
Education in the Post- 2015 Development Agenda: Issues and challenges in Primary School Education in the Kenyan ContextGideon Mochere **MOTUKA**¹& John Aluko **ORODHO**²

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Abstract

The thrust of this study was to examine issues and problems in the provision of primary school education in the post 2015 development agenda in the Kenyan context. . The study was a hybrid of desk-survey using government and international documents as well as primary sources from field using primary school teachers as respondents. The major finding was that as Kenya boldly makes efforts to face the challenges of providing primary school education in the post 2015 agenda, the country faces multifarious and intertwined problems related to regional inequalities in access to education arising from inadequate financial resources, human resources, physical facilities and rampant outdated cultural practices that have adversely affected the quality of the education sub-sector. It was evident that Kenya still largely defines her quality education in terms of academic excellence-hence the need to ensure that the process that lead to those quality grades are tight , lest we lose the link between competence and mere grades. It was concluded that the good progress being made in the education sector notwithstanding, proactive measures are urgently required to address the existing bottlenecks. It was recommended that all education stakeholders should make concerted efforts aimed at eradicating issues and problems that were bewildering the education sector so as not to spill over to future years (215 words).

Key Words: Provision, Primary School, Education Post 2015, Agenda, development issue problems.

I. Introduction**1.2. Background Information**

According to the United Nations (2013) a new development agenda in all countries should carry forward the spirit of the Millennium Declaration and the best of the MDGs, with a practical focus on things like poverty, hunger, water, sanitation, education and healthcare. However, for most countries, especially in the developing world, to fulfil their vision of promoting sustainable development, they must go beyond the MDGs.

Before the post-2015 agenda, it was apparent that most countries did not focus enough on reaching the very poorest and most excluded people. They were silent on the devastating effects of conflict and violence on development. The importance to development of good governance and institutions that guarantee the rule of law, free speech and open and accountable government was not included, nor the need for inclusive growth to provide jobs. Most seriously, the MDGs fell short by not integrating the economic, social, and environmental aspects of sustainable development as envisaged in the Millennium Declaration, and by not addressing the need to promote sustainable patterns of consumption and production.

The result was that environment and development were never properly brought together. People were working hard – but often separately – on interlinked problems. It is against this backdrop that this paper

was motivated to examine the envisaged issues and problems in providing primary School education within the Kenyan Context during the post-2015 development agenda.

1.2. The State of the Art Review

The United Nations (2013) Panel of Eminent Persons came together with a sense of optimism and a deep respect for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The panelist acknowledged the fact that the 13 years since the millennium have seen the fastest reduction in poverty in human history: there are half a billion fewer people living below an international poverty line of \$1.25 a day. Child death rates have fallen by more than 30%, with about three million children's lives saved each year compared to 2000. Deaths from malaria have fallen by one quarter. This unprecedented progress has been driven by a combination of economic growth, better policies, and the global commitment to the MDGs, which set out an inspirational rallying cry for the whole world. Given this remarkable success, it would be a mistake to simply tear up the MDGs and start from scratch. As world leaders agreed at Rio in 2012, new goals and targets need to be grounded in respect for universal human rights, and finish the job that the MDGs started. Central to this is *eradicating extreme poverty* from the face of the earth by 2030. This is something that leaders have promised time and again throughout history.

Before the post-2015 agenda, Kenya had demonstrated strong commitments to implementing her international and national commitments on Education (MOEST, 2015). This is demonstrated in her adoption of international policies like Education for all (EFA) and eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) both of which she has not fully accomplished as anticipated. The Universal Primary Education (UPE) is the second goal of the MDGs. Kenya came up with education documents like the Basic Education Act 2013, Sessional Paper number 14 of 2012 and preparation of the Second National Sector 2013-2018. In her 'Education for All National Review, Kenya has come up with a new education policy titled, "The post 2015 Development Agenda" accompanied by recommendations for implementing it.

Over the years, the United Nations has taken it as its responsibility to monitor how world countries provide education to their citizens. In effort to enhance uniformity in the provision of education among world countries the UN organized a world conference at Dakar in the year 2000. 189 countries including 147 head of states attended and signed the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that were interrelated hence seen as one whole and were meant to be attained by 2015. The second item of the Millennium Development Goal was the Universal Primary Education (UPE). UPE was looked at as a vehicle by which the rest of the seven MDGs could be achieved among the world countries by the year 2015.

In 2015 UN organized another world conference in America that proposed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to offer major improvements in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The SDGs framework addresses key systematic barriers to sustainable development such as inequality, unsustainable consumption patterns, weak institutional capacity and environmental degradation that MDGs neglected (Derek et al 2015). The SDGs have seventeen goals. The fourth goal of the SDGs is an education meant to ensure inclusive and equitable, quality education and promote learning opportunities for all by 2030 which is in line with the Kenya Vision 2030.

Education in Kenya and elsewhere is seen as the primary means of social mobility, national cohesion, political and socio-economic development (MOEST, 2015). Consequently Kenya is committed to implementing her international regional and national commitment such as the EFA of 1990, UPE in MDGs of 2000 and SDGs 2015. This has been done by the government developing the following policy documents: The new Constitution of Kenya 2010 that is the guiding law on education in its articles 43(i) and 53(b); Kenya's Basic Education Act 2013 that was formulated to give effect to article 53(b) of the

Kenya Constitution 2010. This Act introduced the National Education and Education Standards and Quality Assurance Commissions to take charge of education in Kenya and so replaced the old 1968 Education Act. Then there is the sessional paper number 14 of 2012, the Second National Education sector of 2013 – 2018 whose goal is quality basic education for Kenya's Sustainable Development and Education for All 2015 and National Review Report (MOEST, 2015).

The vision of the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST) in Kenya is the Provision of Quality Education and Training of Sustainable Development. The primary school education in Kenya should be provided in line the 2010 and the Kenya Vision 2030. Article 43(i) of the Kenya Constitution 2010 says that every person has a right to education while 53(i) (b) says that every child has a right to free and compulsory education in the country (Machio 2011).

The Kenya Vision 2030 is a vehicle for accelerating transformation of Kenya into a rapidly industrializing middle nation by the year 2030. Thus the Kenya Vision 2030 aims at making Kenya a globally competitive and prosperous country by the year 2030. The government of Kenya singles out education as one of the levers that will drive Kenya into becoming a middle income economy. The Kenya Vision 2030 also places great emphasis on the link between education and the labour market, to create entrepreneurial skills and competencies for the industrial sector. Given that the year 2030 lies in the post 2015 it motivated the research to undertake this study so as to unearth issues and problems in primary school education sub-sector that are likely to affect it between 2015 to 2030.

In Kenya there has been a push for the state to implement the five year old constitution which calls for access to equality and quality education (The Standard , Dec 3, 2015 : 10) consequently in the last financial year the National Treasury gave the Kenya National Examination Council Sh 2.9 billion to pay for examination fees. In the current financial year the state has set aside Sh 3 billion for the candidate registration costs. This increase is due to the implementation of a law that makes it compulsory for parents to send their children to school. Despite the Kenya government's effort to provide this free and compulsory basic education to its citizens, the sector faces challenges.

Years from 2009 to 2015 the study by Uwezo a programme of Twaweza titled "Are out children Learning?" found that primary pupils learning outcomes were constantly low despite teachers and pupils school regular school attendance. Thus pupils' literacy and numeracy skills nationally remained low (Uwezo 2015). This report revealed that 4 out of 100 children in class eight in Kenyan public primary schools cannot read a class 2 Kiswahili or English Story book.

The Uwezo report has been confirmed by the 2015 Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) national examination result in which 927,789 candidates sat the KCPE examination in 25,127 centres. From this, about 7560 scored 401-500 marks representing 0.8% of the total candidates; 201,986 candidates scored between 301-400 marks representing 21.77%; 499,568 posted marks ranging 201-300 representing 53.8% and 218,675 scored 200 marks and below with 3061 of them posting less than 100 marks (The Standard, Jan 2016, p.4) . The public primary school mean score in the KCPE 2015 dropped from 187.58 in 2014 to 180.87 in 2015.

The cabinet secretary in the Ministry of Education Dr. Fred Matiang'i said independent surveys even by the World Bank have shown that cases of teachers missing from schools were up to 70 percent in some Kenyan counties. Educational experts have pressured the national government to address the poor academic performance in the KCPE exam in Kenya otherwise the private schools improved in the KCPE 2015 from 229.94 in 2014 to 230.14 compared with that of public primary schools of 187.58 in 2014 down to 180.87 in 2015. The Ministry of Education attributed this decreased performance to lack of

teaching and learning during the five week teachers strike when they downed their tools demanding a 50 to 60 percent pay rise. Private schools went on with learning at that time.

Global trends to education point the general weakening of the grip on education standards, systematically giving way to unrelenting pursuit of material trappings. A country such as Kenya that defines education in terms of grading system must ensure that the processes that lead to those grades are water tight, lest we lose the link between ability and grades. Grades should reflect ability. People are more interested in your competency in terms of what you can do rather than what your certificate carries.

There was mass exodus of teachers to northern Kenya due to Al Shabaab attacks' in 2015 leading counties in region such as Mandera, Wajir and Garissa without adequate teachers leading to the attainment of 173.68, 184.49 and 176.86 KCPE mean score respectively. There had been fears that the performance of the three counties would decline significantly following the teacher and education crisis sparked by Al Shabaab attacks. These exodus of the non-local teachers sparked an education crisis and their county governments resorted to desperate measures like employing untrained teachers to ease the biting shortage, more than 1000 non-local teachers moved out of the region and pressurised the Teacher's Service Commission to deploy them elsewhere. Attempts by the national government to reassure them to stay by promising to boost security failed to bear fruit. This was because of another Al Shabaab attack in December.

Likewise, 5000 children of Chepsuereta Kipsigirai, Railway and Kibigori Primary schools in Nandi county and Oroba, Guok and Nyangori Primary schools in Kisumu county have remained at home due to clashes between the two counties that left five people dead and eleven others seriously injured on January 11th 2016. Their teachers that leave in Chemilil town feared for the lives and do not go to their schools given that the road they use to the schools is the most affected by the classes (Matoke & Odhiambo, 2016)

Weak leadership from the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) that is the main employer of teachers in public institutions is another challenge to the sub-sector that need to be checked so as to spill over to the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The TSC leadership is in constant conflict with the Teachers Unions- Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) and Kenya Union of Post Primary Teachers (KUPPET) that commonly end the Kenyan courts for solutions (Adan & Orodho,2014; Ampofo, Bizimana, Ndayambaje, Karongo, & Orodho,2015; Dube & Orodho,2014; Mbabu & Orodho, 2014; Orodho & Getange, 2014).

1.3 Purpose and objective of this paper.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the provision of education in the Post-2015 Education Agenda and its envisaged issues and problems in Kenya.

Its objectives are as follows:

- To examine pronouncements, documents, press reports, the genesis and development of education trends in Kenya by 2015.
- To project on the provision of primary school in the Post-2015 Development Agenda in Kenya.
- To identify a critical issues and problems envisaged to face the provision of primary school education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda and make recommendation on the way forward.

II. Research Methodology

The paper was based on a historical research design and utilized two sources of data, secondary data from desk review of literature of education policy documents from ministry of Education Science Technology (MOEST) supplemented with primary data from studies in 42 primary schools, six from each of the seven regions (formerly provinces) in Kenya. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data which were analysed and presented in frequency distribution tables and percentages. Research assistants from the seven regions were involved. The paper explored main issues and problems envisaged to inhibit the effective provision of primary school education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda in Kenya.

III. Findings and Discussion

3.1 Primary school education trends in Kenya before 2015

The first objective of this study was to examine the provision of the primary school education trends in Kenya before 2015. Information obtained from the Kenya's Ministry of Education Science and Technology on this aspect is as shown in Table 1.

Table1: Primary School Enrolment by Class and Sex

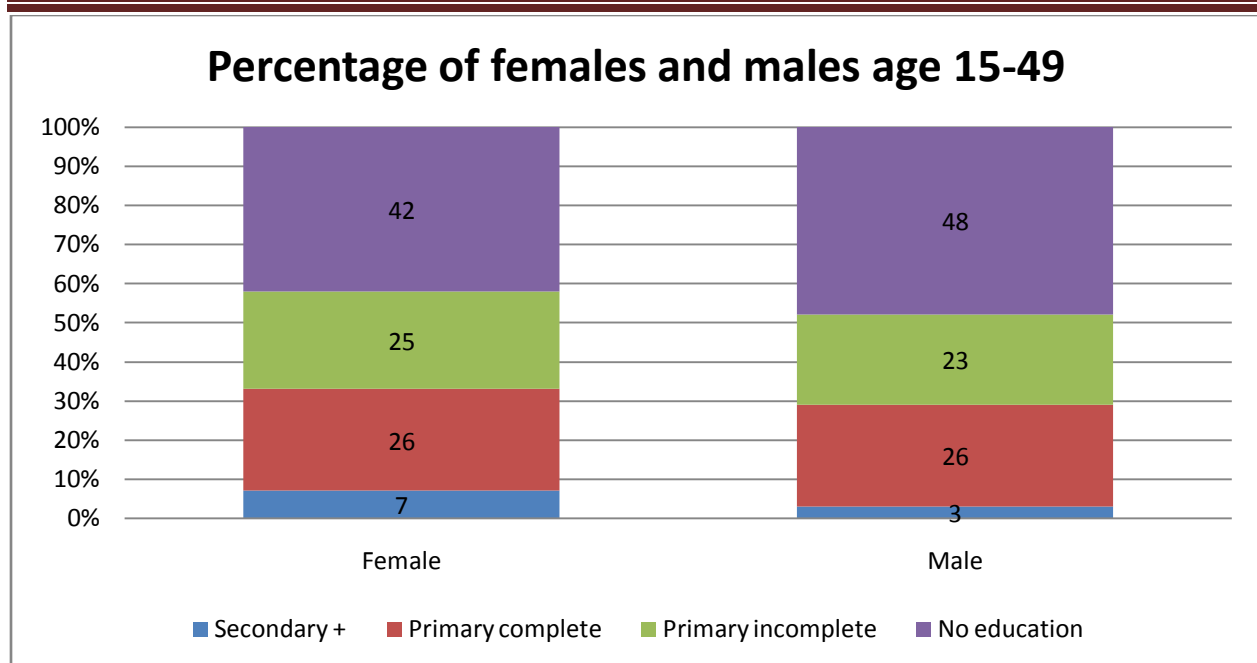
Class	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Standard 1	696.7	684.4	715.6	655.1	713.9	656.8	712.2	658.1	770.5	659.1	728.9	663.4
Standard 2	663.9	625.2	681.0	649.8	679.4	651.8	677.8	654.9	676.2	639.8	674.6	640.9
Standard 3	625.8	613.0	679.4	640.6	677.6	646.5	676.0	648.6	676.1	652.0	673.9	632.9
Standard 4	620.6	608.6	630.6	590.1	676.0	637.4	674.2	643.3	672.6	645.3	675.4	651.3
Standard 5	569.8	565.6	589.3	572.6	603.0	579.3	646.5	625.7	644.8	631.5	643.3	633.5
Standard 6	535.3	492.6	536.7	519.5	575.5	560.9	589.0	567.5	613.4	613.0	649.7	618.5
Standard 7	480.8	467.7	503.9	513.4	510.2	512.9	547.2	553.9	560.0	560.3	600.3	605.3
Standard 8	384.9	351.6	453.3	422.0	451.6	428.1	449.8	433.0	448.1	436.8	446.3	452.4
Total	4577.7	4408.7	4789.8	4563.1	4887.3	4613.7	4992.7	4784.9	5019.7	4837.9	5052.4	4898.4
Grand total	8986.4		9352.8		9561.1		9757.6		9857.6		9950.7	

Table source: Ministry of Education Science and Technology.

From the data carried in table1, can be deduced that , from the year 2009 to 2014, the number of boys enrolled in the education sub-sector was higher than that of their female counterparts, except in the year 2011 when 512.9 thousands of girls were enrolled in standard seven compared with 510.2 thousands of boys. It can also be observed that with the progression to higher classes the number of girls and boys keep on dropping out from school due factors such as early marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) tribal or land clashes amongst others.

Chart 1 above shows the percentage of persons in Kenya of ages between 15 and 49 that had successfully attained primary school education before 2015.

Chart 1: Provision of Primary education in Kenya in 2014



At 15-48 age bracket, there were males than females who had no formal education. The table further shows that there fewer males who had not completed primary school education compared to their female counterparts. It was also evident that the proportion of pupils who complete primary school education was identical for males and females. Finally, it was evident that slightly more females than males complete secondary school education in Kenya.

Table 2: Expenditure of Ministry of Education 2010 2014 on Primary Education

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Recurrent expenditure	159686.7	186328.5	233102.9	237214.8	297570.7
Development (capital expenditure)	19313.3	21131.64	27019.5	13997.76	41508.53
Total	179000	207460.1	260122.4	251212.6	339079.2

Source: Kenya Economic Report 2015

Table 2 shows Ministry of Education expenditure on primary education in Kenya in years 2010 to 2014 in comparison with the fluctuation in primary school pupil enrolment. The ministry was committed to financing the sub-sector and increased the funding over the years from 2010 to 2014. It is clear that the dropout noticed in the enrolment table is apparently due to other factors and not funds.

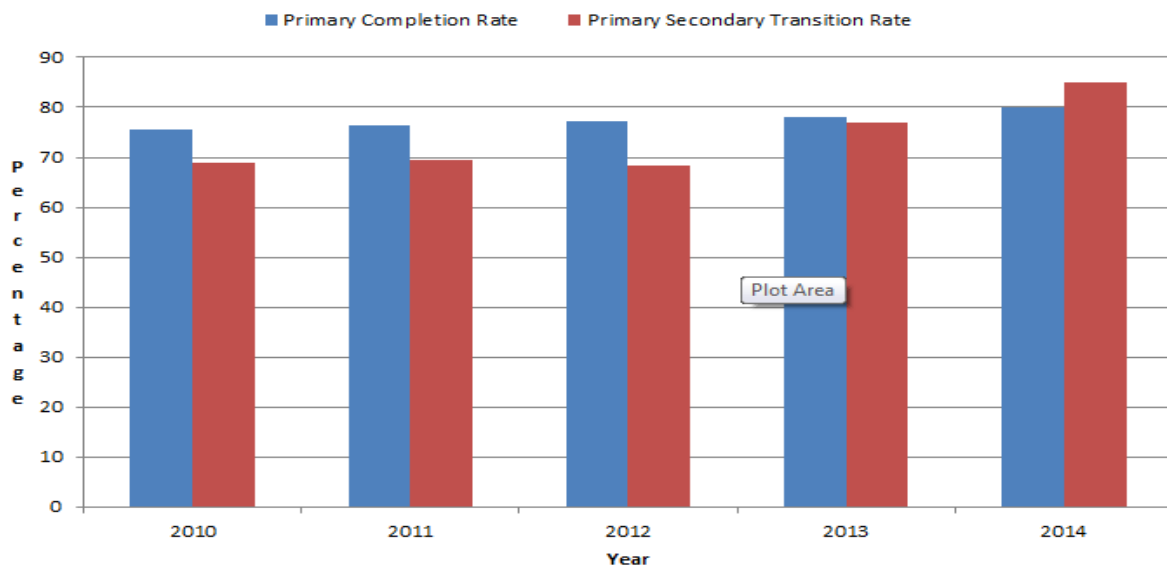
Table 3 shows primary completion rates and their primary to secondary transition rate in thousands from 2010 to 2014.

Table 3: Pupil Completion Rate and Primary to Secondary Transition Rate in Thousands in Kenya Years 2010-2014

Year	Primary Completion Rate	Primary to Secondary Transition Rate
2010	75.6	68.9
2011	76.5	69.4
2012	77.3	68.4
2013	78	76.8
2014	80	85

The data carried in Table 3 shows that over the five year period between 2010 and 2014, the primary completion rate (PCR) for each cohort has been higher than the primary to secondary transition rate (PSTR) for the first four years, except in 2014. In 2014 the primary to secondary transition rate was higher than primary completion rate.

The Chart 2 carries data on primary school education in terms of transition rate in the 2010-2014 year bracket. The chart is meant to clarify and portray the same information carried in Table 3.

Chart 2: Primary School Education and Transition Rates in Kenya in Years 2010-2014

Source: Ministry of Education Science and Technology

Chart 2 above shows primary completion rate and primary to secondary transition.

The PCR increased from 78.0 percent in 2013 to 80.0 percent in 2014 while the primary to secondary transition rate rose to 85.0 percent in 2014 from 76.8 percent in 2013.

Table 4: Number of Candidates by Sex and Mean Subject Score in KCPE 2010-2014

No. of candidates	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Male	388,221	400,814	415,369	426,369	443,258
Female	357,859	375,400	413,390	413,390	437,228
Total	776,080	776,214	811,930	839, 759	880,486
Subject Mean scores %					
English language	49.12	47.10	48.16	53.06	47.64
English comp	42.7	42.45	42.43	41.90	41.647
Kiswahili Lugha	52.76	41.46	46.38	45.78	45.04
Kiswahili Insha	50.3	54.68	54.98	52.43	58.00
Mathematics	53.8	52.18	56.30	52.86	52.04
Science	60.86	67.48	62.76	61.82	66.00
Social studies	64.93	56.32	60.87	54.75	55.26
Religious education	54.32	53.02	55.95	54.13	54.30
National mean score	53.59875	51.83625	53.47875	52.09125	52.490875

Source: Kenya National Examination Council

From Table 4 it can be noticed that the number of KCPE candidate increased gradually over the years though the number of females is lower than the male counterparts. In terms of performance Mean Standard Scores English composition was the most poorly done paper with a mean of below 45.00 all through while in contrast science is the best done with a mean standard score of above 60 throughout the five years.

3.2 Primary School Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda in Kenya

Citizens of all walks demanded for the overhauled of the current system of education especially the primary school curriculum. This is due to the fact that the country adopted a new constitution in 2010 to which education should be aligned (Machio, 2011). The country also need to provide education that can be in line with the Kenya Vision 2030 Sustainable Development goals by 2030. To this end the new Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Education Science and Technology asked the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development to overhaul the basic education curriculum and replace it with a new relevant curriculum with effect from October 2016 (Odour 2015). Some primary school teachers have trained and are ICT compliant. Teachers in the Sub-sector will be using their teaching-e-learning process in their teaching-learning process (Odour, 2015). The Teachers Service Commission has introduced teaching performance contract with very clear guidelines. It is hoped this new development in the sub-sector will do a lot justice in the subsector as Kirui and Muthama 2015 put it.

3.3. Issues and Problems in Primary Education in the Post 2015 Development Agenda

The 8-4-4 system of education has become irrelevant to Kenya Vision 2030. There were inequalities in education provided in the public and private primary schools. The main issues that seem to have bewildered the primary school education sector were:

1. Great demotivation of the public primary school teachers exhibited in their frequent strikes in 2015 due to meagre salaries.
2. Weak leadership in some of the public primary school sub-sector right from the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST) level to the school level is a major issue in the sector.
3. Insecurity in some counties of Kenya like Mandera, Wajir, Garissa and West Pokot is a big issue in public primary schools in Kenya given that Al Shabaab militia killed over 28 teachers in Mandera in 2015.
4. Inadequate number of primary schools in counties like West Pokot was a big issue in Kenya. Inadequate secondary schools a problem to standard eight school leavers who could miss secondary places.
5. Low participation as primary school pupils' retention rate and completion rates was low hence posing a challenge to the sub-sector.
6. Low pupil enrolment in and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALS) areas was another issue facing the subsector and may spill over to the 2015 Post Development Agenda if not arrested in time by the government.
7. Low premium attached to formal education as some communities such as the Somali of Kenya emphasized on Dugsi informal schools at the expense of formal schools. Graduates from the Dugsi were admitted to the Madrassa classes for higher studies especially in Northern Kenya among the Somali people.
8. Inadequate teaching and learning physical facilities such as classrooms, computer labs or workshops hindered the effective and efficient curriculum implementation in most primary schools in Kenya.
9. Inadequate methods of assessing primary school learners both at school and national levels that encouraged rote learning.
10. Low capitation per child to poor learners by the national government was a challenge given that such learners found it difficult to obtain their personal effects.
11. Limited time used by learners in contact with books and instead went for leisure activities due to democratization in the education sector.
12. Low quality of lower primary teachers in some counties in Kenya relying largely on untrained teaching force, some of whom were semi-illiterate hence had poor content delivery to learners.
13. Lack of harmonization of the primary school curriculum is not fully in tandem with the Kenya Constitution 2010 and Kenya Vision 2030 as required.
14. Overreliance on examinations as the only measure of quality outcomes in education, hence creating unhealthy competition among the learners as well as malpractices to ensure high academic grades are attained.
15. Inadequate professionally trained teachers who are ICT compliant in order to use it in teaching children in the sector.
16. Lack of appropriate infrastructure as most primary schools were neither connected to electricity nor supplied with adequate tablets or laptops for ICT lessons for teachers and pupils use in teaching and learning.

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

From the major finding of this study, it is apparent that Kenya made commendable progress in the education sector. These commendations notwithstanding, there still remain challenges of providing primary school education in the post 2015 agenda, the country plans to overcome some of the cited multifarious and intertwined problems related to regional inequalities in access to education arising from inadequate financial resources, human resources, physical facilities and rampant outdated cultural practices that have adversely affected the quality of the education sub-sector. It was also evident that Kenya still largely defines her quality education in terms of academic excellence-hence the need to ensure that the process that lead to those quality grades are tight, lest we lose the link between competence and mere grades. It was concluded that the good progress being made in the education sector notwithstanding, proactive measures are urgently required to address the existing bottlenecks.

From the findings and discussions made thus far, it is recommended that:

1. Government need to establish equalization funds for public primary schools with inadequate physical facilities such as classrooms by doing needs assessment.
2. Primary school teachers need to be equipped with modern methods of teaching such as use of technology to enable learners undertake e-learning. This entails introducing modern ways of training teachers that are ICT compliant.
3. The government should come up with a strategy or package to increase teachers' salaries and allowance based on inflationary situation or use Collective Bargain Agreements in every five years to eradicate teacher's salary strikes.
4. All informal primary schools should be turned into formal primary schools so as to benefit from Ministry of Education.
5. The National government should advance capital or development grants to non-formal educational centres in the country.
6. Assessment of primary school graduated should be competence oriented and not merely objective oriented at both school and national tests or exams.
7. Practical skills oriented curriculum should be introduced to primary school learners in Kenya. This will go a long way attaining the Kenya Vision 2030 goals and sustainable development goals (SDGs) by 2030
8. Youth polytechnics and home craft centres that absorb class eight primary school graduates should be transferred from county government to national government that should equip and staff them well. This will go a long way boosting that attainment of the

The parting shot for this paper is that all education stakeholders in the current post 2015 development agenda should make concerted efforts aimed at eradicating issues and problems that were bewildering the education sector so as not to spill over to future years.

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