

**IMPACT OF POVERTY ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS, A
CASE STUDY OF MUSUKINI PRIMARY SCHOOL,
MWINGI DISTRICT,
KENYA**

**BY
MUTUA NAOMI JANIFER
BED/21199/81/DF**

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DECLARATION

I, **MUTUA NAOMI JANIFER**, declare that this project is my original work and has never been presented to any other university for any academic award.

MUTUA NAOMI JANIJER


BED/21199/81/DF

Signature *DL*

Date *19th APRIL*

APPROVAL

This is to acknowledge that this report has been under my supervision as a university supervisor and submitted for examination.

Signature  Date..... 18 / 04 / 2010

MR. BALIRUNO JOHN BAPTIST

DEDICATION

With great respect and love I dedicate this work to my dear husband Mr. Joseph Muthui and my dear children Lynn and Joy together with my mom plus all my friends and family for their love and moral support during my course of study.

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My gratitude first goes to God who has given me the strength and courage to undertake this research.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Poverty has been the hardest challenge facing human life from time immemorial. It has contributed to low social-economic states in society and has brought about difficult circumstances that face learners today. It has negatively affected all people regardless of age, culture, race, religion and other factors.

On overview of some facts about poverty in the world of South Africa the black Americans suffered untold miseries ranging from diseases, poverty, denial of education, forced labour and denial of other essential services due to racial segregation by the white colonialist. This has lowered Africans, social economic position.

In America black Americans as a result of racial discrimination by whites, they were reduced to beggars who languished in poverty by being denied some of the important resources. This has negatively led to poor social economic situation in America.

The low social economic level may have originated from the negative factors that resulted from colonization which the British colonialist set foot in the 19th century. Some changes were negative and others were positive. Some of the negative changes that the British colonialists brought were the issue of formal education, where the Africans were denied and later they were given basic education to enable them concentrate on agriculture. The whites were trained for white collar job.

Poverty has since increased and has tremendously affected learning in general. It is associated learning with payment of fees in all level of education. Parents are being overtaxed ranging from the part of food staff to land and other basic needs. But the rich are spared from this taxation as they push their tax to the poor men / common man. Despite the introduction of free primary education which spells out free and compulsory primary education. Not all aspects of education have been offered freely there is the case of uniform, desk, among others.

This study analyzes the effect of poverty in reference to learning, the extent to which the same has affected learning, what other people have written and possible solutions that can be put to the problem.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Problem and poor social economic levels affect life and more so the education of the learners. A child whose basic needs are not fulfilled will long for the same and education will be considered next. Therefore the researcher concern as he continues teaching this category of learners is to have an understanding and guidelines on issues in order to have the needs of such learners adequately.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The researcher aimed at investigating all the factors that cause poverty and ways of reducing and finally eradicating the difficult circumstances that affect education of children. Poverty according to the researcher is the root cause and the grandparent of the difficult circumstances that negatively impact the education of children. Once the researcher has investigated he will be able to get the solutions depending on each cause and apply them to the challenges facing the learners for better.

1.4.1 General objective

This study was to establish the effects of poverty on pupil's academic performance of the selected secondary schools in the district.

1.4.2 Specific objectives will be to;

1. Determine the profile of the respondents in regard to;
 - 1.1 Social demographic data
 - 1.1.1 Age
 - 1.1.2 Gender
 - 1.1.3 Academic level
2. Determine the effects of poverty on academic performance of learners.
3. Determine the role of the community in alleviating poverty and improving education.

1.5 Research questions

- (i) What are the effects of poverty on academic performance of learners.
- (ii) What is the role of the community in alleviating poverty and improving education.

1.6 Scope of the study

The study was conducted in Mwingi zone. The study was limited to the objectives of the study. Any other aspect of the topic apart from that mentioned in the objectives was not investigated because of resource and time constraints.

1.7 Significance of the study

This study was very important as it led to increased knowledge about the extent or difficulties facing the children and which has led to a huge magnitude in dropout rate in schools.

The study could be relied upon to bring about positive attitudes towards children who live under difficult circumstances by many parties. The findings of this study would be of great value to the groups of people.

- (i) The affected children would have their problems reduced. The findings reached suggest solution to problems facing the state group of children.
- (ii) The study is of good use to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in planning corrective measures which include giving of bursaries the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour and other ministries whose services are meant for the youth.
- (iii) The community and parents would be greatly assisted by the findings. The community has these children in their hands and proper support should be accorded. These children in addition to provision of guidance and counseling services, the community would change their attitude and appreciate that these children deserve their support in order for them to positively grow into responsible mindful parents in future.
- (iv) The local leaders and teaches would have this study beneficial to them as they would be enabled to handle these children with proper care and provide their needs accordingly.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature as an account of the knowledge and ideas that have been established by accredited scholars and experts in the field of study. It is guided by the objectives of the study outlined in chapter one.

2.1 Definitive review of poverty

It is not easy to have a universal definition of poverty this is because there is intense debate about poverty by researchers and some institution. However, according to (Sachs, 2005) it is generally agreed that poverty can be defined in terms of three distinguishable degrees. These are; extreme poverty, moderate poverty and relative poverty. Extreme poverty means that households cannot meet basic needs for survival. Such people are perpetually hungry, unable to access health care; they lack amenities of safe drinking water, and sanitation. They cannot afford education for their children; they lack basic shelter for their families and some articles of their clothing such as shoes. Extreme poverty occurs only in developing countries. Moderate poverty on the other hand generally refers to conditions of life in which basic needs are met, but just barely. Relative poverty is construed as a household income level below a given proportion of average national income. In high income countries they lack access to cultural goods, entertainment, recreation quality health care, education and other perquisites for upward social mobility.

In poverty has been defined in terms of the condition in which poor people find themselves in. for the purposes of this research, poverty will be defined in its multi-dimensional nature where it includes inadequacy of income and deprivation of basic needs and rights, and lack of access to productive assets as well as to

social infrastructure and markets (Government of, 1999). According to the poverty reduction strategy paper for the period 2001 – 2004, qualitative approach of measuring poverty defines the poor as those who cannot afford basic food and non food items while the qualitative approach defines poverty as the inability of people to meet their basic needs. It is associated with features as lack of land, unemployment, inability to fee oneself and family, lack of proper housing.

2.2 Causes of poverty

As reported in the poverty reduction strategy paper for the period 2001 – 2004 and the second participatory poverty assessment study in (Government of , 1999), the following are the causes of poverty in . Low agricultural livestock productivity and poor marketing. Mostly caused by traditional farming methods, low soil fertility, drought and flood, poor and inadequate extension services, high cost of inputs, low quality seeds, lack of credit facilities, lack of pasture and water, animal disease, lack of information and opportunities on marketing. Insecurity for example banditry, hijacking, raiding, stock theft, robbery and looting, physical injury, mutilation, rape and murder, unemployment and low wages coupled with lack of infrastructure for self-employment. Bad governance – lack of transparency and accountability in management of resources and funds meant to benefit communities. Land issue – landlessness, squaterdom, communal ownership customary laws governing land and fragmentation. Inadequate roads – poor road network which causes lack of access to schools, markets and hospitals. Cost of social services – health, education, etc. HIV / AIDS – young and energetic die leaving the old, widows and orphans. Causes high dependency and wastage of time caring for the ill.

Gender imbalance – for example lack of ownership and control over productive assets such as land by women, lack of access to credit due to lack of collateral. This makes female families vulnerable. Disability – disabled people are denied

access to public utilities, good health care, basic education and vital information leading to lack of employment opportunities. Personal causes – laziness and social breakdown (Government of, 1999).

2.3 Effects of poverty on provision of quality education

Having articulated the indicators of quality education in schools, it is worthy to note that all aspects of quality cannot be achieved because of the effects of poverty in financing education in which include;

Limited provision of school facilities, equipment and materials. Such affects the quality of teaching and learning. Less staff development and training opportunities. Poor nutrition and feeding habits in schools, poor health among some students. Poor time management especially when learning is interrupted as students are sent for fees in some schools. Poor working relations in schools, lack of development of certain skills in students due to inadequacies of the curriculum some schools adopt. Increase school dropout (Government of , 1999).

The list of the effects in long depending on the nature and type of school and the environment in which the school is situated. For instance schools in the arid and semi arid areas are more vulnerable compared to schools in high and medium economic potential areas. equally, schools attracting students from among the urban poor are more susceptible to poverty compared to school children of the well to do in society. Worst affected are girls in some communities where they may be denied education in favour of boys. In other situations the girls may be married off to counter the perennial poverty in their home as the parents hope to be paid some dowry. (Abagi and Odipo, 1997).

Day schools are most affected especially schools in the low income areas. other schools attract very few students such that they cannot enjoy economies of scale in financing educational activities and programmes. Where the average poor

struggle to educate their children putting almost all the family income in financing of the education of their children, the poorest of the poor do not access this service. Contrary, the non poor appear to be benefiting from the cost sharing arrangement in financing secondary education hence the escalation of the gap between the rich and the poor in society.

The school is the most important functional point for achieving the educational goals. (Abagi and Odipo, 1997).

In , many children who enter the school system at the secondary level do not complete the cycle students dropout at various stages of the education system. Several factors are responsible for high dropout rates and hence low completion rates among secondary school students. Schools require students to have uniforms, textbooks, and stationary and pay tuition building fund and activity fees. Due to high cost of these items, children, whose parents cannot afford to provide all or most of these requirements, are always under pressure from the schools' administrators. The frustration these students go through affect their academic performance: they lose interest in education and, eventually, dropout (Abagi and Odipo, 1997).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter gives the methods that the researcher used to select the geographical areas, from which research was carried out and methods of selection of respondents. It also explains the methods used to collect, process and analyze data.

3.1 Research design

This study employed a descriptive design since the study was about explaining a scenario or an event. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The quantitative and qualitative techniques were used to collect and analyze data on the parenthood practices.

3.2 Study population

The study involved students, teachers and parents in Mingi zone.

3.3 Sample frame work

3.3.1 Sample size

A total of seventy respondents were used for the total population of schools used for this study as illustrated by the table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Categories of sample

Categories of respondents:	Sample
Teachers	10
Students	40
Parents	20
Total	75

Source: Primary data

3.3.2 Sample techniques

Using a convenient sampling technique, a total of seventy respondents were *picked at random to participate in this study.*

3.3.3 Sample procedure

In carrying out research the researcher first got a release letter from the course administrators which the researcher took to the schools under study. The researcher then was given permission by the authority to access information from the school.

3.4 Methods for data collection

3.4.1 Instruments

- **Questionnaires**

These were used to collect information from some students since these respondents are literate and are able to understand the language being used.

- **Interviews**

Interviews were held with teachers and parents since they are busy and have no time to answer questionnaires.

3.4.2 Sources of data

This study used both primary and secondary data

Primary data was collected using questionnaires and interview guides, which was given to students, parents and teachers respectively.

Secondary data was through document analysis in the form of reports, training manual, news papers, and journals for the period under study was read and the *required data collected from them.*

3.5 Data processing and analysis

Qualitative data involved three sets of activities which included editing, coding and frequency tabulations. Editing was done by looking through each of the field responses from questionnaires and interview guides ascertaining that every applicable question has an answer and all errors eliminated for the completeness, accuracy and uniformity.

The researcher then proceeded on to coding the various responses given to particular questions that lack coding frames, he then established how many *times each alternative response category was given an answer using tally marks* which was later added up.

Data was then presented in frequency tabulations rendering it ready for interpretation. Quotations and field notes made were also included.

CHAPTER ONE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND THEIR FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data collected. The results are presented in tables and in form of frequency counts and percentages.

4.1 Profile of respondents

A total of 75 respondents were selection. The tables below show the various types of respondents that were selected.

Table 1: Respondents by age

Age brackets	Frequency	Percentage
13 – 19	10	13.3%
20 – 25	20	26.7%
26 – 30	15	20%
31 – 35	10	13.3%
36 – 40	15	20%
40 and above	5	6%
Total	75	100

Source: Primary data

The table shown that the majority of respondents 60% were in the age brackets of 26 – 30 and 31 – 35.

Table 2: Respondents by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	40	53.3
Female	35	46.7
Total	75	100

Source: Primary data

According to table 2 the male respondents were the majority that is 53.3% and the female respondents were 46.7%.

Table 3: Respondents by educational level

Educational level	Frequency	Percentage
None	5	6.7
Primary	10	13.3
Secondary	30	40
College / university	30	40
Total	75	100

Source: Primary data

The table shows that the majority of the respondents that is 30 (40%) had a level of secondary and college education and 10 (13.3%) had secondary level while 5 (6.7%) had no education.

4.2 Effects of poverty on the academic performance of students

Research findings reveal there is a relationship between poverty and academic performance of students. It was revealed that the traditional division of labour stipulates that girls and boys perform certain tasks within the domestic economy as unpaid family labour. In many poor families labour is not only a cultural demand, but in many cases it may be absolutely imperative for family survival. The relatively greater value placed on the unpaid domestic labour results in frequent absenteeism, chronic fatigue and hence poor performance and then school dropout.

During the study the researcher observed that children who were supposed to be in school were selling products in the market to earn a living for the family. According to the children their parents could not afford paying for their school

fees and therefore they had no choice than to sell products to sustain them. Most of the children had started school and could not go further due to lack of school fees.

The parents revealed that the educational cost they had to bear in order to educate their children was high and therefore they couldn't afford it. Education is poorly supported in many African countries (Nikinyangi, 1980). In for example, the lack of proper governmental support places a considerable economic burden (with regards to funding) on parents and children. According to Tomasevsky (2003), has a legal guarantee of free education. However, despite the legal guarantee secondary school fees continue to be charged a situation, which according to the school authorities, forces parents to withdraw their children from the school system.

According to the teachers some of the children were always sent home due to non payment and because of that they would miss classes and hence poor performance. The teachers also revealed that because of poverty children are forced to do work at home before they come to school and this leaves them very tired and therefore cannot concentrate in class which leads to poor performance.

4.3 Limited provision of school facilities, equipment and materials

The study revealed that due to poverty school facilities and equipment materials were scarce and therefore the students did not perform well in class because they could not understand what the teaches were teaching. The findings relating to limited provision of school facilities equipment and materials were captured and presented in percentages using frequency counts in form of the table below.

Table 4: Provision of school facilities

	Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree
1	We have enough text books	30%	12%	58%
2	We have enough classrooms	36%	10%	54%
3	Practical materials are enough	33%	7%	60%
4	We have all the necessary laboratories	44%	4%	51%
5	All students have school uniforms	40%	4%	51%
6	We have enough chairs and black boards	50%	20%	30%

Source: Primary data

Chart I: Provision of school facilities

