

## GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS IN ENHANCING RURAL CHILDREN TO ACCESS PRIMARY EDUCATION IN MOROGORO, TANZANIA

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### Abstract

*The purpose of this research was to determine the efforts done by government in enhancing rural children to access primary education in Morogoro, Tanzania. The main aim of research was to find out the government's efforts in facilitating rural children to enrol in standard one. The researcher used the survey research design. The purposive sampling was used to select 6 primary schools. Data were then analyzed using both descriptive and statistical techniques. The objective was analyzed descriptively by using frequency tables, graphs, and percentages. The findings of the study were that educational, physical and financial resources were having significant positive results on the enrolment of pupils in primary schools. The study then concluded that Primary Education Development Programs (PEDP) through capitation grants had direct significant impact to pupils' enrolment in schools. The study is of significance as it provides information that can be used by the Ministry of Education and policy makers to identify strategies that can facilitate many pupils to enrol in rural primary schools, and enable policy makers come out with stipulation for improving enrolment in rural primary school.*

**Keywords:** Children, Enrolment, Rural communities

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### Introduction

All over the world, education forms the basis for economic, social and political development of any nation (World Bank, 1998). Everyone is obliged to invest in education since by so doing, it promotes economic development and hence, it increases production in terms of socio-economic development and reduce social disparity (World Bank, 1998). Education is treated as one of key indicators of a country's development level (UNESCO, 2005). Education is also recognized as a basic human right adopted by the UN in 1948. The right to education was adopted in Tanganyika (now Mainland Tanzania) in 1961 when the nation became a UN member after obtaining its independence (Omari and Mosha, 1987). Though in this 21<sup>st</sup> century, education sector has continued to face a lot of problems despite the efforts done worldwide in solving them.

### Background to the Problems of Education in the World

It was found that right to education was not offered to millions of children in the world and approximately 72 million children who had to start learning were not enrolled to primary schools (Humanium, 2014). Worldwide, it was reported that 250 million children fail to reach Grade 4 or reach it without learning to read or write, whether they had been to school or not. Furthermore, the number of illiterate adults remained stubbornly high at 774 million (UNESCO, 2014).

Great discrepancies in access and completion rates of pupils exist within and between countries. It was stated that fifty five percent of children not enrolled in primary schools were girls and 4 out of 5 who were not enrolled in schools lived in rural areas mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa and in southern as well as western Asia (UNESCO, 2009). It was claimed that child labour, poor health and physical disabilities were some of the major barriers to Universal Primary Education. Furthermore, it was noted that children with physical disabilities were marginalized and not allowed to go to school (UNESCO, 2009).

In 1990, about 150 delegates from many countries around the world joined together in Jomtien, Thailand and carried out the World Conference known as **Education for All** (EFA). The main purposes were to make primary education become right to every child worldwide and reduce illiteracy rates (UNESCO, 2000), with purposes of meeting basic learning needs, shaping the vision, universalizing access and promoting equity in education, focusing on learning attainment, broadening the means and scope of basic education, improving learning the environment, strengthening partnerships among players in education, developing a supporting policy context for education, mobilizing resources and strengthening international solidarity in education (UNESCO, 2000).

Another **World Education Forum** was held in 2000 in Dakar, Senegal, which emphasized on the need for meeting 'Education for All Goals' by the year 2015 (UNESCO, 2005). The Dakar Framework for Action had the following goals: expanding and developing a complete early childhood care and education, ensure that by 2015 all children had access, complete, free and compulsory primary education, ensure learning needs were met, achieve a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, eradicate gender inequalities in all primary as well as secondary schools by 2005 and lastly, improve aspects of quality education provision, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills (UNESCO, 2005).

#### **Statement of the Practical Educational Problems in Education in Tanzania**

For a long time, evidence from various studies shows that primary school education had encountered many problems from mid-1970s to 1990s, which led many pupils to face obstacles in their studies (Omari *et. al.*, 1983; Mosha, 1988, 1995; Malekela, 1995). Such situation led to general dissatisfaction from parents and public concerning the education standards of primary school leavers in Tanzania. Later on, the government decided to implement the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in mid-1970s in order to solve these problems (Omari *et. al.*, 1983, Omari and Mosha, 1987). Apart from UPE implementation, it was found out that problems in provision of primary education persisted in the country. During UPE implementation, many primary schools experienced inadequate classrooms, shortage of teaching and learning materials, shortage of teachers and unavailability of funds to support primary education provision because the government bore the burden of financing primary education (Mosha, 1995).

In year 2000s, the education sector in Tanzania continued to face a lot of problems, which needed government attention in solving them. Among problems, which faced the education sector they included poor access, high repetition, poor performance, limited access to textbooks, poor teaching and learning environment and a large number of under-qualified teachers (Malekela, 2003). Also it was discovered that in early year 2000s, pupils' enrolment in primary schools declined and at the same time, there was high increase in dropout among pupils from schools (Malekela, 2003). Moreover, it was realized that majority of children from poor families could not afford to pay for school fees and therefore, many children did not go to school and there was noticeable girls' enrolment rate, to a large extent (Björkdahl and Lundqvist, 2006). These problems had to be addressed with notable improvements.

Children in urban areas were more likely to attend school than children in rural areas. In urban areas, 88 percent of children of primary school age attended school, compared to 79 percent in rural areas (URT, 2010).

According to the Household Budget Survey, people living in rural areas were poor and dependent on agriculture as opposed to urban areas, whose people were rich and depended on non-agricultural activities for living (URT, 2013). Poverty was also particularly pervasive in rural areas whereby around 70 percent of the Tanzanian population lives. About 10 million people in the rural population lived in poverty, and 3.4 million lived in extreme poverty, compared to less than 1.9 million who were living in poverty and 750,000 people in extreme poverty in the urban sector.

Therefore in order to solve all these problems, government through donor assistance had implemented PEDP to provide financial assistance to economically different families and poor children to help them access and persist in school. By implementation of PEDP (2002 – 2006 and 2007 – 2011), the government of Tanzania intended to increase participation rate to learners.

### **Government's Efforts to Solve Education Problems**

Although Tanzania for many years involved and signed international conventions and agreements on Universal Primary Education (UPE) for the intention of improving access, equity and quality of education, it was until introduction of the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) was executed (MOEC, 2001). Thus, serious initiatives were implemented to solve challenges related to provision of quality education and enrolment of pupils in primary schools in Tanzania. The aim was to make sure that every child was not denied access to education either due to being poor, disabled or because of his or her gender. Also it aimed at tackling problems of non-attendance, drop-out rates and poor performance in examinations (Sekwao, 2004). In Primary Education Development Programme [PEDP I (2002-2006)], and PEDP II (2007-2011), the government aimed at increasing enrolment of pupils in primary schools, which was low, improve students' retention and improve academic performance (URT 2001, 2006, 2012).

### **Statement of the Research Problem**

Under the Primary Education Development Programs (PEDP) I (2002-2006) and PEDP II (2007 – 2011), Tanzania had put efforts in achieving the EFA goals and the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs). The major focus had been on achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE) targets on access, retention and academic performance to girls and children who were in economic different groups or disabled.

The considerable challenges during implementation of PEDP I and II were on the provision of education to children who were affected by poverty which in turn led to many schools to have poor enrolment. Apart from that there were challenges of getting pupils enrolled in these primary schools due to availability of large class sizes which led to double-shifting sessions for some schools, while other schools to have few classrooms as well as desks and shortage of teachers. Due to availability of poverty at family levels, many children were routinely co-opted into household and economically productive tasks which finally led to poor attendance and drop out of pupils. Concerns had however been raised over the implementation of the program and whether it could be a reality under the challenge of poverty visa a vice bringing quality education.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the efforts done by the government of Tanzania in enhancing rural children to access primary education in Morogoro, Tanzania. The findings of this study would have implications for policy and practice regarding the planning, funding and implementation of educational projects or programs in the country.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objective of study was: To examine the enrolment of pupils during the implementation of Primary Education Development Program – I and II in Morogoro rural District;

### Research Hypothesis

The research was guided by the following hypothesis: The enrolment of pupils in primary schools increased during the implementation of PEDP I and II;

### Research Tasks

The research task was: To examine the enrolment of girls and boys during PEDP I and II;

### Research Question

The study sought to answer the question: How was the enrolment trend of girls and boys in primary schools during the implementation of PEDP I and II?

### Significance of the Study

The study on the intervention made by the government of Tanzania on improving access of boys and girls living in rural communities to primary education through implementation of PEDP is significant due to these reasons. First, it provides an understanding of the academic progress made by the Tanzanian education system on improving boys' and girls' education for those who were left behind in previous reforms and innovations in primary education in the access. These were reflected in terms of enrolment and expansion done in Primary schools. Secondly, the study tried also to come out with suggestions on how to improve quality provision of education to boys and girls living in rural communities during implementation of various reforms and innovations in the country.

### Geographical Location of the Study

The study was done in Morogoro Rural District. The Morogoro Rural District is situated in the North Eastern part of the Morogoro region. Morogoro District-Rural has an area of about 11,925 square kilometres which makes 16.34 percent of the whole area of Morogoro Region (Morogoro Regional Economic Profile, 2006). In administration, Morogoro District has been divided into six divisions to make it easier to be administered. These divisions are also subdivided into wards; currently there are 29 wards in Morogoro District which contain 132 villages (Morogoro District Council, 2013). Further these villages are again subdivided into neighborhoods or *kitongoji* for administrative purposes. By the year 2013, statistics shows that there were 657 *kitongoji* in the district (Morogoro District Council, 2013). The current population size of this district is about 286, 248 people, in which Male are 140,824 and female are 145,424 (URT, 2012b census reports).

In provision of Primary education services to pupils, Morogoro District-Rural has 1 private primary school and 148 governments owned primary schools. The data obtained from council confirms that available primary schools are uniformly distributed across the district, a situation which indicates that there was at least one primary school in nearly every village. Economically, annual income was \$ 612 for Morogoro Rural District. Spending per day was \$ 1.7 in the rural area (NBS, 2003).

### Study Paradigm

In conducting this study, researcher applied the positivist paradigm usually used in investigation of social reality. Positivistic thinkers apply scientific methods and organize the process of knowledge generation with support of quantification to improve accuracy in the details of parameters and the relationship existing among them. Therefore in this notion, positivism is involved with disclosing truth and presenting it out by applying empirical methods (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit, 2004, p. 17).

The combined quantitative and qualitative approaches used to data collection, known as mixed methods were applied. The quantitative approach shares its philosophical foundation with the positivist paradigm (Weaver

and Olson, 2006). This made research problems to be well understood through applying these methods rather than using a single method (Curran and Blackburn 2001:120-124). Creswell and Clark (2011) point that mixed methods provide a more comprehensive approach to examining a research problem than either one of quantitative or qualitative methods.

### Study Design

A survey research design was employed to investigate enrolment rates of boys and girls living in rural communities. The data collection in this study was done in three phases. The first phase involved collection of data from documentary sources. The data from documentary sources were obtained from books, journals, articles, acts, previous research reports, periodicals, internet sources or information, annual reports and newsletters. This phase involved data collection using semi-structured interviews, formal and informal meetings with key officers of the Ministry of Education and Culture as well as Prime Minister's Office Regional Administration and Local Government and government departments and agencies.

The second phase involved the conduct of a survey in fieldwork. Survey research designs were used to describe a situation, phenomenon or area of interest in systematic, accurate and factual way (Omari, 2011). There was the use of Primary School Enrolment Survey Form for collection of primary data. Strategic sampling was used to select 6 rural primary schools. In each location, one performed well, one average and one poor in PSLE results was selected. The identification of these schools was done in collaboration with district education officers. The study gathered data that were analyzed quantitatively to establish relationship between the variables.

The third phase involved collecting data using semi-structured interviews with key officers of the education at district level and municipality. The semi-structured interview was administered to 6 Head teachers of primary schools and the district education officer. This was done purposely for feeling gaps identified in phase two after quantitative data from 6 purposefully selected primary schools being collected and analyzed. The semi-structured interview provided elaboration on the quantitative data and findings obtained in the second phase.

### Population of the Study

The target population for this study consisted 149 schools (Table 1): that were either government owned or private owned Primary Schools in Morogoro Rural District.

**Table 1: Primary Schools in Morogoro Rural Districts**

<b>Morogoro Rural District</b>			
<b>Name of Ward</b>	<b>Government schools</b>	<b>Private schools</b>	<b>Total</b>
Mkambarani	4	-	4
Mikese	6	1	7
Gwata	5	-	5
Tununguo	5	-	5
Mkulazi	3	-	3
Ngerengere	4	-	4
Matuli	4	-	4
Kidugalo	9	-	9
Kiroka	9	-	9
Mkuyuni	8	-	8

Kinole	5	-	5
Tegetero	5	-	5
Kisemu	3	-	3
Konde	3	-	3
Kibungo	5	-	5
Kibogwa	5	-	5
Tawa	7	-	7
Lundi	4	-	4
Mtombozi	7	-	7
Mvuha	6	-	6
Kolero	5	-	5
Kasanga	5	-	5
Bungu	3	-	3
Selembala	4	-	4
Kisaki	6	-	6
Mngazi	4	-	4
Bwakira Juu	3	-	3
Singisa	6	-	6
Bwakira Chini	5	-	5
	<b>148</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>149</b>

**Source:** Morogoro Rural - District Education Offices (DEOs), 2014.

### Sample Selection and Size

A total of 6 schools from rural settings were involved in the study. The sample of this study was purposely selected by considering geographical differences, location and variations of their performances in Primary School Leaving examinations (PSLE). The categorization of these schools on basis of their performance was done in consultation with the District Education Officer (DEO) of the district. Before selection to be done, the researcher requested a list of all schools from Morogoro Rural District. After the list had been obtained, District Education Officers (DEO) assisted in the sorting exercise which was done basing on the set criteria indicated in Table 2.

In each category, six (2) schools were selected basing on their performance in Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) after implementation of PEDP, where the best-performing schools, medium-performing schools and worst-performing schools in examination results were selected (see Table 2). This enabled a total number of 6 schools to be selected to represent 149 schools in Morogoro Rural District. In first phase of data collection, the researcher purposely selected head teacher from each school because of his or her experience in what PEDP did in school to fill record survey tools. In second phase, the head teachers of all 6 schools and the District Education Officer were involved in follow-up interview, to make a total of 7 interviewees.

**Table 2: Sampling of Schools for Study**

Geographical Location	Best-performing schools in PSLE	Medium-performing schools in PSLE	Worst-performing schools in PSLE	Total
Rural area	2	2	2	<b>6</b>

### Instrumentation for Data Capture

Captured data was on access, particularly it focused on enrolments' data by sex, before, during and after PEDP - I and II. The primary data and secondary data were used in facilitating data collection. The primary data was obtained through the use of Primary School Enrolment Survey Form which was distributed to Head teachers of twelve (6) selected primary schools in the Morogoro Rural District as well as interviews conducted to Head teachers and official from council purposely for follow-up and feeling gaps identified in survey forms.

### Procedures for Data Collection

First, data collection was done by researcher himself, in which survey method was adopted. Secondly, it was to make direct consultation of records related to school enrolments in primary schools in Ministry of Education and Morogoro Rural District. Thirdly, it was to analyze PEDP data from other secondary sources which are available in documentary sources. Finally, make analysis of all data collected from study.

### Data Analysis Procedures

The research questions and responses made were coded and entered in the computer through applying Microsoft Excel Software. In this research analysis of data was done with the assistance of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows 22 Version. The SPSS enabled the variables to be coded and thereafter statistical methods were employed on the gathered data so as to attain the analyzed results of interest. The SPSS was used to determine if there were impacts of PEDP I and II to rural schools, in terms of access. In the analysis, descriptive statistics was applied. Later statistical data was presented in graphs and tables.

### Presentation of Research Findings

In the study done in Morogoro Rural District shows that primary school enrolment increased much during implementation of the programs. The data from research indicate that there was a remarkable increase in enrolment of pupils, whereby in 2002 only, the first year of PEDP implementation, standard one enrolment increased by 27.3 percent, in which total number of enrollees increased from 454 in year 2001 to 578 pupils in year 2002 (Table 3). This means that there were almost one hundred and twenty children who were enrolled more in primary schools than those enrolled in year 2001.

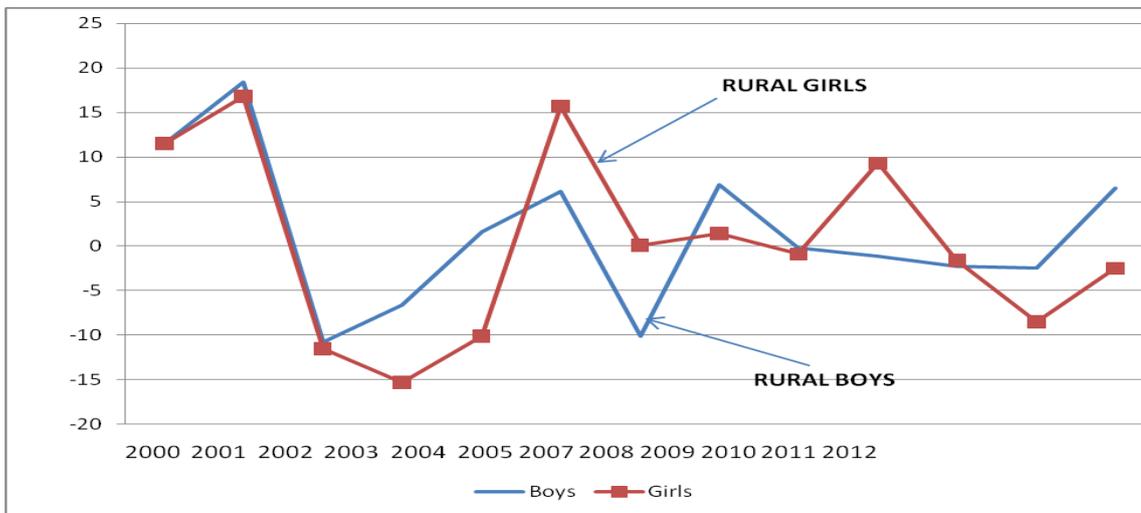
Table 3 shows that between 2002 and 2013, period of 12 years, the number of pupils enrolled increased rapidly to make 5,296 in total of which 2,708 pupils were girls and 2,588 were boys. The data further show that in the year 2009 a total number of pupils amounting to 392 were enrolled in primary schools. These 392 pupils who were enrolled in that year were few compared to enrolment done in other years (2002 to 2012) during the entire period of implementation of PEDP I and II. The enrolment of pupils in other years ranged between 402 pupils to 578 pupils who were above the number of enrolled pupils in 2009.

**Table 3: Enrolment Rates and Gender in Rural and Urban Schools**

Program	Year	Rural Schools		Grand Total	Percentage Change	
		Boys	Girls		Boys	Girls
Pre-PEDP	2000	158	194	352		
	2001	195	259	454	+23	+33
PEDP I (2001 -6)	2002	285	293	578	+46	+13
	2003	245	313	558	-14	+6
	2004	242	203	445	-1	-35
	2005	235	205	440	-2	+0.9

	2006	215	193	408	-8	-5
<b>PEDP II (2007 -11)</b>	2007	189	238	427	-12	+23
	2008	186	237	423	+1	-0.4
	2009	196	196	392	+5	-17
	2010	206	196	402	+5	0
	2011	197	222	419	-4	+13
<b>Post-PEDP</b>	2012	170	207	377	-13	-6
	2013	222	205	427	+30	-0.9
<b>Total</b>		<b>2941</b>	<b>3161</b>	<b>6102</b>		

The table 3 further indicates that the percentage change in enrolment for boys increased by 46 percent and 13 percent for girls, whereby the number of enrolment for boys increased from 195 to 285 and for girls it increased from 259 to 293. Therefore in this sense the program had a positive impact on primary school enrolment for both sexes. The percentage change in the enrolment of pupils in primary schools for PEDP I and II is shown in figure 1.

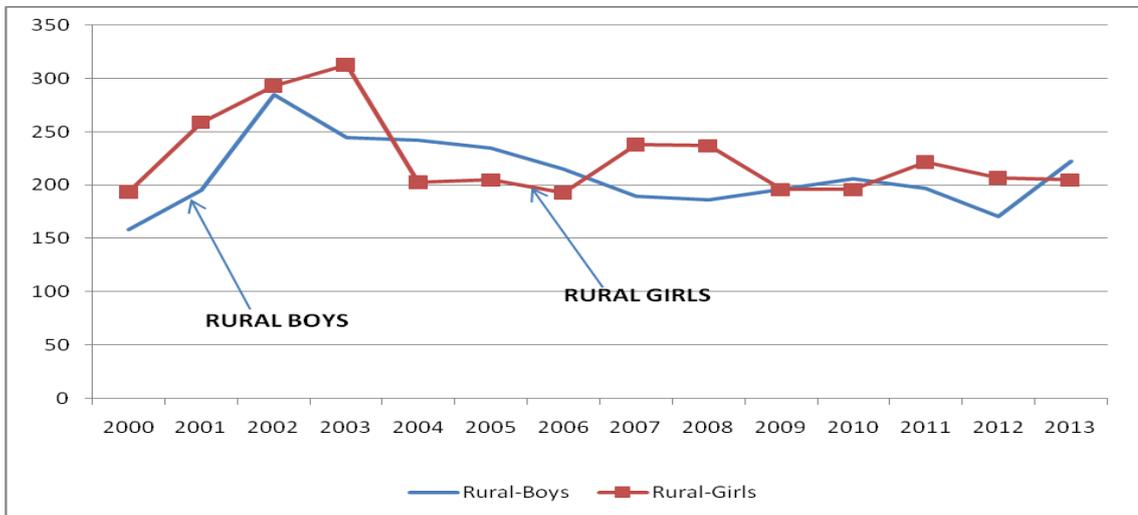


**Figure 1: Graph Showing the Percentage Change in the Enrolment of Pupils**

The percentage changes in Figure 1 shows that there were sharp decrease in enrolment trends of girls twice for the entire period of PEDP implementation which occurred in years 2004 and 2009, but the rest of trend shows that there were tremendous increase of girls’ enrolments in years 2007 and 2011. In opposite, the figure depicts that enrolment trend of boys constantly decreased almost throughout the implementation of PEDP as happened in years 2003, 2006, 2007, 20011 and 2012, and then enrolment increased constantly in years 2009, 2010 and then sharply increased in 2013.

The study also showed that trend towards gender parity in enrolment improved during implementation of these programs, whereby enrolment for boys was almost the same as that for girls (see figure 2). The high degree of equity in primary education was maintained since 2000, where data showed that there were 194 girls (55 percent) and 158 boys (45 percent) out of a total number of 352 pupils in the district. The same trend

was still maintained in 2001 where there were 259 females (57 percent) and 195 males (43 percent) out of a total number of 454 pupils in primary schools (see figure 2). By this study, it shows that gender disparities were highly reduced and gender parity in primary school enrolments was achieved and near parity in primary enrolments to be met.



**Figure 2: Enrolment Trend of Pupils in Rural during PEDP I and II**

Before implementation of PEDP programs, there was a high degree of inequity in education provision between girls and boys in rural settings. For instance, there was unequal enrolment between girls and boys in Primary education in Morogoro rural. The implementation of PEDP succeeded in reducing the gap which happened on enrolment for girls as well as boys in rural areas. In rural areas, enrolment for girls increased from 194 pupils in 2001 to 293 pupils in 2002 and for boys increased from 158 pupils in 2001 to 285 pupils in 2002. By these records, indicate that the huge gender gap in enrolment of boys and girls which were seen in rural areas at primary level was closed. The onset of PEDP I and later the years of implementing PEDP II brought immense enrolment changes, where data show that girls started to be enrolled more than boys in these primary schools. Between the years 2004 - 2006, a total number of 692 boys were enrolled in rural primary schools, at the same time when compared with girls, data show that only 601 girls were enrolled in these schools. After the decision of government to continue with implementing PEDP II, girls' enrolment rate increased abundantly at primary level in rural areas, hence caused the gap (difference in enrolment) between boys and girls to be reduced and even closed throughout the years 2007-2012. Therefore those statistical data revealed that PEDP increased and improved enrolment of girls and boys from poorer households hence make education more accessible to all.

### Summary of the Study Findings

The findings of this research study revealed that enrolment of pupils increased during PEDP – I and II. It was further disclosed that there was close relationship between improved school facilities and learning environment of learners due to PEDP and how growing number of schools in the district as well as increasing number of enrolment of pupils can effectively address or plan for learning needs with the adequate available facilities.

### Conclusions of the Study Findings

The findings of this study indicated that both PEDP – I and PEDP - II had noticeably increased enrolments of pupils in primary schools for the time they were in implementations. It was found that equity was maintained in both times of enrolments. For the PEDP program to be successful, a prerequisite was for schools to have teaching and learning facilities and infrastructure which were to be acquired through received funds from the government and capitation grants which were provided to pupils. These facilitated enrolment of pupils in primary schools. Therefore it was necessary to recognize that the quality of infrastructure in formal was as important as their availability. All schools had to have classrooms, toilets and staff houses which had to be provided with employment of qualified teachers to all schools.

### Recommendation for Administration Action

Since education is also recognized as a basic human right, the Government of Tanzania continued to implement compulsory enrolment of all school age children. This kind of enrolment would be better done while continuously paying attention to the normal pupils, orphans and Other Vulnerable Children (OVC) such as street children, victims of child labour, the girl child, children with disabilities and children from poor families. The other groups which I urge the government to consider very keen while enrolling pupils are the group of children from pastoralist and hunter-gatherer communities and those living in difficult and hard to reach areas. It should be the responsibility of the government to ensure that these groups apart from being enrolled in schools, they attend and complete primary education regardless of their geographical locations. The government should formulate policy and put forward legal framework that would make it mandatory for the future construction of school buildings and other public buildings to take into account the needs of children with physical disabilities.

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