

**THE CAUSES OF POOR PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY
LEAVING EXAMINATION IN WATAMU LOCATION IN
MALINDI DISTRICT**

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**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A BACHELOR'S
DEGREE IN SECONDARY EDUCATION OF KAMPALA
INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

AUGUST 2010

DECLARATION

I JAMES MWAMERI MUGANGA hereby declare that this is my original work and has never been submitted to any institute of learning for any award.

Signed:

JAMES MWAMERI MUGANGA

Signature:.....

Date:.....28/08/2010.....

APPROVAL

This research report has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university supervisor.

Signed 
OKURUT GODFREY

Date: 28/08/20

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved children Grace Makhu, Benta Nyadzua, Paul Mwameri and Joshua Kalenga. May this research work inspire them endeavour and seek for more knowledge.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to my wife Mrs. Alice, for her love and care for the family while I was away for my studies. My elder brother, Samuel M. Muganga for the Financial support he rendered to me which enabled me complete my studies and this project work. Last but not least, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor Mr. Okurut Godfrey for guiding me come up with this research work.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the causes of poor academic performance in Secondary schools in Watamu location, Malindi District, Kenya. The specific objectives of the study were to determine if discipline affects the students' academic performance, to determine if a teacher's quality affects the students' academic performance; and to determine if school facilities affect the students' academic performance in Secondary schools. The methods used for data collection were questionnaires and interview guides to students, teachers and head teachers of the schools involved in the study. In chapter four, the findings were presented and interpreted in relation to the study objectives and research questions. While linking to the existing literature, results included demographic characteristics, frequency and percentages. Based on the findings it was observed that teacher qualities, discipline of students; and school facilities have a direct impact on the students' academic performance. In chapter five, development of solutions to the problem, summary of the findings and conclusions were attempted. The findings suggested recommendations that the Government should provide more teaching learning facilities in schools to make the learning environment more attractive to students and teachers among other recommendations.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

For quite a long time, schools in Watamu Location in Malindi District have been recording poor performance and decline in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examinations (KCSE). This had great concern to the students, parents, teachers, head teachers and other stake holders of education. The poor performance was attributed to lack of reading culture, lack of enough training materials, insufficient funding of schools by stakeholders, lack of proper supervision of teachers and untrained teachers are the root causes of poor performance of schools Watamu Location.

The present situation in regard to the general academic performance in Secondary schools of Watamu Location is pathetic and quite worrying. This situation has been worrying for many years yet nothing much has been done to alleviate the situation.

The researcher noted the following were some of the factors responsible for the poor academic performance in Watamu Sub County, Malindi District;

- Poor attitude of both parents and children
- Poor teaching and learning methods employed by the teachers while administering their respective subjects.
- Poor environment, in which the teaching and learning process is, carried out.

This study therefore intended to find out salient factors responsible for the seemingly poor performance and decline in standards in Secondary Leaving Examination in Schools of Watamu zone, Malindi District has over 90 Secondary Schools both government aided and privately owned. Watamu Location where the study was restricted had about 20 Secondary schools,

1.2 Statement of the problem

For the last four years, Secondary schools in Malindi District have continued to register poor and declining academic performance in Secondary Leaving Examinations, The outcry in the community over the students' failure in all examinable disciplines prompted the researcher to investigate into the factors leading to the poor performance in

Secondary Leaving Examinations in Malindi District and particularly in Watamu location.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The following were the objectives of the study;

- To establish the attitude of both parents and their children towards studies.
- To find out the causes of poor academic performance in the study area and how it can be solved.
- To find out whether teachers employ proper teaching and learning methods in the teaching and learning process.
- To find out how economic, social and political environment contributed to the poor academic performance and decline in standards.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the factors that have led to the poor academic performance of Secondary Schools in Malindi District and more particularly in Watamu Sub County.

1.5 Significance of the study

The researcher found out the causes of poor performance in

Secondary Leaving Examinations in Watamu Sub County. The findings, suggestions and recommendations were of great importance in the following ways;

- To highlight the importance of the study in the District, county's and stakeholders.
- To help career teachers in schools to be in better position to counsel students on any appropriate career.
- To provide appropriate means for teachers on the methods employed in teaching.
- M.O.E.S to realize the necessity for funding and supply of instructional materials and facilities a pre-requisite for training purposes.
- The findings of this study was intended to provide data for further research studies.

1.6 Research Questions

1. Does the historical background affect the general academic performance of students?
2. Do teachers employ proper teaching - learning methods in the teaching and learning process?

3. Does teacher - pupil relation have any effect on the academic performance of the students?

1.7 Scope of the study

The research was carried out in Watamu Location in Malindi District and was restricted in the five sampled and selected Secondary Schools.

These schools included the following;

1. Watamu SDA Secondary
2. Mibarakachembe Secondary School
3. Gede Secondary School
4. Ngala Girls Secondary School
5. Bobi Tuva Secondary School

These are both government aided and Secondary schools that were sampled and selected for the study on the basis of their historical background and their accessibility by the researcher. Also subjects to the study included; teachers, Students, head teachers, political heads of various categories, local administrators and parents of these selected and sampled schools.

1.8 Definition of terms

Government aided schools; schools sponsored by the government

Private Schools; Schools owned by individuals or organizations

Subjects; respondents to the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the causes of poor academic performance in K.C.P.E results. This chapter was especially based on the literature review of previously done studies that were related to this particular research topic. This literature review equipped the researcher with valuable information ranging from historical background of students, education, examinations and current practices in schools, and examination and administration. The information gained helped the researcher to draw partial and final conclusion on the causes of poor academic performance of students in K.C.P.E.

According to Thy re Dennis (1971:5);

"The provision of games during teaching and learning process play a great role in which a number of objects may be displayed in a meaningful way. This is highly desirable.

To site an example, a play activity may be centred around shops,

farm, day-to-day lifestyle, this is most precise in mathematics or language subject from the learners' experience. These play activities make it quite easy for the learners to quickly understand certain concepts of subjects and eventually the general academic performance will improve.

This clearly shows that teachers should provide different methods of teaching and learning and they should not be far from the learners' experience. Therefore, learners will have to gain interest in learning.

Many other writers have written about poor attitudes towards learning but from the above authors, there is clear indication that on various problems, the teachers are supposed to secure the situation by using good methods of teaching, use of teaching learning materials secure the situation by using good methods of teaching, use of teaching learning materials and exhaustion of the meaning of any concepts. This will help teachers to achieve their objectives and learners will enjoy the subject too and hence good academic performance.

Odada (1997:5) states that;

"Teachers spend much teaching time on classroom control, and become slow in completing the syllabus, the students leave schools, to

less crowded schools, accept to sit on the floor, carry their armed chairs and stools from home, provide themselves exercise books, smear classrooms with cow dung and such, becomes the source of the problem."

This is very true, many teachers tend to spend much of the time on other activities and eventually they are caught up with time. Failure to complete the syllabus automatically will result into poor academic performance in the examinations and the students may be out spotted over areas they did not cover in class.

A report on education for (1999) observed that;

"Quality of education, Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) is reduced; this is due to the high ratio of teacher- pupil, this leads to the level of concentration to be lowered. Further, the facilities are lacking, therefore, learning is interfered with for example; basic necessities for learning like; food, shelter and clothing are lacking".

From the above statement is very clear that when the ratio of teacher to pupil is higher than expected, class control becomes hard for the teacher, and as a result, concentration is limited. Under such circumstances, the teacher usually concentrates to the students in the

front seats and it is difficult to cater for individual abilities due to overcrowding in the class.

About poverty Kari-Holt (1996:10) has to say;

"Targeting transfer of riches to poverty structure areas is one solution to the problem facing the teaching of English Language."

According to the Kenya National Examination Board (KNEB) Secondary examination report on work candidates November 1988 examination had this to say; "This overall performance of education November 1998 Secondary Examinations generally indicated a slight decline from that of 1997, candidates performance in basic science and healthy science was followed by social studies the report further reveals that generally the general performance in 1998 was slightly poorer than that of 1997. However results could have been better for 1998 if students had been exposed to a wider variety of documents, where languages cut across various discipline".

UNICEF (1997:10) states that;

"Poor classrooms constructed were due to a number of problems like; lack of funds to build classrooms because SMC fund is no longer being paid by parents, not **providing** enough labour because they think

government should provide these facilities, parents were prevented from contributing towards Secondary education funds meant for building had been inappropriate or misallocated".

Related to this report on the empowerment of women (1997:5) they write; "Inadequate school facilities especially sanitation facilities for female students to education institutions and failure of provision for girls with disabilities do affect the process of learning and generally teaching and learning process".

This affects the morale of both teachers and students during the learning process. Teachers resort to other activities that will provide income while learners inhibit lack of seriousness through absenteeism, late coming and playfulness.

Drawing on this background, this literature shows that there are indeed hindrances that inhibit effective learning due to classroom needs and insufficient teachers' needs, which are all unmatched with the unprojected students' enrollments. All the needs can be met with proper planning or financial resources, which seem not to be readily available.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Design of the study

The study employed quantitative research design. The basic data collection was of semi-structured questionnaire with **pre-determined** responses. Key informants were interviewed and these included; Head teachers, teachers, parents, Education Officers and DIS of Malindi District. During the process of data collection, the principle of confidentiality was seriously taken into account.

3.2 Area of the study

From **Watamu** Sub County, five Secondary schools were **randomly** selected. All the schools are day Secondary schools. These included the following;

1. Watamu SDA Secondary
2. Mibarakachembe Secondary School
3. Gede Secondary School
4. Ngala Girls Secondary School
5. Bobi Tuva Secondary School

The researcher also randomly sampled the respondents of the study and the major categories of respondents included; students, head teachers, teachers, parents, Education Officers and D.I.S. A total of 200 respondents were used for this research. 163 students, 10 head teachers, 20 teachers, 10 parents, EO and DIS were selected for the study.

In schools sampled, students were randomly selected from P.7 class as they could clearly express ideas and interest about their future studies and performance. The questionnaires were administered to students, teachers and head teachers. While a **face-to-face** interview was conducted to DEO and DIS and parents and their responses were recorded.

3.3 Instruments used to collect data

The researcher employed a variety of research instruments in the process of data collection. These instruments included the following listed hereunder;

- Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Observation

Questionnaires

The researcher prepared questionnaires depending on the data that was required in compiling the report, The **questions in** the questionnaires included both structured and open-ended questions. These questionnaires were then distributed to the respective respondents to fill them with the relevant and reliable data.

Interviews

The researcher also conducted interviews with some respondents especially those who had a problem with language barrier (English) and for those respondents who seemed to be so busy to fill in the questionnaires.

Observation

The researcher observed the results of Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examinations in the identified schools and the learning situations of the schools.

3.4 Validity and reliability of instruments

The responses from all the instruments were categorized according to the items using frequency tallies and score tables. The results were presented in tables with frequency, and percentages depending on the

given responses.

For reliability, the data was continually analyzed during and after data collection using open-ended questionnaires, close ended and interviews, The questionnaires were used in the same way for the research to identify and analyze the corresponding information that was transcribed to determine its reliability.

3.5 Procedure of data collection

The data was collected using the instruments mentioned above. The questionnaires were given out to the respondents (teachers, head teachers). The researcher collected them later after being filled in. The researcher did the sorting and editing of data. The interviews were conducted mainly with students and teachers who gave information about various items in the study. Observations were done on request and findings recorded in daily form on each visit.

3.6 Data Analysis

Quantitative data was coded and tabulated by adding the results from all sampled schools. Editing was done in the field to ensure completeness, uniformity, accuracy and consistency in the data

collected. Coding was done and coded data was put in frequency tables and the findings of the study were analyzed using percentages.

3.7 Limitations to the study

The researcher met the following problems during the data collection process; Insufficient funds to meet the costs of traveling to collect data, printing research book and meeting other necessary facilities for the research.

Unwillingness of some of the respondents; students, teachers and head teachers plus parents to give necessary information about the study.

Inconsistencies in the data given made the research to determine the reliability and validity of the information given by the. Teachers - students and head teachers.

Some uncooperative respondents made it difficult to the researcher to compile the report due to the incomplete work.

Inadequate attention due to the busy schedule of some respondents made the researcher meet unnecessary expenses to draft more questionnaires since some were misplaced In offices.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

This chapter gave the results of the analyzed data obtained from the five sampled schools studies namely;.....

For easy interpretation, each research question was considered and the results presented in table form expressing the percentages of the possible causes of poor performance of students in K.C.P.E Exams in Secondary schools of Watamu location y. The results of different influencing factors are given in separate tables.

4.2 Research Question I

This question stated; "Does the historical background affect the general academic performance of students?"

Table 1: Whether historical background of students affect their performance

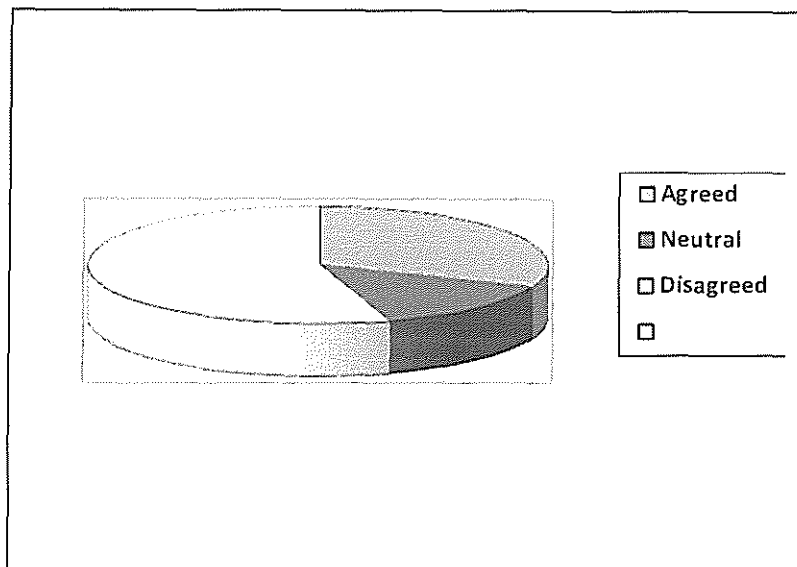
Who agreed	Neutral	Who disagreed	Total
90	23	50	163

From the table above, 163 students who were asked to comment whether historical background of students affect their performance, 90 students agreed to the questionnaire giving a percentage of 55%, 23 students were undecided giving 14 % while 50 ;r.;r/.s disagreed to the statement giving 31%.

The teachers also supported this that some students attend classes while they lack pens, exercise books attend other essential scholastic materials while others attended classes when they are under stress.

The researcher further asked parents whether they spare some time for their children to read and do home work from home. It was found out that some parents do not have time for their children at home and some parents engage their children with other activities discouraging their revision from home.

Fig. 1 Pie chart showing responses to the effect of historical background on performance of students



According to the above graphical and statistic presentation, the respondents who disagreed that the historical background had effect on the academic performance of the students had the largest section of 55%, followed by 31% of those who agreed that the historical background of the students had an effect on the academic performance of the students and 14% were neutral, that they neither agreed or disagreed that the historical back ground had an effect on the academic performance of the students.

4.3 Research Question II

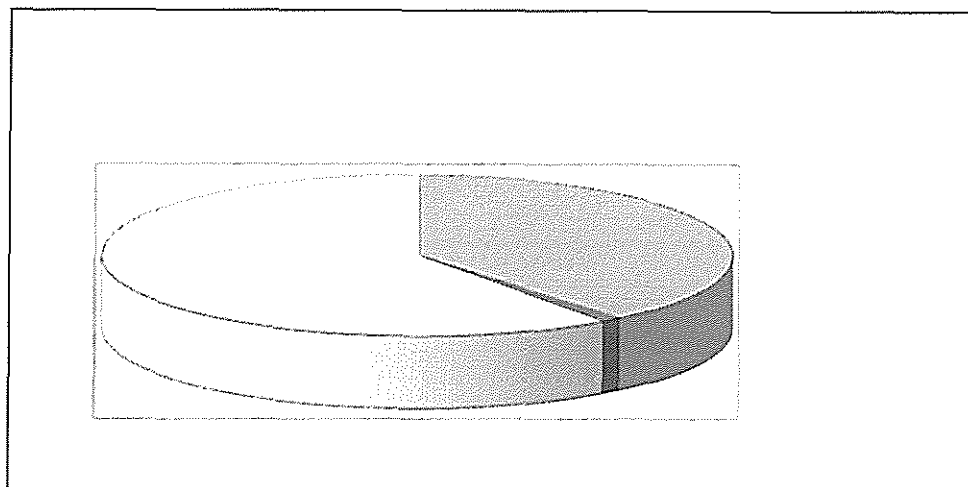
This question stated that; “Do teachers employ proper teaching – learning methods in the teaching and learning process?”

Table 2: Showing responses on method employed by teachers

Responses	Total	%
Who agreed	97	39%
Undecided	2	1.0%
Who disagreed	64	60%

On the methods used in classroom while teaching, it was unfortunate to find out that some teachers are still using unsuitable methods for this level. Some do not consider the level of the class hence students hate them and fail to grasp what they are teaching. As a result students decline in their performance. The above explanation was further illustrated using a bar graph as can be seen below;

Fig. 3 Pie chart showing responses on teacher-pupil relationship



According to the pie chart above, 60% disagreed that teacher pupil relationship has an effect on the academic performance of the pupil, 39% agreed that it has an effect on the performance of the students and 1% were neutral, that is, they neither agree nor disagreed.

Table 3 Guidance and counseling in Secondary schools

Responses	Total	%
Yes	31	19
No	132	80.9

According to the above 19% of students support that guidance and counseling is being carried out in their school while 80.9 confirm that there is no counseling and guidance in their schools when teachers and head teachers were asked to comment on the importance of guidance and counseling in schools.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

The findings were discussed in this chapter as follows; discussion of results, conclusion **and recommendations**,

5.1 Discussion

Historical background of students' performance. It was found out from the study that poor performance of students in schools is brought by lack of reading culture of students in schools, poor methods of teaching by teachers, poor relationship between parents, teachers and students, domestic violence in families, poor feeding of students, some pupil with long distances from their homes to school as result grow tired and lack to concentrate in classes. Some teachers even do not assess students work, and there is a failure to cater for individual difference in class hence causing poor performance of students.

Scholastic materials and the performance of students

It was found out that scholastic materials play a big role on the performance of students. It is the instructional materials that make

teaching more effective to learners for they can coordinate all senses of students and teaching aids, explain complex concepts more than words.

The researcher investigated and found out that in most schools teachers do not cater for the value of their use. In so doing the poor performance of students is projected to teachers' reluctance to using a variety of teaching aids in schools.

According to Goodrich (1964) teaching aids add various essential dimensions in lesson.

He said the use of audio, visual aids saves time in dictating notes and writing on the chalkboard. While Farrant .S. (1988) observed that a teacher's work largely consist of communicating his experience to the children and teaching aids can help in sight and sound.

Teacher-- pupil relationship

The findings of the study shows that there is poor teacher - pupil relationship for some teachers are made and do not create good atmosphere to students. For instance in classes no incentives are provided to students by teachers.

Again, some teachers use poor methods of teaching and some are not good examples to students. It was absurd to find out that there are some teachers who go to school when they are completely drunk hence violate the professional ethics. As a result, students perform poorly and their poor performance is projected in one way or another to teachers, students and parents and the environment they live in.

Guidance and counseling in schools

It was found out that guidance and counseling is not effectively done in schools. Some teachers claimed that there is need to waste their time on an activity, which is not examinable at the end of the course.

5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, therefore the poor academic performance of students in schools was projected to students' home background where they are facing many problems including poor feeding, domestic violence in some families, poverty in their homes where by some students report to school with out enough scholastic materials, lack of ample, time to do homework and lack of reading culture in homes, some students are being looked after by guardians who are not cooperative to them. High rate of orphanage also affects the performance of students in school.

Other causes of poor performance of students in schools included lack of guidance and counseling in schools, poor methods of teaching used by some teachers, high pupil teacher ratio and lack of enough teaching aids in school were noted.

5.3 Recommendations

From the study findings, the following are the researcher's recommendations;

- Parents should be sensitized to give their children enough time for revision while at home. This leads to effectiveness of both teaching and learning process.
- Teachers must follow their professional code of conduct. They should avoid drunkenness at the school premises, enter the classrooms when they are smart, use appropriate methods of teaching and be exemplary to their children.
- To improve on the performance of learners, guidance and counseling should be promoted in schools.

- Regular assessment of students work by teachers should be promoted.

Use of a variety of teaching aids in classes should be promoted.

Government should ensure that teachers are well motivated so that they can love their work. This can instill morale to teachers. This can be done through; paying better salaries and in time, provision of allowances like housing, transport and subsistence.

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE TO HEAD TEACHERS

Instructions to the respondents

Using the options provided tick or circle the correct answer of your opinion

There is no need to disclose your name unless you specifically wish to do so for acknowledgement.

Answer all questions

N.B: All your responses will be treated with maximum confidentiality.

1. The school gives prizes to students who perform better in class.

(a) Strongly agree

(b) Agree

© Neutral

(d) Disagree

(e) strongly disagree

2. Our school gives enough instructional materials from M.O.E.S.

(a) Strongly agree

(b) Agree

© Neutral

(d) Disagree

(e) Strongly disagree

3. We encourage co-curricular activities in our schools

(a) Strong agree

(b) Agree

© Neutral

(d) Disagree

(e) Strongly disagree

4. Do get increment on top of your salary at your school ?

(a) Yes

(b) No

5. What is the teacher -pupil ratio of your school?

.....

6. Parents visit the school to check on the performance of their children.

(a) Strongly agree

(b) Agree

© Neutral

(d) Disagree

(e) Strongly agree

7. Do you encourage home work in your school?

(a) Yes

(b) No

8. Guidance and counseling in our school is highly emphasized

(a) True

(b) False

9. Teachers carry out remedial teaching in our school.

(a) True

(b) False

10. Fill the table below of the performance of students in K.C.P.E in your school.

School Name:.....

Year	Grade I	Grade II	Grade III	Grade IV	Grade V
2002					
2003					
2004					
2005					

11. According to the above, what is your comment on the performance of students in K.C.P.E Exams in your school?

.....

.....

APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

Instructions to the respondents.

Do not write your name on this questionnaire

Using either a tick or circle on any of your choices.

N.B: All your responses will be treated with maximum confidentiality

1. Class:..... Sex:..... Age:.....

2. Who is the caretaker at home?

(a) Father (b) Mother

© Guardian (d) Others specify

3. How many children are there at your school?

.....

4. How many of you go to school?

.....

5. How many wives does your father have?

.....

6. My parents always visit me at school

(a) True (b) False

7. My teachers give me home work everyday.

(a) True (b) False

8. There are some teachers who come to school while they are drunk.

(a) Strongly agree (b) Agree

(c) Neutral (d) Disagree

(e) Strongly disagree

9. I get enough time at home to do home work.

(a) True (b) False

10. Our teachers attend classes effectively.
(a) True (b) False
11. My teachers encourage me to perform better class.
(a) True (b) False
12. Our school gives prizes to students who perform well in Exams.
(a) True (b) False
13. We carry co-curricular activities at school?
(a) True (b) False

APPENDIX III

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS AND OTHER KEY INFORMANTS

1. Do your children come home with home work from school?
(a) Yes (b) No
2. Do you attend PTA Meetings to discuss the performance of your children?
(a) Yes (b) No
3. What do you have to say about the performance of your students in UPE schools in your are?
.....
4. Do you give your children enough time to read books at home?
(a) Yes (b) No
5. Is there any fund (inducement) you pay to teachers for the service given to your children?
(a) Yes (b) No
6. What is your comment on the performance of teachers in your schools?
.....
7. Of what importance is the contribution of Public Secondary schools to your children in your area?
.....
8. According to your observation, how do yo u compare the performance of public Secondary schools and private Secondary schools?
.....
9. Wh at can be done to improve on public Secondary schools performance?
.....