A Call to Reform Secondary Schools in Kenya

Dr. Wycliffe Amukowa
Senior Lecturer
School of Education
Mount Kenya University
Kenya

Abstract

This paper is a thesis to the effect that secondary schools in Kenya frustrate learners thereby undermining the achievement of Kenya's goals of education. In particular the paper discusses how secondary schools in Kenya are leading to the erosion of national cohesion, disfiguration of the Kenya youth and the growth of moral decadence among other social and personal ills. In this regard, the paper calls for an end to the current categorization of secondary schools into national, provincial and district/county levels.

Key Words: Education, Kenya, Schools, Reforms

Introduction

Since the introduction of Western system of education in Kenya in the 1800s, there are concerted efforts towards reforms to respond to social and economic needs in the interest of the Kenyan people. These reforms have also received impetus from various world declarations on education such as the Universal Declaration of Education as a Human Right in 1948 by the United Nations, the international protocol that established Education for All (EFA) agenda in Jomtien, Thailand, 1990 and the World Education Forum (WEF) in Darkar, Senegal, 2000. On the Kenya Ministry of Education Website (*www.education.go.ke/showPage.aspx? department=I&id=1164),* it is posted that the Government's commitment to the provision of quality education and training to its citizens at all levels cannot be over emphasized. Vision 2030 singles out education and training as the vehicle that will drive Kenya into becoming a middle-income economy. In addition, the Constitution, 2010 has provided for free and compulsory basic education as a human right to every Kenyan child. It is because of this, that the Government set a task force in January 2011 to realign the education sector to Vision 2030 and the new Constitution.

In coming up with its findings, the Task Force (TF) identified specific issues including relevance with regard to content and delivery; sufficient flexibility to adapt to the changing socio-economic needs and requisite quality to match global competitiveness and to address challenges of the 21st century. Other issues were effective governance and management; retention and transition rates at various levels; teacher education, management and attrition; effective structure; Standards and Quality Assurance; Monitoring and Evaluation; access especially to the vulnerable and a sufficiently flexible and responsive regulatory framework to deal with the current and emerging challenges and ensure total access, equity and quality (*www.education.go.ke/showPage.aspx? department=I&id=1164).*

The TF noted that the current quality of education was not clearly spelt out so that the curriculum delivery could focus on development of specific expected competences to be assessed. In view of this, it was found necessary to recommend a more flexible and comprehensive structure for Kenya's education system and curriculum reform to specify the expected competences at every level of learning. The recommended structure is 2 years of Pre-primary, 6 years of Primary (3 years lower and 3 years upper), 6 years Secondary (3 years junior and 3 years senior), 2 years minimum of Middle level Colleges and 3 years minimum University education. As a whole this structure will have two cycles; Basic Education cycle of 14 years which is free and compulsory, and a Higher Education cycle. The rationale for the revised structure is to ensure learners acquire competences and skills that will enable them to meet the human resource aspirations of Vision 2030 by offering a choice of subject pathways at the end of the Elementary School phase; ensure the attainment of 100% transition rate from primary to secondary, thereby reducing wastage by introducing automatic progression to the junior secondary phase based on the acquisition of core skills and competences (literacy, numeracy and communication skills).

The Task Force recommended major reforms of the curriculum to align it with the Constitution and to ensure that the aspirations of Vision 2030 are met; Structure the curriculum within a skills and competences framework that identifies the knowledge, skills and competences all learners will acquire, and which will provide both vertical and horizontal coherence. It also proposed for the development of a progressive assessment framework that identifies the knowledge, skills and competences that will be assessed for each level of education and called for the revision of the curriculum and textbooks to ensure skills and competences are emphasized as proposed.

On assessment and Evaluation, the TF noted that the current summative assessment at the end of every cycle does not measure learners' abilities. School-based assessments need to be strengthened so that regular and cumulative assessment in the form of Competence Assessment Tests (CATs) is put in place; the current education system is examination based and that the assessment has little regard to moulding good citizens and for self-reliance. There is need, therefore, to introduce competency-based assessment in line with a competency based curriculum. Revision of curriculum and textbooks is proposed to ensure skills and competences are emphasized. The TF noted that assessment is not seen as part of the teaching and learning process but as a sieve to determine those who can move to higher education where the limited available space dictates the teaching/learning process towards examinations as opposed to competences applicable to life (*www.education.go.ke/showPage.aspx? department=I&id=1164)*.

Achievement at Kenya Primary Education Certificate (KPEC) level and Kenya Junior Secondary Education Certificate (KJSEC) will be considered in Senior Secondary School admission and streaming. Schools will be ranked based on holistic assessment on performance indicators built around the following areas: academic, co-curricular activities, quality of management, operations and maintenance of physical facilities, environmental care, learners' services and community outreach programmes. Competency Assessment Tests (CATs) by teachers are to be supported with a national framework/guidelines to be made available online on a regular basis. These will make the CATs standard and de-emphasize the many private examination papers being sold all over the country.

Access, equity, quality and relevance are fundamental characteristics that define and drive systems of education and training. In this regard, the TF recommends the expansion of access to education at all levels; undertaking of major curriculum reviews; abolition of all school levies which discriminate against poor households; review of capitation grants to be in line with inflationary trends and the establishment of a National Council for Nomadic Education in Kenya (NACONEK). While enrolment rates at primary and secondary levels have increased, learning achievements were found to be below the expected standards as schools are not regularly inspected and as such teachers and school management in general are not held accountable for the declining educational achievements in the country.

This paper argues that whereas the recommendations of the Task Force as shown in the preceding paragraphs are noble, they may not be achieved due to impediments caused by the structure of the secondary education system in Kenya. Categorization of secondary schools into National, Provincial and District/County level schools creates inequality and stands in the way towards the achievement of the aspirations of Kenya Vision 2030. The paper starts with a historical overview of education and schools in Kenya, succeeded by another historical overview of educational reforms and exploration of guiding ideologies. It then presents a case against secondary schools in Kenya before giving grounds for the proposals towards secondary school reforms.

Kenya Education Background

A reflection on the history of education in Kenya shows that before the coming of Europeans, Kenyan societies had their own systems of education. There were no classrooms and no special class of people called teachers, in other words, there were no schools as they are today. All members of the community were involved in the education of the children. Children learnt cultural traditions and customs of their ancestors from the community as well as specific skills from their families and other specialized individuals through apprenticeship programs. Localized, relevant indigenous knowledge was, therefore, very important in the organization and transmission of knowledge (Wosyanju, nd).

The foundation for modern education in Kenya was laid by missionaries who introduced reading to spread Christianity and who taught practical subjects such as carpentry and gardening, which at least at first were mainly useful around the missions.

These early educational activities began around the mid 1800s along the coast. Expansion inland did not occur until the country's interior was opened up by the construction of the Kenya-Ugandan railway. In 1902, a school for European children was opened. A similar school for children of Asian workers opened and by 1910, thirty-five mission schools had been founded. Eshiwani (1992) points out that the present day education in Kenya emanates from the recommendations of the Frazer report of 1909 upon which, Kenya had separate educational systems for Europeans, Asians and Africans a practice that lasted until independence in 1963.

From *www.inspireKenya.com* it is discussed that at independence, Kenya's new national government faced a dilemma in education. The pressing need to train for middle-level and upper-level government service and for the commercial and industrial sectors of the economy, called for a restructuring of secondary and higher education. It was believed that the goal of formal education was to prepare the student for work in the modern sectors of the economy. According to Eshiwani (1992), The Ominde Commission, saw the need to reform the education system so that it became a way of changing people's attitudes and a means of establishing social equality. Rharade (1997) notes that .education was seen as a gateway to training the highly-skilled staff that Kenya needed and was therefore viewed as a productive investment, not only to the individual but also to the society as a whole. The school became the medium of education in Kenya since then.

Primary education

The primary education cycle in Kenya lasts eight calendar years. Achoka, *et al* (2007) observe that this is the longest time spent at one level of learning in Kenya's education system. It is also a long period of one's life span spent on learning at one level. It is here that while children are in the lower primary school between age 6 and 8 years they need support in acquiring additional motor, language and thinking skills. They also begin to develop self-control, persistence, and independence as they stay longer hours in a larger learning community called primary school. The children enroll in primary schools at age six years and leave when they are adolescents; primary schooling occupies an important period in a person's growth and development. It should be accessible to all children. Achoka, et al (2007) discuss that with her commitment to Education for All (EFA) agreement, the Kenya government instituted Free Primary Education (FPE) in the year 2003. One of the aims of this undertaking was to achieve and sustain Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2005. Another aim is to raise transition rates from primary to secondary from 40% in 2003 to 70% in 2008.

www.inspireKenya.com posts that in a bid to raise literacy levels, the government made primary education free and compulsory in January 2003. Since then, an estimated 1.5 million children, who were previously out of school have been enrolled. There have been challenges especially because this high number of enrolment was not expected. It has put significant strain into school infrastructure, teaching staff and crowding within class rooms. Children are not getting the right amount of attention needed from their teachers due to the overcrowding of classrooms. Some parents that can afford to pay tuition send their children to other schools so that they can receive a better education. Many schools are coping with a 100 per cent or more increase in numbers. Average class sizes have risen from 50 to 60 and 70, while the number of the teaching staff and the facilities has remained the same.

The challenges extend beyond the class rooms because many primary schools in rural areas for instance lack even the most basic amenities such as toilets and running water to ensure that basic sanitary standards are met. The other challenge is that a large number of pupils graduating from primary school due to this increase are unable to access secondary school, whose numbers do not match those of primary schools. Presently, more than 250,000 pupils who qualify for secondary education fail to secure chances because the country does not have enough secondary institutions to accommodate them. As a result, only about 17 per cent of Kenyan youths have secondary education. While the basic literacy and numeracy skills learnt at primary school are immensely important, they are not enough to guarantee a reasonable living, and are certainly not sufficient to enable young rural Kenyans to break out of the poverty cycle and to find employment beyond what their parents could find. The lack of cheap day secondary provision also acts as a disincentive to teachers and pupils alike in primary schools, since there is so little hope of gaining a place at secondary school, regardless of the marks attained in Kenya Certificate of Primary E examinations (*www.inspireKenya.com).*

Secondary Education

Wosyanju, (n.d), mentions that secondary school education begins around the age of fourteen. However due to delayed primary school entry and limited educational schools and facilities, many students especially those from rural areas experience late admission into the education system years. Secondary school education in Kenya is aimed at meeting the needs of the students who terminate their education after secondary school and also those who proceed onto tertiary education. It takes 4 years to go through secondary school. At the secondary level, the number of boarding schools is higher than at the primary school level. Public secondary schools are funded by the government, local communities, or NGOs and are managed through boards of governors and parent-teacher associations. The private schools on the other hand are established and managed by private individuals or organizations. Many private secondary schools still follow the British education system, offering British O-levels, A-levels, and International Baccalaureate programs. Others schools follow the follow the American education system. These British and American school systems mainly prepare students who plan on attending university abroad.

Kenya has always placed education as a priority at all levels, promoting it as a key indicator for social and economic development. At independence there were fewer than 900 000 Kenyan children attending primary school but by 1992, the number had grown to 5.53 million (UNESCO, 2008c). At independence there were 6056 primary schools and 891 000 students enrolled in school. By 1990, there were over 14 690 primary schools, about five million students, and 200 000 trained teachers. The teacher/student ratio in 1991 and 1992 was reported to be 1:31. Further, proportion of girls in school had grown to about 50%. Despite a high attrition rate in secondary school, enrolments at this level have steadily been growing

According to Wosyanju, (n.d), due to the large increase in primary school enrollment the number of students seeking secondary school education has grown significantly. In 1963 there were of 151 secondary schools and the total number of students enrolled was 30 120. Today there are about 3000 secondary schools and the enrollment is about 620 000 students. Of these, about 40% are female students (UNESCO, 2008). In 2008, the government introduced a free secondary schooling education program that targeted raising student enrolment to 1.4 million by the end of the year. The scheme proposed to pay tuition fees for students while parents would still be required to meet boarding school costs and school uniforms.

Higher Education/Tertiary Education

For students who go on to higher education in Kenya, there are public universities and private universities with either full or interim charter. In addition to adding technical courses at the primary and secondary school level, vocational education has been a focus of the education system. The Ministry of Higher Education has developed a national strategy for technical and vocational education and training aimed at the rehabilitation of physical facilities and equipment and ensuring that vocational and technical institutions are appropriately equipped by 2010. There are also public and private colleges that certificate and diploma programs. These public and private colleges offer technical hands-on skills in various fields including, engineering, medical sciences, nursing, education, computer science, mass communication, tourism, and business (Wosyanju, n.d).

Historical Overview of Education Reforms in Kenya

According to Stanfield (2005), the European model of schooling was introduced into Kenya towards the end of the nineteenth century with the first school opened by the Christian Missionary Society near Mombasa in 1846. While few schools were built further inland until the turn of the century and the building of the Uganda railway, it is estimated that mission schools had been established throughout Kenya by 1910. In response to the increasing demands for education the colonial authorities established a Department of Education in 1911 and missionary societies began to receive government grants to help fund the building of new schools. However, only those schools which adhered to the principles set out in the 1909 Fraser Report qualified for government funds. Therefore, while academic education was to be given to European and Asian children, African children were to receive industrial and agricultural training. Christian teaching became compulsory and African customs and traditions were subsequently neglected. Furthermore, African children were barred from learning English until the last year of primary school. This marks the beginning of the calls for education reforms in Keny Ojiambo (2009) discusses that the aftermath of the First World War saw a number of government measures with regard to African education.

During this period, the colonial government ended it's hitherto spectator status and initiated a system of grants-in-aid immediately after establishing the Department of Education in 1911 to help in the development of education provided by Christian missions. It also appointed East Africa Protectorate Education Commission in 1919 to review education provided in the colony for all races. According to Achola and Pillai (quoted in Ojiambo 2009), The East Africa Protectorate Education Commission was mandated ―to look into unsatisfactory status of education for all races in the protectorate. The commission made a vague recommendation to the effect that while the provision of education would remain a major responsibility of the missionaries, the government should increase its provision role. During this period, the Phelps-Stokes Commission of 1912-1925 also visited the colony. The reports of these two commissions formed the backbone on which Kenyan education was cemented during this phase. According to Sifuna and Otiende key aims of the report was to make the individual efficient, promote and advance agriculture, develop native industries, improve health, train people in the management of their affairs and the inculcate citizenship and service.

According to Ojiambo (2009) some of the key commissions that were undertaken to review education during this period included: a Ten Year Plan, Phelps-Stokes Commission of 1924, the Beecher report of 1949, and the Binns Commission of 1952. A Ten Year Plan sought to provide 50% of school age children with an education lasting six years and to offer within ten years a full primary course for undergraduate teachers to ensure that there was adequate supply of trained teachers. In addition, a satisfactory number of pupils of both sexes was expected to receive education up to the certificate level. The plan however, was not implemented for the whole cost was to be borne by local government authorities that had inadequate finances. The Commission advocated for both quantitative and qualitative improvement of African education. One objective of this qualitative improvement was to give Africans academic type of education similar to that available to European and Asian children. It recommended a practically oriented education for Africans. This was reinforced further by the permanent Advisory Committee on Native Education in Tropical Africa that was set up by the British colonial Africa office. Its purpose was to develop rural areas. It advocated for continuity in policy and fuller cooperation between governments and missions.

While referring to the observations made by Bogonko (19992) and Sifuna (1990), Ojiambo (2009) argues that although the Commission was expected to create avenues that could make Africans have more access to education and national development, this was note the case. Education during this period remained racial. Europeans and Asians had an education that laid more emphasis on academics and aimed at preparing them for white-collar jobs while Africans on the other hand received an education that geared them towards manual labor. Although the commission made some important contributions in teacher education it failed to meet Africans personal goals and paid little attention to affective domains of education. Most Africans did not want the type of education it was propagating and thus rejected it. They yearned for an academic education that was not racial and one that could promote development. Because of its inadequacies many Africans opted to set up their own independent schools.

According to Otiende *et al* (1992), The Beecher Committee of 1949 was mandated to examine the scope, content, methods, administration and financing of African education. Ojiambo (2009) mentions that the report reinforced the argument of Phelps- Stokes and the Ten Year Developmental plan on the provision of practical education to Africans. Its recommendations formed the basis of the government policy on African education until the last year of colonial rule. According to Bogonko (1992), Africans were strongly opposed to the Beecher Report the recommendations were viewed as leading to Europeanization rather than Africanization of education in which it sought to maintain the status quo of perpetually keeping Africans in low cadre positions.

According to Eshiwani (1992), the British Secretary of State set up Binns Commission in 1952 to examine educational policy and practice in British Tropical African territories. Ojiambo (2009) discusses that the Binns Commission was mesmerized by the high level of wastage within the education sector. According to Sifuna & Otiende (1995), the Binns commission was significant in Kenya's education because it expressed concern regarding the internal efficiency of African education and its ability to address their needs. The colonial government also passed three major education ordinances in 1921, 1931, and 1934 and set up several educational committees, councils and boards aimed at improving the quality of African education (Bogonko, 1992).

Ojiambo (2009) discusses that in the mid 1950s, the colonial office realized it needed a new policy of education. This led to the drawing up of a developmental plan. The plan advocated for speeding up of output of high-level African workforce by expanding secondary and higher education.

Within five years the pace of education was enormously increased for there was anticipation of African rule that required training of more manpower. Sifuna (1992) and Bogonko (1992) observe that the colonial education policies, even after the 1950s, continued to favor European population in terms of finance, curricula and structure and the African education was always the residuary legatee of the wealth of the state. Moreover, only a small number of African children went to school and the rate of attrition was very high compared to European and Asians. The openings for post-primary education for the Africans were also limited and those Africans who qualified were restricted by the many examinations they had to undertake (Bogonko, 1992). An examination of educational reforms undertaken during this period depicts colonial government efforts of using education to foster development that was racial.

According to Ojiambo (2009), historical Development of Kenya's Education System in the Post- Colonial Period In the post-colonial period, Kenya's struggle for political independence served as a major impetus for her educational development. During the struggle for independence, the nationalists' educational aim was to provide an education that would serve immediate needs of the country. In 1961, when independence was imminent in most African countries, a conference on the development of education in Africa was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and Tananarive in Madagascar in 1962. In these two conferences, representatives from all over Africa set educational priorities that aimed at promoting economic and social development. It was upon this framework that Kenya like other African governments formulated its educational programs .

Sifuna & Otiende (1995) point out that the expansion and reform of the education system during this period was motivated by political pressures. Almost every politician and election manifesto leading to the independence elections had called for more educational opportunities of all types, cheaper or free education, universal primary education, Africanisation of syllabuses and teaching staff and an atmosphere in which the African personality and culture could flourish. The education system was expected to fulfill two main objectives: technical and social. The technical objective was to provide future human resource with necessary skills and knowledge, and the social purpose was to inculcate values that could enrich people's lives and maintain cohesive sensibilities. In line with this thinking most African countries devoted their early educational policies to training personnel that could man their burgeoning economic and administrative units.

Ojiambo (2009), notes that Kenya embarked on various educational legal policies that could advance its development. The first undertaking by the government was the drafting of Sessional Paper Number 10 in 1965. This served as an important document for examining immediate needs and goals of post-independence Kenya. The paper saw education much more of an economic than a social service, a key means of alleviating shortage of skilled domestic workforce and of creating equal economic opportunities for all citizens (Republic of Kenya, 1965b). During this period the government established five major inquiries to look into the development of Kenyan education: The Kenya Education Commission-Ominde Commission(Republic of Kenya, 1964, Republic of Kenya, 1965a, Republic of Kenya, 1965b), The National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policy-Gacathi Report (Republic of Kenya1978), The Presidential Working Party on the Second University-Mackay Report (Republic of Kenya, 1981a), The Presidential Working Party on Education and Man-power -Kamunge Report (Republic of Kenya, 1988) and Commission of Inquiry into the Education system of Kenya- Koech Commission (Republic of Kenya, 1999).

Eshiwani (1992) mentions that Ominde Commission outlined what education was and had to be during and after independence. It was the blueprint that laid the foundation of post-independence education. It was mandated to survey existing educational resources and to advise the government on the formation and implementation of the required national policies for education. The commission was strongly influenced by the then existing international opinion, economic and political forces and available publications that underscored the importance of education in accelerating national development. Ojiambo (2009) points out that the organization of education during this period was closely linked to the management of human resources and the labor market. This link led to the growth of enrollments, especially in secondary schools, a growth that continued to be experienced in the 1980s. Although formal education was expanding during this period, it was not directly accompanied by the economic growth. Thus, most school dropouts were soon left out with neither jobs nor training. By 1970, majority of secondary school drop outs began to experience unemployment crisis. Due to increase in demand for higher education and the need for highly qualified manpower, the government made more acts in the 1980s geared towards the improvement of education to enable it spearhead development.

While making a critical examination, Ojiambo (2009) argues that the various educational acts that were undertaken during this period illustrate the government's commitment to improving education and the emphasis it placed on its ability to develop the nation. It is important to note that despite its noble objectives the Ominde Commission recommendations were not implemented in full, a blunder that has had significant effects on education. Amutabi writes that —if the first Ominde Commission Report would have been implemented in full… Kenya would not have been wandering and experimenting with dubious systems like 8-4-4 today.‖9 The Gacathi Report reiterated objectives of the Ominde Commission and sought to enhance the use of the Kenyan educational goals to shape its national character and development. It recommended vocational, technical and practical education (Republic of Kenya, 1964a; Republic of Kenya 1965b). In 1975, the government realized that education was not doing much to achieve its stated objectives. Education curriculum was viewed as being too academic, narrow and examination centered (Republic of Kenya, 1979b; Republic of Kenya 1980). Rate of unemployment grew as school leavers went to urban centers to seek for white-collar jobs. This led to the formation of the third development plan of 1974/78 to address some of these challenges (Republic of Kenya, 1979b). Education system during this period was required among other things, —to provide high level skills needed for economic, industrial, vocational and technical training that was essential for employment and development.

In the 1980s the government changed its policy on education. This was because of the difficulties which were being faced by graduates of its education system at both primary and secondary levels. Most graduates who were matriculating from these levels could not be absorbed into the shrinking labor market. This made the government to reconsider changing its education system and to set up a Presidential Working Party in 1981 (Republic of Kenya, 1981a). The report sought to investigate ways in which education could make graduates from these levels self-sufficient, productive in agriculture, industries and commerce. Education system was expected to ensure that students acquired technical, scientific and practical knowledge vital for self and salaried employment, lifelong skills and nation building. The commission was also mandated to investigate the feasibility of establishing a second university that was development centered. It advocated for a practical curriculum that would offer a wide range of employment opportunities and equitable distribution of educational resources. It gave rise to the current education system, the 8-4-4 (Republic of Kenya, 1988).

The current educational curricula, commonly referred to as the 8-4-4 system, consists of eight years of primary education, four years of secondary, and four years of university education. According to Sifuna (1990), there are three events that led to implementation of the 8-4-4 system: the 1966 conference on education at Kericho in Kenya, which stressed the need for integrating rural development; the International Labor Organization mission report entitled "Employment, Incomes and Equality: A Strategy for Increasing Productive Employment of 1972;" and the recommendation of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies of 1975. In 1979 the Ministry of Education was changed to the Ministry of Basic Education with an introductory nine-year basic education system program. The rationale was that the previous program was too short and not rigorous enough to give graduates enough practical education. It also recommended that the first six years of primary were to concentrate on numeracy and literacy skills and the last two years on basic education with practical orientation. This represented a shift from a focus on enrollment to restructuring the program as a means to cater to the influx of unemployed.

The implementation of 8-4-4 system of education has been suspiciously viewed. For instance Ojiambo (2009) remarks that:

> An in-depth examination of the rationale for introducing the 8-4-4 system gives a hidden agenda. Available evidence seems to suggest that the change of the system was more political than an educational need (...)the system was introduced partly as result of the Mackay Report and also as a political self-actualization by the government (…) inherent in the system was a hidden motive of an apparent settling of some imbalance and political scores. The concept of the 8-4-4 system of education was therefore from the beginning politically driven and there was no major crisis to warrant the change of the system (…).Ojiambo (2009)

Ideological Reforms in Kenya's Educational Practice

Ideology: An Overview

Wikipedia, presents an ideology as a set of ideas that constitute one's goals, expectations, and actions. An ideology can be thought of as a comprehensive vision, as a way of looking at things. The main purpose behind an ideology is to offer either change in society, or adherence to a set of ideals where conformity already exists, through a normative thought process.

> (…) ideology is a *coherent system of ideas*, relying upon a few basic assumptions about reality that may or may not have any factual basis, but are subjective choices that serve as the seed around which further thought grows. (…) ideologies are neither right nor wrong, but only a relativistic intellectual strategy for categorizing the world.

According to Meighan and Siraj-Blatchford (1997: 180), an ideology is a broad interlocked set of ideas and beliefs about the world, held by a group of people which they demonstrate in both behaviour and conversation. These systems of belief are usually seen as the way things really are by the groups holding them, and they become the taken-for-granted way of making sense of the world. Lamm (n.d) observes that ideologies are cognitive systems that serve man in discovering and inventing the meaning of the world and of life, and to derive an orientation for his actions. They (ideologies) bestow meaning to their (people) lives and direct their actions, each in its own way, none encompassing all areas of life. Ideologies act as a control mechanism on people's actions in their social and political lives. The assumption is that ideologies can fill this role of control mechanisms because people cannot control their ideologies to the same extent that they can control their scientific research, their philosophic thinking or their practical actions. People see ideologies as their viewpoint of choice, set of ideas or methods of thought that they have rationally chosen when deciding among available alternatives.

Lamm (n.d) discusses that a comprehensive ideological expression has four components, differing from each other in the types of human abilities that create them. These components are: diagnostic, eschatological, Strategic thinking and a definition of certain publics. Diagnostic component present in every ideology is composed of propositions answering the question "what is?" What defines a proposition as diagnostic is its content, answering the question "what is?" and the structure fitting this content. The second component of every ideology is the eschatological one. The propositions composing it answer the question "what should be?" The third component of each ideology includes propositions telling us what we should do in order to make the available, that is the content of the diagnosis, into the desirable, that is into the eschatological. This component includes a choice of one of the possible strategies: to strive for the desirable by means of information and education, political action, revolution and a seizure of power, or by other means. Strategic thinking, leading to a choice of one of the alternatives of action, is vital to people in all their actions. The fourth and last component of every ideology includes a definition of certain publics, and answers the questions "for whom?" and "by whom?" One public is defined in each ideology as its carrier, the public meant to realize it; another public is that on whose behalf the first group acts.

According to Lamm (n.d), each of the four components of ideology also serves man outside the ideologies. People try to answer the diagnostic questions in their scientific and practical life. They strive for the ideal of the desirable in their moral, religious, utopian thought; try to solve many practical problems through the use of various strategies; and identify with several publics, such as their family, the inhabitants of their area of residence, their church, their culture or humanity as a whole. When the four components coalesce, they form an ideology; and in their coalescence, each loses its original characteristics. Diagnosis in an ideology is no longer such as in science or practical action. It is affected by eschatology, that is the longing for the desirable; by the previous choice of strategy and of preferred publics. A diagnosis influenced by what man desires, by the method of action acceptable to him, and by what fits with his belonging to a certain group or with his identification with it, is not a proper diagnosis but a thought derived from aspirations. This is also true for each of the other components, affecting the diagnosis and affected by it and by all the other components. The coalescence of these four components forms an ideology that constitutes a consolidated structure not easily dissoluble, and resistant to changes. Even a partial change in one of the components creates a new ideology.

The diagnosis, the eschatology and the publics are identical in the communistic and socialistic ideologies. These ideologies differed in their time only as to their decisions on the best strategy.

Because of these differences in means the agreement about goals was forgotten, as well as about evaluating the situation and about the public on behalf of which they both wanted to act. The rich history of ideological controversies has not produced many examples of such acute rivalry as between the followers of these two close ideologies. This rivalry came about because ideological strategy is not only a decision about means, but is an inseparable part of the whole ideological structure.

Ideology and Education

Lamm (n.d) argues that when traditional societies began to undergo changes, the ritualistic legitimization of education gave way to a new type of legitimization - the ideological legitimization of education. The latter has two attributes: one involves the appearance of recognition of their right to choose the type of education that suits their tastes, their values, their aims and their understanding. In view of this new realization, they no longer feel obliged to the accepted education only because it is the accepted type. The second attribute requires the simultaneous existence of several conceptions of education, from which one may choose the type of education suitable to one's needs. When people recognize their right to choose the education suitable to them (and no longer to act according to accepted tradition), and when different educational conceptions are available to them, then begins the modern era in education - the era of ideological legitimization of education.

> (a) Ideologies are cognitive systems that clarify to people the essence and aims of education, and the criteria by which people choose the type of education they prefer over others; (b) Ideologies are social control mechanisms, by means of which agreement is reached in various societies about the accepted ways of educational practice, through which these societies try to ensure their continuity. Clarification of the connection between the ideologies as cognitive systems used by individuals and as social control mechanisms, and between educational thought, requires that we first note their structure and the connection between them and their function (Lamm n.d; 2).

Kenya's Educational Ideology

Kenya's education ideology could be understood as a set of ideas which constitute or have constituted/contributed towards the goals, expectations, actions and practice of education. This way, such ideology could be discussed within several stages/periods of educational developments and its (ideology) dearth established.

The Colonial Era: Assimilation and Adaptation Ideology

A post on *http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/772/Kenya-EDUCATIONAL-SYSTEM-OVERVIEW.html* shows that missionaries introduced Western education in Kenya. The first missionaries to settle on the East African coast were Portuguese Roman Catholics. By 1557 they had established monasteries at Mombasa and Lamu, Kenyan coastal towns. The second wave of Christian missionaries included the Lutherans, who were sent to Kenya through the Church Missionary Society (CMS). Among these were Johann Ludwig Krapf, Johann Rebman, and Jacob Erhadt. The partition of Africa in 1884 established British rule in Kenya and led to an increase of Christian missionaries. As the missionaries established themselves on the mainland, they started schools as a means of converting Africans to Christianity. Their acceptance was somewhat due to the fact that they used the schools as a means of rehabilitating slaves who were returned after having been captured by Arabs. The Arabs had established themselves earlier on the coast, and had already introduced some schools where they taught the Koran. Thus, the Christian missionaries had to move further inland, away from the Moslems where they could easily rehabilitate the returned slaves. Later the British colonial government started to urge the missionaries to expand the educational system to include a technical focus in the curriculum in addition to religion. Although some were reluctant, for fear of losing the monopoly of schools to the government, some went along and even received funding.

In 1908, the missionaries formed a joint committee on education that later became the Missionary Board of Education, representing all the Protestant missions in the British protectorate. In 1909 the British government established an education board with Henry Scott of the Church of Scotland serving as the chair. The establishment of the education board occurred at the same time that the Fraser and Giroud Commissions were put in place. These commissions called for racial consideration in developing the British protectorate.

The recommendations included a push for industrial development, technical education, and the teaching of religion as a moral foundation. The import of expensive labor from India was discouraged. Professor Fraser also recommended the establishment of a Department of Education
(http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/772/Kenya-EDUCATIONAL-SYSTEM OVERVIEW.html)
This period marked the beginning of the three-tier education system in Kenya. There were racially segregated schools for Europeans (whites), Asians, and Africans. It was also the starting point of a joint venture between the colonial government and the missionaries, whereby the missionaries paved the way for colonialism. After Kenyan independence was achieved, the three-tier system developed into three types of schools: government, private and/or missionary, and *harambee* (a grass-root movement of self-help schools). The government schools, formerly reserved for whites, and the private schools were the best equipped. The missionary schools continued to exist, although some were converted into government schools. The quality of harambee schools, which were geared towards increasing education for Africans, depended on the economy of the location.

Wosyanju, (nd) writes that after the First World War, a more concerted effort by the British to develop African colonies was established. The British began reexamining and reevaluating education in the African territories. In 1923 the British secretary of state established a committee chaired by the parliamentary under-secretary of state to advise on the educational affairs of the African-Kenyans. This marked the beginning of the first educational policy by the British colonial government. This period marked the beginning of the three-tier education system in Kenya. There were racially segregated schools for Europeans (whites), Asians, and Africans.

James Stanfield (2005) points out that only those schools which adhered to the principles set out in the 1909 Fraser Report qualified for government funds. Therefore, while academic education was to be given to European and Asian children, African children were to receive industrial and agricultural training. Christian teaching became compulsory and African customs and traditions were subsequently neglected. Furthermore, African children were barred from learning English until the last year of primary school.An understanding of the practice of education at this time was that it was the means by which Africans were to be transformed to accept the way of life of the Europeans. Africans were to learn the language and moral values of the Europeans. This way, the underlying ideology in the practice of education was to have Africans assimilate and adapt to European values.

The Independent School Movement: The Influence of Assimilation and Adaptation Ideology on Education Practice in Kenya

According to James Stanfield (2005), following a ban on female circumcision by three missionary societies in 1929, the Kikuyu in Central Province began to boycott mission schools and demanded an end to the monopoly on education held by the missions. After failing to persuade the government to open its own secular schools free from missionary control, the Kikuyu began to open their own. During the early 1930s extensive fundraising activities took place, school buildings were erected and self-help groups formed. Each independent school was governed by a local committee, responsible for the recruitment and payment of teachers, the setting of school fees and other fundraising events. As independent schools became established joint meetings were organized and at a gathering in August 1934 the Kikuyu Independent Schools Association (KISA) was set up. While KISA emphasized the need to negotiate with the colonial authorities, some independent schools wanted to remain entirely free from direct European influence. A rival association, the Kikuyu Karinga Education Association (KKEA), was therefore established soon after. By 1939 there were 63 Kikuyu independent schools educating a total of 12,964 pupils.

To help meet the increasing demand for trained teachers both KISA and KKEA agreed to support the opening, in 1939, of Kenya's first teacher-training college at Githunguri, the site of the Kikuyu's first independent school. Originally intended to train teachers, the College soon included an elementary, primary and secondary school, with enrolments increasing to over 1,000 by 1947. As James Stanfield (2005) noted these findings help to shed light on the importance of independently controlled schools in a free and democratic society. In Kenya's struggle against colonial rule it was their schools which first gained independence providing the momentum for future reforms. On becoming President of Kenya in 1964, Jomo Kenyatta championed the Harambee spirit of self-help which he believed the future development of Kenya would depend upon.

Independence (Kenyatta Era) and 7-4-2-3-System of Education: Education for Manpower Development Ideology

According to Kivuva (2002), Kenya's attainment of independence from Britain in 1963 was a great source of hope to her people, for it marked an end to the stings of long suffering and discrimination. The independent Kenya therefore needed to make changes in different areas in order to reflect the needs of her people. Education was one of such areas that required such changes, given the way it was operated during the colonial regime.

In 1963, the country gained independence and a commission was set up to make changes in the formal educational system. The focus of the commission was to build a national identity and to unify the different ethnicities through subjects in school such as history and civics, and civic education for the masses. Between 1964 and 1985, the 7-4-2-3 education structure modeled after the British education system was followed. The system was designed to provide seven years of primary education, four years of lower secondary education, two years of upper secondary education, and three years of university (Buchmann, 1999). The country was in dire and immediate need for skilled workers to hold positions previously held by the British. Hence, the government set out to quickly expand educational opportunities to its citizens.

The first changes were achieved through the Ominde Commission Report of 1964 (Republic of Kenya, 1964). The Ominde Commission became the first educational committee in the independent Kenya to look into the educational issues that affected the country and made recommendations for what they considered to be appropriate changes. Among the changes, were the adoption of 7-4-2-3 structure- seven years primary, four years of lower secondary, two years of upper secondary and three years of university education (Republic of Kenya, 1964). Simiyu (1990) observed that other changes include the content of subjects such as history and geography in an attempt to build a national identity and the abolition of technical and vocational education in primary education.

According to (Rharade, 1997), Ominde underscored the need to reform the education system so that it became a way of changing people's attitudes and a means of establishing social equality. Education was seen as a gateway to training the highly-skilled staff that Kenya needed and was viewed as a productive investment, not only to the individual but also to the society as a whole. Rharade, (1997) points out further that the Ominde Commission influenced the view of education as an instrument for development. The organization of education, therefore, was closely linked to the management of human resources and the labor market. This view of education, which was influenced by the human capital theory, led to the growth of enrollments, especially in secondary schools; it was a growth that continued to be experienced even in the 1980s (Kivuva, 2002). Through education, there was a chance for individual mobility and a good life.

Reforming the 7-4-2-3- System of Education: The Failure of Education for Manpower Development Ideology

Owino (1997) argued that the call for reforms in the 7-4-2-3 system of education in Kenya was widespread and based on the perceived weakness of such educational policy. It was observed that the system lacked the capacity and flexibility to respond to the changing aspirations of individual Kenyans and the labour market needs, in terms of new skills, new technologies and the attitude to work. The deficiencies of this educational ideology manifested itself through the increased number of school leavers who went through primary and secondary education but were unemployed at the end because they either lacked the specific skills required for wage employment/self-employment or because the leavers were selective about the type of jobs they thought they had been prepared for (Owino 1997).

According to Sifuna and Otiende (1992), the Presidential Committee (1982/83) on unemployment noted that one of the factors, which contributed to unemployment, was the type and quality of education, which was being imparted in schools. The Presidential Committee further noted that the subjects, which were taught at both primary and secondary schools, were heavily biased towards intellectualism and lacked the development of adaptive skills and lacked the technical and vocational component and was therefore accused of being highly academic.

Simiyu (2001) observed that the 7-4-2-3 system of education was criticized in two major areas. First was that the system was being too academic and therefore not suitable for direct employment thereby lacking orientation to employment. Second, it was argued that the system encouraged elitist and individualistic attitudes among school leavers, an aspect that was considered incompatible to the African socialist milieu. Unemployment concerns with regard to the 7-4-2-3 system of education were conspicuously mentioned in The Gachathi Report of 1976. The Report noted that:

(…)One of the largest problems confronting the country is that of unemployment. The problem is aggravated by the annual outputs of school leavers whose number continue to swell following the enormous expansion of the education system in the first years of independence (…)Unemployment which was said to have started among primary school leavers had spread to embrace even university graduates (Republic of Kenya, 1976:33-34).

As (Kivuva, 2002) observes, education, which was regarded by Kenyans as a medium for social mobility and national economic development failed to deliver as the number of unemployed school leavers continued to grow. In a sense the 7-4-2-3 system was regarded as a failing tool for national development. Therefore a change of the system was required. According to Maleche (1970), the Kenya National Assembly's Select Committee on unemployment (1970) made calls for change of education system to address unemployment noting that:

Of fundamental importance to the solution of unemployment problem will be a reform of content and scope of educational curricula in the nation's education system. The present curricular are too exclusively academic. The school-leavers cannot apply their knowledge to farming or to other activities like bookkeeping, masonry, and carpentry and joinery. The school curricula should therefore be revised to give them a more practical bias. Teaching on agriculture and practical skills should be established both at primary and secondary schools (Maleche, 1976:13, as written in Makori, 2005:7)

Eshiwani (1992) noted that to address the problem of unemployment, the government proposed an emphasis on technical education so that those who were not able to go on to secondary school could receive training that might lead them to either self-employment or other jobs in the non-formal sector. In 1975, the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policy (NCEOP) was formed and was concerned with the issue of unemployment. Eighty percent of primary school dropouts were jobless at that time. The committee's task was to review the achievements of the educational objectives after more than a decade since independence. This led to the Gachathi report of 1976, which emphasized the provision of free primary education. The report also noted that there was need to integrate secondary education with the non-formal sector in order to take care of school dropouts. This called for the introduction of more technical subjects in secondary schools. The last grade in higher secondary education (Form 6) was to be a major recruiting stage, since only a few students could be absorbed by Kenya's only university.

According to Kivuva (2002) institutions for vocational training were seen as an answer to the problem of unemployment. Many religious organizations started vocational training institutes, but the enrollment remained low. Still, few people were in favor of blue-collar jobs. There were moves towards vocational education, although such programs remained unpopular with school dropouts at all stages. The 7-4-2-3 system, as the tool of national development was seen as failing.

Post Independence Period (Moi Era): Education for Self-Reliance ideology

As discussed in the preceding sections of this paper, education, viewed by Kenyans as a vehicle for social mobility and national economic development, was not serving these purposes as the number of unemployed school-leavers rose. According to Makori (2005) as early as the 1970s, the ILO report showed that there was a need to make changes to the education system in order to help reduce unemployment. The ILO recommended increasing the technical aspect. The first and second United Nations' (UN) "development decades," the 1960s and 1970s, also influenced the educational plans most third-world countries made after independence. The UN's main aim was to focus on the production of skilled manpower, reducing social inequalities and providing basic education for all. The move by ILO towards vocationalizing education was supported by the World Bank. Thus, technical and vocational training centers were established with financial aid from developed countries. The International Development Agency (IDA) was instrumental in the equipment of secondary schools.

Kenya also experienced problems associated with the 7-4-2-3 system in that the presence of Harambee schools led to inequalities in education. Most of them were closed due to a lack of funds, which meant that only the ones in the economically stable (mainly urban) areas could survive. Therefore, economic and regional disparities were evident. Gender disparities were also evident in the sense that, although at the primary-school level the difference had narrowed, girls were still not well-represented at the secondary school level. For example, in 1963, 23% of girls attended secondary schools, while in 1980 the figure was 27%, an increase of only 4%.

Formal education was not solely to blame for this trend. Factors such as lack of qualified staff, centralization of management that allowed for little or no flexibility, and the rural-urban migration of qualified staff led to the dysfunction of the system. The problem of inequalities between boys' and girls' enrollment was more of a societal problem than an educational one, except for the fact that there were less state-funded secondary schools for girls than for boys, a fact that also reflects societal values. The issues discussed above all led to people's dissatisfaction with the education system. It coincided with a time when many secondary school graduates applied to join the university but could not get placed, due to the fact that there was only one university in Kenya at the time. In 1981, the Presidential Working Party on the establishment of the Second University was commissioned to look at both the possibilities of setting up a second university in Kenya and of reforming the entire education system. The committee recommended that the 7-4-2-3 system be changed to an 8-4-4 system (eight years in primary, four years in secondary, and four years in university education).

The 8-4-4 System of Education: Education for Self-reliance Ideology

According to Muya (2000), the 8-4-4 system of education, which was pre-vocational in nature, was introduced in January 1985, following the Mackay report of 1982. King and McGrath (2002) report that: (…) the 8-4-4 policy arose out of the concerns that a basic academic education might lack the necessary content to promote widespread sustainable (self) employment (...) King and McGrath (2002:89, as written in Makori, 2005:7). The 8-4-4 policy emanated from the assumption that it would equip pupils with employable skills thereby enabling school dropouts at all levels to be either self-employed or secure employment in the informal sector (Eshiwani 1992). As King and McGrath, 2002 observed, the new system intended to orient youths towards self-employment. The new policy would improve the student's employment potential and thus make them self-reliant (Amutabi, 2003).

According the Kenya Ministry of Education (1984) the 8-4-4 policy was designed to encourage students to become more self-reliant and better oriented towards self-employment. It contained a rather broad curriculum at both primary and secondary levels, with a strong emphasis on practical subjects sitting alongside a rather traditional approach to academic subject. Business education was introduced into upper primary as an evident of encouraging self-employment. As well as business education's focus on providing basic knowledge and skills on issues such as record keeping, there was a cross-curricular emphasis on attitudinal orientation towards self-employment.

Eisemon (1988) observed that the Ministry of Education was charged with the responsibility of implementing the 8-4-4 policy under two task forces, the task force on curriculum implementation and the assessment of the cost of implementing the 8-4-4 curriculum. The task force in charge of assessing the cost of implementation submitted their report in late 1983, urging for caution and gradualism in implementing 8-4-4 system. The task force on curriculum implementation recommended that a structure that should lead to the development of communication skills (literacy) through the teaching of mother tongue, English, and Swahili languages. The development of scientific outlook will be done through the teaching of mathematics, while the development of scientific outlook will be done through the teaching of integrated science. The development and acquisition of social and cultural knowledge, skills and attitudes will be done through the teaching of social studies, religious education, music and physical education, art, craft and home science will provide for practical knowledge and skills. (The Ministry of Education (1984:4).

The 8-4-4 Educational Policy Confronted: Gaps in the Education for Self-Reliance ideology

Although the 8-4-4 system curriculum allowed for more options in technical and vocational subjects, it experienced serious shortages or lack of essential resources and facilities and the local communities could not be mobilized to provide the facilities required. There were no trained technical and vocational subjects teachers and local craftsmen could not be used (Kerre, 1997; Simiyu, 2001). According to Amutabi (2003) the new system was theoretically oriented due to lack of infrastructure.

Desouza (1987) and Owino (1997) share the view that the crisis of unemployment of primary school leavers remained evident. Vocational subjects and activities were seen as an extra burden both in practical daily activities in schools and in national examination. According to King and McGrath (2002) the 8-4-4 system curriculum for primary school was also claimed to be overcrowded or overstretched. Therefore it was an obstacle to effective learning because the pupils worked under great pressure.

Abagi et al (1999) noted that to cover an extended curriculum in the same period increased pressure to students and staff and thus reduced students performance (lower test scores). The pressure negatively affected the children's motivation to learn resulting in the rise in dropouts (Owino, 1997).

At the schools level, standard examination in agriculture, art and craft consisted of multiple-choice type of questions. Although this type of examination has the advantage of objectivity and easy marking, its validity to predict the leavers' ability in higher level of education training and employment was doubtful (Owino, 1997). Bedi *et al.* (2002) observed that by the time technical and vocational education was introduced within the 8-4-4 policy, there was a serious shortage of qualified teachers for vocational subjects. Many of the teachers were untrained, for instance untrained teachers (those with no formal teaching qualifications) increased sharply from 70% in 1990 to 96.6% in 1998), while some had been to teachers college but were not trained in the teaching of vocational subjects, they were thus limited in knowledge and pedagogy.

Trends in Secondary Schools in Kenya

According to Achoka, et al (2007), students in Kenya's major secondary schools (high schools) take their four years to prepare for college studies. Secondary schools are grouped into national, provincial and county (district) level schools. Admission at any level of the secondary school is pegged on performance at the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education, with those scoring highest marks joining National schools in the ascending order. Since 2008, The Kenyan Government has been aiming at increasing the percentage of children who move on from primary to secondary education from 47% to 70% by 2008, with a special focus on girls' education. This presents a significant challenge, since the fees charged by secondary schools are much higher than those charged by primary schools. 'National' level secondary boarding schools cost around £450 per year, which is prohibitive for most rural Kenyans. Secondary education in Kenya caters for primary school leavers in the 15-18 years age group. This is an important sector in national and individual development for two major reasons. One, at the end of its four-year learning period, one may be selected for university, or middle level colleges or professional training such as primary teaching, medical nursing, vocational and technical careers. Two, secondary education plays an important role in creating the country's human resource base at a level higher than primary education. Access to secondary education in Kenya is therefore critical.

Achoka, et al (2007), mentions that although secondary education has expanded considerably since independence, 1963, access to this sector of learning remains restricted. For instance, only 47% of pupils who complete primary level education are selected for entry in the secondary level. This percentage represents only 27% of the eligible age group. The restricted transition rates of less than 50% are due to many challenges of concern. This scenario militates against government's determination to achieve EFA goals for the Kenyan citizenry. Among the challenges encountered include, inability to absorb all primary school graduates into secondary schools (Low transition rates between primary and secondary schools), high dropout rates especially in the last two years of secondary education, HIV/AIDS scourge due to loss of parents and guardians, insecurity, cultural practices, and geographical disparities in some parts of Kenya.

From the statistics provided by Achoka, et al (2007) it is shown that the period between 1995 and 1999, the highest retention rate in secondary schools was 97.06% for boys and 97.36% for girls were between Forms 1 and 2. The lowest retention value, 92.47% for boys and 87.42% for girls was realized between Form 3 and Form 4. Dropout rates for boys, 10% was lower than that for girls, 20%. Completion rate for boys, 90% was higher than that of girls, 80%. Retention rate for this cohort was higher in Form 1 and Form 2, 98.09% for boys and 147.42% for girls compared to previous cohort, 97.06% for boys and 97.36% for girls in the same forms. Lower retention rates were recorded in this cohort for Forms 2 - 3, 94.51% and Forms 3-4, 86.33% for boys while for girls in Forms 2 - 3, 89.66 and Forms 3 - 4, 85.78% compared to 95.55% in Forms 2 – 3 and 92.47% in Forms 3 - 4 for boys while statistics for the girls in same forms were 95.15 and 87.42% respectively in the previous cohort. The drop out value of 20% for boys in this cohort was higher than for boys 10%, in the previous cohort. For girls, the rate remained constant at 20%. Completion rate, 80%, was lower for boys in this cohort than in the previous cohort, 10%. There was no change in the drop out value for girls in both cohorts.

Achoka, et al (2007), provide that for the cohort of 1997 to 2000, the highest retention value, 99.57% for boys was recorded between Form 1 and Form 2. The highest rate, 156.97% for the girls was between Forms 3 and 4. This overwhelmingly high rate could be due to repetition by candidates in these classes. The lowest retention rate for boys, 88.29% was between Form 3 and Form 4.

For girls it was 49.85% between Forms 2 and 3. Dropout values were, 10% for boys while that for the girls was 50%. The cohort's completion rates were 90% for boys and 70% for girls. The highest retention value, 127.88%, occurred between Forms 2 and 3 for the boys while for the girls, 101.82%, was realized between Forms 1 and 2. Dropout rate for the boys is higher, 30% compared to that of girls, 10%. Completion values were high: 100% for boys and 90% for girls. It should be noted that although the completion rate for the boys was 100% this statistic is misleading because the dropout value in the same cohort was 30%. It could be that, the high dropout and completion rates are attributed to repeaters in Forms 3 and 4. In the years 1999 to 2002, 101.82%, was realized between Forms 1 and 2. Dropout rate for the boys is higher, 30% compared to that of girls, 10%. Completion values were high: 100% for boys and 90% for girls. It should be noted that although the completion rate for the boys was 100% this statistic is misleading because the dropout value in the same cohort was 30%. It could be that, the high dropout and completion rates are attributed to repeaters in Forms 3 and 4. In the period between 1999 and 2002, the highest retention rate for the boys, 107.64% and for the girls, 104.15% was realized in Forms 1 and 2. The lowest retention rate for the cohort occurred between Forms 3 and 4; boys, 96.23% and girls, 90.07%. Dropout rate for both girls and boys was 10%, while completion value was 100% for the boys and 90% for the girls. Again, the repeater variable could have taken place.

Secondary school education, which is the last step of the basic education segment, suffers dropout rates ranging from 10 to 50%. The highest dropout value for the girls was 50% in the 1997-2000 cohorts while for the boys was 30% in the 1992 to 1998 to 2001. These rates are very high. They represent youngsters who: 1. Have no access to complete secondary education. 2. Are youth aged between 15 - 18 years. 3. Are not able to positively contribute to their individual, community and national development of the 21st century. 4. Have bleak future in the global village of Hi-Tech. Moreover, as a nation, Kenya incurs a loss whenever there is a dropout in any educational sector.

The dropout signifies unfulfilled aim, goal and objective for the individual, community, and nation. For example, any dropout at this level marks the country's loss of potential man Kenya, 1988). In addition, Kenya also incurs shortfall in her aim to provide EFA by the year 2015 which is also the year for realization of Millennium Development Goals (Achoka et. al., 2005). Accumulated effects of lack of access to secondary education by many youths may be reflected in various ways such as: (a) Increased crime (b) Impoverished persons (c) Drug addicts (d) Semi-literates (e) Unskilled persons (f) Low life expectancy rate. These and other impacts of low or lack of access to secondary education in Kenya point to the urgent need to alleviate the situation.

The Case against Secondary Schools in Kenya

Secondary schools have done more harm to education in Kenya than good. The school undermines the aspirations of Kenyans as expressed through the goals of education. This section brings the following cases against schools in Kenya:

1. To foster nationalism, patriotism and promote national unity,
2. To promote individual development and self fulfillment,
3. To promote sound moral and religious values,
4. To promote social equality and responsibility,

a) Schools continue to undermine national unity and polarize the Kenyan society

The Kenyan society is viewed today in terms of those who went to school and those who did not. For those who went to school, there is a division of those who completed and those who dropped out. For those who completed, there is a division for those who passed and those who failed. For the drop-outs, there is a division at the level which dropped out, for instance, primary school drop out, secondary drop out, and caste continues as one goes up the scale. Another form of polarization is the division of those who attended private schools against those who attended public schools. At the university and tertiary colleges, there is a class of those who are government sponsored and self/privately sponsored. At secondary schools there is a division of those attending national, provincial, district or local schools.

This way, schools have discouraged the achievement of national unity as aspired in the goals of education. Schools in Kenya have perpetuated the class/caste structure and feelings among Kenyans. As Reimer (1971) argued, schools perform a selection function in which it creates losers and winners. Schools in Kenya are instruments of selection that have contributed to the disempowered of those who are seen as the losers.

Selection implies losers as well as winners and, increasingly, selection is for life Reimer (1971:18). To use Reimer (1971) words, schools in Kenya have become a handicap race in which the slower must cover a greater distance bearing the growing burden of repeated failure, while the quicker are continually spurred by success. Nevertheless, the finish line is the same for all and the first to get there win the prizes. Consistently punishing half of the children who are trying to learn what society is trying to teach them is not the worst aspect of combining social role selection with education. As Reimer puts it: (…) such punishment is an unavoidable result of the relative failure, which half the school population must experience while climbing the school ladder in competition with their more successful peers (...). Such punishment can scarcely help but condition this half of the school population to resist all future efforts to induce them to learn whatever is taught in school. But this is only the lesser evil. The greater is that school necessarily sorts its students into a caste-like hierarchy of privilege (Reimer, 1971: 18).

b) Schools in Kenya have mutilated individual development and self fulfillment of citizens

In the year 2012, it was witnessed in Kenya two incidences to the proof that schools are mutilating individual development and self-fulfillment of the citizens. Two former candidates and a head teacher committed suicide following poor performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education examination. Kabaji (2012) notes that the sad story of the two girls who committed suicide for failing to score their anticipated grades in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination, reveals a lot, not only about the effects of a flawed education system, but also about our social system that has failed to capture the essence of education. A note left behind by one of the candidates sadly shows the lost hope, self esteem and fulfillment. The young girl had scored a total of 303 marks out of the possible total of 500 marks. She had aimed at 400 marks. According to Tirop & Moraa (2012), the teenage girl wrote:

> *"Dear mum,*
> *I have let you down in this world without scoring 400 marks."*

The case of this teenage girl rekindles the mind of (Illich, 1970) when he argued that Illich argued that in school we are taught that valuable learning is the result of attendance; that the value of learning increases with the amount of input; and, finally, that this value can be measured and documented by grades and certificates. As Illich (1970) puts it: (...) Once young people have allowed their imaginations to be formed by curricular instruction, they are conditioned to institutional planning of every sort. "Instruction" smothers the horizon of their imaginations. They cannot be betrayed, but only short-changed, because they have been taught to substitute expectations for hope (Illich, 1970:28).

The standardmedia.co.ke article notes that it is saddening to learn students still contemplate committing suicide for failing to attain top grades in national exams. However, one thing we must understand is that exam is not a life and death matter. There is no point of ending one's precious life due to poor results. This can be partly attributed to high societal expectations from candidates who feel disappointed once they fail to achieve the expectations. The article posts that:

> Once results are out, as we embark on celebrating top candidates for working hard, a blame game ensues over who should take responsibility for poor performance among the rest of candidates. Unfortunately, it is the teachers and learners who received the largest share of the blame; parents, politicians and school sponsors hardly take responsibility for poor performance. *(www.standardmedia.co.ke/letters/InsidePage.php?id...cid=17&050175.html)*

According to the Standard Newspaper, *(www.standardmedia.co.ke/ Stop violence in schools over poor exam grades)* parents pressure their children to score high grades, opportunities to get examination papers beforehand are grasped with relief and people are ready to pay anything for a leakage. Cheating is not only widespread but also condoned. When examinations are as overrated and students perform below expectations, egos are crushed and children's ambitions destroyed. This leads to anger and discontent.
As Ivan Illich puts it:

> Under instruction, they have unlearned to "do" their thing or "be" themselves, and value only what has been made or could be made (Illich, 1970:29f) (…) Thus they are made to feel guilty if they do not behave according to the predictions of consumer research by getting the grades and certificates that will place them in the job category they have been led to expect (Illich, 1970:30).

c) Erosion of sound moral values and growth of moral decadence

Schools in Kenya are eroding and corrupting sound moral values that education aspires to achieve among citizens. Students, either on their own, or assisted by teachers and parents are involved in cheating pass examinations. The goal of education in this regard is promote sound moral values, but the school is eroding this goal. A report carried by allafrica.com news has the following: Cheating is (…) cause of concerns for educators in terms of examination outcomes. In the year 2011 (*Language of the year is edited original was: In last year's)* KCPE, 334 exam stations reported cheating. Some 7,974 candidates out of the 776,214 who took the examination had their results cancelled, the worst cheating record in the history of KCPE (allafrica.com/stories/201201). As an antithesis of education, the school is causing to develop in learners, elements of dishonesty. A community of people who fail to tell the truth is quickly evolving, with likely results of moral warping. According Njoroge (1988), nations have been observed to falter in their development, not because of lack of knowledge and technology, but due to defects in human character. The school is putting the development of Kenya at risk, due to moral decadence.

Schools in Kenya only prepare learners to pass examination. The joy of knowing something is disregarded and only examination results matter. This, as Illich (1970) argued school programs hunger for progressive intake of instruction, but even if the hunger leads to steady absorption, it never yields the joy of knowing something to one's satisfaction. (…)Both the dropout who is forever reminded of what he missed and the graduate who is made to feel inferior to the new breed of student know exactly where they stand in the ritual of rising deceptions and continue to support a society which euphemistically calls the widening frustration gap a "revolution of rising expectations."(…) (Illich, 1970:30).

The violent reaction of parents towards teachers due to poor examination is a case of moral concern. Adults are unable to chat way forward but resort to fighting. The failure of the school is perpetuating a disharmony among the Kenya citizens. From allafrica.com it is reported that:

> (…) explosion of violence (…) angry parents (…) stormed a school and attacked the headmaster, (...) the incident disrupted learning at the school for the rest of the day. (…)Area Education Officer defended school teachers, and instead blamed parents for failing to cooperate with teachers. He explained (…) School had performed poorly because parents had failed to ensure that their children attended classes (...) (*allafrica.com/stories/201201*)

As Goodman (1964:10) put it, the schools less and less represent *any* human values, but simply adjustment to a mechanical system. Pedagogically, a teacher must try to teach each child in terms of what he brings, his background, his habits, and the language he understands. (…) But if taken to be more than technical, it is a disastrous conception (…) Goodman (1964:10).

d) Social equality and responsibility

According to Gitau (2005), inequality entails the differences in well-being, that is, how distinct are two people or families, one from the other, whether poor or rich. It entails differences in access to education, health, access and enjoyment of political rights and representation. It is derived from Gitau's point of view that equality should necessarily entail the similarities in well-being of two people or families. It connotes perfect parity. It does not give consideration to the fact that people will inherently have different endowments, efforts and choices. This paper holds that whereas education aspires the achievement of social equality among the people of Kenya, school on the contrary promotes inequality.

A case of the 2012 admission into secondary schools spells it all. Some pupils were denied positions in some schools simply because they attended private primary schools**.** This in Eshiwani (2012) belief is a case of the government discriminating against Kenyan children when admitting qualified KCPE candidates into public secondary schools. Eshiwani argues that: (…) the decision by the Ministry of Education to use the quota system that favours children from public primary schools is "discriminatory, disheartening and unfair". It is unfortunate that bright children from private primary schools with higher marks have been denied an opportunity to join national, provincial and district schools through the infamous quota system. Those from private and public primary schools sat the same exam and should be promoted on merit." "We don't have private citizens in our country. Kenyans have an indelible right to be treated as equal (...) (*www.the-star.co.ke/.../60140-eshiwani-faults-state-form-one-selection)*

The Reform Agenda: Unify Secondary Schools in Kenya

Unhealthy competition among primary school candidates could be attributed to limited places in secondary schools being perceived as the best. This perception is tied along the classification of secondary schools as national, provincial, districts (county) and more likely the village schools. Pupils are made to believe that joining national and top provincial schools means securing chances to join university and pursuing the so-called well-paying jobs. Not getting a place in these schools implies failure in life. However, the following reasons necessitate the abolishment of classification of secondary schools in Kenya:

a) *Primary Schools are not classified*

Primary schools in Kenya are not classified as national, provincial or district schools. This way, candidates appreciate primary schools where they attend without undue competition for places during their preschool education. Having had uniform primary school foundation, there is no justification to be grouped or classified at the secondary school level. A school is a school.

b) *Post Secondary Institutions and Universities are not classified*

Tertiary colleges, such medical training, teacher training and related colleges are not classified into national, provincial or district. The same applies to the Universities. Colleges are colleges and so are universities. There is no reason to classify secondary schools, when the institutions after them and under them do not have related practices.

c) *Uniform Curriculum*

The Kenya Institute of Education has a uniform curriculum used in all secondary schools. School days last same number of hours and lessons take same duration. There is no curriculum for national or county schools. The syllabus is the same. For this reason, all secondary schools in Kenya offer the same curriculum hence no justification for being classified.

d) *Uniform Examinations*

Examinations in Kenya are conducted by the same examining body and candidates in secondary schools do the same examination questions in each paper. There are no questions for those in national schools or for those in the village schools. Examining criteria is uniform.

e) *Uniform Teacher training Programmes*

Teacher training in Kenya is uniform. There are no teachers trained for national, provincial or any such classified schools. To classify secondary schools is to question the competency of teacher training institutions and those of the practicing teachers.

f) *Human Rights Concern*

Classifying schools and admitting students based on examination results raises human rights concern. To do as it is in Kenya is to classify some students as being better than others, yet human beings are equal. It is to belittle those who do not score high marks. They feel themselves less than others resulting in cases of suicide among candidates, head teachers and rejection.

Conclusion

It seems taken for granted that the school provides the medium through education prepares the Kenyan population for a better future. This, however as has been argued in this paper does not always obtain. Indeed, a mere attendance at school does not lead to an educated person, and the very existence of schools could be repugnant to the lives of many people, thereby resulting into the anti-thesis of the goals and aims of the declaration of Education for All as it appears to be the case for secondary schools in Kenya. More specifically, categorization of secondary schools into national, provincial and district/county schools undermines Kenya's educational goals and frustrates the lives of many young people. This results in educational inequality with regard to access, a situation in which learners engage in an unfair competition for limited places in the perceived prestigious secondary schools with hope to lay better foundations for their future. This as discussed in this paper is an anti-thesis of education.

References

Abagi, O., and Olweya, J. (1999). *Education reform in Kenya for the next decade: Implementing policies for adjustment and revitalization*. Nairobi: Institute for Policy Analysis Research. Special Paper No. 3.

Achoka JSK, Otuya P, Otuya W (2005). "Food Insecurity in Public Boarding Secondary schools in western region of Kenya: A threat to Development And peaceful Existence." *Paper presented at the 6th ATWS conference.*

Achoka, J. S. K., Odebero, S.O., Maiyo, J.K. and Mualuko, N. J. (2007). "Access to basic education in Kenya: inherent concerns." *Educational Research and Review Vol. 2 (10), pp. 275-284, October 2007.*

Achola. P., Pillai, V. (2000). *Challenges of Primary Education in Developing* Countries: Insights from Kenya. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000.

Amutabi, . (2003) ―Political interference in the running of education in post- independence Kenya: a critical retrospection. *International Journal of Educational Development* 23: 141.

Amutabi, M.N. (2003). The 8-4-4 system of education. *International Journal of Educational Development.* 23(2003) pp.127-144.April, 2005).

Bedi, A.S; Kimalu, P.K; Manda, D.K; Nafula, N.N (2003) "The decline in primary school enrolment in Kenya. KIPPRA Discussion paper No.14." *URL://www.Kippr.org/Download DPN0.14.pdf (April, 2005).*

Bogonko, S.N. (1992). *A history of modern education in Kenya (1895-1991).* Nairobi: Evans Brothers (Kenya) Ltd.

Buchmann, C., (1999). "The state and schooling in Kenya: Historical developments and current challenges." *Africa Today 46 (1), 95-117.*

Desouza, H.S. (1987). *Kenya education in its context*. New York : Vantage Press Vol. 2 p.120.

Eisemon, T.O.(1988). *Benefiting from basic education, school quality and functional literacy in Kenya.* Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Eshiwani, G. (1992). *Education in Kenya since Independence* Nairobi. East African Educational Publishers.

Gitau, M.J. (2005). "How to understand inequality in Kenya." *Partner NEWS Vol. 8 no. 1 2005*

Illich, I. (1970). *Deschooling Society*. London: Allen and Unwin

Inspire Kenya. *http://www.inspire-kenya.com/*

Kerre, B.W. (1997). *The technical and vocational education for rural development: The case of Kenya. International project on Technical and Vocational education.* UNEVOC.

Kivuva, L.A. (n.d). "Secondary education reform in Kenya: The quest for quality, relevancy, and equality." *URL: http://www.ginie.org/cstudies/africa/es-africa.htm (15th May, 2005).*

Lamm, Z. (n.d). *Ideologies and Educational Thought. Jerusalem.* Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Makori Andrew (2005). "The Kenya's educational policy: Exploring some of the major impediments to redesigning pedagogy." *A paper presented at the International conference (30th May to 1 June 2005:* Nanyang Technological University, Singapore). University of Reading

Meighan, R., Siraj-Blatchford, I. (1997) *A Sociology of Educating*, London: Cassell

Muya, W. (2000). "Great expectations as new system seems likely." Daily Nation on web. *URL:http://www.nationaudio.com/News/DailyNation/2202000/News59.html (17th April, 2005).*

Ojiambo, P.C. O (2009). "Quality of Education and its Role in National Development: A Case study of Kenya's Educational Reforms." *Kenya Studies Review*. KSR Volume 1, Number 1, December 2009.

Otiende, J. et al (1992). *Education and Development in Kenya: A Historical Perspective.* Nairobi: Oxford University Press.

Otiende, J.E., Wamahium, S.P., & Karagan, A.M.(1992). *Education and development in Kenya: a historical perspective.* Nairobi :Oxford University Press.

Owino, G.C.(1997). "Vocational education in primary schools in Kenya and Tanzania: A comparative study with special reference to Kenya." Eldoret : Moi University (Faculty of education). MA dissertation (unpublished).

Rharade, A. (1997). "Educational reform in Kenya." *Prospects*, 27(1). Paris: UNESCO.

Reimer, E. (1971). *School is Dead*. New York. Macmillan Press.

Republic of Kenya (1964). *Kenya Education Commission Report, part I*. Nairobi :Government Press.

Republic of Kenya (1976). *The National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies(Gathachi Report)*. Nairobi: Government Printer.

Republic of Kenya (1981). *Second university: Report of presidential working party* (Mackey Report). Nairobi: Government Printer.

Republic of Kenya (1983). *Presidential committee on unemployment (1982/1983) (Wanjigi Report).* Nairobi: Government Printer.

Republic of Kenya , Ministry of Education (2012). **"**Education Reforms – Recommendations" *www.education.go.ke/ShowPage.aspx?department=1&id=1164*

Sifuna, D. (1990). *Development of Education in Africa: The Kenyan Experience.* Nairobi. Initiatives Publishers.

Sifuna, D., Otiende, J. E. (1995). *Introduction to History of Education*. Nairobi. University of Nairobi Press.

Simiyu, J. H. G. W. (1990). "Vocational and Technical Education and Training in Kenya: case studies of two exemplary Youth Polytechnics". Montreal : University of McGill: MA dissertation (Unpublished).

Simiyu, J. W. (2001). *Factors, which influence the teaching of technical and vocational subjects in primary schools in Uasin Gishu, district*. Eldoret: Moi University (Department of educational communication). MA dissertation (unpublished).

Standardmedia., (2012) ."Bright or not, give yourself a chance." *www.standardmedia.co.ke/letters/InsidePage.php?id...cid=17*

Standardmedia., (2012). "Kenya Examination Results Cause Deaths." *www.standardmedia.co.ke/InsidePage.php?id=2000049406&cid...*

Stanfield, J (2005). *Kenya's Forgotten Independent school Movement.* Oxford. Blackwell Publishing.

Standardmedia., (2012). "After KCPE, competition for secondary education Starts." *www.standardmedia.co.ke/InsidePage.php?id=2000049406&cid...*

The Star. (2012). "Eshiwani criticises state over form one selection." *www.the-star.co.ke/.../60140-eshiwani-faults-state-form-one-selection*

Tirop, B., Moraa, J. (2012). "Two girls commit suicide over KCPE results" *http://www.nation.co.ke/News/Two-girls-commit-suicide-over-KCPE-results/-1056/1297648/-/5xpk79/-/index.html*

Wosyanju. C. (n.d). "The System of Education in Kenya*." International .iupui.edu/ Kenya / resources / Education-in-Kenya.pdf*