively. Pupil's performance has been declining from the time the policy was introduced. The reasons for this situation are that the materials for the revised curriculum are not available; were available, they are not adequate due to abnormal numbers of pupils. (Interview with a school Head teacher from school number 8: June, 2017).

During the interviews one teacher lamented that:

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..... (Response from a male teacher during a focus group discussion number 4: June,2017).

Figure 4.3.1



As shown in the figure above, the findings were that more of the respondents revealed that very few learners in their schools were literate. The rating 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 homework, 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 18 out of the 28 teacher respondents interviewed revealed that they taught one class each and 10 out of the 28 taught 2 classes each. To illustrate on the number of classes taught one teacher lamented that: ...

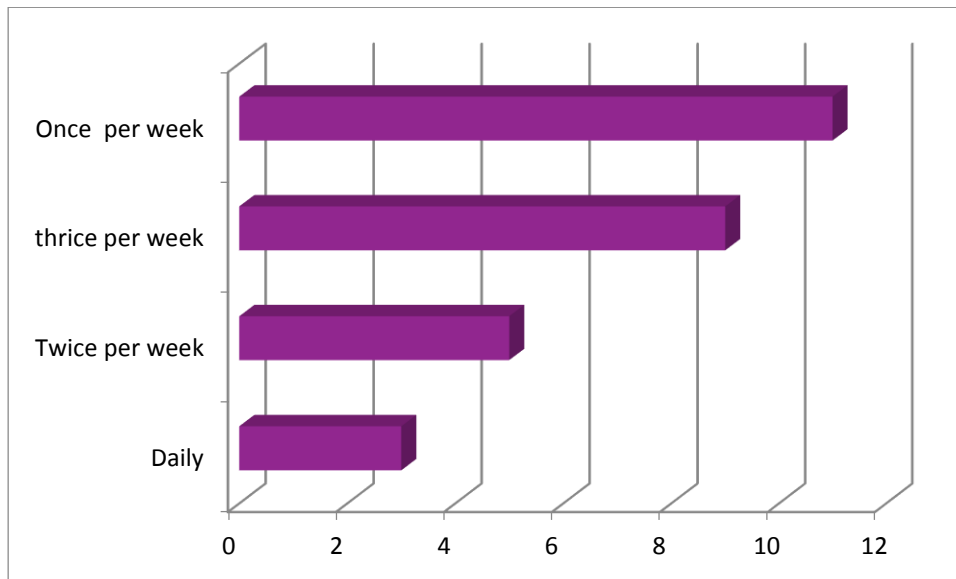
Teaching of more than one class is challenging. I teach two classes and each class has over 60 pupils. In this case marking and conducting individualized teaching is not possible. Sometimes pupils go home without being marked or have their work checked. .... (Response from a male teacher during a focus group discussion number 3: June, 2017).

### 4.3.2 Findings on irregular homework

Homework was another theme that emerged prominent. From the interviews conducted, the teacher respondents were asked the extent to which they gave homework to their classes. The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they gave home work to their classes. The study revealed that 3 out of 28 respondents executed homework daily, 5 of the respondents gave home work twice per week, and 9 indicated that homework was given three times per week while 11 indicated once per week.

**Figure 4.3.2**

**How often respondents assigned home work to their classes**



The study further reveals that only very few respondents were able to assign homework to their classes on a daily basis while a large portion gave irregular homework to their learners which is not a good sign of quality education delivery. However, not only did teachers fail to execute homework regularly but they also failed in some way to teach all subject on the time table per day. To cement on the above views, one of the teacher respondents had the following to say:

Free primary education has led to congested classes which are usually very difficult to handle. In some cases a single teachers is expected to mark up to 400 pupil exercise books in the seven subjects per day. It is for this reason that the teacher might give homework and not even mark it. He further lamented that teachers face difficulties in classroom

management as they have to give all pupils homework and later ensure that they make all those assignments and ensure that the pupils have done the correct thing and that their parents have checked the work..... (Response from a male teacher during a focus group discussion number 2: June, 2017).

#### **4.3.3 Findings on Overcrowding**

Overcrowding was another theme that emerged prominent. Teacher workload affects quality education. Higher numbers of pupils in a class that is supervised by one teacher can lead to overwork and tiredness hence reducing the productivity of such a teacher and reduce quality of education offered to pupils. All the 28 respondents interviewed, indicated that most of the schools have congested classrooms. To facilitate the above findings, a teacher respondent from one school stated that:

High number of pupils as a result of free primary education has led to strained syllabus coverage, difficulties in classroom management and overload to the teachers as they have to give all pupils assignment and homework and later ensure that they make all those assignments and award marks. (Response from a female teacher during a focus group discussion number 1: June, 2017).

#### **4.3.4 Findings on Inadequate Teaching Staff**

Inadequate teaching staff was another theme that emerged prominent. Teachers complain of increased pupil teacher ratios. Many primary schools are understaffed as a result of the free primary education program. This does not augur well for the quality of education being delivered. Majority of teachers in the schools surveyed taught more than one class each. This suggests that teachers were over worked and were not able to attend to individual needs of pupils. According to the findings, 23 out of the 28 teacher respondents interviewed stated that most of the schools in the district were characterized by inadequate teaching staff. Only 5 out of 28 teacher respondents expressed that staffing was adequate. 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 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 the pupils. To cement on the above views, one of the teacher respondents had the following to say ....

As a result of the free primary education, the situation of the teaching force in most of the districts is generally bad. He further stated that this has seen teachers to handle the large numbers under them. There was a P.T.R of 80:1 with some schools having a shortage of up to 20 teachers. (Response from a female teacher during a focus group discussion number 3: June, 2017).

#### **4.3.5 Findings on inadequate accommodation**

Inadequate staff accommodation was another theme that came out prominent. Many schools in the District had few staff houses forcing many teachers to rent from places which were far from the schools. According to the findings all the 8 of the Head teacher respondents expressed that inadequate staff accommodation has been a challenge in most public primary schools in Nyimba District. Only 2 indicated that accommodation was adequate. To cement on the above views, one of the respondents had the following to say:

The majority of the teachers were not accommodated within the schools making it very difficult to implement the activities of the school as they usually leave the school early and report late for work because of the long distances covered. This meant that the majority of teachers in schools were not motivated because of the poor accommodation in most schools. .... (Interview with the Head teacher from school number 8: June, 2017).

#### **4.4 Research findings on the strategies employed by the school managers.**

The third objective of the study was to identify the strategies employed by the school managers in an attempt to achieve quality education following the implementation of FPE. In order to seek responses, the study was guided by the research question:

What are the strategies employed by the school managers in an attempt to achieve quality education following the implementation of FPE? In trying to identify the strategies employed by



the school manager to achieve quality education following the implementation of FPE, the following were the major themes that emerged: PTA project fund, multi-grade, double or more session and preventive maintenance.

#### **4.4.1 Findings on PTA project fund**

To solve the problem of inadequate funding, the Head teachers who are also 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 need. This was supported by 10 out of 10 Head teacher respondents, who expressed that PTA project fund has been effective in the implementation of the FPE policy. To cement on the above views, one of the respondents had the following to say:

With the inadequate and irregular supply of government grants, most 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. (Response from a male teacher during a focus group discussion number 4: June, 2017).

#### **4.4.2 Findings on Multi- Grade**

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. This was supported by 7 out of 10 Head teachers interviewed, against 3, who expressed that multi-grade/combined classes does not help in accommodating more learner in schools. To cement on the above views, one of the respondents had the following to say:

With the surge in enrolment in most of the schools it was very difficult to accommodate the pupils in their various classes. He further stated that many schools in the District have opted to combine two or more grades so as to allow more pupils to attend school. .... (Interview with the head teacher from school number 7 school: June, 2017).

#### **4.4.3 Findings on Double or More Session**

Double or more session was another theme that emerged prominent. To solve the problem of inadequate classroom space, the schools introduced double or more sessions. This was supported by 10 out of 10 Head teacher respondents, who expressed that double or more sessions has helped in enrolling more pupils in schools. To cement on the above views, one of the respondents had the following to say:

Many teachers in the District are on double class. This is the situation where one teacher is assigned to teach two classes. This has helped in the school to contain more streams in the school..... (Interview with the Head teacher from school number 9: June, 2017)

#### **4.4.4 Findings on preventive maintenance**

Preventive maintenance was another theme that emerged prominent. In quest to increase the number of desks, the schools were involved in repairing the broken desks and in making new desks using available resource. This was supported by all the 28 teacher respondents, who expressed that Preventive maintenance had been effective in the implementation of the FPE policy. To cement on the above views, one of the respondents had the following to say:

We usually have preventive maintenance on Tuesday every week. Through preventive maintenance, schools were involved in repairing the broken desks and in making new desks using available resources, and from time to time, we requested desks from the DEBS' office..... (Response from a female teacher during a focus group discussion number 3: June, 2017).

In addition, one Head teacher who was a key informant stated that:.....

As a coping strategy, there was need to incorporate the local business men and women 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. (Interview with the Head teacher from school number 1).

Additionally, the schools' management closely monitored and safe guarded the few books and desks that were available. The study revealed that schools solicited for funding from the government and others used home economics and production unit funds to run the day to day school activities including repair and purchase of desks.

#### **4.5 Summary of the chapter 4**

Chapter four presented the findings for the study. Qualitative data was presented thematically represented by the number of respondents under each category. The succeeding chapter (5) discusses the key findings for this study.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### **5.0 Overview**

The previous chapter outlined the findings that were presented by the respondents based on the various themes that emerged from the research questions. This chapter will however, present the discussion of the findings that emerged from the emergent themes. These were based on the research objectives that guided the study which include;

1. What challenges do schools encounter in implementing FPE policy?
2. How do the challenges affect education delivery?
3. What are the strategies employed by the school managers in an attempt to achieve quality education following the implementation of FPE?

### **5.1 Discussions on Challenges in the Implementation of FPE**

The study revealed that the inadequate and delay in funding was ranked among the most serious challenges that inhabited the implementation of the FPE policy in schools that were surveyed.

Funding was expressed in form of grants and was supposed to be given monthly as per government regulation. Out of a total of ten (10) Head Teachers that were interviewed, findings show that all the 10 respondents confirmed that funding was not disbursed in time. All teachers and key informant revealed that funding for FPE was inadequate. As a result of inadequate funding parents were made to contribute extra levies in the name of the PTA project fund, civilian day, cobra fee and security fee to pay the watchman, sanitary workers and other service in bills in school. The study findings were confirmed by Meki (2004), who found out that grant though provided to schools, they were not adequate especially for 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 fund to schools were either not forth coming or not adequate.

The study revealed that funding was not only inadequate but it was also delayed. As per plan on the implementation of the FPE policy, funding was supposed to be given to schools monthly but unfortunately the findings indicated that funding was received irregularly.

Additionally, the findings indicated that the inadequacy and delay in the funding resulted in the delay in purchase of the materials needed for the running of the FPE policy like chalk, text books, exercise books, mathematical instruments, pencils, rulers, rubbers and other school requisites. The schools infrastructure could not be maintained resulting in dilapidated schools. Some schools reported to have huge 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.

The study revealed that there was a challenge of irregular and inadequate provision of free exercise books and other FPE materials. The findings on Inadequate and irregular supply of educational materials indicated that out of the 10 Head teachers interviewed, three (3) respondents agreed to have adequate and regular supply of education materials while the remaining 7 confirmed that materials were inadequate, not only inadequate but they were also not regularly given to schools as planned. The study revealed 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 two (2) 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 problem of inequalities 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 reported that disparities and inequalities 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 support the communities' educational needs and was not showing a good sign in the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that have emphasized Education for All 2030.

The relevance of instructional materials in delivery of the curriculum cannot be over emphasized. To some extent, this agrees with findings in a study by Arenstrop, (2004); that instructional

materials have an underlying instructional philosophy, approach, method, and content, including both linguistic and cultural information. Such materials help pupils understand areas of their study with much more ease than only being taught in the class.

The study findings agrees with Sifuna (2003), who states that provision of instructional materials including text books is identified as one of key achievement of the FPE programme, particularly through reducing the cost burden of education on parents through availability of study centres or libraries in schools thus leading to one improvement towards quality education.

The study findings revealed that there was a rapid increase in enrolments. This increase was to a large extent attributed to the introduction of free primary education. Additionally, 23 out of 28 of the teacher respondents reported abnormal enrolments and they were of the opinion that this increase was attributed to the FPE policy. They indicated that high number of pupils in a single classroom can increase strain, stress on both the teachers and pupils and eventually result in poor quality of education. However, 5 of the respondents believe that number of pupils in a classroom does not affect the quality of education.

The findings further indicated that the increased enrolments in schools resulted in increased pupil teacher ratios, pupil book ratio, pupil desk ratio and overcrowded classes. As a result this increase became a challenge in that, most schools visited, enrolments were above normal, there were 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 very few as compared to the number of pupils in classes.

The high number of enrolment has put huge strains on the quality of education in schools. These findings were consistent with those reported by Ohba (2009), who states that the increase in enrolment as a result of FPE had huge consequences for schools. The influx of students created a massive teacher shortage, as the number of pupils increased, the number of teachers did not.

The Ministry of Education was supportive of Free Primary Education which resulted in a massive increase in enrolment and led to overcrowding. Furthermore, the findings were also similar in some ways to Kamla (2009) who found that due to the introduction of Free Primary 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 enrolment in Nyimba District were consistent with those cited by (UNESCO,2004a,Kamla,2009 and Duncan, Macmillan and Simutanyi,2003) as having available in Malawi, Kenya and Uganda in the process of implementing FPE in those countries. In addition, the findings were also in conformity with those by Plank (2007) who reported that 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 book increased 24:1. The same author also reported that the abolition of school fees in other countries including Uganda, Cameroon, and Mozambique resulted in increase in the pupil teacher ratios.

The study 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 the desks to be uncomfortable for learners, making the classroom unsuitable for learning. According to the findings, 24 of the respondents indicated that the learning environment was not conducive for learning and only 4 respondents were against stating that classrooms are conducive for learning. This caused the schools' environments not to be favorable 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, and for example one school with 900 had one water point which was also shared with the surrounding community

This situation discouraged the 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.

## **5.2 Discussions on how the challenges affect 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 education attainment, sessions reduced time for learning, teachers not motivated, teachers being over worked, no regular homework and remedial work and lack of pupil comfort which caused absenteeism and high drop outs rates.

The findings of the study were that the frequent and major negatives effects of the challenges on educational delivery were: poor performance due to teacher's inability to teach effectively. According to the findings all the 10 respondents revealed that very few learners in the schools were literate. The response of quarter, less than half of a class being able to read and write was very insignificant as compared to the numbers of pupils in those classes. This resulted in small proportions of classes that were able to read and write. (See figure 4.3.1)

Another effect 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 et al, (2003) on the illusions of UFP education in Kenya. According to the findings, 23 out of the 28 teacher respondents interviewed stated that most of the schools in the district were characterized by inadequate teaching staff. Only 5 out of 28 teacher respondents expressed that staffing was adequate. The combining of classes was bad in that teacher found it difficult to monitor pupils' work and this made it difficult for head teachers to monitor closely the daily progress and eventually poor performance was attained.

The teacher respondents were asked the extent to which they gave homework to their classes. They were asked to indicate the extent to which they gave home work to their classes. The study revealed that 3 out of 28 respondents executed homework daily, 5 of the respondents gave home work twice per week, and 9 indicated that homework was given three times per week while 11 indicated once per week. 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.

Shortage of classrooms was a common feature in rural schools. In almost all schools survey, the number of classes was not corresponding to the number of classrooms.

This led to most of the schools introduce several sessions to enable every class in the school to have a chance of using the few classrooms. All the 28 respondents interviewed, indicated that most of the schools have congested classrooms. From the data obtained, it can be confirmed that public primary schools are congested in in public primary schools in Nyimba District and this is due to high number of enrolment owing to free primary education. 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 Manzo (2006) that the introduction of FPE in some Sub-Saharan African countries led to an increase in enrolment such that classrooms in government primary schools were filled beyond normal capacity.

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 homework 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 homework. 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.

The study also revealed that the staff accommodation was available in schools but inadequate and it was not only inadequate but most of it were not of the required standard. This was crucial in remote centers where staff houses were less than the number of teachers available. For example, one school had two (2) staff houses against twelve (12) teachers, another school had thirteen (13) teachers with literally no staff 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. According to the findings, 8 of the Head teacher respondents interviewed expressed that inadequate staff accommodation has been a challenge in most public primary schools in Nyimba District. Coupled with high workloads, they were demotivated and became inactive in their performance leading to poor quality education in implementation of the FPE policy.

### **5.3 Discussions on the strategies employed by the school managers**

Majority of the key respondents opted for leaving pupils PTA project fund as a way of raising extra income to overcome the challenges un running the day to day school activities.

This was supported by 10 out of 10 Head teacher respondents, who expressed that PTA project fund has been effective in the implementation of the FPE policy. This system defeated the

purpose of which the FPE was introduced. The study further revealed that to cope with the challenge, 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 limited level; materials were supplied to schools but were inadequate. The communities had been sensitized concerning the value of education. Regular visits to schools were conducted to monitor schools on how the FPE funds were being used in terms of teaching and learning.

Furthermore, the study indicated that other coping strategies could be employed in order to overcome the challenges. These include: 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 FPE, and educate the community on where free education ends. These finds 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 in Nyimba District. 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 effects on education delivery. These included: low quality education delivery, low literacy levels, poor performance and teacher' inability to teach effectively, and persistence of inequities and disparities.

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: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.0 Overview**

The first chapter gave an introduction to the study by looking at the background and other important components of the study. In chapter two, various relevant empirical studies done so far have carefully been reviewed to offer rich experiences to the current study on the challenges in the implementation and provision of quality free primary education in public primary schools in Nyimba. The methodological aspects of the study were presented in chapter three which included the research design, target population, sampling procedures among others. All the research findings were presented under chapters four in line with research questions, while discussion of findings in the light research objectives was done in chapter five. Therefore, this chapter makes conclusions and recommendations based on the findings discussed in the previous chapter.

### **6.1 Conclusions**

There was a challenge of providing more teachers, more classrooms, more text books, more toilets, free exercise books and other educational materials to meet the increased enrolment. The implementation of the FPE policy was characterized by inadequate and erratic funding from the government. The school's learning environment were uncondusive 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 pupil squeezing on few available desks. There was also inadequate teaching staff which forced schools to combine classes.

The FPE caused more students to enroll in schools and put a strain on schools, teachers, desks and education materials. Teachers handled more congested classes to the extent that slow learners were not taken care of and they were fewer assignments resulting into poor quality delivery in education. The FPE has caused many children not to be literate. The FBE had caused many children not to complete basic school and not to proceed to high schools and not to enter paid employment. Teachers could not devote much time to their students or even cater for individual needs.

Almost all schools levied PTA project funds to overcome the challenge of inadequate and delayed funding from government which defeated the purpose some schools used local churches 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. Some schools work with the co-operate world such as non-governmental organizations in the provision of educational requisites in order to improve the state of learning facilities and activities. The schools educated the communities on the role of stakeholders, parents in their children's education. In order to match the surge enrolments and share out the workloads, government recruits more teachers while in some schools the PTA employ part time teachers. Other schools build temporal houses to address the challenge of inadequate accommodation.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

From findings of the study the following recommendations were made;

Public primary schools should adhere to the UNESCO pupil teacher ratio of 1:40 in all schools. The government needs to recruit more qualified teachers to meet the short falls observed by the study. The teachers should be well remunerated to sustain their motivations. Meanwhile, staff rationalization may be done by transferring teachers from schools with more teachers to those with extreme shortages.

The study recommends appropriate pupil classroom ratio of 1:40 to avoid overcrowding and congestions in classrooms. The standards of the classroom size should be as per approval by the Ministry of Education. The classroom should be made up of permanent structures with appropriate ventilations to create a favorable learning environment for pupils.

The government should allocate sufficient financial resources to purchase adequate and recommended instructional materials such as text books and other teaching aids. The funds should be released o timely basis to facilitate appropriate planning by school managements.

The government should put up additional modern physical infrastructures such as classrooms, toilet facilities, and libraries to meet the needs of more pupils enrolled in schools. Such facilities should be according to set standards and bench marks.

Parents should be encouraged to take more proactive roles in matters regarding their children education

#### **6.4 Suggestions for future research**

The following were identified as areas of possible future research:

1. To find out the sustainability of Free Primary Education in Zambia.
2. To establish the challenges of extending Free Primary Education up to grade twelve (12).

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## Appendices

### APPENDIX I

UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA IN ASSOCIATION WITH ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Interview schedule for head teachers

Title of the Research:

Challenges in the implementation and provision of quality free primary education in public primary schools in Nyimba District.

1. Do you think access and quality are matching as the FPE policy being implemented?
2. Do you experience any over enrolment in you school?
3. How often do you receive grants if any from government to support FPE policy?
4. Do the grants come in time?
5. How much grant do you receive?
6. How do you rate the pupils' performance in your school?
7. Suggest ways of implementing the FPE policy that can promote quality education.
8. Are the teachers in your school able to use a variety of teaching strategies as they teach?
9. Are the school's environments conducive enough for the teaching and learning process?
10. Are schools well-staffed and adequately stocked with teaching and learning materials?
11. In your own opinion: Do you think free primary education has helped in the provision of quality education?

## APPENDIX II

UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA IN ASSOCIATION WITH ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Interview Schedule for Teachers

Title of the Research:

Challenges in the implementation and provision of quality free primary education in public primary schools in Nyimba District.

1. Explain a little bit about yourself?
2. How many pupils do you have in your class?
4. Do you experience any over enrollment in your school?
5. Is your school well stocked with instructional materials?
6. Are there adequate desks in your class?
7. What challenges do you face as a teacher in running day to day class activities?
8. Do the challenges you have stated have an impact on the quality delivery of Education?
9. What do you think could be the best way of implementing the FBE policy?
10. In your own opinion: Do you think free primary education has helped in the provision of quality education?

### APPENDIX III

#### OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

S/N	INDICATOR	YES	NO	COMMENT
1	Sanitation issues			
2	Status of Infrastructure			
3	Number of Toilets			
4	Teachers' accommodation			
5	Number of Desks			
6	Playing ground			
7	Number of water points			