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Introduction

Education in Kenya as in many of the developing countries is viewed as an important component of development. It is regarded as a critical factor in the alleviation of individual ignorance, fear of servility and in helping the country to move from a traditional to a more modern condition.<sup>1</sup> There are numerous documents both official and unofficial that have propounded this view. Stress has been laid on the potential of education to foster the knowledge, values and skills necessary for productive activity. Education has been believed to contribute to political development by creating an informed and participant citizenry and to socio-economic development by equipping people for new roles associated with an expanding range of occupations.<sup>2</sup>

Both in the colonial period and after independence, there is perhaps no area which has been as heavily financed as education. And it is now feared that unless the government finds a way of arresting its current trend of investing in education, now over 35% of the national budget, all things being equal by 1990, this figure will have risen to 80% of the budget.<sup>3</sup> This is not to mention the generous contributions by the public to educational projects under the banner of harambee (pulling together).

On the basis of the assumed relationship between education and development and in line with the recommendations of the conference of African States on the Development of Education in Africa, which met in Addis Ababa in May 1961, under the joint sponsorship of UNESCO and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa,<sup>4</sup> Kenya devoted the early years of independence to the rapid expansion of educational facilities and the provision of qualified persons to man its burgeoning economic and administrative institutions. Guided by important reports like the High-level manpower requirements and resources in Kenya 1964-70, the Development Plan 1964-70, the Education Commission of 1964 and African Socialism and its application to planning in Kenya, priority in education and training was on the production of high level and middle manpower. Therefore secondary and post-secondary education were given more prominence than 'the development of universal primary education' because for financial reasons the two were not considered compatible. Politically, this strategy which placed emphasis on 'elitist education' was seen to work contrary to the post-independence aspirations of the people.

In 1963, Kenya African National Union published its manifesto entitled What a KANU Government offers you which committed the party to offering a minimum of seven years of free primary education. Despite giving priority to higher education, it meant that efforts had to be made to provide facilities for a slow but steady increase in primary school enrollment.

Primary school enrollment was said to have increased from 980,000 to 1,200,000 in 1965 and was expected to rise to 2,000,000 by 1974. It was further emphasised that it was the KANU government's guiding principle to give priority in the educational programmes to areas which were neglected during colonial rule so that every Kenyan could share fully both in the process of nation building and enjoying the fruits of the government's labour. In the sparsely populated areas, the government pledged to continue its programme of building primary and secondary schools so that every child in those districts which had a low-average enrollment would get an opportunity to attend school. The government fees remission programme was to be continued in favour of these areas.

In 1971 a presidential decree abolished tuition fees for the districts which had unfavourable geographical conditions said to impoverish the populations in these areas. These included the North Eastern Province, the districts of Marsabit, Isiolo, Samburu, Turkana, West Pokot, Tana River and Lamu. The December 12th 1973 presidential decree brought the country and government much closer to achieving the long awaited 'universality of free primary education.' The decree provided free education for children in standards I-IV in all the districts of Kenya. It went further and provided uniform fees structure for those in standards V-VII for the whole country. Everyone had to pay 60 Kenya shillings per child per annum. Subsequent decrees went even further and abolished school fees for primary education. Following this policy development, primary school enrollment increased to 4.3 million. The number of teachers grew from 22,665 in 1963 to 119,709 in 1983 while schools increased from 6,198 to 11,856 in the same period and standard I enrollment of school age children all over the country was estimated to be 83.9%.

In this paper we shall try to demonstrate that less significant gains have been made in education in Kenya than previously believed despite several government policy initiatives. We shall show that the present policy framework for the financing of primary education reinforces disparities and makes the achievement of free primary education for disadvantaged groups an impossible goal. The policy framework in education has been designed and operated to reinforce post-colonial social classes.

Studies have shown that the most common form of social stratification is based on economic variables, i.e. the way society organises its production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. According to Weber, property or lack of property are basic categories of all class situations. Possession and non-possession of property and services, according to Weber, determine an individual life's chances in a competitive market situation. Thus, for example, a positively privileged property class may monopolise the privileges of socially advantageous kinds of education as far as these involve expenditures.

Although Marxist analysis differs from the Weberian conception of social class, there is a consensus on the role that social classes play in the equal distribution of material wealth and socially desired cultural resources, including education.<sup>10</sup> For example, Poulantzas adopting a Marxist view, points out that class barriers (the distribution of income and wage differentials, etc.) and their extended reproduction have the effect of imposing specific concentrated social inequalities on certain groups according to the various classes in which they are distributed. From this statement it is clear that social class differences are not limited to the economic level alone, but are also reflected in the structure and content of other social institutions, such as the educational system, that regulate the distribution and consumption of socially desired goods and services.<sup>11</sup>

The educational system, therefore does not only reflect the social class structure in the society but also reproduces it. The role of the educational system in the social class reproduction is characterised by the differential socialisation and unequal distribution of educational opportunities including access to primary education. The educational system also contributes to the allocation of the social class agents on the basis of performance into occupational structure.

#### Education and Social Class Formation in the Colonial Period

Many studies on the subject of class formation in Africa show that colonialism accelerated the course of capitalist penetration, provided the organisational and technological basis for the rapid spread of capitalism and sharp increases in the level of production, and aligning this development more closely to a dependent relationship with Western Europe. Capitalism is not just a political and economic system, but it is also a cultural system with a distinctive set of values. Its fundamental values are those of acquisitiveness, competitiveness and individualism all antithetical to the communal values of traditional Africa.<sup>12</sup> Capitalist values

were transformed not only by the colonial regimes, but also by its auxiliaries such as the missionary, the trader and the educator.

Colonial education separated the African from his past, distorting or denying him knowledge of his own history and culture. He was educated in boarding institutions away from the bulk of his community, alienating him from his community and transforming him into an individual in the mold of the coloniser. While the school propounded capitalist values, it also provided the basic literacy and simple skills required for the servicing of the lower echelons of the economy and administrative superstructure to reduce the cost of colonialism.<sup>13</sup>

Western education therefore came to occupy an important place in the colonial structure and played a significant role in the social stratification. On the one hand, it was directly related to occupational mobility and subsequent improvement in economic status and on the other, it formed an element of social prestige. With the disintegration of traditional socio-economic structure, Africans came to value western education for its cash return and it remained virtually the only mode by which individuals could partially dissociate themselves from traditional societies and enter the small but relatively lucrative number of posts open to Africans. Thus education, occupation and wealth set certain groups apart from the majority.<sup>14</sup>

Missionary education in Kenya centered mainly on the agricultural communities. The establishment of such institutions like the Native Industrial Training Depot (NITD), the Alliance High School, Kabaa, Maseno and Yala, helped to create an educated elite which worked as colonial functionaries in the form of petty clerks and artisans for the government and missions before the outbreak of World War II. This is the group that Huxley in 1946 referred to as "a whole new generation of Africans little known to the European community."<sup>15</sup> In the same year Creech Jones, the Assistant Secretary of State for the Colonies visited Kenya and argued that Africans needed "a process of education and economic growth to build up their sense of social responsibility and public duty."<sup>16</sup> Postwar educational development which ushered in among other things, the expansion of secondary education, boosted the number of the educated elite. Education in time became the chief determinant of whether or not an individual fitted into the colonial structure, and had access to political power. For example, the franchise approved for Africans in 1956 was based on academic education. To stand for the Legislative Council (Legco), one had to pass the stiff English qualifying test unless one held the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate or higher qualifications. To vote, one had

have a number of academic, business or service qualifications.<sup>17</sup>

Class formation was reinforced through Sir Philip Mitchell's multi-racial policies in the early fifties. It was reckoned in this scheme that among the Africans there was a small group to be distinguished from the rest. This group was expected to collaborate and identify itself with colonial design for the future of Kenya through softening restrictions which enabled them to participate in the socio-economic system. Following the recommendations of the East African Royal Commission of 1952 and the Swynnerton Plan, the doors were opened for this group of 'progressive' Africans to grow cash crops hitherto confined to European farms, and to operate business.<sup>18</sup> This group included the educated and propertied among the politically active nationalities. These included chiefs, who had been able to acquire land and livestock in the course of wielding executive power on behalf of the colonial administrators, and who had early access to mission education. In general, they included anyone with "good education," since this opened the door to relatively well-paid work, appointments to Local Native Councils, access to improved government housing and other tangible benefits. After World War II, government policy had increasingly recognised the need to prevent frustration among such people, and as far as possible to attach their interests to those of the colonial regime.<sup>19</sup>

During the independence struggle it was the new African elites—the product of the new colonial socio-economic strategies—who were the most effective and influential African representatives. On the issues of Kenya's economic structure and values underlying it, there were no serious contradictions between them and the British rule. If anything, the African leaders were suspiciously eager to maintain the socio-economic system in which they had been nurtured. Consequently, no radical changes were proposed in the economy, only modifications. Instead of having purely non-Africans forming the apex of the socio-economic pyramid as was the case in the colonial state, now there was a predominance of the middle and upper classes. In education, emphasis was more on expansion rather than changing the ethos of the system.<sup>20</sup>

Before discussing post-independence educational policies, we should briefly focus on education for the pastoralist communities in the colonial period, because they were an important target of efforts to universalise primary education. In general, the pastoralist economy was not fully incorporated into the main stream of the colonial economy. The colonial state apparatus and other agents of change such as missionaries and settlers could not offer incentives for many fields of change. Instead they tended to pose a direct and

dramatic threat to the pastoral economy and the cultural and social structures that were essential for pastoralism, through such measures as compulsory destocking and forcing the pastoralists to abandon nomadism.<sup>21</sup>

Western education in sedentary communities advanced partly because of community support and partly because of official attitudes. Because of the absence of these two important factors, education remained unpopular among the pastoralists. The result of this was that from the very beginning, educational disparities began to show up between the pastoralists and their neighbouring agricultural people. The demand by the Christian missionaries that pastoralist children be boarded in schools meant that such children had to change their ways of life not only for the family, but for the larger group and the clan. To settle down for the entire group would have meant a reorganisation of the pastoralist economy, leading to stress and anxiety.<sup>22</sup> It became difficult for the colonial administration to penetrate the organisational superstructures of the pastoralist communities for purposes of participating in the colonial socio-economic structure. Schools offered little or no incentive for them. Western Education remained unpopular to most of the pastoralists up to independence, because pastoralist economies were not incorporated in the colonial economy.

It can generally be said that the development of education in Kenya was associated with how closely a region was integrated into the colonial economy. This relationship influenced the social demand for schooling and the funds the government authority and the local population of the area were willing to devote to the development of education. The pastoralist region which is inhabited mainly by the Maasai, Samburu, Turkana and the North Eastern Province remained the backyard of colonial Kenya to both socio-economic and political changes due to a lack of incorporation into the colonial economy. Schools tended to be concentrated in the urban and agricultural regions of the country.<sup>23</sup>

#### Social Class Formation and Primary Education in Post-Independence Period

Following the colonial socio-economic and political measures discussed in the preceeding section, distinct social classes had started to emerge by the time Kenya achieved independence in 1963. Not many studies have been carried out on the nature of these social classes, but a few that researched the subject established the existence of classes. Kinyanjui observes that Kenyan society is differentiated to such a degree that social classes exist both in economic and cultural terms, particularly in the urban centres.<sup>24</sup> Leiter

Also points out that the capitalist mode of production in Kenya which was introduced by European colonialists has a corresponding class formation consisting of a bourgeoisie and a differentiated working class with a commercial, artisanal, professional and administrative petty-bourgeoisie. She also identifies marginal groups which have not been fully integrated into the capitalist mode of production at the level of production but which are exposed to unequal exchange such as trading in animals.<sup>25</sup> According to the International Labor Organization (ILO) report, this social class structure is characterised by a gross inequality in the distribution of incomes which range from <sup>20</sup> (British) pounds or less to more than 2000 pounds a year.<sup>26</sup>

In the urban centres in general, and Nairobi in particular, on the basis of the ILO income survey there were three principal groups. The first consists of the poorly paid skilled and unskilled workers including petty commodity producers. In Nairobi, this social class is found mainly in the Eastlands and the slum communities. The second group consists of a wide range of occupational categories from clerical staff to semi-professionals. One study identified a fraction of this class with value expectations similar to the other middle classes elsewhere:

Nairobi - Kenya - A new class of Africans is emerging. He is educated and prosperous, economically aggressive, dedicated to the dream that his children's lives will be better than his. He is buying a house with a bank loan, and he owns a second hand car. He makes sacrifices in order to educate his children...his expectations and values are middle class by western standards, but in Africa, where the great majority of people participate only marginally in the cash economy, he is decidedly upper class. He is found in countries like Kenya...countries that since the colonialist pulled out have preserved free enterprise and other western ways.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, there are various fractions of the ruling class such as owners and managers of medium to large firms, senior state bureaucrats, and senior officials of bilateral and other large welfare organisations including the church. The coexistence of multinational corporations, the service sector, civil service and the local enterprise has contributed to the development of the ruling class. This is a wealthy class with some of its members earning over Shs. 10,000/- per month plus free housing, medical, school fees, and travel facilities. They also have access to credit through the banks and other financial institutions. This is a multi-racial class consisting of all races: Africans, Asians and Whites.<sup>28</sup>



The dominant class in Kenya has held a stake in post-independence socio-economic and political reforms. Efforts have been made to retain the outlook and structure of former Asian and European schools which have come to be known as 'high cost schools.' Defending the continuation of these schools, a former Minister for Economic Planning and Secretary to the ruling party (KANU) Tom Mboya admitted that they created social distinction but claimed that the objective of the government was to bring all schools up to their standard. He dismissed the charge that they were schools for the privileged class.<sup>29</sup> In the years of independence, the government made high cost schools open to those Africans who could afford the high fees charged. An attempt was made later to assist children from 'poor homes' to enter such schools through bursaries, but the practice was later abandoned.

Following post-independence educational reforms, primary schools in the country could be categorised. The categorisation is quite distinct for schools situated in the urban areas and their surroundings. In Nairobi, Mombasa, Nakuru and Kisumu, primary schools are grouped into three categories: A, B and C. All three are maintained through public funds. There is also category D which receives partial public support. In addition, there is category E of private schools which cater for both citizens and non-citizens. These schools do not, however, receive public funds. For the urban centres, these different categories of schools are distributed as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Categories of Schools in the Major Towns

<u>Category</u>	<u>Nairobi</u>	<u>Mombasa</u>	<u>Nakuru</u>	<u>Kisumu</u>
A	76	29	11	8
B	12	7	2	5
C	8	1	1	1
D	14	10	3	-
E	5	5	4	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>14</b>

Source, Ministry of Education, Annual Report 1979 and Kabiru Kinyanjui, Education and Inequality in Kenya: Some Research Experience, Mimeograph.

The category A schools were the former colonial primary schools catering exclusively to African pupils. Although technically open to pupils of all races, the population in the schools is predominantly African, most of whom are from the urban and working class. The B schools are the former Asian schools of the colonial period which, after independence,

started enrolling children from the middle class of the urban population. About 20 percent of the pupils in these schools are of Asian descent. The category C schools are the former European schools of the colonial period. Close to 10% of the pupils in these schools are Asian and a negligible percentage are Europeans. While in the past the most important factor for admission into these schools was racial consideration, today the criteria are competence in English and family income. The percentage of Africans in category D schools has risen considerably in the last few years. Category E schools have a high proportion of non-Kenyan pupils, especially Europeans.

In a study conducted by Kinyanjui between 1971 and 1976, it was noted that the pattern of school fees and the amount of subsidy given to each pupil in each category of school revealed that pupils attending C schools received 3.6 times what pupils in A schools were allocated from public funds. Pupils attending category B schools received 1.5 times what pupils in A schools did. This expenditure did not include money allocated for equipment, which in 1976 was forty shillings.

The important factor regarding this categorisation of schools is that it corresponds with the distribution of better qualified teachers, facilities and performance in the old Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) examination which determined access to secondary education. As it is well known, teachers, parents, pupils and the public in general, tend to evaluate the quality of primary education offered at each school by how well the pupils perform on the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination, and by the number of pupils given places in government maintained secondary schools. This examination has a strong influence on the curriculum and the attitude of teachers and pupils at the primary school level. Parents, especially the well-to-do, are willing to great pains to provide their children with a headstart in English at home, in nursery schools and at high-costs schools so that they can achieve better grades in CPE, essentially a test in English.

In a study on education and social equality, the influence of socio-economic background on education in Kenya is noted. It was observed that:

very early in the life of their children, educated parents are able to provide differential advantages. The home environment is especially significant when schooling, as in Kenya, is organised around formal and formidable terminal examinations. Wealthier, educated parents who purchase books and educational

toys, who speak English in the home, who utilize private nursery schools, and who otherwise deploy resources in a manner creating pre-school conditions conducive to successful school performance provide initial advantages which are difficult to match in the poor uneducated and rural family.<sup>32</sup>

A survey conducted yielded the information reflected in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Proportion of Well-Educated Kenyans who Provide Educational Advantages for their Children

Speak English in the home	61%
Provide special tutoring or lessons	62%
Read to the children	73%
Send children to private nursery schools	74%
Purchase books and educational toys	90%

Source D. Court (Ed) Education, Society and Development: New Perspectives from Kenya. Nairobi, Oxford University Press, 1974 p. 206.

It can therefore be emphasised that the economic and cultural differentiation that characterises the existing social classes in Kenya is reproduced in the educational sector. Additionally educational mobility in the government school system and entry into training and salaried employment are largely based on performance in examinations, while the distribution of educational resources favours children from wealthy families, thus giving these children a competitive advantage over the others.<sup>33</sup>

#### The Impact of the 1973 Free Primary Education Decree

One aim of the free primary education programme was to provide more school opportunities, especially to the poor communities. The argument was that the payment of school fees tended to prevent a large proportion of the children from attending school. Before the Presidential decree providing free primary education in 1973, officially 64% of Kenyan primary school age children attended primary schools. However, taking repeaters into account, it could be argued that only about 60% of the children were actually receiving primary education. If the drop-out rate was also taken into consideration, a still smaller proportion would actually complete the seven years of primary education. It was estimated that more than 35% of the school age population was not getting any primary education, and another equal

proportion was not finishing the seven years of primary education.

There was also unequal distribution in the school enrollment between the provinces as well as the districts. In some districts in Central Province, the enrollment rate was about 90%, the highest in the country. Enrollment in certain other districts and provinces, while not as high as in Central Province, was well above the national average in 1970 and 1971. Some districts in Eastern and Western Provinces fell in this category. The districts of Meru and Kitui in the Eastern Province had about 67% of the projected primary school age population in schools, while the Isiolo district in the same province had in 1970 an enrollment only slightly above 50. Enrollment in Busia district in the Western Province was generally high. Outstanding differences within a province were more glaring in the Coast where Taita-Taveta in 1970 showed an enrollment of 79% while the provincial average was only 44%. Kilifi was below the provincial average of 36% in 1970. On the whole, low enrollment figures were registered in the semi-arid and arid districts of the Coast, Eastern, Rift Valley and North-Eastern Provinces. The urban areas of Nairobi and Mombasa, although showing an enrollment ratio above the national average, nevertheless ranked behind rural districts such as Kiambu, Muranga and Nyeri in the proportion of children in school. It is therefore important to point out that, in the period before 1974, before the abolition of school fees, only the relatively richer districts of Central Eastern, the Rift Valley, Nyanza, Western and Coast Provinces were fully registering school-aged children.

The presidential decree providing free education to children in standard I-IV in the country was one of the most dramatic political pronouncements, taking planners and the public by surprise. In January, the Ministry of Education had to rethink priorities and areas of operation in order to cope with the staggering rise of pupil enrollment. Enrollment in standard 1 classes rose by a million above the estimated figure of about 400,000. The total enrollment figure for the standards I-IV children increased from 1.8 million in 1973 to nearly 2.8 million in January 1974. It was estimated that each year an additional 400,000 to 500,000 would enroll in standard 1.<sup>35</sup> According to this estimate, the enrollment in primary school would reach 4 million by 1980.

Enrollment at district level almost doubled in all districts. In some districts, as in the arid pastoralist districts of Garissa, Wajir and Mandera in the North-Eastern Province and Turkana in the Rift Valley, the improvement, however, remained small. It is estimated that in the case of Turkana, enrollment even went down to 1 percent of the school-age population in 1978. Apart from those arid pastoral

districts which could be termed as extreme examples, there is a wide range of districts, including Nairobi City and the Municipality of Mombasa, Kwale and Tana River in the Coast Province, Isiolo and Marsabit in Eastern Province, a considerable number of districts in the Rift Valley-Baringo, Elgeyo-Marakwet, Kajiado, Kericho, Narok and West Pokot, the populous districts of Nyanza Province, Kisii, Kisumu, Siaya and South Nyanza which did not register substantial numbers of their school-age children after the presidential decree.<sup>36</sup>

For almost all the districts, it can be said that there was a radical change during 1973-74 and thereafter the situation reverted to what it had been before. Either all eligible school-age children were now in school or those who joined soon dropped out. The former is not likely to be true since enrollments even in districts which had major infusions of new pupils were not registering their full population of school-aged children even by 1977. The likelihood is that many children who joined school in 1974 dropped out soon after and the situation regarding access and continuation in school reverted to what it had been before the government decree. Dropout rates appear just as high before 1974 as after 1974. In terms of the opportunity structure for schooling, nothing really changed despite many official claims to the contrary.<sup>37</sup>

With the enlarged enrollment, a country-wide building programme had to be launched to cope with the extra classes. Planners had a difficult task of assessing the situation. Many were not aware of the new places needed. In some schools as many as five extra I streams were needed. To cope with the problem, school committees imposed a building fee for each child. This varied from district to district. In most cases it had turned out to be higher than the school fees charged prior to the decree. This was quite frustrating and many parents question the so-called free primary education. One estimate on the cost of free education made the following observation:

...the abolition of school fees for the first four years of primary schooling did not inaugurate an era of completely free schooling. From 1974 through 1978 primary schools collected an equipment levy of Shs.10 from each child in standards 1 through 7, which was forwarded to the district education boards to supplement the equipment grant from the Central Government. In addition, many primary schools imposed supplementary fees for such items as building funds, activity costs, uniforms, feeding schemes, etc.. which were estimated to have raised about 12.5 million pounds in 1976. This figure suggests that such supplementary fees added some

Shs.30 onto the average cost of sending a child to primary school.<sup>38</sup>

Following the directive, the supply of equipment also underwent a serious strain. Since its distribution was centralised in the early seventies, it was difficult to dispatch the necessary equipment to most of the primary schools. Distribution problems were enhanced by the problems of topography and long distances. Consequently, many of the schools went without equipment for a greater part of 1974 and the situation has been much improved.

At the time of the pronouncement the country was already short of properly trained teachers. In 1973 the teaching force of primary teachers stood at 56,000 out of whom 12,600 were professionally unqualified. In 1974, an additional 25,000 teachers were needed for the new classes. By 1975, the number of unqualified teachers stood at 40,000, out of a teaching force of 90,000 teachers.<sup>39</sup>

At the time of the abolition of school fees, no counter measures were announced on how to replace the revenue lost through their abolition. Consequently, primary schools in almost all districts were flooded by many more pupils than usual and eventually the situation reverted to square one when school committees decided to raise a new school levy, under the disguise of a 'building fund' ostensibly aimed at building new facilities to cater to the increased enrollment.

The newly instituted school fees under the 'building fund' were not actually meant to be a permanent feature but a purely spontaneous reaction to an emergency. However, it turned out to be permanent. The Government has played little or no role in this exercise. If anything, from the very outset it was exceedingly happy that the school committees had managed to have the free education programme take off without it having to incur a heavy cost.

Owing to a heavy influx of pupils, many of the new school recruits had to be herded under tree for shade, to special designated clearings often with other writing material than sand. For most of them, this was not the kind of schooling that they had heard about from their parents and peers. As for the teachers, according to the survey, they may do with the makeshift arrangements expecting that at any time a ministerial interpretation of the Government's decree would soon be forthcoming to provide more teachers, school building materials, and many other needs.<sup>40</sup> None of these was forthcoming. The depressing situation continued and became more and more pathetic. Children who had not initially been discouraged by this image of school were soon driven out by the introduction of the school 'building fund' which most rural

school committees were forced to introduce as a counter measure to cope with the situation. Even after several years of the functioning of free education programme, many rural parents, still resentful of school teachers thinking that, in fact, they were purposely misinterpreting government policies by deciding to introduce school fees when the government had abolished them in the first place.<sup>41</sup> At the level of official rhetoric, the abolition of school fees is real and beneficial. This position is erroneously shared by the press in the country.

Strategies for developing education in the pastoralist areas have not had much impact. The government first tried to provide boarding facilities to encourage more and more school attendance. A number of the Development Plans have echoed the importance of increasing boarding schools in arid and semi-arid regions. Generally the response has not been encouraging and it was decided to stop the expansion of the programme. In the 1974-78 Development Plan it was emphasised that a substantial proportion of the population in these areas was not fully aware of the social and economic benefits that result from the education of their young people.<sup>42</sup> This does not, however, appear to be the main reason why parents in the pastoralist areas are unwilling to send their children to school. Pastoralist communities' interests and concerns for the education of their children are not any less than those of the parents in other areas of the country. Behind their reluctance lies an explanation of their inability to pay the relatively exorbitant school fees and meet other costs which are necessary in order to participate in the boarding schools allegedly built for them. The amount of boarding fees and other costs that pupils are expected to bring like beds, bedding, cutlery etc., are quite expensive and it seems to be a major hindrance for the smooth participation of children in these institutions. The end result is that there are many pupils from other districts, particularly agricultural ones, who are enrolled in these schools.<sup>43</sup> This trend affects day schools as well. The extra cost accompanying free primary education had the same adverse effects on children in pastoralist communities.

## Conclusion

In Kenya, like in most other developing countries, the colonial capitalist system accelerated a social stratification based on economic factors. One important area where efforts have been made to maintain the status quo has been in education. It was seen that no attempt was made to produce a unified school system. Instead, Kenya built into its system, especially at primary and secondary school levels, different

categories of schools derived from the colonial period. In our discussion we focussed on primary schools in the urban areas classified into several types corresponding to the virtually segregated categories of the colonial period. Although racial exclusiveness no longer applies, the school types retain a differential quality in terms of teachers and resources.

As a result of the prevailing socio-economic and political system, attempts at universalising education has been more symbolic than real. The country is far from achieving a mass education system. Not even primary education where cosmetic efforts were made to universalise is anywhere near it. Consequently, a very small proportion of relevant age-cohorts progress into the secondary schools, university or professional training. There is overwhelming evidence that the opportunity to enter the formal school system is not equitably distributed. It is not equitably distributed across the geographical regions and between the urban centres and the rural areas. Nor is it equitably distributed across the class categories which themselves are based on who among the older generations received formal education first, and the emergence of an educated self-perpetuating elite. To be the child of a well-educated and wealthy urban resident provides substantial educational advantages over those available to the child of the illiterate, impoverished rural or urban resident. Although, of course, family status and geographic location are not perfectly correlated, it remains that both factors reduce equal access to the school system for all the children in the country.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>D. Court, (Ed.), Education, Society and Development: New Perspectives from Kenya. Nairobi, Oxford University Press, 1974. p. 4., E.J. Keller, Education, Manpower and Development: The Impact of Educational Policy in Kenya. Nairobi, Kenya Literature Bureau, 1980, pp. 1-10. G.M. Ishumi, Education and Development. Nairobi, East African Literature Bureau, pp. 4-5; also see Republic of Kenya, Development Plan, 1970-74. Nairobi, Government Printer 1969.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Ministry of Higher Education, Report of the Working Party on Financing of Higher Education. Nairobi, 1982 p. 35.

<sup>4</sup>United Nations Economic Commission for Africa/Unesco, Final Report: Conference of African States on the Development of Education in Africa. Addis Ababa, 15-25 May 1961, p. v.



Although not yet independent, Kenya was among the thirty-nine African states that participated. The goal of the conference was to provide a forum for African states to decide on their priority educational needs.

<sup>5</sup>Kenya African National Union, What a KANU Government offers You. Nairobi, Press and Publicity Department, KANU, 1963 p.4.

<sup>6</sup>KANU Manifesto, 1969 pp. 6-7.

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