

NLA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

JOINT EDUCATION PROVISION; A RELIEF OR CHALLENGE TO QUALITY EDUCATION SERVICES IN UGANDA.

“A study in Buganda region”

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Abstract

The National constitution of Uganda clearly underscores the fact that education is a right of every Ugandan. The same document also stipulates the role of the Government and other stakeholders in providing education. It is from this mother document that also the other key providers of education services derive their mandate. In Uganda providers of education are either private or public. In some cases the government takes over the management and day today running of some schools whose founder body is private. This is mostly for those schools that are founded by the religious bodies. Hence coining of the term 'government aided' schools.

Even in the previously entirely public owned schools, government has introduced cost sharing as it cultivates the culture of having the parents too, share in the task of shouldering some operational costs like lunch & scholastic materials for their children among others. Hence the purely public school has quickly faded off the Ministry of Education vocabulary and the government aided has come to be the key term embracing all schools with a government attachment.

Grounded in the Ugandan education system's practice of joint education service delivery, without losing sight of the bulk of private education providers, this study sought to test whether the quality of education delivered today is better, than what it would be if one stakeholder provided the service. The study in general investigated the problems that affect the Ugandan school system, reviewed government position in lower levels of academia, and gave policy recommendations and suggestions of boosting school performance in light of the current performance.

A low resource base is reported as one of the key problems that Ugandan schools still have to grapple with. It in turn has accounted for substandard infrastructure, poor library systems, inadequate teacher remunerations and appalling student housing problems in a number of schools, among other challenges. The government stewardship through the Ministry of Education was also found wanting in some aspects.

Increasing funding to the education sector was one of the recommended policy interventions. Consultation of all stake holders even those in the private sector was highly encouraged in order to foster unity and flatten the ground between different school ownerships. This is projected to reduce the gap between private and public institutions and build a more sound education system founded in performance & qualitative delivery as opposed to institutional ownership.

The coverage of this study could have been wider, but time and monetary resources were key hampering factors to a more exhaustive and comprehensive coverage. It is therefore my strong recommendation that a corrective study ought to be done. This should raise more palliative approaches to improving performance between public and private sector. The government also needs to realise that Uganda is a developing country and education is a priority that is highly needed to achieve and sustain development. They should therefore control most of the educational institutions as opposed to leaving majority of them in the hands of private institution owners. The government too needs to improve it's performance as regards the role of stewardship in it's institutions. In as far as achieving the objectives of the study are concerned, the study was largely success.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

- NCHE - National Council for Higher Education
- ESA – Education Standards Agency
- DES – Directorate of Education Standards
- DEO – District Education Officer
- DES/C – Diocese Education Secretary/Coordinator
- CMS – Church Missionary Society
- USE – Universal Secondary Education
- UPE – Universal Primary Education
- UNEB – Uganda National Examinations Board
- SIS – Senior Inspector of Schools
- MOES – Ministry of Education and Sports

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CHAPTER ONE

1:0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Provision of education as a social service and public good is a primary responsibility of the government in many countries. In Uganda this right is enshrined in article 30 of the constitution; “all persons have a right to education”. In the same line, article 34 states “A child is entitled to basic education which shall be the responsibility of the state and the parents of the child” (Government, 2006). Even among the poorest economies of the world the governments have gone out of their way to ensure that they mobilise their resources to serve this noble cause. Yet in their efforts to do so they do not close the door to other players whom they mandate to lend a hand!

In Uganda most private schools are registered, as not for profit, non-governmental organisations. They include the religious institutions & private individuals among others. They set up & operate such schools. They receive no government funding to facilitate their operation. On the other hand, government aided institutions are Jointly operated institutions that are run by the government alongside the founder religious bodies. They are almost public schools (semi autonomous) but the founder religious bodies also have their policies/interests incorporated in the operation.

With a defensible view that education is the leading vehicle for human capital transformation and development, many African states have undertaken massive albeit ambitious projects of ensuring that they do not fail in this noble task of providing education to the lowest and core compositions of their societies. In so doing they have however faced tough challenges arising from a low and continuously fluctuating resource base. This comes amidst other hard to determine random variables, such as birth rates and death rates, all of which affect the population of a country on top of other numerous events.

Uganda as a country has not been spared from the numerous challenges that many countries of the developing world have encountered in their quest for a self liberating, empowering yet transferable education system. The government coffers have always been emptied in pursuit of this noble cause and yet the demand for education services as traced from the colonial times of early formal education has seemed to grow year by year. Opening gates for

private participants at one point was therefore not an option but a crisis solving remedy that shifted the burden from the ‘aching’ government shoulder to reputable organisations spearheaded by churches. On such a premises private institutions could be viewed as relief to many nations human resource(s).

(Aguti, 2002, p.6) Reports that in 2001 for instance 360,000 children sat the Primary leaving examinations, of these 250,000 qualified for post primary education. However, only 150,000 children were admitted into the 734 government aided secondary schools and 29 technical and farm rural schools. 100,000 children were therefore not placed in any of the government schools. The same scenario was repeated with those who sat the ordinary level examinations. Although 103,262 students sat the examinations, both government-aided & private institutions only took in 57,110 leaving over 40,000 children with no admission.

(Ahimbisibwe, 2009) further reports, “Education officials say more than 250 sub-counties do not have a government-aided secondary school, which explains why 310 private schools are implementing Universal Secondary Education (USE).” This shortage of the government’s hand in some parts of the country’s education zones creates a double-edged sword! The private institutions are indispensable allies to the government in its noble cause, if found to have shortcomings little is done by the government as it has no other remedy. In such situations under performance by such private schools is tolerated at the expense of quality.

Such a scenarios have over the years made it an acceptable norm that not only the state, but also private stakeholders too offer similar education services for nation building and societal transformation. The government has each day relinquished more of its responsibilities to private academic institutions and the community in a liberalisation move that has left over half of Uganda’s educational institutions dominated by private sector in post primary education.

The bulk of the country’s private education institutions are owned by religious organisations; namely the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Seventh day Adventists. These with the Muslim faith own educational institutions starting from primary, through secondary to university. Besides these, other institutions are individually owned by persons, communities and non-governmental organisations. The breadth of this private ownership

though was not exhausted due to resource limitations such as time, funds, personnel to mention but a few. So the main focus was on religious owned institutions explored alongside government/public owned.

1.2.1 Motivation for the study

The main motivation for me to conduct this study, was not only the string of events that have been briefly hinted on herein the background, but others that have been deeply grounded in the literature review chapter. The government as a primary provider of education services is also a key custodian of the quality, principles and standards that are expected at the successive levels of these institutions. It therefore has established organs such as Directorate of Education Standards (ESA), which started as Educational Standards Agency & metamorphosed to take over the duties of the inspectorate of schools department. There are Education Standards Committees among other operational organs such as District Educational Officers (DEO's), National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), to streamline and provide benchmarks for quality education system.

All these bodies are government entities with a key responsibility of being watchdogs of the government in both private and public institutions. They also have a key task of seeing that the expected/pre-set and minimum academic standards are met by the academic institutions. NCHE is specifically for higher education, majorly Universities, technical institutions and other tertiary institutions of learning.

These quality and standard watch dogs have however concentrated their efforts mainly on private institutions and yet public institutions too need to be monitored and kept in line with expected standards. Reports have shown strikes by teachers in public institutions due to poor facilitation, remuneration among others. Students in public institutions such as the leading University in the country (Makerere University) have been on record for striking due to matters related to inefficiency. Yet there is no traceable record of a public institution closed permanently because of inefficiency. On the contrary many private institutions have faced the wrath of the government and some have been closed permanently for non-compliance to quality standards.

Such strikes however, and other signs of inappropriate education institutions operation have also been a notable occurrences in private institutions. Issues of low standards in academic

facilities have become a never-ending feature of reports compiled by the watchdog organs. Inappropriate staff qualification, and management have all been voiced concerns by the afore mentioned monitoring bodies.

Building on such a background therefore i developed an interest in conducting a study that would seek to investigate whether the joint provision of education services is a relief. Is it bridging the education gap in Uganda or posing another challenge to quality education service delivery? The issue of a challenge is multi faceted in that the government in liberalising the education sector and opening up to leave approximately 50% of sector in private hands at post primary level has lost control of the direction taken by the institutions creating a challenge. Or it has equally created another challenge by absconding from its responsibility as a primary provider of education and consequently key ‘generator’ of manpower supply for development. The government may set operational guidelines but lacks empowerment to enforce them, as private institutions motivations are not necessarily those of the government.

One of the notable vices has been the establishment of private education institutions as profit making organisations. There are schools that target the payment of tuition by parents who may choose to take their children to these institutions. This may pose a big challenge to the quality of education and consequently the results from national examinations usually show a highly striking disparity between student performance in public and private institutions.

On the other hand since the government in Uganda lacks the resource base to sustain the education institutions as would be desired. Opening the gates for private participation in provision of education therefore may be a mega relief and the right step to not only solving the problem of illiteracy, but reduce the manpower gap that exists in Uganda just like it does in many other developing countries. It may also be an outlet for employment of the many teachers who need jobs thereby reducing unemployment that is one of Uganda’s macroeconomic problems. With the multiplier effect such employment would widen the tax base of the country and directly or indirectly improve the level of economic welfare (wellbeing).

1.2.2 Conclusion

Upon such a platform the study was anchored and it delved deeper into investigating the arising consequences of this joint education service delivery so as to draw useful conclusions and recommendations. This joint education service provision has pros and cons and a comparative analysis of the two was done in order to establish whether this joint relationship is not only a feasible, but worth undertaking. Such conclusions will be good planning springboards and point to some of the elusive features that need attention from relevant stakeholders.

1.3 Statement of the problem

In spite of the government being the pace setter as a provider and watchdog of quality in the educational sector, teachers (includes lecturers) and students in government owned institutions have always voiced dissatisfaction about the quality in public institutions. Strikes by these two groups among other inefficiency indicators have been witnessed on various occasions. Teachers have complained of unfriendly work environments, salary arrears, low and late remuneration, poor facilitation, congestion in classes.

On the other hand the government's liberalisation of education has opened doors for private players who have also been found wanting one time or another! Some schools use unqualified teachers, some under pay them as others don't pay them at all. A number of private schools lack key scholastic facilities such as libraries and laboratories among others.

On the contrary some private schools have become academic beacons of the country and have produced good and high performing students. This is on top of being able to fill the manpower gap by training students and absorbing those that could not fit in the public school establishments. Such relief has taken Uganda a step ahead in its literacy levels as the numbers of school going children have risen considerably.

The key question addressed and investigated by this study is, is this joint operation within the education sector leaving the challenges, generating some? Is it more of a relief for the developing country? Upon such a platform the study was conducted.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The study was to establish whether the joint operation of schools by the government, private and community bodies is alleviating the problem of illiteracy on top of helping to fill the gap that would have been filled by only the government. It also examined government's role as a player in the education sector, since it has the primary responsibility of offering education. It further ascertained whether the quality of education thus offered does meet the set and expected standards. This is on top of drawing conclusions that will be meaningful in streamlining the operation of schools by the joint entities involved.

1.5 Research questions

The following research questions guided the study

- i. What are the key contributions of the privately owned institutions to the education sector in Uganda?
- ii. What are the key challenges faced by both the government and private sector in the course of providing education services?
- iii. In what areas is the government able to help private sector in increasing their qualitative & quantitative performance and contribution to the education sector?
- iv. What are the possible remedies and policy interventions to the challenges faced by the education institutions (both government and private)?

1.6 Research objectives

1.6.1 General objective

The general objective of the study was to find out the key contribution(s) joint provision of education has on the education sector in Uganda.

1.6.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of this study were;

- i. To find out the main challenges to Uganda's education system arising out of provision of education services by both the private and public entities.
- ii. To establish whether education institutions that are jointly operated by government and private bodies are better providers of education than single owned institutions.

iii. To find out possible solutions to existing shortfalls between government and privately owned academic institutions.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 History of education in Uganda

The absence of Western education in pre-colonial Africa does not mean that education did not exist in this continent. In Uganda traditional forms of education existed, based on tribal and clan units. These covered both theoretical and practical fields. Education was, as is today part of living, but people did not have to go to school in order to be educated. “The whole process of living was a process of learning.” (Tiberondwa, 1998, p.1)

Missionary education (formal education) was re-organised by Bishop Alfred Tucker who was made Bishop of Uganda in 1897, seven years after his arrival in the country. He invited CW. Hattersley a C.M.S missionary, whom he gave the responsibility of building a system of primary schools and training teachers. Hattersley started small day schools in the bush wherever he found a group of parents willing to send their children to school. He then tried to build up a group of such ‘bush schools’ around centres of population where he set up larger ‘central schools’ also for day pupils. The system was completed as he had planned, by the opening of the ‘high schools’ for pupils, of his own at Mengo¹. This first school was opened in 1927 and was named Kings College Buddo. From then on the missionaries spread everywhere in the kingdom of Buganda and Uganda protectorate.

The genesis of the government’s involvement as a key provider of education is noted way back in the times of introduction of this formal education in Uganda. Between 1877 and 1925 education was under the control and direction of the Christian missionaries. However, in the 1920’s the British colonial government realised that education was too important to be left entirely in the hands of the Christian missionaries, some of who were not British. (Tiberondwa, 1998, p. 75)

In 1920, the British government, which did not have clearly spelt out policies on education in its African colonies, gave full support to the Phelps-Stokes fund to sponsor a special

¹ Mengo is the seat of the ‘Kabaka’ of Buganda. Kabaka is a title of the king and Buganda is a kingdom made up of the Baganda who are the largest ethnic group in Uganda. Uganda as a country derives its name from Buganda. Missionary education started in Buganda as one of the Kabaka’s (Muteesa I) wrote a letter to invite missionaries into his kingdom. It is from here that the missionaries spread their activities in the other parts of the kingdom & country at large.

commission to study and make recommendations on the type of education suitable for the Africans. To cut the long story short the commission made several recommendations and one of the most important one was ‘the direction and control of education to be a responsibility of the government through a department of education headed by a director who would be advised by advisory committees at the national and local levels (Tiberondwa, 1998, p. 76). From that recommendation to this day education became a responsibility of the government in Uganda.

2.2 State of education in Uganda today

Today education in Uganda is under the control of Ministry Of Education and Sports. There are a number of factors affecting the quality of education in Uganda today, most of which do not stem from only direct effects, but also from indirect ones as well. The government contends that there is a quality challenge in the education sector. The government white paper (Republic of Uganda , 1992) reports;

“growing public debt and the declining value shilling- all leading to a marked squeeze in the resources for education. This coupled with massive ill planned expansion of schools and enrolment in the eighties, has resulted in considerable decline in both quality and quantity inputs per student². ”

Among the many critical issues that were investigated during this study, is how (method/way) private institutions can manage to survive where the government owned are struggling. Additionally the study attempted to investigate whether in operating public and private institutions jointly there is an improvement in quality of education offered as opposed to single stakeholder operation.

In further buttressing the point of challenges faced in Uganda’s education system the daily Monitor, one of Uganda’s leading daily reports of an appalling situation in one of the government schools. They interviewed one of the students (Ms Achola) in a government secondary school and issues concerning quality of the education services offered were raised, as seen in the extract below;

However, Ms Achola does not like the idea of studying in shifts. Her school has a double-shift programme where some students come in the morning and leave in the afternoon while

² Government White Paper on implementation of the recommendations of the report of the education policy review commission. Entitled “Education for national integration and development” (1992) kampala, pg.210

the other group comes in the afternoon because of the big number of students compared to the limited infrastructure. They quote;

“I hate walking in that sunshine in the afternoon. And thinking that other children I am competing with in other schools are in class or revising weighs me down,” she said (Monitor, 2010).

The issue of students in some schools studying in two shifts a day is a Government engineered strategy to accommodate as many as they can in government schools under the free education policy (U.S.E). In situations like this where the government schools cannot be able to accommodate the student population, private providers of education become indispensable allies that come in to fill this gap. It is in such situations that i attempted to establish whether they do play the role that they come in to play thereby being a relief or they raise another quality challenge since they realise they are indispensable.

2.3 Universal primary Education

Universal Primary Education (UPE) is one of the Government of Uganda’s main policy tools for achieving poverty reduction and human development. It was seen as the main tool for achieving the economic, social and political objectives outlined in the Ugandan Ministry of Education and Sports policy document of 1998. Broadly, the objectives of UPE are to:

- Establish, provide and maintain quality education as the basis for promoting human resource development;
- Provide the facilities and resources to enable every child to enter and remain in school until the primary cycle of education is complete.
- Make basic education accessible to the learner and relevant to his or her needs, as well as meeting national goals.
- Make education equitable in order to eliminate disparities and inequalities.
- Ensure that education is affordable by the majority of Ugandans;
- Meet the objective of poverty eradication by equipping every individual with basic skills and knowledge.

UPE was introduced in January 1997, following a political commitment by President Museveni that the Government would meet the cost of primary education of four children per family. This commitment was soon extended to allow all people that wanted to access primary education to do so. Even though the purpose of deviating from the original plan is good, the consequences would not directly be as such. A logistical strain on educational resources became inevitable partly because the demand of the education services was

exceeding supply. Besides the planning for this kind of policy change wasn't done following logical steps so as to ensure necessary resource adjustment.

(Okurut, 2006) Under the UPE programme, the Government of Uganda abolished all tuition fees and Parents and Teachers Association charges for primary education. Following its introduction, gross enrolment in primary school increased from 3.1 million in 1996 to 7.6 million in 2003. This amounts to an increase of 145% (4.5 million children), compared to an increase of 39% (0.9 million children) between 1986 and 1996. This is despite the fact that primary education was not made compulsory, nor entirely free, since parents were still expected to contribute pens, exercise books, clothing, and even bricks and labour for classroom construction. The bulging numbers entering the schools had an immediate impact on efficiency of school operation.

The issue of efficiency dropping greatly has been witnessed in other government organs. Key challenges have driven the government to keep on shifting goal posts even in matters of policy. One wonders whether they should have the mandate of controlling education. The Daily Monitor further reports how other challenges arise and government shifts policy just to accommodate earlier made mistakes. (Monitor, 2010) reports;

In the meantime, the ministry together with Uganda National Examinations Board have agreed to relax examination rules in order to allow the big number of pioneer students to sit examinations.

For example, instead of a single-seater desk for a candidate, schools will be allowed to use the existing infrastructure and convert classrooms into examination halls as opposed to UNEB's initial requirements".

This report shows the magnitude of the challenges government schools are faced with. It also raises critical questions about the quality of education services offered in such study environments. In such situations private institutions become indispensable partners. But even as they offer their services this does not necessarily improve the situation in government institutions.

The high drop-out rate is one of the noted problems. This is partly attributed to some of the parents of the beneficiary pupils of UPE, who appear not to have seen benefits of the programme. Additionally schools in urban areas (private and also UPE) perform much better in national examinations compared to UPE schools in rural areas. The differences arise partly from public expenditure per pupil, which is much higher in urban areas than in

rural areas. The differences also reflect parental contributions however. In rural areas where the majority of the poor reside, the contribution of parents is almost zero, introducing further inequity in terms of total resources per pupil. (Okurut, 2006)

These regional disparities notwithstanding, the issue of inequity even in schools owned by same stakeholders is worth mentioning. Some of the pupils in rural schools are exposed to less qualitative learning environment as compared to their urban counterparts. This absence of uniformity at a formative level is clearly reflected at a summative stage when national exams are done. By this research I sought to find out about such challenges even within institutions of similar ownership.

(Lewin, 2007) reports on Uganda; “Most costs (over 70%) in public secondary schools are already borne privately by parents and guardians over and above the public contributions (predominantly to salaries and capitation). There is therefore greater dependence on non-government providers of educational services. Thus today there are almost no purely public schools, but most are regarded as government aided.

In buttressing the theme of the study Daily Monitor, Uganda’s independent daily reports findings of Uwezo an initiative that is committed to accessing performance of Education institution in East Africa. Working with a team of 1,620 village based volunteers, visiting 16,200 households in 27 districts of Uganda they (Uwezo) conducted a study and report that “majority of pupils are unable to read let alone deal with figures while those in private institutions are performing better than their colleagues in government aided schools³”.

In a report dubbed ‘Uwezo 2010 assessment learning report’ they maintain that 98% of the children in primary three in the sample studied could not read and understand a story of primary two without difficulty. And they report that private schools outshine the Government aided schools for the almost all classes of primary education except primary seven where there was almost no difference in reading comprehension and mathematics. In line with these findings the study explored the performance of the government, government aided & private institutions in order to ascertain whether they’re equally efficient or complementing each other.

³ <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/-/688334/1031538/-/cmhi2sz/-/index.html>

It was therefore pertinent to the study that a comparative analysis of the operation of public & government institutions is done with a view to generating a relationship to quality. (Donald B. Holsinger et.al, 2002) report “in some cases the quality of teaching is recognised as superior in private schools.” This is partly because some private schools do not always hire teachers for full time responsibility but on a class-by-class basis. This enables private schools to have the ability to attract the best teachers from public schools but pay them for only one or two classes. Popular teachers may teach one or two classes at several different private schools, while at the same time holding a full time teaching position at a government school. Highly qualified and educated teachers are in high demand in many private schools, and some private schools pay a fortune to have these teachers on their staff.

On the contrary (Donal B. Holsinger et.al, 2008) further report that private schools are however challenged with delivering quality, as some of their teachers don't meet the certification requirements, some are under qualified whereas others are unqualified. They maintain that in some (especially) poor regions of the country some private teachers go unpaid for months. However they conclude that ‘both public and private schools may be at either end of the quality spectrum.’

Much as the government is the pace setter & quality watch dog in the education sector, it has not gone without notice that issues of poor quality have been noticed in government aided & owned institutions. (David W. Chapman et.al, 2009) report that “Essentially, enrollment grew faster than new teachers could be recruited and trained, schools built, and textbooks procured and distributed. Primary school head teachers were faced with burgeoning enrollments, declining teacher qualifications, and higher teacher workloads. Maintaining morale was a challenge. Access rose but quality suffered” Net enrollment rates for primary schooling increased from 62.3% in 2000 to 91.4% of girls and 95.3% of boys in 2007. Yet, while enrollment increased by 171% during this time, the number of teachers and schools increased by only 41% (MOES, 2005).

(David W. Chapman, 2009) maintains that Government adopted USE without sufficient attention to system capacity or how the policy would be financed. For example, external estimates of teacher demand indicate that, with the introduction of USE, the country would

need approximately 90,000 new teachers by 2010, an annual growth rate of 15%, more than the current teacher preparation system was prepared to produce. Such gaps in planning have an implication on the quality of education offered by the affected institutions and the education system in all.

In relations to 2010 ordinary level national results, the New Vision reports that; a total of 805 schools, out of the 2,551 who had examination centres, never got a single first grade⁴. One wonders whether education is offered on leveled ground given the gigantic disparity between schools. For instance Uganda Martyrs Namugongo S.S had a total of 194 candidates, and of these 190 students passed in division one & the other four in the second division. New Visions further reports that “All candidates in Namagunga passed in Division One. In another school Kisubi, only three of all candidates failed to pass in Division One, four in Namugongo and Kitovu secondary schools respectively. They were followed by Gayaza, King’s College Buddo and Namilyango”. All these are schools teaching under the same governments stewardship, the same syllabus and many more similar conditions.

The national ordinary level examination results of 2010 raise a lot of question marks in regard to complementarity & quality in education service delivery. The Daily Monitor quotes results from Uganda National Examination Board. “Of the total who sat the examinations, 7.2 per cent passed in grade one, 16.4 per cent in grade two and 24.2 per cent in third grade. The fourth grade registered the bulk of students—45.7 per cent while 6.5 per cent of the candidates failed after registering the 9th Grade though they will receive a certificate while 2,830 students were not graded meaning they failed completely⁵”. These results do not include those of 1,950 students still withheld for suspected exam malpractice!

Such a report from National exams raises many dilemmas that need further investigation. Over 67 percent of the total number that sat for exams are below average (3rd grade) And yet because the government is implementing a universal free education policy they would love them to continue so that they create way for the others still in the pipe line. And because these programs are introduced as political strategies of winning votes their implementation doesn’t follow the proper chronology. The monitor further reports that; “However, those

⁴ New Vision: <http://newvision.co.ug/D/8/12/746142>

⁵ <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/Education/-/688336/1104110/-/efl215/-/index.html>

who were hoping to continue getting free education at A-Level will have to wait for at least a year as the government sorts out ways of implementing the scheme—promised by President Museveni on his recent campaign trail.”

Such a scenario is self-defeatist, given that policy is introduced as political strategy. One wonders whether it is sustainable after the current government is out of power. Viewed in another angle, a private school that plans for its student population may be in position to deliver education services to them in a better way than a government institution that will never be sure as it is politicians who determine how it will operate. These reports put some public institutions in a situation where their programs are unpredictable, effectiveness not guaranteed given their little control over how many students they will have and when they will have them. All this is anchored on the argument that government has to provide free education for all, so children have to move to the next level so as to create room for their followers.

(Butagira, 2011) writes “In the rush, government decided that any PLE candidate who obtains up to Aggregate 28, scorers in the last segment of Division Four, who prior to the inception of USE would hardly get admission to Senior One in an average secondary school, be admitted. Like its predecessor UPE cousin, President Museveni announced commencement of USE in the heat of the campaigns for the 2006 elections. It came therefore as no surprise that an estimate of 30% of the USE students dropped out before they could sit for exams⁶.

In stepping up to assume the public schools mantle, private schools may also not been effectively executing their responsibilities. (Naturinda, 2011) Quoting Mr Bukenya the UNEB secretary the monitor reports “government aided schools registered an improvement in performance in science subjects. This is because ministry of education had supplied equipment and there was in-service training being provided to teachers.” However, a sorry performance was noted in almost all science subjects, done from private schools. Mr Bukenya said this could be attributed to shortage of teachers and inadequate laboratory equipment.

⁶ <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/Education/-/688336/1104854/-/ef17m0/-/index.html>

In the same regard (Grogan, 2006) report “The results suggest that UPE increases the probability of a child entering school age before age 8 by about 9%. However the introduction of UPE caused a 10% fall in the probability that a publicly –schooled child of a given age & socioeconomic characteristics was able to complete a simple reading test.” such shortfalls of this policy in government institutions has been one of the key reasons behind parents shift of loyalty from public to private institutions. The main question though is; are these private institutions a solution to the problem or a resort since no other alternative is available for parents.

2.3.0 Government in education

2.3.1 Basic Minimum requirements

As laid down in the foundation of this research work, governments world over are the backbone upon which the education sector leans for survival, monitoring, guidance, finance among others. The Ugandan government has not reclined from this position. (Sports, 2010) In 2001 the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) issued the Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards indicators for education institutions (BR & MS) to schools and other relevant stakeholders to guide the organisation and the management of educational institutions. However, awareness and compliance by schools is still inadequate owing to a number of challenges highlighted in the government (MOES) report.

The ministry named these as the quality/standards indicators to be assessed in regular school inspections by its supervising machinery.

- i. Overall management
- ii. Provision and management of structures and facilities
- iii. Staff organisation and development
- iv. Organisation and management of teaching and learning processes
- v. Organisation and development of co curricular activities
- vi. Learners organisation and development
- vii. Finance generation and management
- viii. Organisation and development of institution parents/ community
- ix. Organisation and development of health, sanitation and environment
- x. Discipline management and development
- xi. Time organisation and management
- xii. Organisation and management of institution safety and security

xiii. Provision and management of boarding facilities

The report further notes that in spite of these challenges, government is commended for reducing student numbers in its schools. It has endeavoured to impose quotas on education and endeavoured to intervene in other areas of quality enhancement. (Donald B Holsinger, 2002)

2.3.2 Key challenges

The Government of Uganda and development partners through the Ministry of Education and Sports have made enormous investments in the primary education sub-sector to improve quality in terms of curricula, infrastructure and learning environment, teaching/learning process and learning achievements. The UPE policy in Uganda received a major boost with the enactment of the new Education Act, 2008 by Parliament, which makes primary education compulsory for all children. In addition, the sector adopted the Quality Enhancement Initiative (QEI) - a flagship program within the UPE program for the improvement of primary education specifically targeting the twelve districts with the worst education indicators in the country (Uwezo, 2010).

The sector also adopted other support policies to guide its efforts to provide quality primary education, including the instruction in local language policy which is intended to support the on-going implementation of the thematic curriculum in lower primary. However, the subsector continues to register low learning outcomes. This is possibly because of challenges that exist in the various parts of the country. The most eminent are mentioned below.

(Uwezo, 2010) reports that the Uganda National Examination Board (UNEB) has since 2003 been conducting annual national assessments of literacy and numeracy competencies at primary 3 and 6 level. The 2009 National Assessment of Progress in Education showed that in terms of proficiency in Numeracy and Literacy of children in the sampled classes of Primary three (P.3) and Primary six (P.6), many stood below 50%. The UWEZO 2010 assessment of learning report identifies the following as key outstanding problems.

- i) Low community participation and ownership of education activities

- ii) Inadequate capacity particularly at the district level
- iii) Inequity in primary education provision particularly due to a wide variation in access to preprimary education in the country
- iv) Slow recruitment and deployment of qualified teachers
- v) Inadequate school inspection services
- vi) Poor communication between the districts and schools
- vii) Inadequate provision of instructional materials for implementation of the thematic curriculum at lower primary
- viii) Lack of trained teachers in the delivery of the thematic curriculum

Besides these reported by UWEZO there are other factors from other independent sources such as the MOES and they include;

- ix) Inadequate institutional capacity for planning, implementation and management particularly at the secondary school level.
- x) Insufficient training, orientation and continuing support for classroom teachers dealing with new syllabi (Ministry Of Education and Sports, 2001).
- xi) Lack of quality assurance procedures and strategies in the orientation to and implementation of new syllabuses.

2.3.3 Thematic curriculum

The thematic curriculum is a proposal by the National Curriculum Development Centre. Derived from the term theme, Thematic Curriculum is an approach to learning based on themes rather than subjects. In addition to the traditional subjects and use of local languages in the initial stages, children are exposed to practical themes like music, news, arts and crafts, physical education and literature in building a child's thinking capability.

The National Curriculum Development centre proposed continuous assessment in primary seven instead of the traditional exams set by the examining body at the end of a full seven years after a child has completed primary education. This however, has been criticised by several education experts and employers who assert that graduates often leave one level without the essential skills. They say, this is because the assessment done after seven years misses out crucial stages of assessing pupils' academic progress.

Every year, candidates in their last stage of primary prepare to sit and answer theoretical questions in the four subjects; Mathematics, English language, Science and Social studies

set by Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEb) to determine who is ready to join another level of education.

Students also get through primary seven with essential skills for progression to the later stages of education. In some cases, parents have not welcomed the idea with some changing their children to private schools where the system has not been emphasised. They argue that teaching their children in mother tongue undermines the education system especially that UNEb still sets examines in English, the official language.

It is important to note here that only some government schools have implemented the curriculum. Most of the schools public and private have not taken the step to implement this proposed curriculum. The MOES is also reluctant to enforce its implementation.

2.4.0 Relationship between Government and private academic institutions

2.4.1 Government as supervisor

The government has the responsibility of being the supervisor of all activities of the academic institutions both private and public. As earlier postulated, private institutions do not receive any logistical support from the government. Studies have reported inefficiency in monitoring and supervising of institutions. Most of the government efforts are directed towards monitoring private institutions and less attention is given to public. And in most cases students are left as culprits of scrupulous school establishments in later stages when the government does ‘show up’ to close schools that have failed short of its expectations. It is usually an inconvenience to the parents and community as well. Besides eroding trust of some people in private schools it sends a wrong message about the government as quality watchdog.

The Daily Monitor reports how 450 students were left stranded when their school was closed because of non-compliance to established rules. (Mukombozi, 2011) quotes Silver Magara the District Police Commander, present at the eviction of the students and staff from the school.

“The school is not officially registered, not licensed in the premises it is in and therefore not supposed to be here. Your administrators confused everybody by failing to pursue relevant papers to have it legalised. I am therefore giving you 15 minutes to pack your

things and go home,”

Such eviction fracas drive students to become riotous and engage the police that affect the closure thereby creating running battles. This is then associated to private institutions and some label them as trouble spots for indiscipline cases. (Mukombozi, 2011) further reports there are 151 candidate students of whom 84 are in Senior Four and others in A- Level in the school at the time of closure⁷.

“We had already registered at this school for our A -Level exams. What will be our fate now that you are saying this school is operating illegally,” asked the students.

The key question to ask is where was the government monitoring and supervision machinery as a school operated for considerable years without any provisional operation license? Above all in the event that the school is closed what is the students fate as the government seems not to have offered them any options but to go home and look for other schools. Such inefficiency in supervision does create key operational challenges that the government has to tackle to avert future recurrences.

On the same issue the Uganda Teachers Association National Vice Chairperson, Mr James Tweheyo said that the liberalization of education is partly to blame for strikes in schools, as it doesn't offer quality education and acceptable discipline of the learners. Some private schools have been licensed without meeting the minimum requirements and they have consistently lacked supervision. The education “investors” sometimes are out to maximize profits at the expense of the students and parents/guardians (Mazige, 2011).

2.4.2 Teacher/ ‘teacher’ untrustworthiness / unprofessionalism

One of the key issues that have continued to escape extermination by government is the unprofessional conduct by teachers and others who masquerade as teachers. One of the key issues that the government believes has been a plague in private schools is the use of unprofessional teachers. On contrary though a number of these masquerading teachers are deeply entrenched in the government schools as well. Previous studies have made note of this in the Ugandan education sector.

⁷ <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/-/688334/1140318/-/c2sydlz/-/index.html>

One such a case is reported by (Idoru, 2010) “The Ministry of Education has said it is overwhelmed by the number of teachers who gained employment using forged documents. Dr Yusuf Nsubuga, the director Basic Education, said yesterday that a survey found that all districts in eastern Uganda have several cases of forgeries. The same has been discovered in central region as investigations continue in other parts of the country.” The director of basic education further notes

“There are still many concerns on quality education and because we lacked teachers at one time, people took advantage and forged certificates. Those qualified give their appointment letters to others. These teachers are in class teaching our children⁸,”

Situations of unprofessional teachers in the government teaching ranks are existent because of bribery and inefficiency at recruitment stage. As Dr. Nsubuga notes “When there are interviews, they come and present themselves and because district officials don’t have machines to detect forged documents, they are recruited into the system.” The impact of this is on the unsuspecting students who miss out on the required training from professionals. These poses a quality challenge to the country’s academia and professional force generated from it.

In bridging the assessment gap, the government has adopted an open-minded approach to NGO’s and other private education partnerships. This is a good step, given the noted irregularity in supervision, owing to logistical issues. The challenge though is the findings of such independent assessment are disputed by the government with a view to saving public image and their recommendations are rarely implemented. (Kagolo, 2010) report “The Government has rejected a controversial report, which says universal primary education is yielding illiterate students and that private schools are better than the Government institutions in teaching⁹”. This is partly because the government does not mandate the study though done with its knowledge and good will.

⁸ <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/-/688334/1033214/-/cmg6tpz/-/index.html>

⁹ <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/13/734997#>

2.4.3 Learning environment

In its Basic requirements and minimum standard indicators for education institutions, the Ministry Of education and Sports clearly underlines the provision and management of structures and facilities. It expects from institutions to have buildings that have been approved by relevant government authorities. These should also conform to occupational safety and health acts. It is clearly stated that children with special needs too need to be put in consideration as these structures are put in place. Important safety gadgets such as lightening conductors should also be installed. This has however only been partially implemented in some institutions & enforceability remains low because of different reasons. It therefore mainly remains a paper policy in most schools.

Appalling learning environment is always a key feature. In many of the private and government institutions there is inadequate infrastructure; this is one of the key problems that stretches from the lowest level of education to the highest. Most of the schools are housed in shoddy establishments that do not provide a conducive learning environment. A case is drawn from Kabushaho school which continues to operate with many students despite of the unfriendly learning conditions. Over 100 students at Kabushaho Secondary School are being taught in a church that was turned into a classroom (Mugasha, 2011). This doesn't conform to any of the laid out MOES infrastructural guidelines. Photo 1 below illustrates one such a scenario of Kabushaho Secondary School.

Photo showing students studying in a church that was converted into a classroom



Source: <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/9/35/750534>

In relation to the same, the photo below shows a classroom whose roof collapsed in a rainstorm. The roof came off and students narrowly escaped death. This and many other cases of lightning striking school buildings and killing pupils have become ‘acceptable’ day to day issues in a number of districts. Many of such structures that do not conform to the ministry’s laid out guidelines exist.

Photo 2: a school building whose roof came off during a classroom session in a rainstorm.



Source: The New vision , 20th October 2010

(Jane Perryman, 2011) mentions “schools along with other providers of public welfare, have been encouraged to become responsive to the disciplines of market forces.” These (market forces) usher in competition and struggle for advantage that can be seen across a range of different measures. They continue to highlight that “the pressure to succeed and look better than any other local competitors means that the schools are inevitably caught up in the process of attempting to mark themselves out as distinctive and as less ordinary than others” (Jane Perryman, 2011. Pg 4)

In relation to the above (Ahimbisibwe, 2009) reports “the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) complained that most private schools did not have laboratory equipment, which has undermined their performance in the Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) exams. A private initiative was launched and it seeks to address the risks and dangers that children are exposed to by some private secondary schools, such as fire outbreaks, buildings collapsing, drug abuse, moral decadence, increasing academic failures, drop outs, teacher misconduct (strikes, absenteeism) and teacher mistreatment (non payment of salaries, lack of job security).

In conclusion it is worthy noting that this is one area in which academic institutions have to work hard in order to improve the overall welfare of schools. Most institutions trade off good school welfare for academic pursuits. They build their decisions on the premises that as long as students attain good grades the school is serving its purpose. It is a highly recommended step that institutions begin to value the wellbeing of people within the schooling environment.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The following chapter is a descriptive presentation of the methodology that was adopted for the study. The qualitative and quantitative designs were used. Much concentration was given to the qualitative design. There was a limited use of quantitative design in dealing with demographic variables that needed a common & comparative opinion. Validity was given due consideration in choice of the methodology so as to ensure that findings correctly map the phenomenon under study.

3.2 Study population

The study population was composed of key informants in both public and private education institutions. People in education management (1) these included diocesan education officers (also known as Diocese Education Coordinators), (2) Senior Inspectors of schools from Directorate of Education Standards and those at operational level (3) the teachers. The diocese education officers were chosen to take part in the study because the church (Anglican, Catholic & Seventh Day Adventists among others) are leading private academic institution ownership. They with the Muslim faith own along a vertical dimension a number of institutions from primary schools, through secondary to university. This is a role that they have served for so long.

3.3 Methodology of data construction

Triangulation technique; the data and methodological triangulation approaches were adapted for this study. In employing the data triangulation technique, multiple data sources with similar foci were explored in order to obtain various views/opinions. Notably the Diocesan Education Secretaries, Senior Inspectors of Schools, at least a teacher of private, government owned and aided schools. This is because of the two parallel yet jointly operated structures of educational institution ownership. For the methodological triangulation more than one data construction technique was used in order to tap the different dimensions of the problem. The questionnaire as a tool was used alongside, observation, key informant interviews and analysis of existing records. Triangulation involving the use of qualitative and quantitative designs was selected to minimise bias (Hyunjoon, 2011) as it engages the use of multiple strategies.

There was the use of the questionnaire as a tool of data construction. This was the major tool mainly chosen for purposes of ensuring consistency and comparability in response attained. Key informant interviews were also conducted to get additional information. These were aligned to the questionnaire responses given with a more probing approach to ensure exhaustive reporting and an in depth exploration of the study variables

3.3.1 interviews

3.3.1.1 interview preparation

Key informant Interviews were conducted, audio taped and transcribed. The standardized open-ended interview was conducted. All respondents were required to answer the same questions for purposes of comparing findings. Only two respondents were chosen randomly from the key informant population of 6 respondents to take part in the interview. Six stages were used for this method of data construction. They included;

- ✚ **Thematising;** at this stage questions reflecting the theme under investigation were formulated. An attempt was made to ensure the interview questions were not a repetition of those reflected in the questionnaire. Also the reasons why I was carrying out the study were highlighted for purpose of removing doubt that would destroy respondent confidence and affect openness in the course of the study.

- ✚ **Designing;** at this stage I planned the sequencing of questions so as to create inter relatedness and ensure a chronological flow. It is here that I also planned the nature of interviews to be conducted, in a way that would ensure that there is rapport and easiness between the respondents and me. I also ensured the questions were well structured so as to avoid giving any trace of identity of the respondents as an ethical component of guaranteeing anonymity.

- ✚ **Interviewing;** after clearly laying out the questions on the interview guide, we held the interviews with the respondents. Each interview lasted between 40 to 50 minutes. The interviews were conducted in English and recorded. I made it clear to the respondents that the interview was strictly for academic purposes, and their names were not of any significance to the study. I further mentioned it to them that all the recorded information would be accessed by me and deleted after transcribing and analysis.

- ✚ **Transcribing;** all the responses given were transcribed. Some were too lengthy and were therefore not transcribed verbatim; on the other hand those that were straight to the point were transcribed verbatim. The responses of the two categories of respondents interviewed (Senior Inspector of Schools and Diocesan Education Coordinators) were reported concurrently in order to trace similarities and contrasts for comparability.

- ✚ **Analysing;** there were 10 questions set out on the interview guide. This gave rise to approximately 20 answers after the two respondents were interviewed. These answers were then analysed and some because of their nature required more extensive qualitative interpretation so as to link them to the subthemes of the study. Because in some cases the answers were similar a general presentation and analysis of these responses is done.

- ✚ **Reporting;** After the results were sorted and paraphrased, they were reported in the research report as shown herein. A concurrent approach was used for presentation and discussion of the study findings.

3.3.1.2 Alternative interview methods

It is worthy noting that Semi-structured Interviews could have been an equally relevant approach to adopt for this study. These semi-structured interviews are non-standardized and are frequently used in qualitative analysis. The interviewer does not do the research to test a specific hypothesis (David, & Sutton, 2004, p. 87). Such an interview could be built if the researcher has a list of key themes, issues, and questions to be covered. In this type of interview the order of the questions can be changed depending on the direction of the interview. An interview guide is also used, but additional questions can be asked.

Flexibility within this kind of interview approach accommodates wider coverage. The order in which the various topics are dealt with and the wording of the questions are left to the interviewer's discretion. Within each topic, the interviewer is free to conduct the conversation as he thinks fit, to ask the questions he deems appropriate in the words he considers best, to give explanation and ask for clarification if the answer is not clear. Much as this approach was highly adoptable for this study there was a major limitation of time within which the study was to be conducted.

Additionally from the preliminary findings about the study that were gathered, the issue of public–private institution performance seems to have so many underlying factors that a comprehensive study lasting a longer period of time is the best approach to fully bring forth knowledge & lasting interventions suggestions.

3.3.2 Ethics

All effort was made to ensure the respondent’s responses recorded or those given in the questionnaires bore no trace or cannot be linked back to the respondents. These interviews were supplementing data already gathered through questionnaires; their breadth was therefore not as that of stand alone interviews. However they were exhaustive on the theme under study and all effort was made to ensure they attempt to achieve the study objectives. A digital audio voice recorder was used to capture the exchange of ideas during the interview.

In line with the ethical principle of guaranteeing anonymity the recordings were deleted as soon as they were analysed, refined and presented in the final research report. The questionnaires too after sorting, coding and analysis were destroyed as promised in the form of consent that was signed by each respondent.

3.4 Sample selection

Purposive sampling was used for this study. Denzin and Lincoln write that purposive, and non random sampling methods seek out groups, settings and individuals where ...the processes being studied are most likely to occur (1994:202). For the same purpose therefore these techniques were chosen over others for use during this study.

Non random sampling was used to purposively select the respondents that took part in the study. This is because the private, church owned and government owned institutions are clearly known from the national school registry. The researcher therefore endeavoured to ensure balanced judgement and representation along a vertical and horizontal dimension of the institutions to be studied. Due consideration was also given to gender so as to ensure an evenly fair distribution of respondents. The short time available for the study necessitated quick access to respondents for data construction, a purposive sampling technique turned out efficient in this regard.

3.5 Sample size

The sample size was composed of three schoolteachers. Each from the three school categories namely; One entirely owned by government (public) and one entirely private and then one jointly owned by government and the church (government). As a representative of joint ownership Two Diocesan Education Coordinators were involved in the study. These with four Senior Inspectors of Schools formed the sample size. In total nine key informants were involved in this study. Gender balance was also an attribute considered in selecting the respondents that took part in the study.

3.6 Validity and reliability

The use of triangulation is for purposes of reducing bias that may be inherent in a particular data source or method of construction (Amin, 2005). It is for this reason that there was interchangeable use of qualitative and quantitative designs as a triangulation approach. Bias was minimised through this duo approach and conclusions drawn that would be the springboard for further studies. The sample size and study population among others were all carefully set to ensure utmost representation of the variables under the study thereby increasing the validity and reliability of the constructs studied.

3.7 Data presentation and analysis

The data constructed during the study was organised, sorted, analysed. For the quantitative constructs coding is used and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Spread sheets software were used during the sorting, analysis and presentation of the study findings. Additionally study findings with a quantitative orientation are presented in graphs and tables for easier comparability. A narrative approach is employed for the qualitative approach findings.

3.8 Tools used for the study

The main tool used for data construction was the questionnaire. Open ended, fixed alternative questions (closed ended) structured and multiple choice questions were asked. Also rating scales were used in testing some of the key constructs of the study. The questionnaire was interviewer administered. It was pretested in order to iron out the inconsistencies that may have arisen during its design.

3.9 Challenges faced during the study

Much as the study objectives were achieved, this did not come without challenges. A number of issues arose during and after the study. Some of them were unforeseen, whereas others were predictable. First and foremost even with guaranteed anonymity some respondents were at first uneasy when it came to filling the questionnaire. This is because much as their names were not necessary for the questionnaire, it was necessary for them to put the name on the form of consent guaranteeing their willing participation in the study. This reluctance is partly attributed to the government defensive approach whenever a study that reveals findings contrary to the government painted picture is carried out. For most of the time a study is done and results are found not to concur with the government position, they come out to dispute the study because most of the reforms in the academic sector have been introduced as political moves to win support by the regime in power.

There was a challenge with some of the literature found in the periodical reports of the government. There were contradictions in some cases that it was wise not to include it in the study to avoid confusion. For instance government reports would portray a rosy picture of the schools that none of the participants in the study even thought was near being implemented. For instance the government reports noted how the thematic curriculum was introduced and was being successfully implemented in schools. Most of the participants in the study had only read about it in papers. Key informants like senior school inspectors noted that even books tailored to this thematic curriculum were not there. As a way around I choose to disregard some of these reports to avoid confusions in the research report. I dwelt more on the information attained from my own research investigation(s).

As already mentioned the time framework available for the study was one of the key limiting factors for the scope thus covered. During the course of the study I realised the breadth could be expanded to put more focus on individual academic levels. There seems to be specific problems that affect particular levels independently. For instance a private primary school may have issues not found in a private secondary school or university. These need individual investigations and tailor made redress.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the analysis and discuss findings. The background characteristics of the respondents and the outcome of the findings from the questionnaires administered plus the interviews conducted are all compiled. The data was collected through a period of six weeks. The respondents were distributed as shown in the methodology. All the nine questionnaires issued were usable for analysis after the study. The analysis is divided into two parts; 4.1 showing the presentation and discussion of findings from questionnaires and 4.2 showing the presentation and discussion of findings from interviews.

4.1 Questionnaires

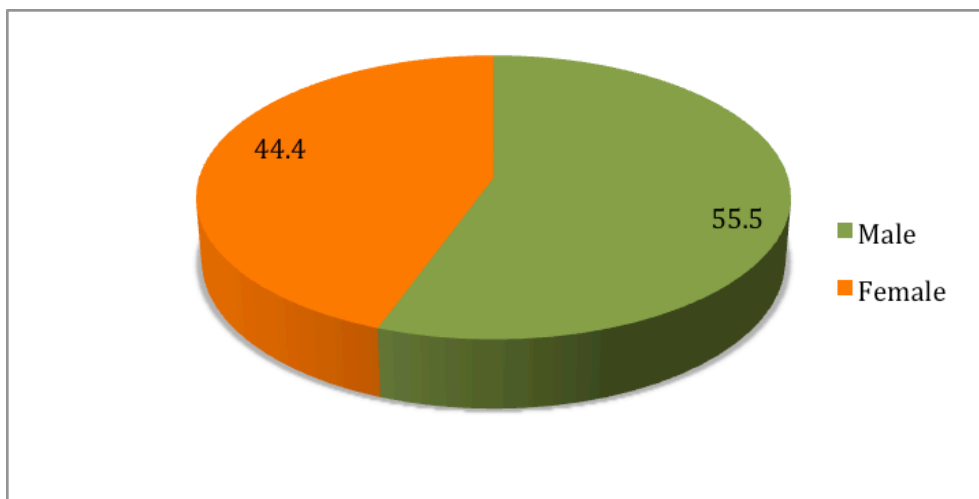
4.1.0 Socio demographic variables

In the introduction part of the questionnaire, were questions seeking the descriptive social demographic variables of the respondent population. Its composition is reported as shown below.

4.1.1 Sex distribution

There was a fairly even distribution of respondents with five out of the nine respondents being male & four being female. This distribution is shown in percentages on the pie chart below.

Figure 1: Pie chart showing the gender distribution of respondents in percentages



Even though no specific questions were aimed directly for a specific gender, it was a necessary gesture to ensure the sample was representative of all gender in a bid to minimise bias.

4.1.2 Years of working in the current portfolio.

Respondents were subjected to a question seeking to find out the years they have worked in their current portfolios. This question was to test if they had stayed in these offices long enough to have a certain degree of knowledge about the education sector. The response showed 10 as the highest number of years that the selected sample had worked. And this was a Diocesan secretary & on the contrary the lowest term spent working in the current portfolio was 1 year. The full distribution of response to this table is summarised in the table 1 that follows.

Table 1 showing: Respondents time spent working in the current portfolio.

| Age (in years) | Senior Inspectors of schools | | Teachers | | Diocesan Education Secretaries | | Total | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|--------------------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| 10 + | - | - | - | - | 1 | 50 | 1 | 11.11 |
| 9 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 8 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 7 | 1 | 25 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 11.11 |
| 6 | 1 | 25 | 1 | 33.3 | - | - | 2 | 22.22 |
| 5 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 4 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 50 | 1 | 11.11 |
| 3 | - | - | 1 | 33.3 | - | - | 1 | 11.11 |
| 2 | 2 | 50 | - | - | - | - | 2 | 22.22 |
| 1 | - | - | 1 | 33.3 | - | - | 1 | 11.11 |
| Total | 4 | 100 | 3 | 100 | 2 | 100 | 9 | 100 |

The shortest period served by the respondents was 1 year. On a broader scale most of the respondents had served in their offices for a period of 3 years or more. So they were in position to give their views with a weight of experience over a more prolonged period of months. The Senior Inspectors of Schools dominated the sample with more years of exposure in their field of operation.

4.1.3 Sample composition

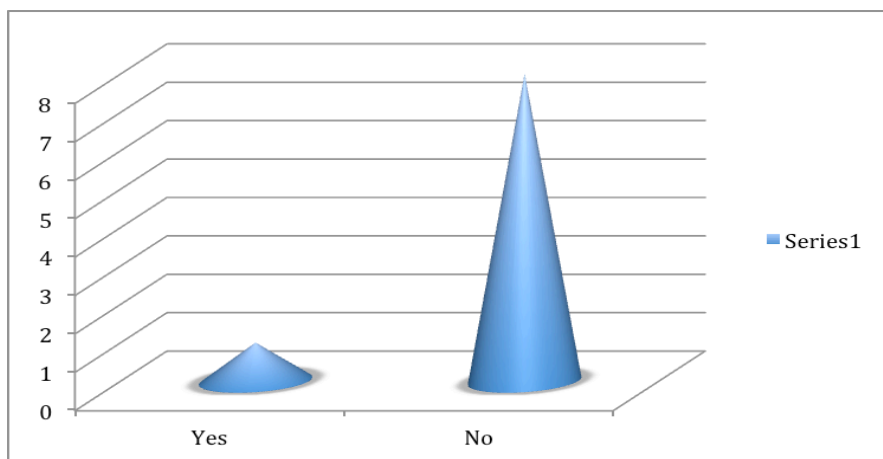
The sample was largely composed of Senior Inspectors of Schools whose main task is monitoring and supervision of schools irrespective of ownership. Their operations fall within the office of quality assurance in the ministry of Education's Directorate of Education standards.

Among the teachers subset of the studied population, there are three categories and each got one respondent. These included; a teacher from a government school, a head teacher from a government-aided school and a deputy head teacher from a private school.

4.1.4 Provider of education

Government has the primary responsibility of providing education services, however because of insufficiency in resources as demonstrated in the literature, private education service providers become unavoidable partners. As premised in the literature these too have been found wanting in most situations. So the researcher subjected the respondents to the question of whether they would support a decision of the government being the sole provider of education services in Uganda. With an 88.89% majority, the respondents revealed that they would not support a situation where the government is the sole provider of education. Their response is shown on a graph.

Figure 2 showing: response on whether government should solely provide education



I asked the respondents to give reasons for their opinion as shown in the graph above. The following emerged as possible answers, as to why they would not support the government to be solely responsible for education in the country.

- ✚ To enhance quality in education provision there is need for competition, which can only be realised when private sector is involved. Majority of the respondents against government being a sole player argue that competition will boost quality. This competition can be fostered if there are other players besides the government that keep one another in check.
- ✚ Government cannot cater for all the students and teachers needs in the country because of its limited facilities and low logistical endowments. So private education service providers have been the solace for the country's growing population and a fertile avenue for teacher employment.
- ✚ The government cannot satisfactorily level the current demand for education services in the country for all levels of academia. So opening the door to private players is a good strategy of bridging the gap. It has facilities (both material and immaterial) that would accommodate more students in primary and less numbers at higher levels of academia. This would imply, as you go up the academic ladder there would be students surpluses for each level. Private education service providers therefore are a necessary intervention.
- ✚ It is important that choice is offered to parents as to where they can take their children. So a wider scope of educational institutions should be considered. From one philosophical school of thought people have different intellectual abilities and interests. It is therefore fair that they are not limited in choice of academic training centres if it can be avoided.
- ✚ The government does not cater for the international community in its curriculum. So private education institutions which are international, design their education curriculum to cater for the international student who will continue with his/her education outside Uganda at a later stage of his/her life. A number of international schools have been licensed and are briskly executing their responsibilities in this regard.

- ✚ Since government encourages private investors in all sectors of the economy it would likewise be a good decision to welcome them into the education sector. Private investors are known to bring a new approach to doing things. These changes bring in variety and widen opportunities for even low income earners join school as prices go down.
- ✚ Government cannot guarantee to keep the education standards as well as facilitate education institutions at all times through out the country. This calls for additional support to keep these standards. Respondents felt that being a sole educational service provider, public schools would with time lose initiative, and experience a fall in standards. However with private service providers in the field both public and private players can use each other as benchmarks.
- ✚ Besides competition also partnerships where government works together with private education service providers could boost the quality of the education in the country. Such synergies have been known to work in some countries.
- ✚ The church is responsible for introduction of formal education into the country, so it should continue to oversee and provide the same. Since the governments got involved later in education there is need to maintain the pioneer stakeholder among others so as to avoid the extremes that can be generated by only one stake holder providing the service & enhancing his interests.

The only respondent who sided with the view that the government should be the sole provider of education services argued that the government has the responsibility of financing the education service, so it should run it solely. Building on the argument that all people are stakeholders in the government so it should cater for their education welfare. Even as this respondent thought so, a clear summary of opinion on this issue shows people have a high interest in private education institutions.

4.1.5 Indicators of quality

In a comparative sense the respondents where asked to rate given indicators of quality. On a rating scale where 5 was highest and 1 lowest, respondents were asked to rate five indicators of quality as chosen by the researcher. From the responses given private and government aided schools are reported to have an edge over government schools almost in all the areas (factors) under investigation. From the mean average it can be seen that even as these

schools have an edge over public schools the overall performance of the schools is still marginal. This has a direct bearing on the study in view of the fact that even as these schools come up to assist government schools. Much as the services may be rendered, the question is; is acceptable quality delivered?

Table 2 showing: Mean rating of factors within three the forms of schools under study

| Factor | Government | Government aided | Private | Mean average |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Teacher student ratio | 1.8 | 2.6 | 2.4 | 2.3 |
| Classroom environment | 2.3 | 3 | 3.4 | 2.9 |
| Teacher facilitation | 3.4 | 3.6 | 2.3 | 3 |
| Overall student welfare | 1.7 | 2.11 | 3.3 | 2.4 |
| Infrastructure (buildings) | 2.3 | 3 | 3.3 | 2.9 |
| Teacher motivation | 2.2 | 3 | 3.4 | 2.9 |

4.1.5.1 Student teacher ratio

One of the key parameters to consider in educational efficiency is the issue of teacher student ratio. This is one area where the ministry of education has always tried to create a balance though a lot still needs to be done in Uganda. The burgeoning number of school going children has had its logistical demand felt by the government. Many UPE schools have pupil numbers, which are beyond their carrying capacity. There are large numbers of pupils in relation to the teachers.

The government's sluggish response in the recruitment and deployment of qualified teachers is also not helping. With a mean of 2.6 the government aided institutions scored higher than the private & public institutions respectively. This score could be attributed to the combined resources of the government & founder bodies of the government aided institutions (church in this case). However the mean average of 2.3 is below the desired performance. So this is one area where the educational institutions have to improve.

4.1.5.2 Class room environment

Building on the premises that a study environment needs to be conducive in order for studies to flourish, I required of the respondents to compare the teaching-learning environment within the three school structures under study. Private schools scored highest with a mean of 3 & public institutions scored lowest. Another clear opinion that private institutions are playing the gap-filling role well. Comparatively even the government aided institutions have an above average rating. The mean average of 2.9 reflects a fairly improved learning environment. More schools have worked on improving their facilities under the watchful eye of the directorate of educational standards.

4.1.5.3 Teacher facilitation

Teacher facilitation is a key parameter to test in the measure of quality & efficiency. Since learning is built on a good teacher student relationship, it is imperative that the teacher as the leader in the learning process is well facilitated to carry out his duties. As mentioned in the literature this is one area that has a lot of imbalances. Whereas some of the teachers may be well facilitated because they are in good environments, others are poorly facilitated. The government has in the past years been working on teacher facilitation. It therefore came as no surprise that the respondents rated government & government aided schools highest with mean of 3.4 & 3.6 in teacher facilitation respectively. This however raises a critical question in relation to the study. How is quality standardized nationally given the difference in teacher facilitation for different institution ownership?

For physical science subjects such as Chemistry, Biology, Physics and agriculture this disparity is further reflected in the national exam performance. Those schools with good facilitation usually achieve better results than their counterparts that are not well stocked. Because of the enormous costs that are required to pay an acceptable salary, provide good housing & other accompanying services not all schools have established laboratory facilities.

4.1.5.4 Infrastructure

With a mean average of 2.9, the infrastructure is slightly above the average. The study was intended to discover how well the teaching establishments are. Public institutions scored least in infrastructure development. Of particular interest to the researcher were the buildings in which the indoor teaching is conducted. Most of the government schools are short of new infrastructural establishments. In pursuit of its education for all the masses the government has been stretched financially and so most of the resources are invested in day to day running and operation of these institutions. Some of these buildings are put up hurriedly to accommodate the unexpected numbers. It comes as no surprise that they are shoddy & cause accidents like the one shown in photo 1 in the literature section.

On the contrary because of the liberalisation in the sector many private players enter any time to supply education services. It therefore is no surprise that most of the infrastructure establishments of the private education institutions are more recent and well furnished. However this does not cut across the board for all private institutions. The interview with a Senior Inspector of Schools revealed that some of the worst infrastructures are seen in government schools. In some pastoral communities of the country where the government policy of UPE is implemented, classes are conducted under trees. This scenario though does not appear for private institutions because for an institution to be considered for registration, its infrastructure has to be inspected and approved to meet the acceptable standards.

This raises key questions in line with the study. Is this highly diversified portrayal of different study environments within the different school ownership a reflection of problem solving or a source of a new problem all together? In trying to meet the schooling requirements of the population isn't the government compromising quality seeing as a uniform national examination is given to students who have been taught within highly contrasting circumstances.

In the photo below students are shown in one such mobile under the tree class. Such classes were common during the time the northern part of Uganda experienced rebel insurgency. Many people were forced to live in camps because their homes were destroyed by rebel attacks or for fear of rebels attacking them. In these camps government found it easier to offer them security. The mobile class was also used in the pastoral region of North Eastern Uganda (Karamoja). Because these pastoralists are always on the move with their animals, their children move with them. They would therefore miss schooling. Government came up

with such mobile class arrangement. This would ensure that before pastoralists moved out each morning the children would first have to be schooled for a part of the day. The army had to be deployed to ensure that this arrangement is implemented everyday.

The key questions to ask here would be is this the best remedy to the problem? Was there no better way to make learner's environment more productive than this open air teaching?

Photo 2: showing children in a class session under a tree.



Source; <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/Education/-/688336/1154076/-/einpuq/-/index.html>

4.1.5.5 Teacher motivation

The study also sought to briefly discover through comparison the level of teacher motivation. This was built on the premises that Uganda as a developing country is still lacking well-stocked library systems. So a teacher is still heavily relied on to be at the centre of all teaching - learning activity. Just like all services the degree of effectiveness of the service depends on the efficiency of the service provider. Teachers in Uganda have on numerous occasions voiced their discontent in regard to their welfare.

The findings revealed that, public schools scored least with a mean of 2.2 as on the contrary private institutions scored highest with a mean of 3.4. Unlike the case in public institutions where the government uses bureaucratic procedures in policy formulation and implementation, private institutions find themselves at an advantage for they have short

decision making protocols. Government's take home pay among other logistical packages is fixed until when revisited by the different statutory body(s). The private sector enjoys quick decision-making, therefore it is a lot easier to put in place material and emotional motivational packages in place for the teacher. The overall mean average of 2.9 is above average & can be attributed to the increased government involvement in enacting laws to ensure that teachers, as service providers are not abused.

4.1.6 Challenges to delivering quality education services

Selectively looking at the various educational institutions challenges could be a good approach in attempting to design practical solutions. In as much as some of these challenges cut across these various institutions, trying to establish whether a decentralised approach could be a more focused remedy to the various challenges. These challenges are listed below.

4.1.6.1 Government owned / public institutions

- ✚ Little care by stakeholders such as parents who leave the burden of sustaining the school to the government.
- ✚ Management is sometimes found wanting. Sometimes head teachers are posted because they have bribed key officers in the ministry of Education and Sports.
- ✚ Inefficiency in these schools is most times brought about negligence of duty arising from confidence that the teachers are working for the government. There is little monitoring in these institutions since by default government tends to think it is the private schools out there that are not meeting standards and need to be monitored.
- ✚ Irregular distribution of resources among the various public institutions. It comes as no surprise that as some public institutions may have good laboratories other may be grappling with learning in absence of the same.
- ✚ There is at times delayed release of the UPE funds, so these institutions operate with difficulty, as they get no operational fees from the parents. This is more pronounced in UPE & USE schools.

4.1.6.2 Government aided institutions

- ✚ Sometimes there is failure to recognise the position of the church or founder body. Government most times overrides the founder body in decision making. They dictate policy that at times doesn't conform to the founder body's philosophy.

- ✚ Conflict arising from overlapping responsibilities between founder body leadership and the government.
- ✚ There's political influence in the decision and policy making which in most cases has an impact on the performance of the institution. This at times acts as a deterrent to progress as the institutions are compelled to develop or implement politicians programs regardless of their technical impact.
- ✚ Rigidity on the side of the founder bodies that may not want to lose its identity and attachment to the institutions. They (churches) in most times become too rigid on issues of management & school administration yet the students are being trained to serve in all environments (those of their institutions identity & the secular) such rigidities sometimes degenerates into power struggles that only inhibit the growth of the institutions. It also sometimes pushes non-performers into administration. These are people who may have the backing of the founder body because of their religious attachment but a poor academic record for institutional management.
- ✚ Because of the large numbers of students in comparison to available institutions, most of these institutions are congested and classes not very conducive for academic purpose. This is however noted in some institutions and not all.
- ✚ Sometimes the management of these institutions is doing a good job, but they get interference from the ownership of the institutions and the government. These two may each want to bend the institution towards implementing their policies and promoting their ideology and this takes the institution away from the acceptable academic pathway.

4.1.6.3 Private institutions

- ✚ Less control on student discipline out of fear of loosing them & yet they are the sole source of income for the sustenance of the academic institution.
- ✚ Most of these institutions are always having financial problems because of failure of some students to pay their school dues, and these are the lifelines of the private institutions.
- ✚ Some of these institutions have a problem of management. Since they are privately owned, many owners would like to double as administrators so that they not only control the cash flow but also decision making so as to ensure attainment of their motives.

- ✚ The profit motive has driven many ‘gold diggers’ into the private school business. A number of schools have suffered closure because the founder has picked money from students & failed to meet their academic requirements after investing the money into other business ventures.
- ✚ These institutions have a higher record of defaulting on teacher payment. Even when they have the money, they may choose to invest it in more avenues that will promote the school since it is a business. They know teachers are liabilities that can come and go, so they care less about their welfare.
- ✚ These institutions by law are charged a tax. This increases their operational costs. They therefore transfer the tax burden to the students in form of increased fees. It also compromises the quality of education offered as the financial need to set laboratories, well equipped libraries & classrooms, motivate teachers among others are all affected.
- ✚ In a bid to raise as much revenue as possible so as to meet operational expenditures or profits most private institutions are over populated. They have a big student teacher ratio, and this has a direct bearing on the quality of education services that they deliver.
- ✚ These institutions usually have a problem of irregular/ unstandardized salary scales. People with the same level of qualification and doing the same work may be paid at different salary scales. This is because most of the decisions are made by the owner(s) and they at times operate outside the acceptable policy guidelines from the ministry of education and sports. Irregularity in the payment of teachers sometimes degenerates into lack of payment. Teachers go for months with no payment of their dues. This has made teacher switching between different schools a common practice in the private academic sector.
- ✚ Low compliance with the Ministry of education policies and guidelines is more noted in the private academic institutions arena. Sometimes the Ministry is forced to close down these institutions because of this failure to comply with the laws that are in place to govern the operation of these academic institutions.
- ✚ The use of unqualified teachers is a common scenario among the private institutions. Most of the time these private owners like to cut costs or stay in operation at all costs. So they employ people who at times are unqualified or are qualified to teach at low echelons of education. These are usually fought by the ministry whenever discovered though they are hard to discover

- ✚ Exam malpractice is usually more pronounced among these private institutions. Because of the economic implication of many student numbers, most of these schools would love to have their students mentioned as high performers whenever national exam results are released. It has of late become a routine that each time the Ministry releases national exam results it announces cancelling of some academic institutions results on account of exam malpractice. Usually it is private institutions that are caught as culprits.

4.1.7 Advantages of private schools over public schools

In an attempt to establish the role played by the private schools I subjected the respondents to a question that required them to state the merits of private schools over public schools. The rationale for this was the increasing foul cry from the government that it is private schools that are not meeting the quality requirements of the ministry of education. This was on top of the regular pattern that reoccurs each time the national exams are released. Exam results are always held for malpractice and it is largely private schools exams that are withheld. In light of this I tasked the respondents to give their opinion whether they feel private schools have any advantage over the public schools. The response given varied in argument and they are summarised below.

- ✚ The majority of respondents argued that private institutions are well supervised by their private owners since in many of them the owners are part of the administrators. In this regard there are low cases of teachers absenting themselves from work.
- ✚ There is quick and easy decision making, this is because there are few bureaucratic procedures to go through as opposed to the red tape that is witnessed in the many government processes.
- ✚ In case of a recommendation(s), it is a lot easier to implement in a private institution(s). They are also more easily supervised and with less bureaucratic procedures
- ✚ The presence of owners among the administration helps in monitoring the work relations and establishes collegiality. Motivation of staff is a lot higher as the school owners are usually more informed on what is happening on the ground.
- ✚ Private institutions are more result oriented as compared to public schools. Because their performance in national exams determines how many students will apply for vacancies and numbers are crucial for the survival of such institutions since these

numbers mean financial survival. It is the results of the school that will determine the input of students that the school will get in terms of not only numbers but also quality of students.

- ✚ The ratio of teacher to student in private institutions is low as compared to public institutions. There is therefore more contact between the learners and their teachers in these institutions. This boosts quality and more effective monitoring of the learners (learning) activities.
- ✚ In a bid to outwit the competition in the form of other private schools or win more students even from the public schools, most private schools invest in academic infrastructure. Their buildings (classrooms & laboratories and student hostels) are more current and well equipped than their public counterparts. In this regard for many private schools, student welfare is given more consideration than in public institutions.

4.1.8 Policy interventions to standardise performance

Building on the already mentioned attributes it is apparent that there is a noticeable difference between private, public and government aided institutions. However in light of a common good i.e to provide quality education that will be uniform across a horizontal platform. There is a need to take a certain course of action in order to level the ground for all the education players. Respondents made the following suggestion in this regard.

- ✚ Comprehensive monitoring of all the education institutions as opposed to concentrating on few institutions with a key objective of checking out whether they meet the acceptable requirements of the ministry. Monitoring should be impartially done with a key objective of ensuring that even government institutions are weighed on the same scale as private & not giving them any preferential treatment. This should be built on the premises that they are all training students who will be headed for the same job market & in this market the ownership of the institutions that the student went to will be of little or no significance. Above all the monitoring and supervision should be more regularly done to ensure consistence in the performance of the academic institutions.

- ✚ There is a strong need to improve the infrastructure mainly in the public institutions. Most of these public institutions are old and the high student populations are not helping in reducing the rate of infrastructural depreciation! The government should be more strict in adhering to set teacher student ratios so as to ensure more interaction between the two parties. There is therefore an urgent need to refurbish the old buildings and equally promote through fair tax and subsidisation policies setting up of modern/state of the art teaching-learning facilities in all the three forms of school ownerships under study. This should be built on the premises that whether taught by private, government aided or public institutions the pupils will be a work force that will end up in the same job market & above all are citizens of the country who will pay the same taxes. So they should not be left private education service providers to determine their fate or quality of education services given to them.

- ✚ Government should not only be a supervisor of private institutions but also a partner. These private players are helping the government in supplying a public good education. So it is important for the government to realise that whether it helps them or not they are supplying the manpower that will be highly needed in attaining economic development besides working in the government as well and paying taxes to it. So it is important that it (government) subsidises these institutions or even exempts them from taxes so that they plough back this money into boosting quality. It is high time government treated them as partners other than subordinates to government or government aided schools. Such partnership would mean the government and government aided schools would also pick up ideas from private institutions on how to increase their efficiency.

The current practice is the government institutions sit together and select which students to admit to their schools basing on performance in national exams. They then leave those not taken by them to 'run' around the private schools seeking for vacancies. Such a treatment portrays the image that such schools are second grade schools that take government rejects and yet all low and high achievers deserve to be catered for by the government since they are all citizens. This discriminatory treatment needs to be dropped & joint partnerships set up.

- ✚ There is also a strong need to set up a minimum wage to avoid teacher exploitation. At the moment one of the key encumbrance to progress in the private school sector is defaulting on paying the teachers in the private schools. This is ostensibly due to high operation costs, a situation that isn't helped by continued government taxation and pushing to meet quality in absence of any outstanding government assistance. The output of the education system isn't for the private business to absorb but the whole community or Ugandan population, so it is imperative that the government moves in to ensure that they guarantee that such an output meets the requirements of a growing nation. By ensuring directly that teachers in private institutions are given good treatment they are also indirectly ensuring that the students will be well attended to. This is quite the opposite of the current system where the government inspectors of schools require the private institutions to provide the evidence that the teachers are teaching, yet they do not pay similar attention to the motivation given to them to carry out effective teaching.

- ✚ Low remuneration among others has been voiced countless times as being of utmost concern to the teachers in both private and public schools. Most of the teachers mention discontent either with the amount given, mode of payment or other matters that are related to the logistical wellbeing. Most private schools pay teachers for the months when the school is in session (school term) and they receive no salary in the holidays. This puts them in a situation where they seem to be unemployed during the holiday months of the schools. This is something that the government needs to attend to & forge a way of boosting the financial muscle of private schools so as to enable them to remunerate the teachers for the twelve months of the year.

- ✚ Curriculum development should be done with due consideration of all the stakeholders in the education sector. It should be done with more emphasis on a bottom up approach that will ensure that the teachers as implementers of the curriculum have their input in development, integration and design of the curricula. Some times it is after the national exams reflecting a poor result pattern that the Ministry of Education redesigns the curriculum. This is not the best way to evaluate the curriculum! Teachers as implementers should contribute the largest part of the curriculum in consultation with the job market that employs the student that they train. This is bound to achieve better results than the current system in which the

government technocrats design and develop the curriculum for teachers to implement. Under such a situation operational problems that arise may not be given the attention they deserve and yet they have an impact on effectiveness of curriculum implementation.

- ✚ Enforcing the existing policy is also a task that needs concentrated effort. There are so many policies that would promote the education system, but the key challenge is a number of these are either not enforced or enforceable! It sometimes becomes self defeating for the government to close down a private school because of poor classroom environment, as this school may be the only one in the surrounding community and better still in that poor state such a school's infrastructure may be way better than the public schools infrastructure in the same vicinity. So government must walk the talk! If it is to ensure that private schools bend to the policy, it too must reflect a good example by using its schools as benchmarks of quality for private schools or government aided schools to emulate.

- ✚ A sound school system is built on a strong library! Many of the schools in the private wing are short of library material for the students and teachers to consult for their further reading. They restrict their libraries to core reading texts or worse still get only essential copies for the teachers who act as the 'fountains of knowledge' to the students. This does not only impede the students skills of research and knowledge seeking, but will also narrow their views and arguments in line to those of the teacher who may be the only one to have access to the book(s). Government needs to work out a library subsidisation policy that will ensure that the schools have sound standard libraries countrywide and ensure a regular updating policy is in place to make the libraries up to date through maintaining a steady supply of textbooks or recommendation of contemporary editions. This will be one of the best ways to standardise the knowledge as learners are exposed to more uniform sources countrywide.

- ✚ In service training and refreshers courses should be made a policy to ensure that teaching staff are always equipped with the current trends in the education fields of their expertise. In light of deficient libraries, the disparity in the body of knowledge that is held by the teachers owing to the difference in their training is noticeable in

the student performance. Government run refresher course or in service training will go along way in ensuring that despite of their different training, at a given period of time the teachers in a country are holding a more uniform body of knowledge. Most of the time the results in the national exam reflect a great disparity in the knowledge that the students are holding. Whereas in some districts students may be passing with mainly A's and B's in another they may not realise a single A or worse still more failures are registered than pass grades. Such refresher courses will bring together private, government aided and public institution teachers and in so doing form a common platform of agreement in regard to the knowledge that they pass on to students or help students to discover. It is in such fora that curricula will be best discussed, designed and integrated.

- ✚ There is need for a technology policy! Today the development of a sound school system cannot be achieved without harnessing a sound technological framework. Online library resources and computer use in information communication technology learning have long become a facet of the 21st century. Many schools, government owned and aided plus private are lagging behind in this area. This is partly because of the heavy start capital for installation, maintenance and upgrading sound technological learning resources. Government policy tends to be a little 'shy' or soft on technological issues. It is not a surprise that for a number of schools a student goes through the secondary school's pipeline without knowledge of computer use! It is however worth mentioning that for those well sophisticated private schools and some government and government aided schools, students exit with commendable computer skills owing to the availability of the ICT education. Such contrasts are not worthy maintaining and government should endeavour to strike a uniform technological platform.

4.1.9 Has the government played the supervisory role as it should

Government is the custodian of people's welfare; from the constitution it gets the mandate to regularly monitor the activities of all education institutions in the country. Given the deficiencies though and strengths highlighted in the literature, I was interested in finding out if it has played it's supervisory role as expected. The distribution of response on this issue revealed that many believe the government has not played its supervisory role as expected.

89% of the respondents are of the opinion that the government has not played this role, as it should.

Table 3: Response on whether the government has played its supervisory role well

| Respondents | Yes | No | Don't know |
|-------------|-----|----|------------|
| SIS | 1 | 3 | - |
| DES | - | 2 | - |
| Teachers | - | 3 | - |

The distribution of response as reflected in the table shows that even the majority of the key respondents interviewed who are senior inspectors of schools, the key government machinery for secondary, primary & pre-primary education institutions supervision do contend that the stewardship done is not sufficient. They are of the view that government can do better in monitoring and supervision. Some of the arguments advanced by those who feel the government can perform better in its role of supervision are presented below.

- ✚ Most schools have key problems affecting their performance that take along time to be noticed and addressed. For instance respondents mention the issue of schools having few or absentee teachers. This may go on for months or years before it is noted that certain schools are not having the required number of trained or on station qualified teachers.
- ✚ In light of the key quality guidelines and attributes that the government laid out in its ‘Basic Requirements and minimum standards indicators for education institutions’ instrument many schools including the government owned do not meet the criteria set. In this regard the quality in the ministry of education planners foresight remains elusive.
- ✚ The government is not only supposed to be a watch dog of institutions but has the mandate to close down those that donot meet the criteria it has laid down for school operation. Incidentally cases of closing down under performing schools are rare as it either needs the services of these schools however substandard or its monitoring officials are corrupt. The schools in operation that are falling short of the laid out ministry guidelines are still in large numbers. The inspectors are bribed by the underperforming schools officials, so they falsify the reports about these schools and leave them in operation.

- ✚ There is still the problem of big teacher student ratios in all schools under study. In spite of the government's awareness about this and its impact on quality education service delivery they still treat it as an issue with minor impact on the outcome of the education process. This problem is most pronounced in government UPE and USE schools and it is no surprise that evaluating studies carried out by independent bodies reflect poor or under performance of students within such systems. This is beside the national exam results reflecting low achievements by students in these schools.

- ✚ The Senior Inspectors of Schools noted that the government releases funds to them to facilitate inspection late. They further noted that, the money is not enough to ensure that every school is inspected with a possible follow up inspection. The consequences of this is inefficient school supervision and failure to implement recommended changes given that there is little or no follow up inspection(s).

- ✚ The Senior Inspectors of schools further noted that both the national and district inspectorate levels have no means of transport to reach schools. This means they rely on public means and since some schools are remotely located in areas with few or irregular means of transport, they remain not inspected for long periods of time. Additionally they hinted on the inadequate inspectorate staff in relation to the number of academic institutions to be inspected.

- ✚ The Senior Inspectors mention the frequent change of curriculum that is not backed by adequate research. In absence of missing research the curriculum doesn't stay for long before it becomes out dated. The big question is what are the consequences of this mobile curriculum to the job market? If government had adequate manpower on the ground, they would be able to come up with a practically designed & developed curriculum that takes into consideration the views of all involved stake holders.

- ✚ There's also an imbalance in the way inspection of schools is done. It is usually done in the easy to reach urban areas & occasionally done in the rural areas. The selective conduct of inspection does not make the situation any better! Most government schools are found wanting as regards quality, but they are left uninspected with a

wrong premises that since they belong to government they are perfect. Quality in these schools on the contrary goes down as teachers in them spend sometime teaching in private schools to earn extra income.

- ✚ One of the key respondents mentioned the problem of increasing political influence in policy and management of schools. Most times the recommendations of the technocrats are not paid heed to as politicians with administrative power such as district officials & parliamentarians among others interfere in school management. Their interference is for the purpose of gaining political popularity. These political interests may have a negative bearing on quality. The government as the leading stakeholder should see that they minimise this kind of manipulative interference in the education system.

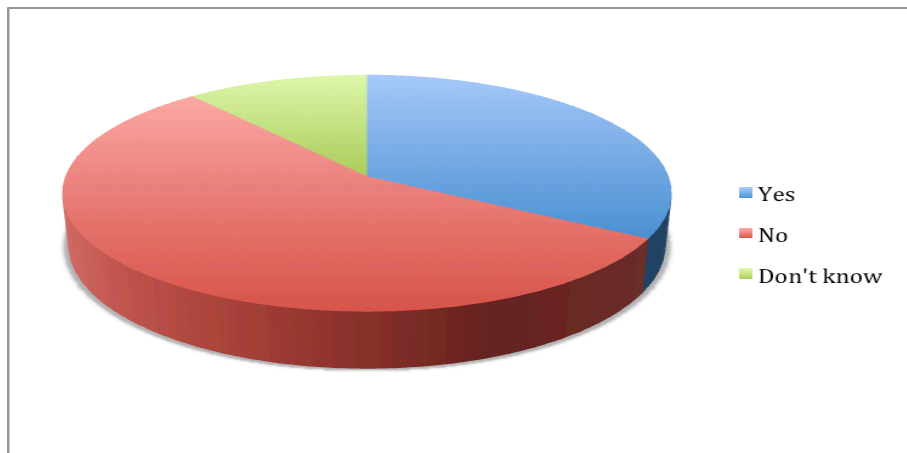
In conclusion, for the reasons advanced above the respondent majority were of the view that much as government appears to have taken a step in the direction of education progress, it can do better. They submit that the country's education sector has more potential that can be better tapped to achieve sustainable growth.

4.1.10 Government institutions as benchmarks of quality

In line with the problem under investigation, I subjected the respondents to a question whether they think government institutions have been benchmarks of quality. Response to this issue revealed that 55.56% (which is the majority percentage of respondents) were of the opinion that the government schools have not been benchmarks of quality. This raises a point with a bearing to the theme grounded in the hypothesis; that private schools therefore play a complementary role and can be seen as the much-needed relief to the burgeoning government schools. It does not however come by default as aforementioned submissions have indicated, they too have been found at fault in certain areas. None the less government alone cannot be relied upon to fulfil the education demands of the country.

The figure below is a diagrammatic expression of the respondent opinion on whether government institutions have been quality benchmarks.

Figure 3: showing whether public institutions have been benchmarks of quality.



The respondents with the opinion that the public institutions have not been benchmarks of quality argue that some government institutions too, do not meet the minimum requirements that are laid down by the ministry of Education. For instance many teachers who are employed full time in public institutions go and do part time teaching in the private institutions. This is against the ministry and government policy. Besides they further take public institution instructional materials and use them in these private institutions. This deprives the public institutions of the use of such important material. These may include textbooks and laboratory equipment among others.

The issue of teacher student ratio remains one of the worst problems in government institutions. In most schools, the teacher population is overwhelmed by the student population. This leaves a lot to be desired in regard to quality enhancement. In some districts public school structure is in a dire state and far from being a symbol of quality.

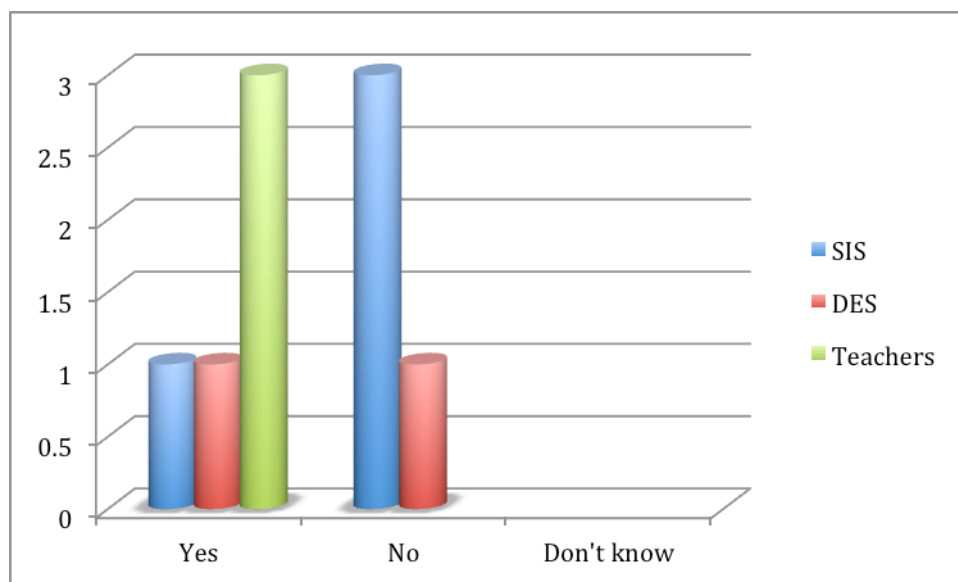
Like a thorn on a red rose, public institutions however don't only represent poor quality. There are some landmark achievements that put them ahead of most private institutions. Respondents mentioned some of them as timely remuneration of teachers. In this area they outscore many private institutions. The issue of the teacher's salaries is one of the most pressing problems in the Ugandan education sector. A number of private institutions pay less to the teacher and some default on payment for months, yet others pay too little for the services offered.

4.1.11 Private institutions filling the education gap

In establishing the private institutions the government, mandates them to provide education services that will be of meaningful use to the pupils and deliver it to them in such a way that there is no difference between the education these pupils in comparison to that in public institutions. I asked the respondents whether they think the private institutions have lived up to their expectations by filling the gap that the government should have filled in the education sector. The response revealed that five of the respondents are of the view that the private institutions have played the role as expected. However four respondents were of the view that private institutions have key issues that they have not addressed as they should and therefore have not filled the gap in the education sector as they should have.

The distribution of response as shown on the bar graph below shows that three out of the four senior inspectors of schools were of the opinion that the private schools have not played the role they should have of substituting the government in providing education services. Worth noting is the opinion of the teachers from all the institutions under study. They were all of the view that the private institutions are filling the gap that the government should have filled by offering educational services beside it.

Figure 4 responses on whether private institutions have filled the gap



The equitable distribution of response on this issue raises many more questions such as where have these private institutions failed as submitted by those of the opinion that private institutions have not played government role. On the other hand for those with the view that

the private institutions are playing the role they are mandated to, the questions would be where do they outshine the public institutions?

Those of the opinion that the private institutions are being a relief submitted the following arguments.

- ✚ UPE as a policy had so many mistakes made at its introduction that compromised the quality of education offered in the government institutions. It therefore was a much needed relief to know that there was an alternative option of schooling. These private institutions were able to lend a hand to the strained government institutions in order to deliver education for the public good.
- ✚ As premised in the literature, in Uganda the number of students seeking education services is way beyond what the government institutions can handle. The letting in of private players into the education service sector therefore was not an option but a certainty and relief. In aspects of growth it definitely is a relief because the number of school going children today has gone up tremendously. (see figures of PLE student growth in the literature section)
- ✚ There has been increased investment in the education sector by private individuals, NGO's, religious institutions among others. This has not only improved technology used in the teacher - student interaction, but also boosted diversity in scholarly systems. For example there are many international schools now teaching foreign students alongside Ugandan students. This has also brought exposure of students to different curricula and social practices as they interact.
- ✚ One of the Senior inspectors of Schools mentions that private institutions outnumber public institutions. This brings in variety of institutions on the market and it further means they are always ready to take the spill over of students after the government owned schools have picked out the students they like through selections that determine the admission to government schools.
- ✚ It is on record that some of the well performing students in the national examination are from privately institutions. Some private institutions have established themselves in the higher echelons of the academic society. Schools such as St. Mary's Kitende,

Vienna College Namugongo, Seeta high school, among others have left an indelible mark of good performance on Uganda's education sector. It's no wonder that these academic beacons have left not only parents and students clamouring for vacancies in them, but also justified the governments continued liberalisation of the education sector to allow more private players to fill the government's gap in the education sector.

- ✚ Private schools have also played a role in employing people such as teachers and those who provide support services to schools in the education service sector. This has not only boosted people's revenue, but equally had a multiplier effect on their level of economic welfare. Moreover it is worth mentioning that the Ugandan economy is labour surplus, so in opening and operating these schools the private sector is extending an olive branch to the population.

From the submission of respondents given above, it can be arguably justifiable to conclude that these schools (private) have been of tremendous help to the community. They take students that are 'rejects', those that the government schools leave out as they select best performers for admittance to their services. In this regard these private institutions deserve a standing ovation. Many of these students turn out to be the much needed labour force.

On the other hand respondents holding the view that the private institutions have not filled the gap presented the following arguments to support their view.

- ✚ Many private institutions compromise quality. Not only are they in poor & miserable conditions, some are in unacceptable learning state. They argue that these institutions are started by their owners for purposes of supplying to them money as businesses, so little interest is given to the primary purpose of starting the school which is education. Because of this profit motive such schools sometimes default on teacher's payments and sad to say they ill equip the learning environment.
- ✚ There is irregular location of private institutions given their profit motive. This on the contrary is not the government's purpose. The government is interested in education being availed to people as geographically equitable as possible. In this

regard private institutions have not filled the governments role because they're nucleated in areas that will guarantee the return of the money they invest in setting up these schools.

- ✚ Given their large numbers, monitoring and supervision is a tedious task. Building on this many escape unmonitored as they operate outside their mandate. It is therefore no surprise that whenever they are inspected / supervised majority are found to be with issues pertaining to quality that need resolving.

In conclusion it can be justifiably said that the equitable distribution of opinion on this issue shows the complementarity of these two distinct schools ownerships. Much as the response points out the problems that these two institutional types have it also highlights key difference in their operation thereby necessitating joint operation of both so as to fulfil the role of delivering education services.

4.1.12 Suggestions of possible government intervention to help private school

From a proactive perspective, i tasked the respondents to suggest possible government interventions that would help private institutions to improve their performance and contribution to the education sector plus the community at large. A number of suggestions were advanced as presented below.

Government being the principle custodian of society and peoples welfare could undertake the task of paying all teachers even those in the private education sector. It could work out an arrangement where these institutions deposit a certain minimum of their earnings with it so that it either tops up or entirely shoulders the responsibility of paying the staff in these institutions. This is built on the premises that these students are being trained for the nation and if they are ill prepared the nation will not benefit from them. Additionally these students will be serving in the same jobs as those trained in the government institutions so they should be well prepared to deliver equally well in similar conditions.

Poor study infrastructure has always recurred as one of the common problems in many of the privately owned institutions. Government could work out a loan scheme to lend money to these private institutions to set up acceptable infrastructure. It could also undertake the supervision of the construction of these scholarly structures so as to ensure that they

conform to the acceptable study environment requirements. It is a lot easier to control the quality of structures that come up, as schools and to standardise them, than wait to supervise already completed structures. After they are complete, in cases where they are found not to conform to the expected quality unnecessary compromise is made and this could be avoided.

At the moment the government requires the private schools to provide evidence that they will be able to meet all their financial obligations within a specific period of time of not less than one year. However after the school is licensed and allowed to operate less monitoring is done to ensure than these schools still maintain the financial muscle to manage their financial load. It is no wonder inevitable that whenever they fail to continue because of bankruptcy the government intervenes after the damage is done. Regular monitoring of the financial health of all the private schools should be done to save students, teachers, parents & society at large the embarrassment of closing a school when it has already misaligned the learning process.

Additionally a loan arrangement should be put in place to help schools that have made sound contribution to the education industry and save them from closing down due to financial related matters. Also passing and implementing an educational policy that allows subsidisation of long existing private institutions would reduce cases of financial trauma.

- ✚ Some institutions have in place good infrastructure but are found lacking in scholastic material such as books, laboratory equipment to mention but a few. Given the big monetary implication a number of private schools are slow in investing in the scholastic material. In a bid to standardise the output of the education process the government should start thinking about harmonising the library system in a move that will ensure that all schools share common library resources.
- ✚ There is need to review the curriculum with wider consultation of all the stakeholders at the different levels of the education hierarchy. It is important that also the curriculum is reviewed more regularly so as to keep the students and their teachers abreast of the contemporary knowledge in the academic world.

- ✚ Because of the financial squeeze, most private schools compromise quality in order to survive. One of the thorns in the side of private schools is a large sum of taxes that the government levies on them. Government should begin viewing private schools as partners in the academic sector and exempt them from paying taxes. These saved monies could be ploughed back into the schools to facilitate libraries, set up laboratories and classrooms among others. In the long run a boost to quality would be achieved.

In conclusion it is clearly highlighted by all the respondents that co funding is one of the possible interventions that will help private schools. Government should not leave the responsibility of grooming students entirely in the hands of private individuals. Besides regular monitoring and evaluation to measure the performance of these schools and taking into consideration any other adjustment they could have made will always ensure these schools stay in alignment. Better still it would avoid the embarrassment and consequences of closing the institutions because of non-performance.

4.1.13 Problems arising due to private providers of education

- ✚ Remuneration irregularities have been one of the nightmares that have come to be associated with private academic service providers. This is characterised by under payment and at other times late payment of teachers. For majority of teachers in private schools the take home pay is many more times less than their government counterparts. For most besides the official take home pay there are no other allowances that are extended to them. Besides being demotivated by these noticeable differences the private school teacher is sometimes conned & not paid at all by the private school owners.
- ✚ Coaching of students outside the normally acceptable hours and school terms. Private schools are always caught in the infamous act of teaching students in holidays with an aim of covering the syllabus earlier than scheduled by the ministry of education. They aim at ensuring their students pass exams with high grades; these will attract more students to the school in subsequent years and gain them more revenue. Besides depriving students of their right to holiday it deprives parents of their meagre incomes as this coaching is paid for. It also starts a coaching race as

each private school engages in the practice, lest its student's performance is worse than the competitors.

- ✚ There is limited quality control in private schools as compared to government schools. The private interests of the school owners usually over ride those of the ministry of education in cases of contradiction. Most private schools have a motive of generating profit to the owners. They start them as income generating projects & quality education services comes secondary. This on the other hand is not the primary mission of the government as it licenses them to operate. They are licensed as non profit making organisations with a sole purpose of providing education services and boosting literacy levels. Because of these monetary pursuits by some school owners, parents have become sensitive and highly selective of the schools to which they take their children.
- ✚ Examination malpractice that is characterised by unscrupulous practices such as buying exams. Each year as the ministry of Education releases the national exam results for various levels of education, it also mentions schools whose results are cancelled or with held because of exam malpractice. Because of the profit motive, a competition exists between the private schools to ensure that they have students among the best performers in the country. Much as this competition would be health to generate quality, it is not. It kindles cheating, as use of money takes central stage in order to ensure that each school gets a favourable mention.
- ✚ The private school service providers have a direct impact on the public schools. The coexistence of these two on top of jointly operated schools in an economy such as Uganda means there are resources that will have to be shared. Government usually forbids its teachers to teach elsewhere since they are usually on government permanent payroll. They however go & teach in private schools and on top of that take public school instructional material & use it in private institutions. At times they deny the right full users (students in public schools) the opportunity to use the items.
- ✚ Because of the profit motive, most private schools are found nucleating around populated settlements urban centres. This is because of the profit motive and

availability of many students in urban areas as compared to rural areas. They therefore have accounted for the noticeable differences in performance arising from the geographical location of the schools. On the contrary the government endeavours to locate its schools in different parts of the country given its position that it is not seeking profits. This irregular school distribution has created cutthroat competition between schools in urban centres. From such competition exam malpractice and holiday coaching among other evils have been bred!

- ✚ The student discipline in most private schools is not desirable. Some of these schools admit the students that have been expelled from other schools because of indiscipline. Others have good students in regard to discipline but their discipline deteriorates because of less control. Most of those private schools fear to lose students if they are strict regarding discipline. The loss of students to them means loss of money and profit. It therefore is always noticeable at times in the performance of students that the discipline leaves a lot to be desired.

In conclusion it is worth noting that much as the above mentioned evils are attributed to the participation of private education service providers, some of these problems are existing in public institutions also. The advantages of the private education service providers though, outweigh their evils. It is therefore incumbent upon the government to ensure that it monitors and guides these private education service providers so as to ensure that they stay in alignment and conformity to the established government guidelines.

4.1.14 Recommendations to improve joint education provision.

Building on the premises that the reasons that necessitated the ushering in of other service providers besides the government were sound. I sought to get possible recommendations that the respondents hoped would further help to iron out the inconsistencies between public, government aided & private education institutions. A variety of recommendations were given owing to the respondents key knowledge accumulated through experience and interaction with various school environments. They are presented below.

- ✚ The government should devise more watertight monitoring system in order to ensure the schools are regularly and efficiently monitored and supervised. In most situations the inconsistencies that degenerate to abuse of existent laws and policy

guidelines are correctable and avoidable if detected in time. It should also not shift goal posts when it comes to public schools. All institutions public or private should conform to the minimum requirements and standards without giving public schools preferential treatment. Most importantly the supervision should be regularised so that all institutions are always kept in check and encouraged to build quality delivery procedures.

- ✚ Increasing the logistical support that is given to the Directorate of Education Standards or the Ministry Of Education at large for purposes of institutional supervision. One of the key thorns in the education sector is limited funding. The inspectors of schools who are the government's key monitoring and supervision machinery have constantly voiced the inadequacy of the funds that they are given to perform their tasks. Education standards efforts of reaching remote school establishments and regularly making follow up inspections are hampered gravely. Using this loophole many schools operate outside the government established guidelines and in due course the quality of education is compromised.
- ✚ The inspectors of schools also note that one of the key areas where they find quality not sufficient is teacher's quality. The training that is given to the teachers is wanting in some areas. They therefore recommend that there is a strong need to improve teacher training. Some teachers are not qualified whereas others are not trained as professional teachers. This is one of the key areas that the government needs to vigorously monitor, because some schools especially in the private sector are unsuspecting victims of false teachers.
- ✚ Additionally the school inspectors note low moral arising from low motivation to the people in the education sector. A low wage bill, accumulated salary arrears, appalling housing conditions among others are openly voiced sources of discomfort to many teachers. Most of the teachers are driven by such conditions to take up other side jobs in order to boost their incomes. This leaves them with less time to perform their teaching obligations. It is also one of the key reasons why government teachers do part time teaching in other private schools, against government policy. There is a need for a complete redress on the issue of teacher motivation.

- ✚ Regular revisions of the curriculum to suit the contemporary academic demands. The inspectors of schools note that most times pupils are being taught basing on out dated education curriculum. In other situations the, curriculum is not being followed.
- ✚ Involvement of all stakeholders in the planning for the education sector. Most of the time government using its technocrats designs policies without involving the key people that will be affected by these laws or that will implement them. It is no surprise that sometimes such policies don't achieve their designer's objectives. Issues to do with curriculum among others should be done with collective contribution of every stakeholder. It is no surprise that their quality is found wanting most times when inspected.
- ✚ There is need for a minimum wage. The government should encourage a minimum wage to be paid to teachers in all institutions irrespective of ownership. The effect of a lowly remunerated teacher has a direct bearing on the performance of the teachers and the way he delivers to the students. It is paramount to note that the teachers are teaching students who will replenish the country's labour force. So for government to neglect the quality of teachers in the private school, is to indirectly neglect the quality of the labour force that will man government tasks and duties/responsibilities.
- ✚ Standardisation of all academic institutions at the same level of learning. There is an outstanding disparity between the rural schools and urban schools. Rural schools are operating in adverse conditions that are characterised by poor teaching- learning environment. On the contrary in urban parts of the country there are good learning conditions and a number of resourceful teachers (Mukombozi, 2011). It therefore comes as no surprise that the national exam results reflect a great disparity between the two contrasting geographical locations.

4.2 Interviews

4.2.0 introduction

As reflected in the methodology, key informant interviews were conducted. The sample population targeted by these were the senior inspectors of schools and the Diocesan Education Coordinators. Because the interviews were held to supplement the data already constructed through the administered questionnaires, a small population of only two respondents was involved. Most importantly because most of the questions asked were more factual than opinion related, the purpose of having many respondents would serve little purpose as response given would be a repetition rather than a value addition. The responses were processed, analyzed, organized, and presented.

4.2.1 Possible reasons behind establishment of private institutions

I asked the respondents to mention some of the possible reasons behind the establishment of private institutions. They all mentioned earning a livelihood as one of the key reasons. The Senior Inspector of Schools said most people come up to start them as income generating ventures. This is especially common for those in urban areas. On the other hand most of those private schools in rural areas are started for purposes of helping poor people and the community improve their welfare. Non Governmental Organisations, and various religious institutions mostly of a Christian Orientation mainly start these. It is fast becoming a norm that in most cases when a new church opens in an area, they start up a school to offer education services to the neighbourhood.

The inspector of government also mentioned the existence of a different type of schools, which are called ‘non - formal schools’. These are started by the community in areas where no private individuals would risk investing their money in starting up a new school. The government gives these schools limited support and is also not willing to take them up.

Besides the profit the Diocesan Education Coordinator defended the Church’s’ presence in education with the argument that the government alone does not have the facilities to provide education services in the country. So there was need for a body with interest in the society’s wellbeing such as the church to increasingly get involved in providing education at subsidised rates or free at times. He also notes that the church being a voice for the voiceless has a section of the population that it cares for. He cited the example of orphans and widows. These would require special education that may not be provided because they do

not have money. Other evils in public schools such as negligence of duty given the little supervision were an impetus to the religious bodies to get involved so as to ensure the society's voiceless too get access to education services.

4.2.2 Key challenges affecting education institutions

After breaking down the various institutions of education basing on ownership, I reconstituted the academic institutions disregarding ownership and sought to find out some of the key challenges affecting all. The senior inspector of Government noted that many of the schools do not meet the minimum basic requirements set by the ministry of Education and Sports. He however singled out two major problems that cut across all the schools irrespective of ownership.

He pointed out the first as lack of the thematic curriculum in most primary schools. The ministry of education requires each of these schools to teach following this curriculum. He further said there is just a sketch and a detailed curriculum is missing. He attributed this to a hurried implementation of this policy of using a thematic curriculum in primary schools. He further mentioned that many of the reference books that are recommended for use under this curriculum are not available in these schools. So it becomes quite impossible to continue with teaching following the guidelines of the thematic curriculum.

He also singles out the issue of insufficient infrastructure as being one of the key challenges cutting across all schools. Government schools in some parts have more students than they should in their buildings and some have been coded allocated new schools but these have not been established on the ground. Private schools too have not been spared of this evil as some put up structures hurried to meet the rising demand for their services. Others have makeshift classrooms after converting residential houses into schools. On top of this there is insufficient sitting facilities in a number of schools.

The Diocesan Education Coordinator also noted rising operation costs as one of the key challenges. Most of these schools have to foot operational costs for their survival. They run a fixed budget and yet the price level in Uganda is always rising and seldom comes down. So even for government aided which should not be charging money from pupils at primary level, they have at times asked parents to pay some money for day to day operation. The funds from the government are not enough to meet all the school's financial obligations.

These costs he noted are also felt by the private institutions, which are challenged not to increase their costs so high that they will discourage schooling. He points out that the rising costs have generated fraud in the schooling system. Some parents pay part of the tuition and then take their children to other schools in subsequent terms without completing the balance in the previous schools.

4.2.3 Government aided schools

In schools that have different founder bodies that the government is aiding, there could be situations of divergence of opinion regarding some matters. This could be because of the difference in the way the government decides to run the school as opposed to the reason for the establishment of the school by the founder body. I sought to find out how a compromise could be attained in case of difference in opinion.

The inspector of school noted that areas of conflict have always been on choosing the schools leadership. The education act gives the government power to choose the leadership in consultation with the founder body. However in most cases the founder bodies want to choose the school leadership and not the government. In cases like this they always sit and on a round table, the District Education Officer and the religious body's leadership. They usually agree following the legal guidelines as laid in the education act or involve senior Ministry of Education officers such as Permanent Secretary to come up with a workable agreement.

He (SIS) also noted that another key area of conflict was majorly in Muslim dominated districts. Here schools founded by the Muslim faith want to allocate more hours of school time to teaching of Islamic subjects. At times they put little attention on the government curriculum and dwell more on their own. It is in cases like this that the inspectors of Government come in handy to enforce the government laid down curriculum. In cases like this the Ministry of Education and Sports curriculum takes precedence over any other curriculum.

In buttressing the same the Diocesan Education Coordinator explained that the government has powers of posting teachers and key decision making for day to day operation in regard to academics in government aided schools. But the founder body has powers of ownership and is key in making decision in regard to land titles, infrastructure and other fixed assets. It

is because of this ownership that the founder body has the largest number of members on the board of governors, which is the highest management body for the school. So he notes as long as each keeps within their area of jurisdiction, disagreements are avoided but whenever they arise, they do sit down on a round table and solve them.

4.2.4 Standardising and harmonising performance of all institutions

In light of the differing philosophies of the various founder bodies of the institutions, there are paramount reasons as to why these various bodies (especially the religious institutions) would adopt particular curriculum and additions to the curriculum so as to meet their interests. For example Churches are interested in value-based education; Islamic schools the teaching of Islam, the government may be more interested in skill transmission & professional transformation of the student. Given such a difference in expectation the approach to teaching and learning would be different. I was interested in finding out what criterion is followed to reconcile these different interests in order to standardize the outcome of the education process.

To this the senior inspector of government notes that the founder bodies have to abide by the laid out curriculum as set by the government. If they must add something, the founder bodies may have to take their expected additions to the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) for review and incorporation into the curriculum. In Uganda the curriculum is usually reviewed after every 5 years. It is up to this body to modify, reject or wholesomely adopt the possible inclusions that different founder bodies may wish to be introduced into the curriculum.

4.2.5 Government contribution to private institutions

In a liberalised education system such as Uganda's, the government has always encouraged private participation of individuals in all sectors including education. Private institutions are started with clear knowledge that they have to be self-sustaining. They therefore should expect nothing from the government in terms of funds to help in their operation. However because education is a public service that in principle should be provided by the government, it would not be wrong hypothesising to state that either directly or indirectly the government must have a contribution it is making to the private institutions.

One of the outstanding contributions the inspector of schools noted was the incorporation of private schools views in policy formulation. Initially only government schools were brought on board whenever matters regarding schools were discussed. If a private school was allowed to take part in meetings to submit views regarding education policy, then they had to pay to be allowed into these forums. Government would organise workshops for only Government aided schools and material(s) would not be officially availed to private institutions. Today however private schools are allowed to take part in these education policy forums and workshops without restriction. They are also given curriculum materials just like public schools.

He further pointed out that for school inspections both public and private schools are equally supervised and monitored. He noted that in the olden days the inspectors of schools were mainly directing their efforts to the public institutions to ensure that everything is done as per government laid guidelines. The government realised the fact that whether in private or public institutions the students belong to the nation and therefore in principle supervision attention is directed to all the institutions. And they are all given relevant instructional materials regardless of ownership.

The Diocesan Education Coordinator mentioned that the Government has helped a few selected private schools at primary & secondary by giving them scholastic material such as books and lab equipment. This is more noted at secondary school level because it has also distributed some students under the government funded Universal Secondary Education (USE) program to private schools. It gives a certain amount of money to these private schools for each student they have admitted on government account of USE.

4.2.6 Ministry Of Education and Sports role

Given the situation where sometimes private schools have conned students of their money and left them unattended to. Other times they have not offered them services or worse still in extreme cases where sham schools have been closed and students left as victims. This is besides usual anomalies school strikes, teacher remuneration problems, among others. I asked the Inspector of schools whether he thought the Ministry of Education and Sports is playing the role of academic stewardship as well as it should in light of this intermittent vices.

The inspector of schools noted that the ministry is playing its role but not as efficiently as it should. For instance he noted that the acceptable approach before a school is started, should be scouting to verify if the catchment area in which it is to be established has a population that will continuously feed the school with pupils. More important also should be to find out what other schools are in the area, so as to avoid duplication of services. The criterion however one puts up structures and meets all the other requirements as laid down by the MOES and then registers the school. Because of this there are many schools congested in small areas. And when they realise the student population to serve is not there, they resort to commercial ways of competition so as to win students and survive losses or collapse. To this he noted MOES is to blame because of their weakness in monitoring.

The government inspector of schools also noted that most of the time the Ministry of Education and Sports is reactionary instead of being proactive. Instead of identifying anomalies in some institutions and recommending correcting them or closing them down, they usually respond after something has gone out of order. For example there was congestion and poor housing in students dormitories at Buddo junior school where a fire gutted and killed 20 children in their beds in 2009. This is besides other schools, which have also suffered school fires in Uganda. He points out that the ministry is not swift footed in trouble shooting and forecasting occurrences in the education sector.

4.2.7 Quality indicators

From the highly diverse level of performance exhibited in the national exams one could draw many conclusions. As laid out in the literature some districts do not get any single student passing in 1st division, whereas others have schools with all students passing in 1st and 2nd division. On top of the many factors that may account for this disparity, I sought to find out some of the key indicators of quality.

To this the inspector of schools mentioned that the ministry coined the Basic minimum requirements for schools. These are the ones that are used as a yardstick or checklist whenever they visit schools. They have established these as a threshold that each academic institution should have. They have been laid down as a policy instrument and are presented herein a summarised form in the literature review section.

The Diocesan Education Coordinator argued that quality is far beyond academics. In his opinion quality should also involve smartness of the students, clean and good appearance of the school premises, values such as time keeping and other behavioural issues such as teacher and student discipline. These too must be enforced if a conclusion is drawn that the education institutions have had a boost in their quality.

4.2.8 Prospective quality attributes for Uganda

Uganda being a developing country is still on the path of development in all sectors. Education as one of the sectors too should not be spared from adoption of new strategies for improvement. I asked the key informants which are some of those areas where in their opinion Uganda could have to channel her efforts for better education service delivery.

The inspector of schools notes that Ugandan schools have not ventured into the area of safety and security. He notes that they visit many schools where there is no security personnel or any security strategy. Other schools you cannot find a single first aid box. He also mentions that in some schools the main focus has been put on academic aspects and little energy has been directed to co-curricula activities. These too are as much aspects of quality in education as class work. A number of schools do not have space for students to play after classwork. He notes that there are many non-academic aspects that are not evaluated at the end of a cycle that schools do not pay attention to. This is a direction for Ugandan schools to venture into.

4.2.9 Advice on managing large numbers of students

I asked the key informants the possible advice that they could give on managing the large number of students at Primary leaving level, given the situation of low financial capabilities of the government to accommodate all of them into its institutions.

The inspector notes that we need to accept that we have a low resource base at the moment. Therefore we cannot have the ideal classes of few pupils, as we would want to. It is therefore important that we go back to the teacher training colleges and equip teachers with skills to handle large numbers of pupils. In most cases teachers are trained to handle a standard class of acceptable numbers. On the contrary when they go to the field they find that the situation on the ground is different. It is therefore imperative that intervention that will transform the way teachers are trained is given due consideration.

He also advised on increasing deployment of teachers so as to reduce teacher student ratios. He mentions that there are teachers in the country, but government has not deployed them for different reasons. For instance he noted that before deployment the government first finds out the number of classes and classrooms that a school has. It will then deploy teachers basing on this and not necessarily the number of pupils. So it is a step in the good direction if the government reduces the teacher student ratio. I however note that this investigation of establishing the number of pupils and classrooms may take sometime by which time improper student numbers could be a burden to put up with.

4.2.10 Areas for further investigation in regard to private- public education provision

The issue of government and private sector jointly providing education services to the citizens is global; studies into a harmonious operation or coexistence of the two are always a welcome approach to achieve efficiency. I asked the respondents some of the other vital areas in this regard that they considered vital to research on with specific reference to the Ugandan context.

The inspector of schools notes that in the Ugandan context, the level of compliance to the minimum basic requirements is still very low. He therefore suggests that there is a need for further research to find out why in spite of these instruments being in place as guidelines of operation, still a number of schools both government and private are failing to comply to them.

He also mentions that there is need to research further why the government has failed to enforce its policies. He mentions the government policy on teacher student ratio, use of recommended instructional materials and putting books in the hands of learners (setting up good libraries), starting schools after they are approved by government, among others. He notes there are so many good policies in regard to quality that would be very useful for attaining quality but they are not implemented.

He notes that they as inspectors of schools usually find anomalies and write reports about them, but they do not have powers to enforce their recommendations. The responsibility of implementing their recommendations lies in the hands of the Chief Administrative Officers of the districts or Permanent Secretary of the MOES. It is one of these officers who should

come to the ground and verify or enforce the recommendations. This has therefore created a gap in enforcement and research may be necessary to come up with practical suggestions of ensuring effectiveness by suggesting other checks and balances that would streamline the system.

In conclusion it can be deduced from this concurrent interview presentation that private – private education services is a ‘bag of mixed emotions’. It is also not without justification that they need each other for complementarity. Each of the education players is rendering a very important service to the nation. Besides numbers of school going children in Uganda have gone up due to no restriction entry into education service provision. As long as the laid out criteria by the ministry is met, schools can be started by anyone in any part of the country.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present summaries and conclusions to key issues addressed by the study. This study was conducted as an eye opener to the situation of joint education service provision, time & resources limited its scope. It however served the purpose of contributing to the available body of knowledge and generating of interest for deeper study of the relationship between public and primary institutions in Uganda. Recommendations are therefore given basing on the findings reported herein. Other deeper areas for studying are recommended in order to add onto the body of knowledge that is possessed in regard to private, public and government aided institutions.

5.2 Conclusions

The study was majorly anchored on the argument that, In spite of the government being the pace setter in providing education and being a watchdog of quality in the educational sector, teachers (includes lecturers) and students in government owned institutions have always voiced dissatisfaction about the quality in public institutions. Strikes by these two groups among other inefficiency indicators have been witnessed on various occasions more in government institutions than in private. Teacher complaints of unfriendly work environments, salary arrears, low and late remuneration, poor facilitation, congestion in classes have all become unending feature of the sector. In the same stead private institutions serving alongside the government in a bid to deliver education that is much needed for development have equally been found wanting in some areas.

The study revealed that private education service providers are indispensable allies of the government because; they are needed to enhance quality in education provision bred from competition, government alone cannot cater for all the students and teachers needs in the country because of its limited facilities and logistical endowments. It cannot satisfactorily level the current demand for education services in the country at all levels. Above all it is important that choice is offered to parents as to where they can take their children. This is besides the government policy of privatisation, which encourages private investors in all sectors of the economy including education. These among other reasons emerged from the study as a premises for opening doors to private education service providers.

Additionally the government being a sole provider of educational services was not supported by majority of respondents. They based their arguments on the under performance of the government in its stewardship role over the whole education process. They argue that Basic Requirements and minimum standards indicators for education institutions' in the instrument laid down by government have not been honoured by a number of schools including the public. Most schools have key problems affecting their performance. They take along time to be noticed and addressed because of inefficient supervisory machinery. Closure of under performing schools is rare and is usually done after they have cost the student dearly. Some of the monitoring officials from the ministry of education are corrupt. There is still the problem of big teacher student ratios in most of the schools under study. The Senior Inspectors of Schools noted that the government releases funds to them to facilitate inspection late; this hampers their movement and work.

This is besides the problem of an under staffed inspectorate. The number of inspectors of schools in proportion to the number of academic institutions to be inspected is inadequate. Frequent change of curriculum that is not backed by adequate research and an overall imbalance in the way inspection of schools is done are crucial challenges. Increasing political influence in policy and management of schools among others has painted a picture that government alone could not be relied on to offer quality education. Majority of the respondents involved in the study contended that government has not played its supervisory role in the education sector. This therefore clearly lays the platform for not only emergence but also sustenance of private educational institutions.

Government schools facing challenges however does not mean private schools are a paradise. They also have a number of issues with a bearing to quality. Most of the private schools are fond of under paying and in many times late payment of teachers. From the study it was further noted that coaching of students outside the normally acceptable hours and school terms in contravention of government policy is done in private schools. Most importantly there is limited quality control in private schools as compared to government schools. Another outstanding vice of examination malpractice characterised by unscrupulous practices such as buying national exams is mentioned in private schools. This is on top of the student discipline that is found wanting in most cases. And lastly because of

the profit motive, most private schools are found nucleating around populated settlements mostly in the proximity of urban centres thereby circulating in small catchment areas.

5.3 Recommendations

In light of this background it became apparent that there is need for joint operation in a bid to offset the weaknesses of single player. From the study a number of recommendations were made in a bid to iron out the inconsistencies. Participants suggest comprehensive monitoring of all the education institutions irrespective of ownership. Improvement of the infrastructure mainly in the public institutions is still one of the key tasks that need to be undertaken. Government shouldn't only become a supervisor of private institutions but partner with them through various programs.

There is also a need to change the current admission system into government institutions after national exams. All institutions should be given a chance to select students together as opposed to leaving of low performers to private schools. A minimum wage should be set by the government to avoid teacher exploitation. Curriculum development should be done with due consideration of the all the stakeholders in the education sector and enforcing the existing policy is also a task that needs concerted effort. Lastly to ensure that teachers acquire in service training refresher courses should be made a policy to ensure that teaching staff is always equipped with the current trends in the education fields of their expertise.

The study clearly highlighted the need for palliative action to correct the problems in a number of unproductive learning environments. In attempting to suggest solutions to challenges faced by the joint entities in education service provision, it is a defensible recommendation that co funding is one of the possible interventions that will help private schools to boost their performance. Government should not leave the responsibility of grooming students entirely in the hands of private individuals. Besides regular monitoring and evaluation to measure the performance of these schools and taking into consideration any other adjustment they could have made will always ensure these schools stay in alignment. Better still it avoids the embarrassment and consequences of closing the institutions because of non-performance.

5.2.2 Areas for further research

This study was conducted as an academic inquiry fulfilling partial requirements leading to award of a Master of Philosophy in Education of NLA University College. It therefore was constrained by time, logistical support and coverage of the study population. The study was however able to point out the key problem that even as this joint operation has created mutual exclusivity, there still remains many inconsistencies that need to be ironed out. It is my strong recommendation that a further study be conducted lasting a longer time period, covering larger sample area and bringing in more participants than those involved in this study. Above all once conducted such a study should be able to come up with workable recommendations to the challenges affecting joint provision of educational services.

In line to the same, I further suggest a comparative study of joint operation of education services. The private-public education institution ownership is a global scenario. It would therefore be good for planning purposes if benchmarking is done by taking a study in other nearby countries to Uganda or better still in other countries of the developed world. Such a comparison may generate resourceful information that could raise the education standards of Uganda as a country & East Africa at large.

5.3 Summary

Even as the coverage of this study should and could have been wider, time and monetary resources were key hampering factors to a more exhaustive and comprehensive coverage. It was therefore my strong recommendation that a corrective study ought to be done. This should raise more palliative approaches to improving performance between public and private sector. The government also needs to realise that Uganda is a developing country and education is a priority that is highly needed to achieve and sustain development. They should therefore control most of the educational institutions as opposed to leaving majority of them in the hands of private institution owners. The government too needs to improve the it's performance as regards the role of stewardship in it's institutions. In as far as achieving the objectives of the study are concerned, the study was largely success.

In conclusion it can be highlighted that, the biggest contribution of the joint operation of government & private education has been a highly noted pupil intake especially because of the massive UPE supply. For the future of the educational sector there will be need for synergy between the various players if quality is to be sustainably delivered.

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