

Full Length Research

Factors Influencing Teachers' Implementation of Early Childhood Development Education Programme in Lugari District, Kenya

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Early Childhood Development and Education is a very important level of education as it forms the foundation for further learning. Due to this, the demand for this level of education has increased in recent years. In Kenya, the government has developed policies to guide the implementation process of ECDE programmes. However, the implementation process is quite dismal. Factors leading to this dismal implementation process have not been adequately investigated and understood hence hindering the development of Early Childhood Development and Education in the country. To this end, this study sought to determine the factors influencing teachers' implementation of Early Childhood Development and Education programmes in Lugari District. Specifically the study sought to find out the level of training among the ECDE teachers and to establish the educational resources available in Early Childhood Development and Education centres, The study used descriptive survey design. Fredrick Froebel theory was used for the study. Using a sample of 15%, stratified and proportionate sampling techniques, a total of 61 ECDE centers and 89 ECDE teachers, 61 primary school head teachers were selected from the three divisions of Lugari district. The study established that there was low level of training among the ECDE teachers in the district and that some of the crucial educational resources were lacking in ECDE centres. The study recommended that ECDE trained teachers should be absorbed by the Teachers Service Commission and that public advocacy to inform parents about the positive impacts of ECDE pedagogy should be conducted.

Keywords: Teachers, Implementation, Early Childhood Development Education, Programme, Lugari.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) is a broad one and goes outside mere provision of education to children. It encompasses the provision for social, health and psychological needs of a child in total [16]. A historical analysis on the emergence and development of Early Childhood Development Education reveals that, it was built on the Philosophical, Sociological and Historical foundations [4]. Philosophical and Sociological ideas of selected early educators have helped to shape the theory and practice of Early Childhood Development Education [3]. Various declarations have been passed concerning the rights of Education and freedoms of children.

The Universal Declarations of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948, acted as a driving force for most countries in the world to revise their aims of education. Article 26 of the charter stated that, "everyone has a right to Education; Education shall be free and compulsory in the elementary stages. Higher and professional Education shall be made

accessible to all on the basis of merit". The article acted as the impetus for the world nations to have a common aim of education – accessibility of education to all [16].

The Jomtein Conference of 1990 reviewed the extent to which democratization of Education throughout the world had taken place since 1948. At this conference, great emphasis was put on the development and expansion of Early Childhood Development and Education [13]. The Salamanca conference of 1994 furthered the theme, "Education for All" that had been championed by the Jomtein Conference. According to this convention, every child has a fundamental opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning. The education systems should account for the wide diversity of children's characteristics and needs [11].

The Dakar Framework of Action 2000 assessed the progress in attaining Education for All (EFA). Goals set by the Dakar Framework of Action 2000 included; expanding and improving a comprehensive Early Childhood Development and Education care for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. In the conference, it was revealed that, in most developing countries, Early Childhood Care and Education has not been part of public policy, and the governments have limited capacity for developing policies and systems for it. Particularly lacking is knowledge on policy options and strategies for promoting the child's holistic development with limited resources. Consequently, the participants of the conference reaffirmed the vision of the world declaration on Education For All (EFA) which was adopted ten years earlier at Jomtein in 1990 [18].

Early Childhood Development Education in Kenya has been developed as a result of several seminars, task forces, workshops, commissions, declarations and also private endeavors. Over the years, this level of education varied in terms of quality, quantity, service providers and principles governing its provision [3]. The Ominde Commission of 1964 recommended the establishment of Early Childhood Education along other Education facilities [14].

In 1969, a seminar was conducted in Nairobi to assess the status of ECDE. It was recommended that the national policy on pre-school Education was to be formulated, pre-school committee to be established to formulate operating principles, the central government to provide the pre-school with trained personnel and supervise the pre-school education, a major teacher training centre be established, the government to sponsor the training of teachers and the parents committees be established. As it pertains to the enrolment, there were to be 25 children per teacher [4].

Gachathi commission of 1976 recommended among other things that, a National Centre for Early Childhood Education (NACECE) be established [9]. In 1982, a seminar was held in Malindi to review the progress achieved during the pre-school projects first decade (1971-1981) [5]. In 1987, another national seminar was held in Mombasa to review the three years of operation of NACECE programme. In the seminar, it was recommended that NACECE was to be made visible at KIE [5].

Despite the government's rationale for attaining Education for All (EFA), ECDE programme is not well implemented. Factors behind this dismal implementation of the programme have not been investigated and well understood. The preceding observations call for urgent mechanisms to stem out the poor implementation of the ECDE programme. ECDE teachers and other stake holders not only require knowledge of the factors that contribute to the proper implementation of the programme but also need to be sensitized about the factors.

According to evidence from the District Education Office – Lugari, there have been serious problems as regard the successful implementation of ECDE programme in the district [2]. It is for this reason that this study was set out to investigate the factors behind lack of proper implementation of the said programme. This was important because in many cases, pre-school children in Lugari district may be receiving substandard education due to unknown factors that could be impeding the implementation process of the programme. This study, therefore, aimed at bridging the knowledge gap that exists between the planning stage and implementation stage of the ECDE programme in Lugari district.

The study sought to determine the factors influencing teachers' implementation of ECDE programme in Lugari District. Specifically, the study sought to: find out the level of training among the ECDE teachers in Lugari district, establish the educational resources available in ECDE Centres in Lugari district, examine the strategies used by the education office in monitoring and supervising ECDE programmes in Lugari District and establish the challenges facing of ECDE programme implementation in Lugari district.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey design was used. The study was carried out in Lugari district. The study targeted the DICECE officer, ECDE teachers and Public Primary School Head Teachers in the district. Lugari district had one DICECE officer, 413 public ECDE Centres, 413 targeted public primary school head teachers and 604 ECDE teachers of which 14 are male teachers while 590 are female teachers. Simple random, stratified and proportionate sampling techniques were used to come up with the sample size. To get the number of ECDE centres to be studied, the researcher used simple random sampling to select 61 centres using 15% from the three categories of divisions. On this basis, Lugari produced 19 ECDE centres, 25 from Likuyani and 17 from Matete division giving a total of 61 ECDE Centres. As for the ECDE teachers, using the same criteria, 32 teachers were selected from Lugari, 40 and 17 from Likuyani and Matete divisions respectively constituting 89 ECDE teachers. As for the public primary head teachers, Lugari produced 19, Likuyani 25, and Matete 17. Thus a total of 150 respondents formed the sample frame.

The study utilized questionnaire and interview schedules for data collection. A pilot study was conducted in three divisions of Lugari district. Two types of validities, content and construct validities were used. To ensure the reliability of the instruments, all respondents were subjected to the same type of questions and same respondent duration. To estimate the degree of reliability, the researcher used Spearman Rank Order Correlation to compute the correlation coefficient in order to measure the consistency. A Correlation Coefficient (r) of 0.85 was obtained, which is high enough to charge the reliability of the instruments. By using a descriptive and analytical survey design, data collected from the field was coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 12.0. After analyzing the data, it was then presented in the tables, pie charts and graphs.

RESULTS

The study established that there was variation in the level of education among the primary school head teachers. Majority, (26) of these head teachers had attained Diploma in Education, followed by P1 Certificate and Bachelor of Education at 24 and 11 respectively. There was no head teacher with a Master of Education degree. Of those sampled head teachers, male head teachers had the highest academic qualifications with Bachelor of Education and Diploma in Education. Majority of the female head teachers had P1 Certificates. Regarding the ECDE teachers, the study found that out of the 79 ECDE teachers, there was no graduate ECDE teacher. The number of those with Diploma in Education stood at 14 (18%) while those with certificates stood at 65(82%) as shown in the figure 1 below.

Demographic Data of the ECDE Teachers (Academic Qualifications)

Although the level of training among the ECDE teachers was witnessed as high, the study established that only 8(10%) male teachers and 6(8%) of the female teachers had Diploma in Education. This information is summarized in the figure 1 below.

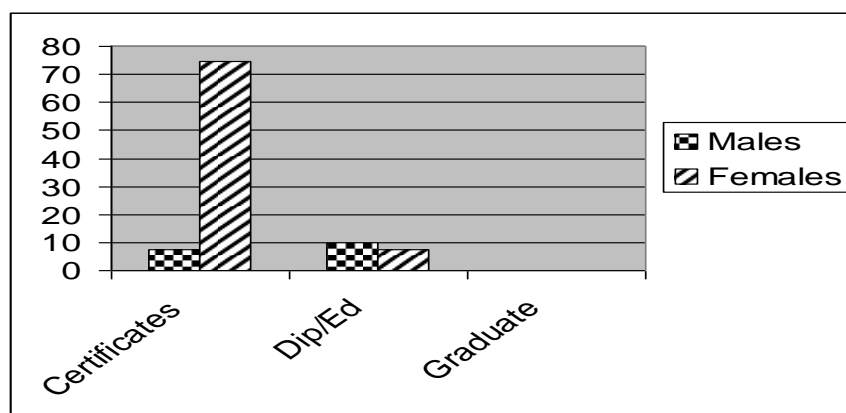


Figure 1: Demographic Data of the ECDE Teachers (By Gender)

The study established that 54(68%) of the ECDE teachers sampled had been examined by the Ministry of Education while only 25(32%) of the respondents had been examined by the Kenya National Examination Council. The study further established that of the sampled population, none of them had been examined by any University. This fact of low level of training was confirmed by the primary schools head teachers, who acknowledged that their respective ECDE teachers had certificates or Diploma in Education while about 14.75% was untrained. The figure 2 below has a summary of this information.

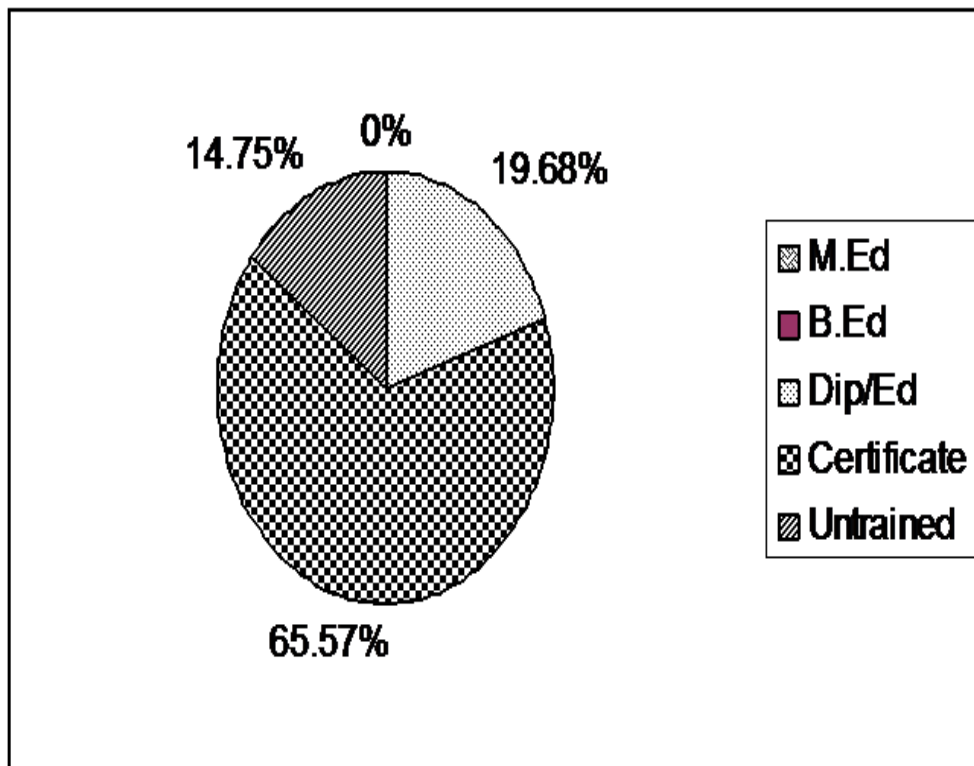


Figure 2: ECDE Teachers Level of Training

According to the DECECE officer, out of 604 ECDE Teachers in the district, only 65(11%) had Diploma in Education, 225(37%) had certificates, 87(14%) had short course certificates while 125(21%) were untrained. The study found that, although most ECDE Teachers had not advanced their studies to University, majority had attended refresher courses organized by the DICECE Officer in the district. Of the 79 sampled ECDE Teachers, 31(39%) of them had attended workshops, 20(25%) had attended seminars, while 28(35%) had not attended any.

On the issue of relevance of refresher courses to the ECDE teachers, out of the 79 ECDE Teachers that were sampled, 47(59%) thought that the refresher courses had improved their professional skills while 32(41%) reported that the refresher had little or nothing to do with their professional improvement. The sampled head teachers also had the same opinion since out of the 61 sampled head teachers, 42(69%) believed that the refresher courses had helped their respective ECDE Teachers, while 19(31%) were of the opinion that the courses had not helped their respective ECDE Teachers

3 Educational resources available in ECDE Centres

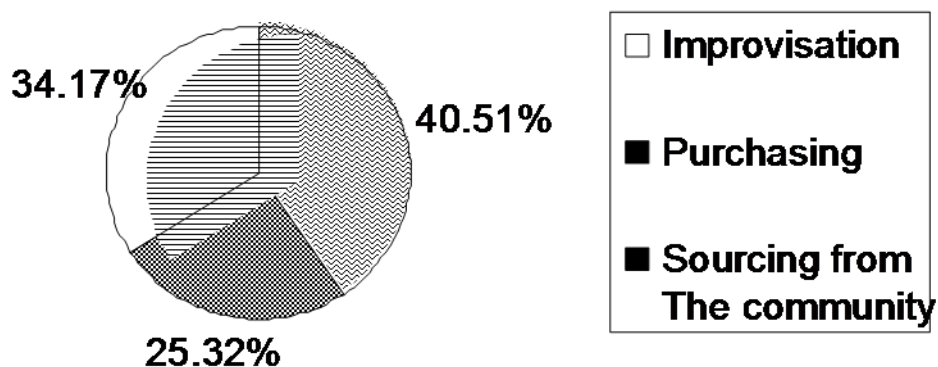


Figure 3: Strategies used by the ECDE Teachers to Source Physical Facilities

On teaching – Learning Resources in ECDE Centres, a summary of the information is presented in the table 1 below.

Table 1: Teaching-Learning resources in ECDE Centres

<i>Teaching –learning resources</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Three dimension	8	10
Graphic Designs	14	18
Chalk board	31	39
Text books	26	33
Total	79	100

Source: Field Data

The findings showed that, Fifty seven (57%) of the sampled population agreed that they use chalkboards and text books as the only major teaching-learning resources, 14 (18%) reported that the graphic designs were available in their ECDE centres while only 8 (10%) reported to have three dimensions in their ECDE centres. On the issue as to whether the curriculum was localized to make it relevant to the ECDE child, the results are shown in the table 2 below.

Regarding availability of physical Facilities in ECDE Centres, the study established that out of 79 ECDE teachers that were sampled, 24(30%) reported that they had well furnished classrooms, 25(32%) and 6(8%) reported to have pupils' and staff toilets respectively, 4(5%) had kitchen, 1(1%) had sand pit and see saw, 3(4%) had cupboards while 8(10%) of the sampled population in each case reported to have low small tables and chairs. Other important facilities were completely lacking in this ECDE centres. Due to lack of or inadequate physical facilities, ECDE teachers

have resolved into various strategies in an attempt to implement the ECDE programme. This is shown in the figure 3 below.

Table 2: Relevance of Localized ECDE Curriculum

<i>Is the curriculum relevant?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	57	72.15
No	22	27.85
Total	79	100

Source: Field Data

The findings of the study showed that 57(72%) of the sampled ECDE teachers agreed that the localized curriculum was relevant while 22(27%) disagreed. This point was further supported by the primary schools head teachers who confirmed that the localized curriculum was relevant to their pupils. Regarding the attainment of the ECDE objectives, a summary of this information is shown in the table 3 below.

Table 3: Achievements of the ECDE objectives

<i>Are objectives achieved?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	35	44.30
No	44	55.70
Total	79	100

Source: Field Data

The findings further reaffirmed that the inability to achieve the ECDE objectives was associated with various constraints (see the figure 4 below).

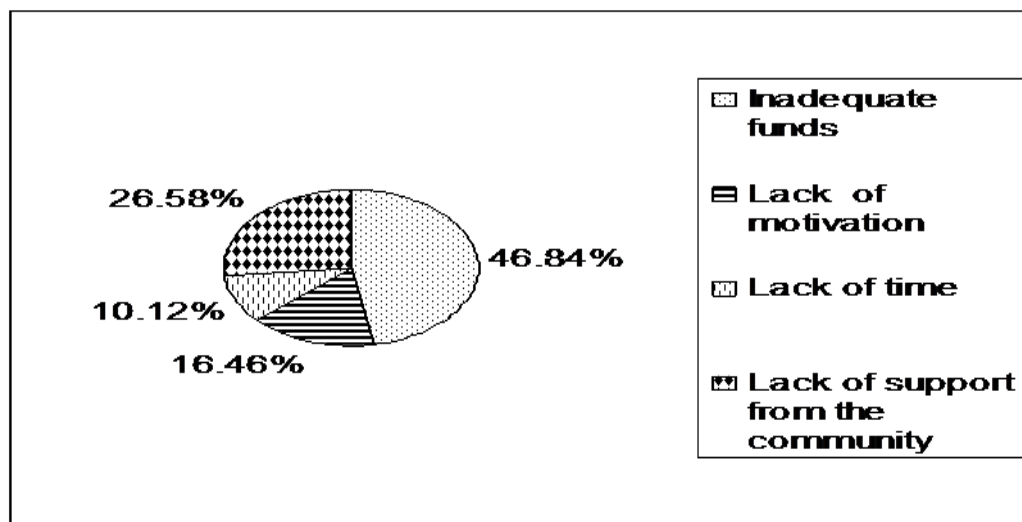


Figure 4: Constraints in Achieving the ECDE Objectives

79 ECDE teachers who participated in the study, 37(46%) reported that inadequate funds was a major stumbling block for the attainment of the objectives while 13(16.46%) cited lack of motivation, 8(10.12%) blamed it on inadequate time and 21(26.58%) cited lack of support from the community. Regarding the use ECDE timetable the findings are shown in the table 4 below.

Table 4: Availability of ECDE Master Timetable

<i>Do you have master timetable?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	52	65.82
No	27	34.18
Total	79	100

Source: Field Data

The findings revealed that 52 out of 79 respondents, constituting 65.82% of the sampled ECDE teachers agreed that they had a master timetable while 27(34%) said that they did not have master timetables. The study also sought to find out the various methods used by the ECDE teachers in delivering the ECDE curriculum.

From the findings it was revealed that majority of the ECDE teachers use Discussion as a method of teaching. Out of 79 sampled ECDE teachers, 34(43%) indicated that they used discussion method, while 28(34%) used the interaction method and 17(22%) used the lecture method. The head teachers reported a similar observation. They reported that discussion is a major method used by teachers followed by interaction and lecture methods respectively.

Out of 61 head teachers that were sampled, 37(61%) and 14(23%) said that ECDE teachers in their schools were using discussion, interaction and lecture methods respectively.

In respect to preparation of professional records, especially schemes of work and daily lesson plans, the study findings are further elaborated in the table 5 overleaf.

Table 5: ECDE Teachers' Preparation of Schemes of Work

<i>Do you prepare schemes of work?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	54	68.35
No	25	31.65
Total	79	100

Source: Field Data

Regarding the preparation of the daily lesson plan, the results are further shown in the table 6 below.

Table 6: Teachers' Preparation of Daily Lesson Plans

<i>Do you prepare lesson plans?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	29	36.71
No	50	63.29
Total	79	100

Source: Field Data

Frequency in Evaluation of Pupils by ECDE Teachers

The findings of the study revealed that majority of the ECDE teachers evaluated their pupils at the end of the term. It was found that 17(22%) evaluated them daily, 19 (24%) did evaluation weekly, 13(16%) termly, while 30(37.97%) of the 79 respondents evaluated their pupils at the end of the year. Compared to head teachers responses on the same aspect, the findings tended to concur with 27(44.26%) of 61 head teachers indicating that their respective ECDE teachers tested their pupils at the end of the term, 15(23%) said their ECDE teachers used check lists for evaluation, 10(16%) evaluated by Continuous Assessment Tests while only 1(2%) evaluated by giving assignments (see the figure 5 below).

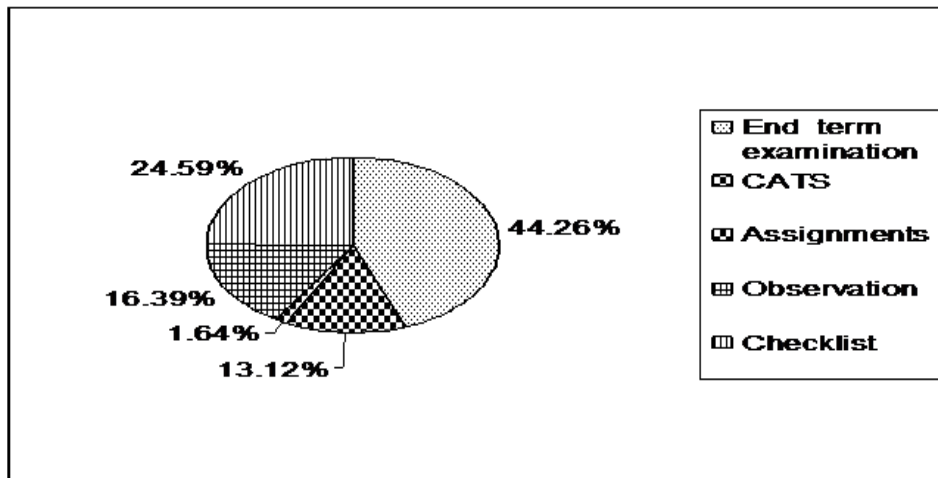


Figure 5: Frequency in Evaluation of Pupils by ECDE Teachers

Strategies used by the Education Office to Monitor and Supervise ECDE Programmes in Lugari District

The study established that the main strategy used by the Education Office to monitor and supervise the implementation of the ECDE programme is visiting the ECDE Centers. Further Study findings indicate that 47(59.05%) agreed that their centres had been visited by the Education Officers, 32(41%) said they had never been visited by the Education Officers. This was further supported by the primary school head teachers who confirmed that Education Officers visited their institutions with or without notice.

Frequency of Visitation by the Education Office

On further scrutiny the study sought to find out the frequency of visitation of the ECDE centres by the Education Officers. The results are shown in the figure 6 below.

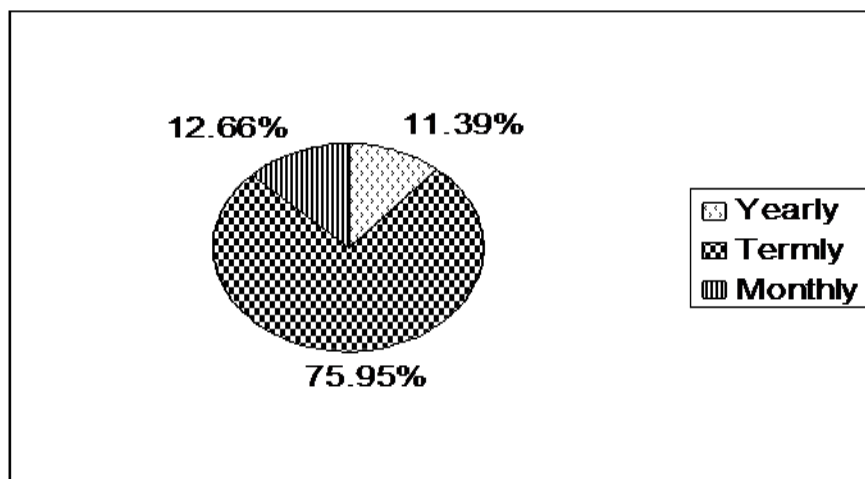


Figure 6: Frequency of Visitation by the Education Office

The above figure indicates that 60(76%) of the ECDE teachers indicated that Education Officers visited their centres at least once every term, 11(13%) said that Education Officers visited them monthly, while 8(11%) said they were being visited at least

Challenges Facing the Implementation of ECDE Programme in Lugari District

The study sought to establish if there were any challenges facing the implementation of ECDE programmes in Lugari district.

Challenges Facing Implementation of ECDE Programmes

The study findings indicated that there were three major challenges facing the implementation of the ECDE programmes. These are Curriculum related challenges, personal related challenges and community related challenges. Inadequate time is also another challenge. Of the three major challenges, 48 out of the sampled population of 79, constituting 60.76% reported to having had personnel related challenges, while 18(23%) and 8(10%) reported to have curriculum and community related challenges respectively. The least of the challenges was inadequate time which registered 7(6%) of the total sampled population.

DISCUSSION

In relation to the foregoing findings it implies that most primary school head teachers were P1 Certificates and Diploma holders. A few have B.Ed. degree. However, many of these head teachers had enrolled for B.Ed. degree courses in ECDE. This concurs with the World Bank [18] that the government was in the process of providing in-service ECDE training to primary school teachers to help them address issues to do with unprepared early grade pupils and to strengthen the pedagogical linkage and co-operation between ECDE centres and primary schools [18]. The findings of the study revealed that the level of education among the male head teachers was higher than that of females. This appears to corroborate with Karanja and Githinji [3] findings, that in many African communities, girls were not educated, but were married off for bride price, while men were more valued and enrolled in learning institutions.

There was overwhelming evidence that most of the ECDE teachers had undergone training. According to World Bank [18], the period between 1997 and 2004 saw the number of trained ECDE teachers surpassing the number of untrained teachers for the first time. This is supported by the "theory of education of man which emphasizes training of teachers as an important aspect of the teaching fraternity. The level of training among the ECDE Teachers has increased due to the fact that the fee for a certificate course is affordable to most of them. This fact agrees with World Bank [18] which indicated that the fee for certificate course is on average Kshs. 40,000 while the Diploma course costs Kshs. 60,000. This amount is thought to be affordable for most people. Besides this, a future prospect of the ECDE teachers to be employed by the government has heightened the demand for training. The government is in the process of developing a scheme of service for ECDE teachers and liaising with partners in education to improve their salaries and terms of service [9].

Teachers are required to update themselves with the current trends in education. This factor is supported by the remarks by the permanent secretary in the Ministry of the Higher Education who said that Graduate teachers should keep themselves relevant by continuously upgrading their professional skills [17]. However, these findings negate what World Bank [18] established that DICECE Officers organize meetings, seminars and workshops for ECDE teachers as part of ongoing professional development and support. However, in some areas, no training appears to be available due to lack of accommodation and boarding facilities and clear management structure.

From the study findings, it can be inferred that majority of these teachers had been examined by the Ministry of Education because it was in control of the ECDE programmes including examinations up to 2008. According to Ministry of Education [7], the Ministry of Education Science and Technology by then was mandated to be responsible for pre-school education. The study also observed that these teachers had scored a mean grade of D+ at KCSE or less. According to the Ministry of Education policy, practicing teachers with a minimum of D+ or Division IV at Kenya Certificate Education can enroll for a certificate course at college. ECDE teachers who did not meet the minimum

qualifications for the course can enroll for the Kenya National Examination Council proficiency examinations [6]. In the first place, these entry points are low for the ECDE course and apparently affect the quality of Education offered to ECDE pupils.

Furthermore, these teachers do not meet the minimum qualifications for university which is C-, C and C+ respectively. This implies that they cannot enroll for further studies at the university. Moreover, universities policy insist that those without any other qualifications and would like to enroll for a Bachelor of Education degree in ECDE, the minimum qualifications must be C+ and above at KCSE or must have passed Kenya National Examination Council (ECDE Diploma examination) and must have attained an aggregate of C at KCSE [17]. This has made it difficult for most of the ECDE Teachers to enroll for further studies at University. This perhaps explains why there is a high percentage of ECDE Teachers with low academic qualifications in the ECDE Centers hence affecting the implementation of the ECDE programme.

Although the refresher courses were relevant to the implementation of the ECDE programmes, it was observed that majority of the ECDE teachers did not implement what they were taught. The main reason behind this could be pressure from parents who wanted their children to be exposed to primary education at their elementary stages of learning. As observed by World Bank [18], ECDE Teachers were using standard one text book and materials brought to the centre by the children. Even when appropriate pedagogical materials were available, most ECDE Centres provide Early Primary Education to prepare children for formal schooling. What contributes to this pedagogical deviation is pressure from parents who see ECDE as a chance to help their children obtain good marks in primary school [3].

Proper implementation of ECDE programme requires quality education facilities. The study findings revealed that there are inadequate facilities in ECDE centres. This implies that the ECDE programme is not well implemented, as proper implementation would mean availing the required facilities through either purchasing or improvisation [11]. ECDE level of education received only a small portion (less than 1%) of the overall funding from the Ministry of Education. This affected the availability of facilities in ECDE centres thus affecting the program implementation [18]. This negates the United Nations Charter, Article 26 which says that everyone has a right to education and that education should be free [18].

The ECDE curriculum embraces holistic teaching. However, the study findings clearly indicates that the teachers in the ECDE centres not only use what is available, but also what the parents want to see, as most parents require concrete evidence that their children are reading and writing. This appears to concur with World Bank [18], which stated that although ECDE curriculum focuses on interactive methodologies, many teachers find it easier to revert to teaching the alphabets and numbers, especially where few materials are available for creative expression or for fine motor skills development. Even if appropriate teaching learning materials are available, ECDE teachers rarely use these materials they tend to remain in their boxes.

ECDE teachers reportedly administer pens and paper to children so as to show their parents that they are focusing on reading and writing [18]. This observation agrees with a report by Barnabas [1] who argued that most teachers are not fond of using teaching aids but at a minimum level. According to the theory of *“Education of man”*, the curriculum should create a stimulating environment for children through “gifts” and “Occupations”. The “gifts” are play materials which should be provided to help children learn effectively. The “occupations” are the activities which teachers should provide to enhance their learning.

The inadequacy of teaching-learning resources can be attributed to the financial status visa-vise high enrolment in ECDE centres. As noted earlier, the major donors of ECDE education are parents, most of whom are poor hence the little funds that are contributed are mostly used in the payments of salaries. This concurs with World Bank [18] who asserted that the fees charged to parents are used almost entirely to cover payroll costs. These fees average between Kshs. 200 and Kshs. 300 a month at public ECDE Centres [18]. This was further supported by the primary school head teachers who argued that the inadequacy of teaching-learning resources in ECDE Centres had affected greatly teachers' implementation of the ECDE programmes in ECDE centres.

The high percentage of the ECDE teachers having master timetables can be attributed to the fact that majority of them had trained and had attended refresher courses which enhanced their professional skills. This implies that the ECDE programmes are well implemented as explained by Ngaroga [13] who noted that the school master timetable formed an important component of the crucial apparatus for curriculum implementation.

Discussion method is mainly used by the ECDE teachers because of pressure from parents who think that it would help their children pass well in primary schools. These findings seem to support World Bank [18] report that the

guideline for ECDE contains information for correct pedagogy- that is child centered interaction and emphasizes on holistic development of the child.

However, teachers are using standard one text books and materials brought to the centre by the children. Even when appropriate pedagogical materials are available, most ECDE centres provide “Early Education” to prepare children for formal schooling [18]. According to Ndani [11], Early Childhood Development Education aims at developing the children’s cognitive, social and emotional aspects through informal means. Thus, the use of discussion as a main method in ECDE largely contradicts this aim of ECDE education. It implies teachers’ implementation of the ECDE programmes is not well done.

The study revealed that most of the ECDE teachers prepared schemes of work. The high level of preparation of schemes of work correlates with the level of training among the ECDE teachers. As already discussed, the number of trained ECDE teachers has surpassed the number of untrained ECDE teachers [18]. As such, teachers have gained skills and appreciated the importance of preparing schemes of work. According to Mukwa [10], a scheme of work is important because it helps the teacher to be orderly and systematic in teaching.

The study found that most ECDE teachers do not plan often. These findings sharply contrast Mukwa [10] who said that a lesson plan for every lesson should be prepared on daily basis. The problem of the ECDE teachers not preparing lesson plans daily can be attributed to pupil, teacher, as well as parent related challenges that they face at their work stations. This means that ECDE programmes are not adequately implemented.

The study found that there is a high percentage of evaluation of pupils. This high percentage of evaluation of pupils by ECDE Teachers can be associated with the high level of training among the ECDE teachers on the importance of evaluation. This is in support of Nzubaga [14], who pointed out that evaluation helps in improving instruction, aids in determining the effectiveness of a learning programme and teacher techniques. It also motivates the pupils and provides feed back to the teacher. However, lack of education resources such as funds, time and physical facilities might however have been inhibiting teachers’ continuous evaluation of their pupils [18].

The findings of this study however seem to largely deviate negatively from the theory of Education of man which emphasizes play as a major method of teaching, therefore the most appropriate methods of evaluation are the use of checklists and observation. The main reason behind this deviation is pressure from parents who insists that their children should be given formal learning right from elementary stages of learning [11].

From the findings of the study, it is clear that the education officers rarely visited ECDE centres presumably because of the low level of training among the education personnel, as a majority of them had not been adequately trained on how to monitor and supervise ECDE programmes. This in essence affected the implementation of the ECDE programme. According to the Sessional paper No. 1 (2005), most of the education officers are deployed by the ministry of Education without due consideration of their abilities and past performance [9]. Moreover, Sessional paper No.1 (1988) underscored the importance of Quality Assurance and recommended that the head teachers of institutions be trained as first line Quality Assurance and Standards Officers [8]. In addition to this, the Kenya Education Staff Institute which is charged with the responsibility of training and in-servicing Education Officers lack adequate human and financial resources to undertake this task effectively [18].

These findings partly agreed with World Bank [18], the implementation of Free Primary Education in 2003 had a negative impact on the enrolment at ECDE centres, as many parents by-passed ECDE and enrolled their children direct in primary schools. In some areas parents kept their children at home until they reached the age of 6 and above entitling them to Free Education. The problem is confounded by the refusal of some parents to pay for ECDE on the grounds that it too, should be free. Further, ECDE teachers were providing Early Primary Education to ECDE children to prepare them for formal schooling as opposed to the ECDE Curriculum which contains sufficient information for correct pedagogy; that is, child-centered interaction and which emphasizes holistic Development [18]. These two assertions agreed with the findings that the major challenges facing the implementation of the ECDE programmes are the personnel related challenges and the curriculum related challenges respectively.

CONCLUSION

First, although the number of trained teachers surpasses the number of untrained teachers, the level of training among the ECDE teachers is low. The highest training is at Diploma level. This means that they may not be competent in teaching the ECDE pupils. Worse still, it was realized that some ECDE teachers were not trained even at all.

Secondly, although essential educational resources such as classrooms, sanitary facilities, pupils and staff toilets were available in most ECDE centres, there were yet other important educational resources that were lacking. Further, the educational resources in ECDE centres were inadequate and ECDE teachers mostly used discussion methods in teaching instead of the recommended interactive pedagogy which emphasizes holistic development. This was due to pressure from the parents who wanted their children to be prepared for formal schooling.

Thirdly, the monitoring and supervision of the ECDE centres by the education office is poor. Most of the ECDE centres were only visited termly. This is inadequate as these centres required frequent visits by these officers.

Finally, there were various challenges that influenced teachers' implementation of the ECDE Programmes. These challenges can be broadly grouped as curriculum, personnel and community. Time is also a challenge that influences the implementation of the ECDE programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Concrete and visible measures must be taken to guarantee ECDE teachers job security. ECDE trained teachers should be absorbed by the TSC since they are also trained teachers performing a very essential task. Alternatively, the government should provide all trained teachers with annually renewable contracts guaranteeing a humane salary.

The government should explore the possibility of entering into partnerships with sponsors so as to raise funds for ECDE programmes. This will help reduce the over-reliance on parents in as a source for implementing the ECDE programmes. To improve pedagogy at ECDE centres, teachers should make ECDE classroom more child - centered and child friendly by allowing the children to explore the environment. In addition, the teachers to provide children with concrete objects for self manipulation.

Public advocacy to inform parents about the positive impacts of ECDE pedagogy especially its effectiveness in preparing children for formal schooling should be conducted through the mass media and 'barazas' [community meetings].

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