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Amugune A. Aggrey, Mutsotso S. Ngome, Shiundu O. John

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Origin and Development of Key Religious Organizations in Kenya: Their Influence on Curriculum Implementation in Public Secondary Schools

Amugune A. Aggrey
MMUST
Email: amuguneaggrey66@gmail.com

Prof. Mutsotso S. Ngome
Kibabii University
Email: smutsotso@kibu.ac.ke

Prof. Shiundu O. John
MMUST
Email: shiundu2000@yahoo.com.

Abstract

Historically, religious organizations in Kenya have had great influence on education. Their participation has been viewed by stakeholders as either positive or negative. The objective of this study was establish the origins and development of key religious organizations in Western area of Kenya and their influence on curriculum implementation in public secondary schools. The study is based on Ludwig Von Bertalanffy theory of General Systems from which the systems approach in the learning process is derived. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The target population for this study was all secondary schools in the region of study, County Directors of Education, Sub-County Education Officers, principals and teachers in secondary schools, religious leaders and students. Of the twenty two sub-counties, the study used purposive sampling to carry out the study in ten sub-counties. This gave a total of 650 students, 102 teachers, and 60 principals of secondary schools, 5 Islamic leaders, 10 church leaders, 2 County Directors of Education, 4 Education Officers and 1 curriculum developer. This gave a sample size of 834 respondents. The instruments for data collection were questionnaires for principals, teachers, students and interview schedule for religious leaders as well as education officers. Focus Group Discussion and Observation Schedule were also used. To establish validity and

reliability, the instruments for data collection were assessed by two experts from the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Technology. The questionnaires were also piloted and the anomalies were corrected before the study was conducted. Presentation of data was based on the objective of the study and was put in form of tables, bar-graphs and descriptions. The findings were as follows: key religious organizations have influence on curriculum implementation. Majority of the schools in the study area were founded by key religious organizations. The study found out that parents, local communities and the Government of Kenya play a crucial role in curriculum implementation. From the above findings the following conclusions were made: religious organizations play an important role in curriculum implementation in public secondary schools The Roman Catholic Church and Friends Church are dominant in the study area. The recommendation was that there should be clear policy guidelines on the role of religious organizations on curriculum implementation in public secondary schools.
Keywords*: Influence, religious organizations, curriculum implementation*

Introduction

Education is a phenomenon that is basically as old as mankind hence cannot be detached from human civilization. For this reason education has become an established institution (Sifuna and Otiende, 2006). It should be noted that early civilizations in ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Hindu civilization, Maya civilization, Greek civilization, Hebraic civilization and Roman civilization laid the basis of modern western education throughout the centuries. Taba (1962) summarizes the functions of education under three main areas: education as a process of preservation and transmission of the cultural heritage, education as an instrument for transforming cultural heritage and lastly education as a means for individual development. Olouch (1984) defines education as a process of acquiring and developing desired knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Education is the mother of curriculum. Curriculum is the vehicle that carries education. Educators use the term curriculum to refer to various activities which involve teachers, school learners or even the community around. They include Bloom's three domains of education which are; cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains. Curriculum on the other hand is all subjects that a school offers to the learners and the organization of the subject matter and activities within a course or a unit offered by the school. Ryan and Cooper, (1998) defined curriculum as all organized and intended experiences of the student for which the school accepts responsibility. Bishop, (1995) defines curriculum as the sum total of the experiences a learner undergoes.

Curriculum is the content that is made available to students (Pazmino, 2006). He goes further to say that curriculum is the planned and guided learning experiences of students. Generally, curriculum includes both the materials and the experiences for learning. A total curriculum may be defined as: the total learning, planned or unplanned, overt or covert, explicit or implicit, intended or unintended, that learners gain from exposure to instruction, (Uzoma, 2004). Curriculum implementation is a systematic process of ensuring that the new curriculum reaches the intended consumers. Shiundu and Omulando, (1992) view it as making real of what has been planned. Some of the groups that implement curriculum are religious organizations.

Education the mother of curriculum is as old as mankind. In the Christian and Muslim Holy books we see God giving instructions to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Consequently the Jews

maintained a God-centred learning (Kimengi and Lumallas.2009). The Chinese education of classical times concerned itself with human relationships, order, duty and morality. In the traditional African society education, religion and general way of life were interwoven. Religious organizations have therefore had a lot of influence on education and curriculum in Africa, Europe, America and the rest of the world. Indeed Africa as a continent has been one of triple heritage hence it was exposed to Islam, Christianity and now Western heritage.

By 1599 A.D, the Portuguese claimed the conversion of nearly 600 Christians, although they gave no details about them. There is however no doubt that some were young Africans presumably slaves and servants who worked for the Portuguese as employees were converted to Christianity. Great missionary work in Kenya was pioneered by Johann Kraph and Johann Rebman from 1847 A.D. This was achieved after the two missionaries established a mission station at Rabai near Mombasa and translation of the Bible into Kiswahili and the local languages. The Bible was the first text to be used in the early schools that were set up in the mission stations. The construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway encouraged many missionary groups and societies to move into the interior of East Africa.
Missionary contribution in West Africa was varied. In the social field, education topped the list. In their thirst for converts in Yoruba land and other areas, they built schools where sometimes education was provided free. People who had for a long time been subjected to slave raiding, now, began to enjoy a measure of security. European missionaries campaigned against domestic slavery and human sacrifices. Freed slaves were cared for at special centers or mission centers like Freetown.

Missionary work in Central Africa was pioneered by Dr David Livingstone, the Scottish adventurer-cum-missionary who first came to Africa in 1840 AD to take up a missionary post in Bechuanaland. He strongly believed that white settlement in the vast unoccupied parts of African would make the indigenous people benefit greatly from the principles of Western civilization.
In South Africa Religious Education is conceived as a tool to transmit knowledge and values pertaining to all religious trends in an inclusive way so that individuals realize their being part of the same community and learn to create their own identity in harmony with identities different from their own. As such religious education radically differs from the catechism or theology defined as the formal study of the nature of God and the foundation of religious belief. Consistent with this argument South Africa's new education policy for teaching and learning about religion is inclusive, enabling learners to explore their own identities within the diversity of South Africa. Departing from the compulsory Christian religious indoctrination of the apartheid era, the new policy proposes educational outcomes in teaching and learning about religious diversity that promote empathetic understanding and critical reflection on religious identity and difference. Additionally religion education represents a dramatic departure from religious education instruction or indoctrination of the past. Under the apartheid era, religion with its commitment to Christian National Education, a narrow set of religious interests captured religious education.
In Ireland Republic, religion is a very emotive and sensitive issue. Students in Irish Catholic schools are expected to score five points higher on attitude to religion scales than those students in state schools, while students in the Church of England would score four points less (Hirst, 1974). Irish parents generally are believed to want their children taught in schools which reflect the religion

of their home. In North America religion is given a neutral status in the public school system. This means its influence on curriculum implementation is less. Indeed pluralism is protected by numerous Supreme Court rulings. Religious education is based on moral development and has been labeled as secular humanism. In the USA there is a great lack of apparent knowledge of religion amongst American adolescents. Prominent writers such as Lippman (1966) and Newman (1982) do challenge the religious neutrality of U.S.A public schools and argue for integration of religion into the curriculum. Thiessen, (1985) also defends the Christian curriculum and argues that religion should be extended to the rest of the curriculum. Those opposed to Christian curriculum assert that knowledge is autonomous and fundamental and that there is no unique Christian or other religious perspective (Hirst, 1974). Many writers in education are however against it and they do urge a fight back by religious bodies against secularization.

In Canada in 1976, a group of Mennonites made legal history by overriding the compulsory School Attendance Act. They had withdrawn their children from public schools and set up their own schools to educate their children in their own beliefs. They wanted a school where the entire curriculum reflected their faith. The Roman Catholic run their own schools, and thereby dictate their own curriculum. In the Jewish managed schools specialist religion teachers are employed to teach religion each morning before secular instruction begins (Thiessen, Elmer et-el (1885). In Israel and Israel communities the world over religion permeates all activities of life. Teachers of religion are recruited from the local Israel community.

The aim of Muslim education was to study Islamic Law (Sharia) which was regarded as the only subject of learning. Islamic Education inculcated three main things in Muslim youth: belief in Allah (God) who according to the Koran is the beginning and the end, have faith in Prophet Mohammed and lastly strong belief that human activities should follow the way of Allah. This thinking guided Islamic education before and after independence. The Government of Kenya intervened by centralizing the curriculum for easy monitoring and evaluation.

This study was carried out because the results will assist in strengthening the understanding of influence of religious organizations on curriculum implementation in public secondary schools in Kenya and the rest of the world. The findings will benefit teachers, curriculum planners, curriculum developers and implementers.

Statement of the Problem

Religion has significantly influenced man's history and literature. This follows that a relevant curriculum must be dynamic and be able to satisfy the formal, informal, non-formal and moral development of the society as well as prepare its members for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life. The curriculum must therefore address all the concerns of society. Religious organizations making submissions to the Ominde Commission of Education (1964), observed that an education system is one - sided unless the spiritual, values and standards of religion inform it. As sponsors of schools they are expected to take care of the spiritual and moral development of the schools they sponsor. The Education Act (1968) legalized religious organizations and churches as sponsors of schools. The influence of religious organizations in implementation of secondary school curriculum in Kenya continues to draw mixed reactions from Kenyans. There are perceptions that religious organizations which sponsor schools have generally failed in their influence as sponsors of public secondary schools because they do interfere in the

management of schools. Moreover their role is not very clear and strong in the schools they serve. This affects curriculum implementation in schools. There are however those Kenyans who feel that the contribution of some religious organizations has been significant in curriculum implementation.

The Education Act (1968) provided for sponsorship of schools. It gave religious organizations an opportunity to be involved in the running of their respective schools. There are schools which do not have a mutual relationship with their respective religious organizations because they believe there is interference from the sponsor which causes conflicts with school management. Religious Organizations were expected to take care of spiritual, pastoral as well as moral needs. However, their operations were expected to be within the dictates of legal and policy framework. Many schools do not have enough facilities and chaplaincy services in spite of the heavy presence of religious organizations in the study area. Former Western Province has so many religious organizations. This suggests that, this is one of the most religious regions in Kenya today, yet the influence of these religious organizations in the implementation of the curriculum is still an area of concern to many people. In the absence of chaplaincy in academia and general learning one should expect lack of concrete guidance in public secondary schools. It is against this background that the researchers carried out a study in former Western Province in order to establish the real influence of key religious organizations on curriculum implementation in public secondary schools.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design since it dealt with a broad area of data collection. Descriptive research falls under qualitative domain. However elements of quantitative design were not completely ignored. According to Bell, (1999, Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), Kothari (2004), a survey will aim to obtain information from a representative selection of the population, and from that sample one will then be able to present the findings as being representative of the population as a whole. According to Babbie (1992), survey research is probably the best method available to the social scientists interested in collecting original data for describing a population too large to observe directly. It also looks at relationships that exist among the variables in the field.

Kothari (2004) holds that surveys have larger samples because the percentages of responses generally happen to be, as low as 20% to 30% especially in mailed questionnaire studies. With this approach, the survey method gathers data from a relatively large number of cases at a particular time. The study was conducted in secondary schools in former Western province in the Counties of: Bungoma, Busia, Kakamega and Vihiga. Techniques and methods of data collection included; questionnaires for students, teachers and principals, interview schedule for religious leaders, education officers, focus group discussion for teachers and observation schedule. Data was analyzed by use of tables, figures and description.

Results and Findings

The purpose of the study was to investigate the origin and development of key religious organizations in former Western Province and their influence on curriculum implementation in public secondary schools. To achieve this, the study addressed the following questions of concern: what are the key religious organizations that dominate former Western Province? How

widespread are the teachers who teach Religious Education? How well do schools relate with the sponsors? This was analyzed and presented as below:

Table 1 Religious organizations in former Western Province

Sponsorship	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
ACK	9	15.0	15.0
CATHOLIC	15	25.0	25.0
CHURCH OF GOD	5	8.3	8.3
FRIENDS CHURCH	16	26.7	26.7
MUSLIM	4	6.7	6.7
ORTHODOX	1	1.7	1.7
PAG-KENYA	4	6.7	6.7
SALVATION ARMY	3	5.0	5.0
SDA	3	5.0	5.0
Total	**60**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Table 1 reveals that the Catholic Church and Friends Church are the dominant religious organizations in Western region of Kenya. They therefore sponsor most of the schools in Western Kenya region. Friends' missionaries arrived at Kaimosi in (AD) 1902, while the Catholic Missionaries set their foot in Uganda in early 1890's. Because of its proximity to Western region of Kenya and Nyanza, they quickly spread in the region. In every mission station established, there was a school, church and a health facility. This was deliberately done by Christian missionaries in order to endear themselves to the locals and eventually convert them to Christianity. The Catholic Church sponsors about (15) 25.0 percent of schools in Western region of Kenya while Friends Church sponsors around (16) 26.7 percent of schools in the four counties of Western region of Kenya.

The general survey from principals' questionnaires reveals that most of the secondary schools in Western region of Kenya have a religious sponsor. However some of the religious organizations are not actively involved in the activities of the school. The sampling shows the Catholic Church and Friends church sponsor most of the schools in Western region of Kenya. The Seventh Day Adventist Church has however not made considerable inroads into Western region of Kenya. The same applies to the Orthodox Church. Most of the schools sponsored by Islamic Religion are found in urban areas such as Mbale, Kakamega, Mumias and Bungoma towns.

The Friends Church has more schools in the study region. The Catholic Church sponsored schools are better equipped than Friends Church sponsored schools. The Anglican Church, Pentecostal Assembly of God, and Salvation Army Churches, also have a big presence in the region. However their influence on curriculum implementation is low compared to Catholic and Friends religious organizations.

In terms of geographical spread, the Catholic Church is evenly spread in the western region of Kenya; however it has numerical strength in Busia County and some sub-counties of Kakamega County such as Kakamega Central.

The Church of God East Africa is mainly found in Luanda and Emuhaya Sub-counties. Pentecostal assemblies of God is mainly found in Vihiga County while Friends church (Quakers) has established itself in Vihiga County, Bungoma County and some sub-counties of Kakamaga County. The Seventh Day Adventist church is mainly concentrated in Malava sub-county while Salvation Army has a heavy presence in Vihiga County as well as Teso sub-county. A quick survey reveals that these churches have not done much in the area of training people in basic skills, hygiene, health education and training of medical personnel. Besides, some of the independent churches are not associated with any of the secondary schools in the region.

The above discussion can be viewed as a summary of the social changes religious organizations have brought in the Kenya in the last one hundred years. In quoting Angels, Haralambos and Holborn, (1995) it is argued that groups which turn to religion as a way of coping with oppression could as well develop into political movements which seek change on earth rather than salvation in heaven. In Kenya some of the freedom fighters such as Paul Ngei, Jaramogi Odinga, Kenyatta, and others went through church sponsored schools. These nationalists championed for the independence of Kenya.

Several studies have been carried out on the influence of religious organization on curriculum implementation in Kenya and elsewhere. These studies show that modernization presents a strong attraction to the youth due to its pre- occupation with the combined effect of individual freedom, material aspects and Western values which are spread through the social media, schools and other avenues. They have a negative influence on religion and education in general.

Nasir, (2007) observed that in Northern Nigeria after the pre-colonial period schools, which were predominantly Muslim, didn't have formal education structures. They existed as individual institutions. In 1965 the premier of the Northern region Sir Ahmadu Bello initiated plans to put in place a program geared towards reforming and supporting of local Islamic Institutions. The immediate effect of this policy was the provision of state support to those Islamic schools willing to modernize as well as the establishment of a limited number of state schools meant for training teachers that would cover the Arabic language and Islamic component on the curricular of formal schools. The assassination of Ahmadu Bello in 1996 reduced tempo in the implementation of this noble program.

Studies conducted by Risti (2009) on the Economics of Islamic Education in Indonesia show that in 1975, the Indonesian government regulated the primary and secondary curricular of Islamic Schools (Madrassa). The regulation required 70% standard education and 30% religious education. In Kenya Madrassa schools are not regulated except in situations where the Government feels there is radicalization going on.

Eshiwani (1983), focused on performance in Sciences and Mathematics. He did not focus on religious education and other subjects. In reference to the above objective, this study tried to look at what education programmes and activities are promoted and supported by various key religious organizations in secondary schools in former Western Province. Nandi (2003) mainly focused on one sect in former Western province. This was Dini ya Musambwa. This study attempted to look at a fair cross-section of religious organizations and their influence on curriculum implementation in public secondary schools in the four counties of Western region of Kenya.

Whereas Nasambu (2007) mainly focused on the influence of Islam on the Bukusu indigenous beliefs and practices surrounding death and inheritance, this study looks at various religious organizations and their influence on curriculum implementation in public secondary schools in Western region of Kenya.

The implementation of curriculum demands workable efforts that are based on achieving objectives that go hand in hand with the intended set objectives of the education system (Kimosop, 2008).Various studies have been carried out in Kenya on curriculum implementation; the current study was related to the previous studies.

Anyona (1990) carried out a study to investigate primary factors affecting the implementation of 8.4.4 school curriculum. The study revealed that adequate information was not obtained from the right sources in order to gather information about teachers and community. It also revealed that proper dissemination of ideas was not done to establish good strategies for actual implementation based on conditions as they were and that and that curriculum change must address itself to implementers. In this case the teachers are implementers who are supposed to interpret and effectively put into practice implementation process of curriculum. In this study a lot of information concerning curriculum implementation in public secondary schools was obtained from teachers.

Malusu (1997) observes that Christian church sponsor has so far not prepared the necessary books required in teaching Religious Education. As a result schools have had to depend on commercially produced textbooks which in most cases are commercial oriented. This puts religious organizations in a bad position because if they really want to influence implementation of secondary school curriculum, they must be able to publish enough textbooks for secondary schools. The study sees this, as a gap in knowledge and hence the study on influence of religious organization on curriculum implementation in public secondary schools in western religion of Kenya.

From the information gathered in the field, majority of the secondary schools were started after the attainment of independence of Kenya.This was a delibarate attempt by the colonial government to deny indigenious Africans quality and academic education at secondary school level. This was meant to keep them in low cadre jobs where they would not be able to raise up and challenge the colonial government on issues concerning their rights. If it were not for various missionary groups, majority of Kenyans would not have acquired quality secondary education by 1963.

The theory of evolution was taken a step further to imply that culture and religion also developed acordingly (Ndungu and Mwaura, 2000). In other words, the earliest human beings were deemed primitive and as they evolved in time so did their culture and religion. The writers of nineteeth and twentieth centuries assumed that the most primitive and simple religion was found among people with simplest technology and social organizations. Europeans on their part believed that their own culture and religion were advanced and at the top of the evolutionary ladder, while those of the primitive people were at the bottom of it. Many of the ideas contained in the literature written then about Africa have remained unchanged to date. The literature represented the inhabitants of Africa as childish, crude, prodigal and comparable to animals and embeciles. Therefore the mental capacity of Africans was considered less developed than that of Europeans.

From the foregoing analysis, religious organizations are expected to go a extra mile in assisting schools. There are some religious organizations in Vihiga County which do not support education oriented issues. Educationists are urging them to support and even sponsor some of the school activities and projects so that the perception that they are a liability can be erased from the minds of people.

Religious education as part of the curriculum provides the main avenue for religious instruction in educational institutions. Religious Education subjects impart in the learner the mental and spiritual capacity for reverence to God who is the foundation of all knowledge. Religious study is therefore an exposition of what is true, excellent and just.
Religious Education should be handled by teachers who are committed and practicing of a given faith. Religious education should not just be handled like another academic subject but as an important subject that is expected to affect behavioral change among the learners. Emphasis on the teaching of religious subjects has deliberately been emphasized in this study because through these subjects the impact of various religious organizations is directly felt in curriculum implementation in public secondary schools. In fact in some of the Catholic and Muslim Schools, teachers of religious subjects must profess the respective faith of the religious group that sponsors the school.

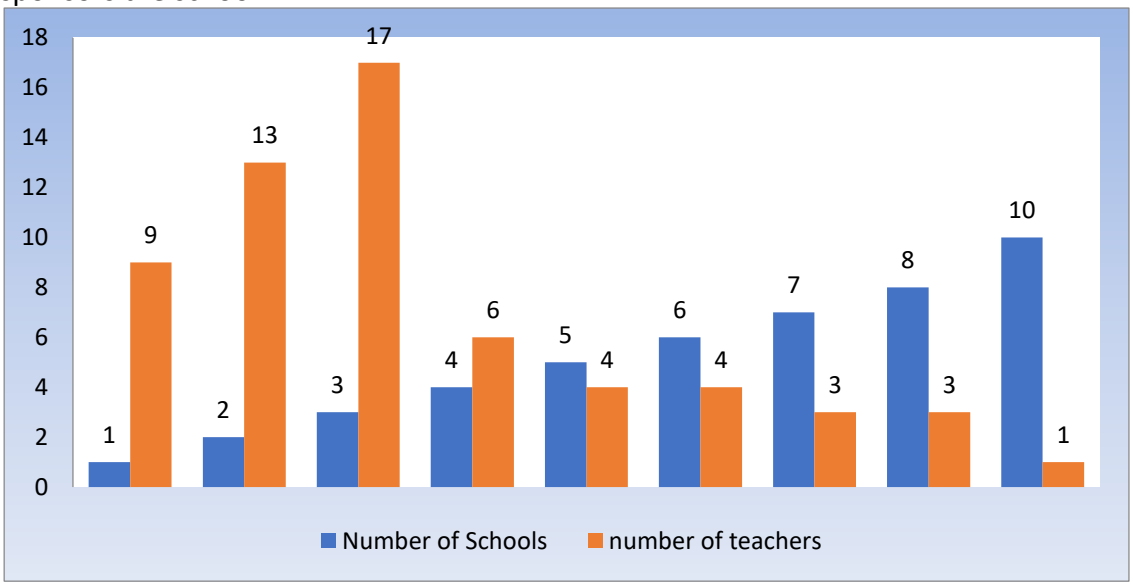
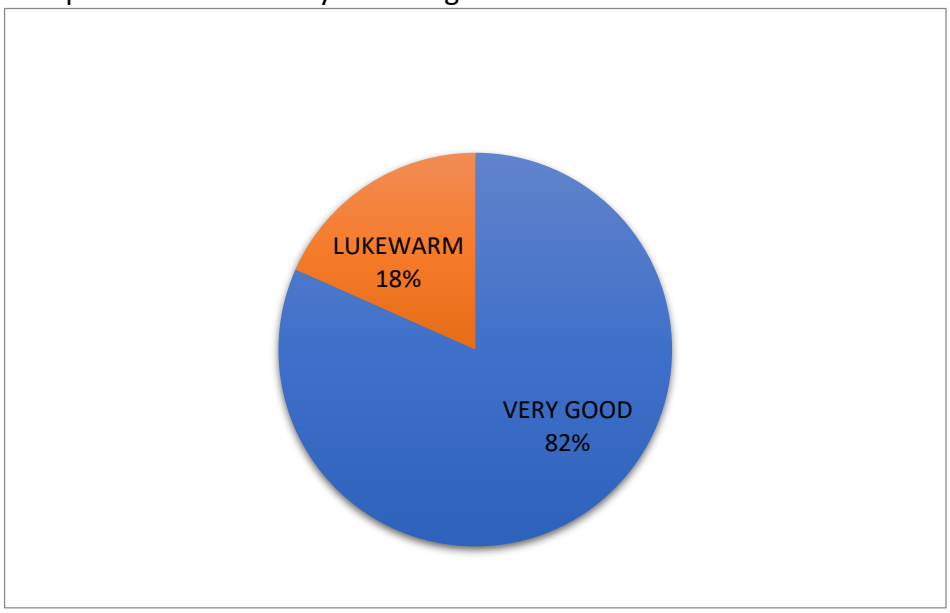


Figure 1 Distribution of teachers of religious education
Findings in figure 1 shows that nine out of the sixty schools where the study was done have one teacher of CRE/IRE. This gives a percentage of 15. Thirteen schools had two teachers each, that is 21.7%, and seventeen schools had three teachers of CRE/IRE each which is 28.3%, while six schools had four teachers of CRE/IRE that is 10.0%. Cumulatively, this gives 73.5%. Schools with four streams have more teachers of Religious Education. A school of four streams has an average of four teachers. The teaching of religious subjects is one area where the sponsor is directly felt. In some of the Catholic sponsored schools CRE is a compulsory subject and all learners irrespective of their faith must attend mass. In one of the SDA schools two teachers trained at Baraton University. They were shortlisted, interviewed and absorbed by TSC. All the seven

teachers teaching IRE in the schools visited by the researcher profess Islamic faith. The government should consider training more teachers of IRE for secondary schools.
It is important that schools have a mutual and warm relationship with the religious organization that sponsors the school. The legal and policy framework allows Religious Organizations through the sponsor to have a say in what goes on in their schools.



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igure 2 Schools relationship with sponsor
Results in figure 2 show that 82 % (49) of the respondents said that the relationship is very good. They consult on matters of spiritual nourishment, physical development of the school and general security of the school. Religious organizations should endeavor to establish why their relationship with some of their schools is lukewarm because it was at 18 percent, that is, (11) respondents.

Education officers interviewed at sub-county and county levels observed that religious organizations as sponsors of schools are allowed to participate in the management and physical development of schools. They are expected to nominate members of Board of Management of their schools. The education officers do agree that religious organizations are an asset because some have school chaplains who help in character and moral development of the learners.

Conclusion

The findings in this study revealed that former Western province of Kenya has key religious organizations such as: Friends Church, Catholic Church, Salvation Army, Church of God in East Africa, Pentecostal Church of God and the Islamic religion. The above stated religious organizations have been in the area for more than one hundred years. The Catholic and the Friends Churches are the dominant ones in the area hence have more public secondary schools. Muslim sponsored public secondary schools are mainly found in urban areas such as Mumias, Kakamega, Mbale and Bungoma. Islamic Religious Education as a subject is taught by teacher

who must be professing Islamic religion. Both Christian sponsored and Islamic sponsored schools admit students from all religious faiths.

On the basis of the findings above it was concluded that former Western province has heavy presence of religious organizations. Some of these religious organizations such as the Catholic Church have tried to avail resources to their schools. The resources include: land, bibles, computers, buildings and many more. There is a good relationship between the sponsor and their respective schools. The Ministry of Education has availed teachers of Religious Education in various schools in former Western Province of Kenya. The study also revealed that Islamic Religion is handled by teachers who profess Islamic religion.

Recommendations

Religious organizations should enhance their role of developing and providing facilities and resources to their schools in addition to spiritual nourishment. They have to respond to the new emerging needs of schools and local communities in equal measure. They should strengthen their influence in schools especially on matters concerning curriculum implementation, spiritual nourishment as well as having chaplains in schools. Based on the findings of the study that are outlined in the objective a study should be carried out on the impact of splinter groups on curriculum implementation in public secondary schools.

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