

Effectiveness of Educational Policy in Curbing School Dropout in Secondary Schools in Tanzania: A Case of Dodoma City

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ABSTRACT

This paper exploits on effectiveness of educational policy is in curbing school dropout in secondary schools in Tanzania, a case of Dodoma City. The specific objectives of the study were to explore the effectiveness of educational policy on alleviating school dropout of secondary schools students, to determine challenges facing educational practitioners in implementing educational policy, to find out the magnitude and growth of drop out in Dodoma Urban, to examine setbacks facing education investment in relation to dropout and to examine the financial and social impacts of drop out in secondary schools

The results from the study revealed that all respondents (the DEO, WECs, HOS and Class teachers) responded positively to the question which asked: 'what is your opinion on the dropout policies in place, is there a need to be changed'? Their response was that the policies have no problem. They are sufficient in content and are self-explanatory. The only problem is the implementation process. The people to who are supposed to implement the policy are not aware enough to make the process successful, and make the set policy objectives realized. Therefore, to a great extent the government policy is effective in addressing the dropout problem, the issue is implementation.

Though there is a clearly laid out policy to address the dropout of students from secondary schools, the policy has not been quite effective in alleviating the problem. As a result the problem of dropouts in secondary schools still persists due to the explain factors.

There is a need for the government, more specifically, the Ministry responsible for Secondary Education to re-examine the policy on retention and dropout of students from secondary schools in order to come out with a more effective policy, Heads of schools should work more closely with the DEO for secondary schools, as well as their teaching staff so as to curb the problem of student dropout, Parents and guardians should be sensitized on the need for them to make a close follow up of their children regarding attendance to school and the government should improve remuneration for teachers so as to motivate them to perform their duties more effectively.

INDEX ITEMS

Dropout: A student who for any reason other than death leaves school before graduation without transferring to another school (Kotwal, Neelima and Rani, 2007).

Policy: A statement or pronouncement which outlines a doctrine and principles as a guide for action(s) or decisions in a particular area of social and economic development (Mlawa, 1996:3-4).

Policy Implementation: Is the testing of hypothesis about how to solve social problems throughout the formulation phase (Walker, 1989: 10).

Circular: A printed document, notice issued by an education authority at central or local government level and sent to different people/stakeholders at the same time (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2006: 265).

Education: It is a process by which the individual acquires knowledge and skills necessary for appreciating and adapting to the environment and the ever-changing social, political and economic conditions of society and as a means by which one can realize one's full potential. OR Education is the process of initiating and preparing an individual through training, in his/her environment, to play active roles in society (ETP, 1995: i and viii).

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Dropouts in schools is one of the major forms of wastage in education and if not curbed could lead to poor student completion rate in most schools. Dropping out of school in most cases does not only result into wastage of students but also leads into wastage of financial resources, for example a student dropping out at the level of form three or four means a great loss as a lot of costs have already been incurred on her/him (Bunto, 2002). Also, time is wasted as well as loss of future manpower. Hence, there is a need to adopt appropriate education policies so as to address the problem. In addressing the drop out problem in the education system, the government of Tanzania has adopted several policies which are in place.

Currently, there are several policies which include policies that try to reduce dropouts in schools such as "No Child is Left Behind Act of 2001" in the USA. The Education Act of 2002 which has replaced the National Education Act of 1978 in Tanzania is in Part V(C): Section 35(3), the Education Act which states that: "Every pupil enrolled at any school shall regularly attend to school at which he/she is enrolled until he/she completes the period of instruction specified in respect of the level of education for the attainment of which he/she is enrolled at the school. In addition, the parent(s) of every child enrolled for education shall ensure that the child regularly attends the school at which he/she is enrolled until he/she completes the education cycle (Education Act No. 25 of 1978:266)".

Therefore, one can deduce that the policies to prohibit dropping out of school are in place and should be implemented effectively. However, in terms of implementation, these policies have been ineffective particularly in Tanzania as the statistics of dropouts continue indicating their increase. Table 1.1 shows the number of dropouts and enrolment in

different zones of Tanzania Mainland, for the period of six consecutive years (2002-2007). The zones and their respective regions in brackets include: Central Zone (Dodoma, Singida); Eastern Zone (Morogoro, Pwani, Dar-es-Salaam); Lake Zone (Kagera, Mara, Mwanza, Shinyanga); Northern Zone (Tanga, Arusha, Manyara, Kilimanjaro); Southern Zone (Lindi, Mtwara); Southern Highlands Zone (Mbeya, Iringa, Ruvuma); and Western Zone (Tabora, Kigoma, Rukwa).

Table 1.1: Total Dropout and Enrolment by Zone in Tanzania Mainland Government and Non-Government Secondary Schools, Form 1-6 (2002-2007)*

S/N	ZONES	TOTAL ENROLMENT	TOTAL DROPOUTS	PERCENTAGE DROPOUT
1.	SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS	197,848	4,090	2.1
2.	LAKE ZONE	226,718	3,628	1.6
3.	NORTHERN ZONE	232,565	2,191	0.9
4.	CENTRAL ZONE	64,060	1,371	2.1
5.	WESTERN ZONE	81,002	1,190	1.5
6.	EASTERN ZONE	181,069	1,100	0.6
7.	SOUTHERN ZONE	37,248	395	1.1
	GRAND TOTAL	1,020,510	13,965	1.4

***Source:** Modified from BEST (2007: 69 and 91-94; Regional Data)

According to Table 1.1, when one looks only at the dropout totals she/he can assume that the Southern Highlands Zone is leading for dropout cases while the Southern Zone is the least. However, in actual fact the opposite is true because total enrolment is lowest in the Southern Zone than all other zones. For example, it is about 6 times less than that of Northern and Lake Zones, and 5 times less than total enrolments of Southern Highlands and Eastern Zones, respectively. Frankly speaking, the Central Zone (Dodoma and Singida) leads for secondary school dropouts, with 1,371 dropouts (2.1 percent) out of 64,060 the students enrolled between 2002 and 2007. On the other hand the Northern Zone has the lowest dropout rate, 2,191 (0.9 percent) out of 232,565 enrolment, which is the highest of all zones in the country.

It should be noted that education is a fundamental right of every citizen of the United Republic of Tanzania. For that case, the government has decided to provide quality primary education for all children of school going age. So it is a must to enroll all the school going age children; they have to attend and complete the cycle of the education level to which they are enrolled (Education and Training Policy, 1995). It has been observed that there are different forms of drop-outs with diverse causes which include: early pregnancies; truancy; illness, economic constraints and parental

role performed by the student while schooling due to HIV/AIDS pandemic, to mention a few (BEST, 2008:72; National Data, 2004-2008).

However, one of the major problems that have caused a lot of student dropouts is pregnancy. It is mainly influenced by moral decay in the contemporary society where by even aged male adults who are parents are involved in love affairs with young female students. Girls' pregnancies are at times accelerated by: lack of parental care for children, family education level, as well as the family's poor economic status that forces some female students to indulge in immoral behaviors like commercial sex as a means of earning income (WEC, Msalato Ward, 2009). Sometimes pressure from peer groups exacerbates girls' early unwanted pregnancies. Girls pressurize each other to have boyfriends, hence, find themselves engaged in irresponsible sexual relations resulting into unexpected pregnancies (WEC, Msalato ward, 2009). Unfortunately, school rules and regulations in Tanzania do not allow both male and female students to commit fornication or adultery. One regulation states: "Any student (boy or girl) who is evidently proved by the school administration to be engaging in fornication will be instantly expelled from school. Worse still, if that action (fornication) has led to pregnancy (to a girl) or to a boy causing pregnancy, both will be discontinued from studies, hence becoming dropouts (HSGB, 1997:47- 48)".

On the other hand, truancy is also a leading reason for dropouts in Tanzanian secondary schools, followed by lack of school needs especially for students from families with poor economic status. Other factors which include: illness, parent/guardian illness as well as death are negligible. The stated factors are minor because proportion of students who dropout for such reasons in every region is very minute. For example, in Dodoma region in 2007, about 1,021 students dropped out of secondary schools for different reasons. However, those who dropped out because of illness were only 7(0.6 percent), and no student dropped out due to death or parent/guardian illness. While dropout figures for truancy, pregnancy and lack of school needs were 740 (72.5 percent). 56 (5.5 percent) and 42 (4.1 percent) respectively.

1.2 Policies Governing School Activities

School heads are guided by the HOSGB. This guide book clearly proclaims that: "All secondary schools in Tanzania should have one stand point. Laws and Principles of secondary schools should adhere to the following eight aspects:- Discipline/Respect; Attendance; Evening preparations (for boarding scholars); Punctuality; School uniforms; School boundaries; Cleanliness (of body and environment); and Dining hall (HSGB, 1997: 42-47).

To ensure that the government is concerned with the dropout of female students, a stern policy is in place and intends to take measures against those who have caused girls to drop out of their studies.

Moreover, the circular Number ED/OK/C.2/III/134 proclaims that: once the offence is committed, the concerned HOS/HT in collaboration with the School Board/Committee will present the issue to the District Commissioner (DC) concerned, so that the issue is forwarded to the judicial court. In case a student is raped, the "Law of Rape No. 4 of 1998" will apply. On top of that, every HOS/HT will keep records of all pregnancy and marriage cases of female students and actions will be taken against the offenders. Such records will be sent by the District Education Officers/Regional Education Officers to the Chief Education Officer after every three months (January, April, July and October). This circular number ED/OK/C.2/III/134 replaced Circular No. 6 of 1998 and came into effect on April 15, 2004. Something new in the new circular that was not there in the old circular of 1998 is that, the new one has

clarified the rate of fine, and jail penalty duration, against the culprits, whereas the old circular did not contain such details.

Truancy is also one of the forms of dropout in Tanzanian schools. By “truancy” here it means a state of being regularly absent from school without permission (Cambridge International Dictionary of English, 1995:1562). Thus, a pupil who is regularly absent from school without permission is a truant. Truancy is more pronounced in pastoral and commercial oriented societies (regions), and it is the boys who are mostly affected when compared to girls. For example, in 2005 and 2007 there were more boys who missed school than girls in Dodoma, Mara, Manyara (pastoral zone) and Kilimanjaro (commercial zone).

In such regions, the number of truants’ boys to girls in percentage was: 51.8 to 48.2, 50.4 to 49.6, 56.6 to 43.4 and 52.4 to 47.6, respectively as in Table 1.1. Despite these rules and regulations being in place, there is a persistent increase in number of dropouts in different regions in Tanzania.

The ten leading regions described in Table 1.2 can be categorized into four major economic zones or clusters, namely:
- Pastoral zone (Dodoma, Mara and Manyara); Mining zone (Mwanza and Shinyanga); Commercial zone (Kilimanjaro Region) and Agricultural zone (Iringa, Mbeya, Ruvuma and Kagera). Such economic activities are gender oriented. For example, more males are engaged on pastoral, mining and commercial activities than females. Probably that is why boys’ dropout aggregates are higher than those of girls in Dodoma, Mara, Manyara and Kilimanjaro

On the other hand, agricultural activities seems to be a female occupation as huge number of girls dropped out of schools in 2005 and 2007 in Iringa, Mbeya, Ruvuma and Kagera regions. Probably, they were involved in agricultural activities to labor as farm workers or domestic servants as this is a common practice especially for young females in
Iringa Region

TABLE 1.2: Dropout by Region, Sex and Reason in GVT and NGT Secondary Schools, Form1-6 for 10 Leading Regions, 2005 and 2007*

S/N	SCHOOL TYPES	GVT SEC. SCHOOLS (A)								NGT SEC. SCHOOLS (B)						A+B	GRAND TOTAL	
		REASONS	TRUANCY			PREGNANCY		GROSS TOTAL	TRUANCY			PREGNANCY		GROSS TOTAL				
	REGIONS/SEX	YEAR	B	G	T ₁	B	G	T ₂	T ₁ +T ₂	B	G	T ₁	B	G	T ₂	T ₁ +T ₂		
1	IRINGA	2005	130	165	295	0	44	44	339	50	47	97	0	9	9	106	545	2,668
		2007	863	1088	1951	1	52	53	2,004	44	66	110	0	9	9	119	2,123	
2	MWANZA	2005	115	122	237	3	39	42	279	56	60	116	0	5	5	121	400	1,766
		2007	567	586	1153	0	66	66	1219	57	84	141	0	6	6	147	1,366	
3	MBEYA	2005	88	135	223	4	54	58	281	125	110	235	0	9	9	244	525	1,291
		2007	277	314	591	5	67	72	663	50	48	98	0	5	5	103	766	
4	K/NJARO	2005	271	254	525	0	35	35	560	95	59	154	4	6	10	164	724	1,155
		2007	196	170	366	0	32	32	398	14	18	32	0	1	1	33	431	
5	DODOMA	2005	167	68	235	0	26	26	261	10	14	24	0	0	0	24	285	1,081
		2007	330	394	724	0	56	56	780	7	9	16	0	0	0	16	796	
6	S/NYANGA	2005	134	170	304	0	35	35	339	45	29	74	0	7	7	81	420	996
		2007	214	216	430	0	50	50	480	32	34	66	0	0	0	66	546	
7	RUVUMA	2005	122	123	245	0	67	67	312	21	25	46	0	24	24	702	382	985
		2007	246	218	464	7	100	107	571	16	6	22	2	8	10	32	603	
8	KAGERA	2005	161	191	352	0	33	33	385	12	9	21	0	4	4	25	410	947
		2007	238	225	463	0	60	60	523	3	11	14	0	0	0	14	537	
9	MARA	2005	147	144	291	0	20	20	311	53	72	125	0	6	6	131	442	788
		2007	144	142	286	0	43	43	329	10	7	17	0	0	0	17	346	
10	MANYARA	2005	120	162	282	0	8	8	290	11	19	30	0	2	2	32	322	782
		2007	274	140	414	17	28	45	459	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	460	

Also, from Table 1.2, the rate of increase in the number of dropouts is more scaring in some regions than in others. Iringa, for example ranked first, followed by Mwanza and Dodoma. From 2005 to 2007, dropout rate increased by 289.5 percent, 241.5 percent and 179.3 percent in Iringa, Mwanza and Dodoma respectively. However, there was a decrease in dropout rate in other regions especially Kilimanjaro (40.5 percent) and Mara (21.7 percent).

In addition, statistics show that, dropouts in GVT secondary schools are significantly higher than in NGT secondary schools. For example, in both years for NGT schools, Manyara had the least number of dropout followed by Kagera and Dodoma. The three regions had 33 (29.5 percent), 39 (34.8 percent) and 40 (35.7 percent) dropouts respectively (BEST, 2007: 91-94). Therefore, there was a need to find out as to why dropout is high in GVT secondary schools but low in NGT ones despite the anti-dropout government policies in place. In general, these regional data show that for both reasons (pregnancy and truancy) in both years (2005 and 2007) in the ten regions, more girls dropped out of school than boys.

BEST (2008:72) reveals that: “In 2007, dropout caused by pregnancy tripled to 21.9 percent when compared to previous years. This is because some parents do not take education of their children seriously. They do not inquire about progress and performance of their children in school”. In a related vein, Mwananzila (former Deputy Minister for Education argued: “In some cases, especially among the pastoral communities parents demanded that boys look after livestock instead of going to school. Awareness levels were, however, rising among those communities and more of their children were going to school. We are getting good reports from Manyara and Arusha regions, where the Maasai children are now allowed to go to school”.

Women activists have accused the government of delaying a review of the law on marriage, especially the provision that allows a girl to marry at 14 or 15 years. “The government should make it illegal for a girl to be married at an age younger than 18 because she is still a minor as far as the country’s constitution is concerned”, said Ananilea Nkya, Director of the Tanzania Media Women Association. The Law of Marriage Act (1971) allows a girl as young as 14 to be married.

This study therefore, intended to investigate the effectiveness of government policy in combating students’ dropout in secondary schools in Tanzania. Also, this introductory section is geared to present the background to the problem, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research tasks, and significance of the study as well as conceptual framework of the study.

1.3 Dropout rate in Tanzania

Among the challenges that are facing the education sector in Tanzania today is the way to address different forms of school wastage in education especially dropouts as it is threatening the development and rapid expansion of the secondary education sector. A good system of education must be effective not only qualitatively but also on the quantitative aspect specifically ensuring access to and retention of students in schools (ETP, 1995: Foreword). The education sector in Tanzania is confronted by a problem of high dropout rate. The Secondary education sector in particular has been noted to have a high dropout rate leading to a substantial number of secondary school children failing to complete form four (World Bank, 2001). To address the problem government policy proclaims that: “The parent or parents of every child compulsorily enrolled for primary/secondary education shall ensure that the child

regularly attends primary/secondary school at which he/she is enrolled until he/she completes primary/secondary education” (Education Act: CAP 353 R.E. 2002: 18; Section 35 (2)).”

BEST (2004-2008: 72; National Data), dropout rate in secondary schools is higher than retention rate and keeps on increasing year by year as described in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3: Transition Rates Form 1 to 4 for 2003/2004 - 2007/2008*

Transition	Transition Rates	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Form 1-2	RR	2.0	0.8	0.3	0.4	1.2
	DR	0.2	2.0	2.0	1.9	2.4
Form 2-3	RR	6.5	7.0	6.0	4.5	5.2
	DR	14.2	15.0	20.4	7.5	2.4
Form 3-4	RR	1.8	1.4	0.7	1.4	2.5
	DR	5.3	4.6	7.2	3.9	3.3
AVERAGE	RR	3.4	3.1	2.3	2.1	3.0
	DR	6.6	7.2	9.9	4.4	2.7

*Source: BEST (2008: 72; National Data)

KEY: RR= Retention Rate DR= Dropout Rate.

Table 1.3 shows that the rate of dropout in Form 1 increased by about 2.2 percent from 0.2 percent in 2003/2004 to 2.4 percent in 2007/2008. However, there was a decrease in dropout rate for Form 2 to 3. It decreased from 14.2 percent to 2.4 percent in 2007/2008. Likewise for Form 3 to 4 dropout rates declined from 5.3 percent in 2003/2004 to 3.3 percent in 2007/2008. In general, for all the five years dropout rate was higher than retention rate as given in Table 1.3.

It has been observed that school dropout is more serious in community secondary schools than in other categories of secondary schools probably because of various factors like poor learning environment (poor physical and learning resources), and inadequate teaching staff some of whom are less qualified teachers. The main issue raised concerning such teachers is that their professional training was of a short one, conducted in July 2006 and 2007. Form 6 leavers were prepared to teach in secondary schools on ‘crush program’ basis. These factors discouraged students to stay at school.

To deal with such shortcomings, the Ministry of Education took the following steps: First, it ceased conducting such programs, thus from 2008 crush program is not in operation. Second, all crush program teachers were ordered to upgrade themselves academically and professionally within 5 years by undergoing teacher education training programs offered by the Open University of Tanzania; Teachers’ Colleges and other universities offering Education degree programs like St. John’s University of Tanzania, Dodoma University, University of Dar es Salaam, among

others. Third, the Ministry resumed the former 2 years diploma teacher training program entailing academic (content) and methodology (MoEVT, 2008).

1.4 Extent of Dropout rate in Secondary Schools

Generally, the statistics on dropout rate by reason in secondary schools for Forms 1-6 from 2003 to 2007 are as presented in Table 1.4.

Table 1.4: Dropout by Reasons in Secondary Schools, 2003 – 2007*

Years /Percent	2003	%	2004	%	2005	%	2006	%	2007	%
Truancy	8,071	63.2	6,912	60.0	7,734	62.6	9,600	68.8	6,016	33.2
Pregnancy	776	6.1	772	6.7	993	8.0	904	6.5	3,965	21.9
Death	77	0.6	180	1.6	11	0.1	5	0.0	1,254	6.9
Illness	0	0.0	0	0.0	149	1.2	150	1.1	1,124	6.2
Parent/Guardian Illness	0	0.0	0	0.0	42	0.3	15	0.1	469	2.6
Lack of School Needs	0	0.0	0	0.0	884	7.2	727	5.2	2,348	12.9
Others	3,853	30.2	3,649	31.7	2,550	20.6	2,554	18.3	2,956	16.3
Total	12,777	100.0	11,513	100.0	12,363	100.0	13,955	100.0	18,132	100.0

*Source: BEST (2008: 72; National data)

Therefore, with reference to policy statements as well as previous studies and Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania from MoEVT, it was imperative to find how effective the education policy is, on combating the dropout problem in secondary schools in Tanzania.

1.5 Problem Statement

Dropouts in secondary schools have been one of the main problems facing the education sector in many developing countries, Tanzania inclusive. Several studies have been conducted to address this problem and numerous causes. The same applies to this study.

Grimsrud and Stokke (1997) reported that besides, more than half of the school-aged children worldwide receive no primary education suggesting that they might be in the informal labour market. Estimates show that about 80,000 new children are recruited globally into child labour every day of which most of them are from poor and marginalized families.

In addition, most of the studies done, have concentrated mainly on the causes and impact of dropout in secondary schools. For example, the study by Millanzi (2005) on patterns and causes of dropouts in community secondary schools which found out that there is higher dropout in remote rural located than urban situated community secondary schools, mainly caused by poor school environment especially inadequate teaching staff, and teaching/learning facilities like books, laboratories, library, thus exacerbating truancy in such schools.

It has been found that 30 percent of Tanzanian children enrolled in school fail to complete seven years of primary education, while in secondary schools, the dropout rate is 20 percent (Daily News, June 8, 2007). Pudenciana Temba, in the Daily News of September 10, 2008 reported that many of the children who dropped out of school ended up being exploited in many ways since they become employed in the informal sector as farm workers, miners, domestic servants, prostitutes and often under abusive and exploitive conditions. In rural Tanzania, for example, one out of three (33.3%) children between the ages of 10 and 14 years work outside their families.

There have been a number of efforts undertaken to deal with the drop out problem such as punishing irresponsible parents as well as employers of such children. In addition, the government emphasizes equality in access to and retention in schools but still dropout rate is increasing time after time.

Therefore the existence of drop out in secondary schools provides a rationale to investigate the effectiveness of educational policy in Tanzania.

1.6 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were to explore the effectiveness of educational policy on alleviating school dropout of secondary schools students, to determine challenges facing educational practitioners in implementing educational policy, to find out the magnitude and growth of drop out in Dodoma Urban, to examine setbacks facing education investment in relation to dropout and to examine the financial and social impacts of drop out in secondary schools

1.7 Public policy implementation process

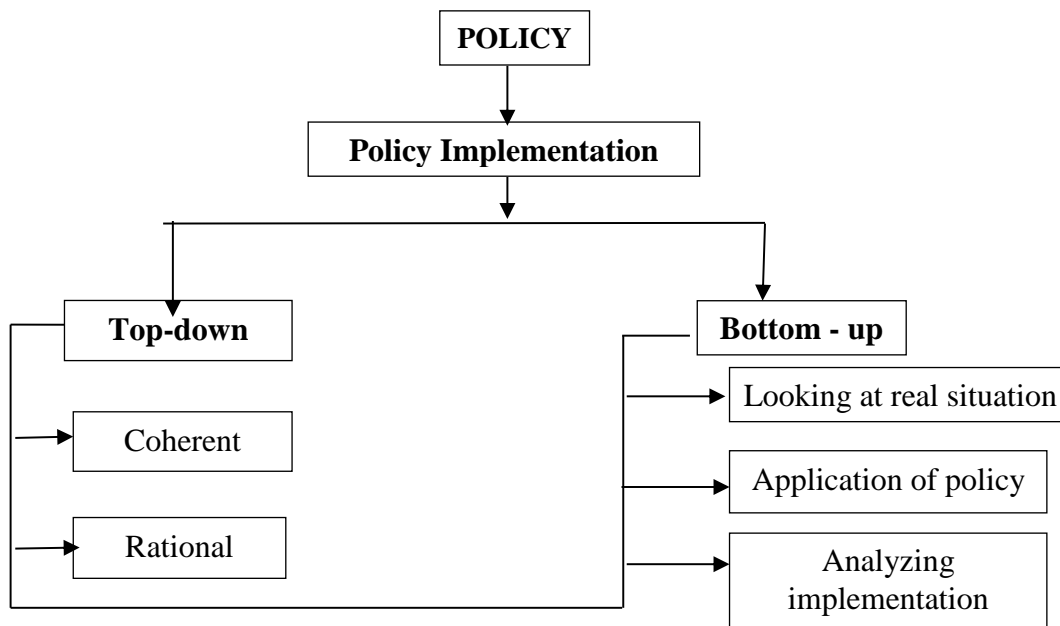
The formation and implementation of policies are different issues in theoretical and practical terms. Implementation is more complicated, being concerned with political, financial, administrative and socio-economic issues. It requires motivation, proper lobbying, and technical, professional and administrative support (Khalid, 2001:87-92). This is simply because the way things are interpreted by each individual can affect the implementation process. This is purely related to the Tanzanian context in that one cannot talk of successful government education policies' implementation out of political will consideration, financial support, and existence of competent and committed administrative staff as well as public social economic status. A combination of these ingredients brings about effective policy implementation.

1.8 Implementation Models

Policy implementation and evaluation are, in the classical sense, the final stages of a policy program (Ham & Hill, 1983:96). This, in itself, suggests the traditional view of policy as finite rather than as phases, evolutionary or cyclical. Implementation has been viewed as the missing link between policy decision-making and policy execution (Hargrove, 1975, cited in Lane, 1990:21).

In a short survey of implementation models conducted by Lane (1990:22-32), implementation was identified variously as perfect administration, policy management, evolutionary learning, structural outcomes, perspectival mapping, political symbolism, ambiguous, advocacy coalitions, normative and utilitarian. These examples fall into two categories: those which appear coherent and rational, viewing implementation as directed from the top; and those which look at the real situation, the application of policy, analyzing implementation from the bottom up, as illustrated in the Lane Model shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Implementation Model*



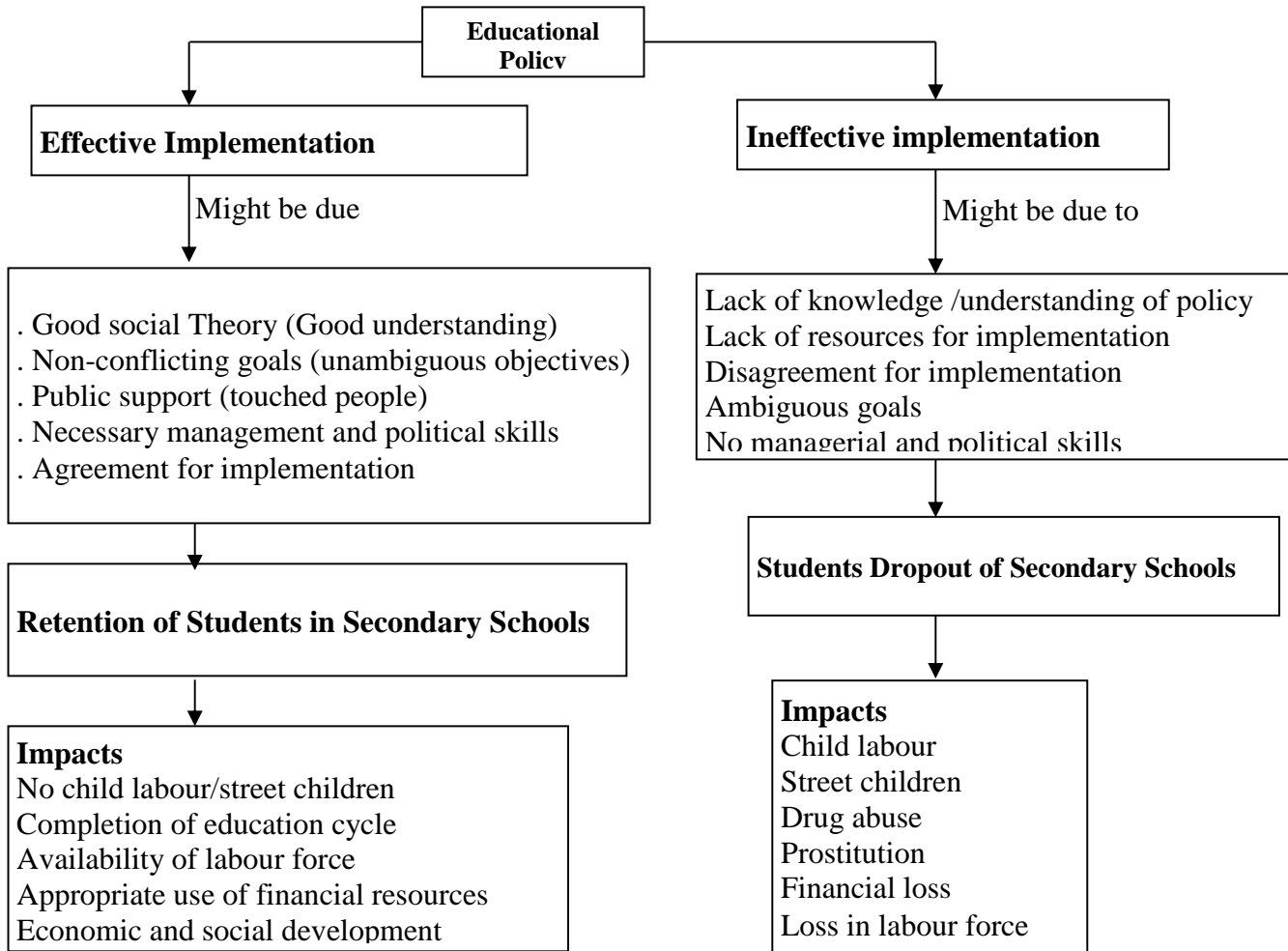
*Source: Extracted from Lane (1990: 22-32)

In Figure 1.1, one can deduce that, a number of factors are responsible for effective government policy implementation process, as follows: - If policy implementation is top-down in nature, then it should be coherent and rational; whereas if it is bottom-up then there is a need to look at the real situation, to assess applicability of the policy, as well as to consider analysis of the implementation process.

In addition, implementing agencies must have the necessary management and political skills: because the implementation process requires a lot of resources utilization. So, in case of public policy implementation failure is either (i) due to people

who are implementing the policy not knowing what they are required to do; (ii) not having the means or resources to implement the policy; (iii) or such people disagreeing to implement the policy. Therefore, government policy has an influence on dropout or retention of students in schools. If the policy is effective enough then majority of students will be retained, while if not dropout will standstill. The impacts for both are as described in conceptual frame work model (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2: Conceptual Framework Educational Policy on Dropout Model)*



Source: Documentary Review, 2018

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The status of dropout in some countries and Tanzania

Internationally, there is considerable variation in dropout rates, because different nations are in different stages of extending universal secondary education as follows: In U.S.A, dropout rates have been examined in three perspectives, namely:-event, status and cohort dropout rates. The U.S. National Centre for Education Statistics (NCES) reports annual event dropout rates that describe the proportion of young adults ages 15 through 24 who dropped out during the school year prior to the data collection. Between 1972 and 2000 this annual event dropout rate ranged between 4 and 6.7 percent. This rate however, has decreased from 1972 through 1987. From 1987 to 2000 there were year-to-year fluctuations, but the overall pattern was one of stable rates ranging from 4 to 5.7 percent.

Status dropout rates are reported by NCES as the proportion of young adults’ aged between 16 through 24 not currently enrolled in schools that have not completed a high school diploma or the equivalent. Between 1972 and 2000 the annual status dropout rate declined from 14.6 percent to 10.9 percent. Status dropout rates and changes in these rates over time differ by race/ethnicity which implies the Whites, the Black and the Hispanics.

Cohort dropout rates are calculated for various cohorts studied as they make their way through secondary school. The most recent large scale secondary school cohort is found in the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988, which examined the cohort

Dropout rates for the eighth-grade class of 1988 followed up at two-year intervals through 1994. For this national sample of U.S secondary school students, the cohort dropout rate in the spring of 1992 was 10.8 percent. The rate declined to 10.1 percent by August 1992 after some of the students completed high school in the summer. The rate declined further to 7.2 percent by August 1994, two years following their scheduled completion of high school.

In Uganda secondary school dropout status is somehow different. Data from administrative records of the Uganda MoES indicate that school dropouts in all government aided schools in the country is higher at primary level than at secondary level and that more girls than boys dropout at this level as well as at the primary school level. The reasons for dropout in Uganda are similar to those of Tanzania, including: truancy, pregnancy, lack of school needs, early marriages. Table 2.2 presents percentages of boys and girls dropping out of secondary school as presented by three national data sets.

Table 2.1: Secondary School Dropout Rates in Uganda*

Year	% Boys dropping out		% Girls dropping out	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
2001(DHS)	15.7	7.8	22.6	7.9
1997	6.0		6.9	
1995	6.0		7.6	

*Source: DHS EdData 2001:58 and Education Statistics Abstracts (1995, 1997).

Similar to Uganda, the dropout status in Kenya is examined in three different perspectives, these are: sex, geographical location and socio-economic status (students' family background). On the sex perspective, administrative data on education statistics in Kenya (2008) shows that, there is higher dropout rate for female students than males in secondary schools (29.6 percent to 25.5 percent). In terms of location, statistics reveal that, more students are dropping out in urban areas (30.3 percent) than in rural areas (26.3 percent). On economic status, the data shows that, dropout phenomenon in Kenya is more common among students from rich families than from poor families, and the proportion is 30.6 percent to 23.9 percent, respectively. Average total dropout aggregate is 27.4 percent (see table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Kenya - Secondary School Dropout Rate in Percentage*

Total	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Richest	Poorest
27.4	25.5	29.6	30.3	26.3	30.6	23.9

***Data Source:** Kenya 2003 DHS

There is also high dropout rate in Mozambican secondary schools though the extent is not as high as in Kenya and Uganda. Statistics in Mozambique have been examined in three aspects, which are: gender (male/female); location (urban/rural) and economic status (richest/poorest). *Gender wise*, there is a slight difference in dropout between boys and girls. They differ by 0.4 percent, which is 7.8 percent for males and 8.2 percent for females. With regard to *geographical location*, Mozambique has higher dropout rates in rural areas (8.6 percent) than urban areas (7.9 percent). On *economic basis*, the Ministry of Education provided data which is hard for someone to comprehend, as it shows that by May, 2008 there was no dropout for the poorest (0.0 percent), while for the richest it was 7.4 percent (UNICEF, Division of Policy and Practice, Statistics and Monitoring Section: May, 2008). Table 2.4 complements the above descriptions.

Table 2.4: Mozambique, Secondary School Dropout Rate in Percentage*

Total	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Richest	Poorest
8.0	7.8	8.2	7.9	8.6	7.4	0.0

***Source:** Education Statistics: Mozambique, 2003-2004; DHS

In Tanzania, secondary school dropout is an issue of concern. Statistical data from MoEVT show a proportionate increase year after year, in both annual dropout figures and transition dropout rates (DR) from one class/form to another. According to BEST (2004-2008), data in Table 2.5 (a) and (b) present a vivid status of dropouts in the country for the past five years.

Table 2.5(a): Total Dropout in Tanzania Secondary Schools, 2003-2007*

Years	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Dropout Total	12,777	11,513	12,363	13,961	18,132

*Source: Modified from BEST (June, 2008: 72),

Table 2.5(b): Average Transition Dropout Rates Form 1-4 for 2003/2004-2007/2008 in percentage*

Years	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Average DR (%)	6.6	7.2	9.9	4.4	2.7

*Source: Modified from BEST (June, 2008: 72).

In both tables 2.5 (a) and (b) above, there is fluctuation in the number of dropouts. For example, in Table 2.5 (a) total dropout decreased in 2004 by 1,264 dropouts when compared to that of 2003. Then, total dropout progressively increased from 2005 to 2007. Meanwhile, Table 2.5 (b) signifies that, the dropout rate had been irregularly increasing between 2003/2004 and 2005/2006, before suddenly declining in 2006/2007 to 2007/2008.

2.2 Government policies on school dropouts

The scarcity of resources in developing countries often necessitates the adoption of education policies that differ significantly from those in industrialized countries. Among developing countries themselves, there is a wide range of policies in place. Yet, surprisingly little is known about the consequences of these ‘alternative policies’ (Steward, 1998; World Bank, 1993). Policies on ground to address dropout problem vary from one country to another depending on context and extent of the problem. Some are written and documented, like the ‘Education and Training Policy’ of Tanzania; while others are just verbally proclaimed by government officials like the President, Prime Minister or Ministers.

In U.S.A, anti-dropout policies in place are ratified by the National Dropout Prevention Center and they are in form of programs. Some of the School Dropout Prevention Programs include: “No Child is Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001; Career Academies Strategy and Talent Development Model”. At the Federal level, the NCLB Act authorized the school dropout prevention program. It aimed at providing three-year grants to States and school districts to assist in dropout prevention and school re-entry activities. “Career Academies,” another prevention dropout strategy, offer career-focused curricula, team teaching, and involvement from the business community. An ongoing, 10-year evaluation of career

academies found that, among other results, they significantly cut dropout rates of students at high risk of school failure (Kemple and Snipes, 2000).

Under the Talent Development Model, one template for this approach, officials may restructure a school into smaller learning academies, create standards-based instructional programs, and put more emphasis on professional development. A three-year evaluation of five Talent Development high schools in Philadelphia found that in addition to achievement gains, schools that implemented the model for two or more years saw their 9th grade attendance rates rise by 15 percent (Philadelphia Education Fund, 2002).

Despite the fact that U.S anti-dropout policies have helped students not to dropout, the following are some of the challenges which face the established dropout prevention programs: As accountability and standards continue to dominate school policy, some experts say that more and more students may feel pressured to dropout. Under 'No Child Left Behind', all students must meet proficiency level on state examinations by the year 2014; and demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) up to that deadline. Conclusively, it is for this reason that several policy analysts suggest making high school graduation rates a stronger component in the NCLB accountability system to encourage schools to prevent dropouts (Swanson and Chaplin, 2003).

In Tanzania policies on dropout are diverse. Among the prevailing policies include: National Education Act No. 25 of 1978 (NEA), and the Education and Training Policy (ETP) of 1995. The Education Act has put emphasis on both enrollment and retention of students up to the end of education cycle. For example, Part V (C), Section 35 (3) states that: "Every pupil enrolled at any school shall regularly attend the school at which he is enrolled until he completes the period of instruction specified in respect of the level of education for the attainment of which he is enrolled at the school." Section 35 (4) insists: "The Minister shall make rules, which shall be published in the Gazette, for the better carrying out of the purposes of this section and may, in those rules, prescribe acts or things which shall be done by any person and penalties for the contravention of those rules" (NEA, 1978, 35 (3) and (4): 18).

Another policy in place is the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977 (amended in 1998) to address issues of education especially access and retention in schools. For example, Article 11.2 declares that: "Every person has the right to self-education, and every citizen shall be free to pursue education in a field of his/her choice up to the highest level according to his/her merits and ability"; and Article 11.3 further proclaims: "The government shall endeavor to ensure that there are equal and adequate opportunities to all persons to enable them to acquire education and vocational training at all levels of schools and other institutions of learning".

Thirdly, anti-dropout policies are also in the HSGB of 1997, Chapter 6 Part B on attendance, states that: "Students should be insisted on the importance of attending to school for the whole term, and Students should attend all periods conducted inside and outside the classroom (HSGB, 1997: 44)".

In a related vein, Part I pointed out 13 mistakes that may cause expulsion of students from school, one of them states: “Any student (boy or girl) evidently proved by school administration that she/he is engaging in fornication will be instantly expelled from school. Worse still, if that action (fornication) has led to pregnancy (to a girl) or caused pregnancy (for a boy), both will be discontinued from studies, hence becoming dropouts” (HSGB, 1997: 48).

Fourthly, Education Circular Number 134 of April, 2004 which concerns pregnancy-related dropout declares: "Any parent who betroths his/her daughter studying in primary/secondary school is guilty and will be liable to pay a fine of not more than 100,000/= or jailed for not more than 2 years or both penalties. Additionally, any person who marries a primary/secondary school girl is guilty and have to pay a fine of at least 300,000/= and at most 500,000/= or to be imprisoned for not more than 3 years or both penalties at once. Moreover, a man who will make pregnant a girl at primary/secondary school level is guilty and deserves a prison sentence of more than 3 years but less than 6 years without a fine” (MoEC, 2004: 25-26).

The most current policy was announced by the Minister of Education and Vocational Training in September 2009. It endorsed readmission of pregnant female primary/secondary school students and for the first time Class 7, Form 2 and Form 4 pregnant girls sat for the 2009 national examinations.

The challenges to this new policy include the difference in perceptions among social groups. Whereas women activists have positively received the new policy of recruiting back into the formal education system all pregnant female students, religious groups oppose it on allegations that by doing so it is legalizing adultery and fornication which is against the scriptures. Others argue that allowing such students to continue with studies will exacerbate sexual immoralities among students, as they will no longer fear to be terminated from studies. Also, some community members further argue that, it will accelerate HIV/AIDS infection and unwanted pregnancies due to irresponsible sex practices.

2.3 Effectiveness of government policy in addressing the drop out

South Africa has no clear policy/circular or strategy purposely meant to address the dropout issue in secondary schools. The only visible education policy is that for primary school children under grade nine, so called: “The South African School Act of 1996”. This makes it compulsory for all children to attend school until they reach the age of fifteen or the end of grade nine (Motala, 2008). The 7-15 years age-bracket in South African population have reached the enrollment levels of 90 percent, but 30 percent of Philippi children do not attend primary school, due to poverty.

In South Africa in general, enrolment starts to decline sharply from the age of 15. The highest dropout rates are from the age of 16-18 years (Panday and Arends, 2008). Professor Mary Metcalfe recognized that an integrated approach towards South African ‘school dropouts’ is necessary; with the following interventions: “Extend the child support grant to 18 years of age; second, build into the education system much more rigorous quality and relevance; thirdly, strengthen the availability of resources to teachers, both within the education and social services systems, identify children at risk of

dropping out such as school aids and peer support mechanisms; and finally, improve counseling and support services to children (Panday and Arends, 2008)".

Tanzania has something to learn from other countries' experiences on how to handle the issue of dropout through adopting the successful policies and strategies applied in such countries. For example, Tanzania can make use of the National Re-enrolment Strategy as effectively as used in U.S.A. Also, re-admission efforts as those imposed by the Indian government. Other effective strategies that can be utilized by Tanzania by copying and modifying from other countries or States include: The Successful Students' Partnership' strategy in Pennsylvania State; and the 'No Child Left Behind' policy, in U.S.A. Further, Tanzania ought to adhere to the four suggestions stipulated by Professor Mary Metcalfe of the Republic of South Africa.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Population and Sample

3.2 Target Population

The population under study comprised mainly of education stakeholders who in one way or another are involved in the formulation and implementation of policies aimed at combating dropouts in schools. As previously mentioned, they include: Secondary school teachers; Heads of Schools, Ward Education Coordinators, and the District Education Officer. Others were: Parents, Regional Education Officers, as well as officials in the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training.

3.3 Sample size and sampling techniques

The sample of the study had 25 respondents. The purposive sampling technique was applied to select the wards and their respective schools for the study. For the purpose of this study, schools were identified in relation to the rate of dropout statistics, the number of students enrolled, and the number of teachers available in the school. Similarly, the wards were identified according to the number of secondary schools established in the ward. Thus, respondents to the study included teachers; HOS; WECs; and DEO.

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

Despite the fact that the study is qualitative in nature, a combination of instruments and techniques were employed, all aimed at realization of objectives of the study. These instruments included questionnaires, interviews and documentary review. Questionnaires were administered to class teachers. HOS, WECs, and the DEO responded through face to face interview with the researcher. Documents reviewed were: HSGB; BEST (2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009; National Data) and BEST (2005, 2006 and 2007; Regional data). Through these documents, the researcher tried to countercheck the availability of students' attendance registers and roll-call sheets or books in schools, and if they are effectively utilized. Also, the HSGB; the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania (1977); the National Education Act No. 25 of 1978; and Education Circulars of 2001-2005. In these official documents the researcher counterchecked chapters, sections and parts related to the research problem under study, specifically objectives of the study; and those which in one way or another could answer the pertaining research questions. Furthermore, the researcher reviewed other documents such as:

Tanzania Education and Training Policy (1995) as well as Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania, National Data (2002-2006; 2003-2007; 2004-2008 and 2005-2009) and Regional Data (2005; 2006 and 2007).

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Policy on truancy

According to the DEO, there is a policy on truancy and it is followed. This policy is stipulated in the HSGB of 1997, it states that: "Students must attend to school for the whole schooling period in the term/year". Hence, if students do not attend to school for more than two months consecutively without proper communication to the school, the HOS are responsible to make a follow-up, then after that consult the School Board to discuss the issue and report it to REO. The REO is the one who will ensure that legal action is taken against the culprits as per policy directives. Examples of such incidents were reported by the HOS of DO (2) and MS (1). The HOS of MS handled it by first making the matron visit the student's home place which is Ifakara in Morogoro region to investigate the whereabouts of the girl. She found the student under comma, and was an AIDS victim. Then the HOS presented the issue to the School Board which discussed and the resolution was reported to the REO for final decision. It took about five months to finalize that incident. The incidents of DO secondary school (for a boy and a girl) were handled in a similar way but took less time (only three months) than that of MS because DO is a Day school, hence follow up processes are a bit cheaper and easier as all students hail from the Municipality.

4.2 Policy on pregnancy

According to the interview with the government official, government policies have been set up and disseminated to all officers concerned including the REO, DEO and directly to heads of schools for implementation. This policy categorically states that: "Every Head of School will keep records of all pregnancy and marriage cases of female students and actions taken against the criminals. Such records should be sent to the Regional Education Officer who in turn will forward them to the Chief Education Officer after every three months (January, April, July, and October)." For example, students who were found pregnant were automatically discontinued from studies.

According to HOS, these students were identified by the school matrons who conduct pregnancy test for female students twice per term, that is, at the beginning and at the end of each term. Also, the HOS added that, even if someone is just about to finish school if she is found to be pregnant, she is expelled from school as per school regulations stipulated in the HSGB and other circulars. Unfortunately, no HOS could provide supporting document as empirical evidence to signify the extent to which this policy is implemented.

Therefore, pregnant students who were candidates sat for National Examinations and continued with the next level of education. However, the HOS and teachers are not supporting this new policy for girls who are pregnant to do their examinations and continue with their studies as it is against the policies which are in place for quite a long time. Supporting empirical evidence was obtained at two neighbouring schools within Dodoma Municipality where two Form 6 and four Form 4 female students were beneficiaries of this policy.

4.3 Trend of dropout in Dodoma Municipality

The trend of dropouts that has been discussed here includes: all the students who for one reason or another have decided to discontinue their school program. These include those who have dropped out due to truancy, pregnancy, illness lack of school needs, parent/guardian illness and sometimes death.

Data from the questionnaires that were distributed to class teachers and results from interview schedules administered to HOS, WECs, and the DEO. Also, documentary review from BEST (2004-2008), Circular Number 134 of 2004, and a HSGB were used to get a clear picture of the dropout problem., They showed that showed that majority of the students dropped out of school because of Truancy and Pregnancy.

4.4 Causes of school dropout in Dodoma Municipality

All four HOS and WECs mentioned the same causes of student dropout in their respective schools. The number of students who dropped out due to pregnancy exceeded that of students who did so due to truancy in the surveyed schools. This may be due to the fact that the number of girls is more than that of boys as two of the schools are absolutely girls' schools (MS and HU), and the other two are co-education schools (JA and DO) and therefore the number of female students in such schools exceeds that of male students. For example, the total number of girls at JA and DO secondary schools is 1,193, while that of boys is 1,149.

The main reasons for these girls getting pregnant are diverse, two of which are economic problems and moral decay. The former reason is due to the fact that some female students come from families with poor economic status, hence they are likely to be deceived by men who are economically well off. One respondent pointed out moral erosion in the society to be another reason for school girls' pregnancies (HOS). Another respondent argued: "Nowadays, it is quite often for adult males, popularly known as *"Fataki"* to entice young school girls for sexual immorality. The reason could be the looming wrong presupposition that school girls are free from HIV/AIDS" (WEC).

4.5 Awareness of class teachers on school dropout policies

By awareness here it means, the ability to notice something using your senses; the knowledge or understanding of a particular subject or situation (Longman English Dictionary, 2006: 88). Therefore, when talking about awareness of dropout policy, one refers to knowledge of the nature and pattern of policies that address the contextual trend of dropout in schools, secondary schools in particular.

The awareness of class teachers on government policy on dropout is very little. All 16 teachers (100%) said, they have never come across the official government policy document on combating dropout of students in schools; and therefore, none of them had a copy of the said policy. It seems there is a communication gap between Heads of Schools and their teaching staff. All the teachers said, they just implement what the HOS ordered them to do, and copies received from the Ministry are not given to them. There is only one copy in the office of the head of school.

Further, the findings showed that educational policy making process is done by parliament after receiving proposals from central government (through MoEVT) and then forwarded to schools for implementation. Therefore, class teachers are just implementers of school rules and regulations as instructed by the head of school who receives policy statements

from the Ministry. The class teachers' role is to report students' long term absenteeism to the second master (the chairperson of the school discipline committee). The decision to punish the victims is the head of school after receiving recommendations from the discipline committee. However, if the student has to be expelled from school, then the final decision maker is no longer the HOS but the School Board.

Among the challenges which class teachers face include harsh orders from HOS; improper directives; and interference from school administration in fulfilling their responsibilities. Evidence of this was received from one of the class teachers at Dodoma high school. He said sometime when students in his class misbehave and as a class teacher he decides to punish, his head becomes furious especially if the head is related to the parents/guardian of a student or a student himself/herself. At times there is a negative relationship between HOS and teachers; and in extreme cases there is a tendency of some HOS to be involved in love affairs with female students. In such situations it is very difficult to reprimand such students and control discipline in the school. This was pointed out by some class teachers when they were interviewed in privacy. However, the respondents preferred anonymity, and because of ethical issues in research, evidence on the doers of some of these immoral issues is withheld.

This makes it difficult for a class teacher to monitor and control students' discipline, as some students become arrogant and do not listen to their class teachers because they know that they will not be expelled from school as they will get a favour from the Headmaster (a class teacher in the surveyed schools). The general conclusion from what was stated by the teachers is that the heads of schools should entrust full mandate to them as they trusted them and appointed them to be class teachers. Hence, they do not want to be interfered when fulfilling their duties and responsibilities of monitoring students' discipline, and academic progress. They want to be recognized and their status respected. They suggested the following: "Heads of schools should be directing and not dictating issues when giving instructions or directives to their subordinates for successful implementation. In addition, heads of schools should be role models in terms of behavior which other teachers and students can imitate, instead of indulging themselves into deeds that may tarnish the image of their schools, for example involving into love affairs with students, instead of rebuking students and other members of staff practicing such immoralities".

4.6 Heads of School views on dropout policies

All the four Heads of Schools who were interviewed agreed that there are many circulars that are in place for a long time. For example, the National Education Act No. 25 of 1978; Tanzania Education and Training Policy of 1995; and the Education Circular Reference Number: **ED/OK/C.2/III/134** issued on **13th April, 2004**. To avoid repetition of information, the details of each of these mentioned circulars and how they work in schools are described in chapter one, section 1.1 and 1.2. Also, one HOS showed the researcher a section in the HSGB of 1997. The section gives guidelines to school heads on how to handle the issues of pregnant girls and truancy problems.

Chapter 6, Section B of the book states that: "HOS should insist to students the importance of attending to school for the whole period of studies. Also, should make sure that students attend all periods conducted in or outside the classroom. Further, the guide directs that roll calls should be conducted regularly so as to ensure effective attendance to school

(HSGB, 1997: 44)”. If there is a case on pregnancy, the HSGB states that: “Any student evidently proved to commit adultery/fornication or get pregnant (for a girl) or cause pregnancy (for a boy) will be expelled from school instantly”.

On truancy, any student who fails to attend to school for two consecutive months without genuine reason(s) will be considered truant and hence written off in school records (HSGB, 1997:47-48). However, neither DEO nor REO could admit the presence of these documents in schools as none of them received report of that nature from any of the school heads in his administrative area. It is likely that such cases are terminated at the grassroots through negotiations between parents of truant students and school administration (researcher assumption).

On the other hand, the researcher was interested to know the teachers awareness of these policies, the school heads agreed that teachers especially class teachers are well informed and are assigned to follow up students missing or with irregular attendance in their respective classes. According to the findings the circulars are self-explanatory hence; there is no need of conducting special training sessions for the class teachers on how to implement them.

From these findings, it can be concluded that HOS need to present before teachers all the policies on dropout which they receive from the Ministry and then hold a discussion with them, to make teachers well informed rather than just ordering them to implement something which they are not conversant with. In a related vein, the HOS should explain such policies to students too, as they are clients of the policy, as well. If possible let students be made aware of the policy copy by posting it on the school notice board for reference. As indicated in the conceptual framework, for any policy to be effectively implemented there must be support from stakeholders or public; good social theory/knowledge and understanding of the policy content; non-conflicting goals; possession of managerial skills and resources; and there must be consensus/agreement for implementation.

4.7 WECs and the education policy on pregnancy and truancy

There were diverse responses of WECs to the question asking about the availability of government policy/ circular issued by the Ministry to address the dropout problem in secondary schools. 50 percent of the interviewed WECs were able to present a copy of the circular/policies that were present and that were used in the schools to punish students who were truant and who got pregnant. But the rest of the WECs did not have any copy. In addition, the WECs admitted that such policies have been in place since 1978 when the NEA No.25 was first issued. Also, the WECs, interviewed agreed that HOS together with their teachers are informed and are aware of anti-dropout policies and that there was no special training session for HOS in the ward on how to make use of them because they are self-explanatory. At Ward level, the WECs are involved in the implementation of the policies/circulars. They are guided and directed by the DEO. Their general view on the policy is that, they want the secondary education department to recognize them as stakeholders by seeking their advice on how to implement the dropout policy because they are aware of the context more than anybody else. So they are unhappy with what they have and they negatively reacted to the new statement by the Minister of Education who allowed pregnant girls to sit for national examinations and in case they pass to continue with studies to the next level of education.

4.8 DEO's views on government policy on truancy and school girls' pregnancy

The DEO admitted that a number of policies are issued and disseminated to ward education coordinators and heads of schools for implementation. However, copies were not available because the secondary education department was formerly under the Central Government. Hence, she advised the researcher to consult the DEO for secondary schools though he was not accessible because he was new in office.

However, the researcher was informed that most policies have been in place for a long time but at district level secondary education circulars were provided but not exercised. "The task was delegated to the REO", she told the researcher. They make follow up of these policies by maintaining close contacts with the HOS who exercise these policies on day to day basis, then give feedback to the DEO and the REO through monthly, terminal and annual reports. Through this communication system, the DEO and REO are informed and are up to date and aware of the policy implementation process at the grassroots, even for the latest policy issued to school administrators on how to handle pregnancy problem for female students. However, evidence of reports that are sent to the DEO and REO from the schools so as to show evidence of each step, could not be accessed as all school heads said such reports are confidential, hence they cannot expose to anybody not concerned. They asked me to consult the DEO and REO themselves. Unfortunately, I got a similar response.

The DEO through interviews said that all HOS and WECs are aware of these policies. The DEO said all these people are informed during meetings of the Tanzania Heads of Secondary Schools Association (TAHOSSA) which are regularly conducted country wide at district, regional and zonal levels; as well as during the Annual Meeting for HOS. During this meeting the Chief Education Officer emphasizes to the HOS that they have to maintain students retention in their schools by monitoring students daily attendance at schools by conducting roll-calls regularly; ensuring that students attend all lessons conducted in and outside the classroom; and that HOS should ensure that all teachers and supporting staff attend and fulfill all their duties and responsibilities as assigned to them (HSGB, 1997: Chapter 6, Section B, p.44). This section addresses students' attendance, and it gives the followings instructions to HOS:

“(i) Students should be insisted to attend to school for all school days in the year.

(ii) Students should be demanded to attend all lessons conducted in and outside the classroom.

(iii) All students should be urged to attend all manual activities.

(iv) All students should be required to attend all school meetings like the “*School Baraza*”; cleanliness inspection; national flag rising; dormitory meetings, etc.

NB: In order to ensure effective attendance, the procedure of calling names (Roll-call) should be adhered (HSGB, 1997:44)”.

It should be noted that, as discussed before there are two main forms of dropout investigated in this study, truancy and pregnancy. However, there are other causes of dropout such as lack of school needs, students' illness, P/G illness as well as death. The reason of lack of school needs was not pointed out by the respondents as a problem, as the majority of the students come from urban areas where economy is better than in rural areas, hence possible to finance education of their children. The common problem in these schools in terms of "lack of school needs" is that, parents fail to cover school requirements for their schooling children, for example, they cannot: pay fees; buy uniforms; cater for school facilities like books and pens. Also, some of them cannot pay even examinations' fees. On this, the students and teachers say that the problem with parents who do not care for education and not because of poor economic status as it is claimed to be. Their argument is based on the fact that school fees in government schools is very low, which is only Tsh. 20,000/= and 70,000/= for day and boarding secondary schools, respectively. Lucky enough it is paid in two installments.

In other extreme cases such as death, most respondents said, it is a will of God, thus it is beyond human control as it can happen to anybody. Therefore, death cannot be discussed as a dropout problem. About illness of student or his/her parent/guardian, HOS said, it is not a serious problem because very rare cases have been reported in their respective schools. For example, between 2005 and 2009, only seven students (3 boys; 4 girls) dropped out of school because of illness. No student abandoned studies because of parent/guardian illness. Empirical evidence that in some areas students are affected by illness of their P/Gs and could not come to school can be drawn from Makete District, Iringa region, where over 35 percent of the population is HIV/AIDS victims (TAC-AIDS, 2009).

5.1 CONCLUSION

Though there is a clearly laid out policy to address the dropout of students from secondary schools, the policy has not been quite effective in alleviating the problem. As a result the problem of dropouts in secondary schools still persists due to the explain factors.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a need for the government, more specifically, the Ministry responsible for Secondary Education to re-examine the policy on retention and dropout of students from secondary schools in order to come out with a more effective policy, Heads of schools should work more closely with the DEO for secondary schools, as well as their teaching staff so as to curb the problem of student dropout, Parents and guardians should be sensitized on the need for them to make a close follow up of their children regarding attendance to school and the government should improve remuneration for teachers so as to motivate them to perform their duties more effectively.

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