

## The provision of pre-primary education in Mjini Magharibi Region-Zanzibar: Educational stakeholders' perceptions

Ali Chai Ali\*, Ignasia Renatus Mligo, Florentina Shaghembe Nsolezi

College of Education, University of Dodoma, Tanzania

\*alichai1986@gmail.com

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### Abstract

This paper explored educational stakeholder's perceptions on the provision of Pre-Primary Education (PPE) in Zanzibar. The study employed qualitative methodology and a case study design where only PPE level among other levels of education was involved. A total number of 20 participants participated in the study where by 6 were pre-primary school teachers, 3 were pre-primary school head teachers, 5 were Quality Assurance Officer (QAO) from the Ministry of Education and 06 were parents. Data was generated by using focus group discussion and semi structured interviews. The results of the study revealed varied educational stakeholders' perceptions on PPE which influenced by educational qualification of the participants, awareness, involvement, cost incurred, experience and expectations in PPE. The study concluded that the government, user institutions and people concerned in PPE should ensure that quality standards in terms of teachers, school environments, school administration, parent's involvement, materials as well as the infrastructures and all the resources needed are improved and maintained for better teaching and learning in PPE. Also, the interactions between home (parents) and school (teachers) in PPE schools is unavoidable for better provision of PPE.

### Keywords

Pre-primary education, pre-primary school head teachers/mistresses, pre-primary school teachers, quality assurance officer, educational stakeholder's perceptions.

### INTRODUCTION

Zanzibar is a semiautonomous part of the United Republic of Tanzania. It consists of two main Islands which are Unguja and Pemba. Zanzibar has the autonomy to administer and manage its own internal affairs including the provision and financing of social services like education and health. Zanzibar has a population of 1.3 million inhabitants with a growth rate of 3.1 percent per year [1]. Agriculture and tourism activities contribute significantly to the island's economy. The population of Zanzibar is very young with children less than 15 years of age making up 45%

of the population where PPE aged children make up 24.6% of the total population [2]. Enrollment in PPE is increasing from 14 percent of children under the age of six attending pre-primary school in 2015 to 21 percent in 2020 where enrollment in pre-primary school is higher in urban areas compared in rural areas [3].

Zanzibar has clear policy directive on pre-primary school education [4], [5]. This policy drew on the Zanzibar Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty commonly known as MKUZA I development strategy (2007-2010)



which acknowledged the critical importance of early childhood care and development, and the need to holistic approaches to cover care, nutrition, health and education. Zanzibar Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty I (MKUZA I) set a target for an increase in pre-primary school enrollment. To achieve this end, the ZEDP called for partnership with communities and NGOs to establish pre-primary schools especially in rural areas. The subsequent MKUZA II in 2010 called for speeding up this process with universal access to pre-primary school education with the development of the minimum standards for a conducive learning environment which is gender sensitive and child friendly.

Currently, Zanzibar Government is determined to ensure that the young children in the Islands acquire necessary and basic education so that they can address the issues of dropout rates among primary school pupils, poor developmental delays to children, learning problems and behavioral difficulties [6]. This is believed to provide a strong base for lifelong learning and learning abilities including cognitive and social development [4]. This situation has been stipulated clearly in the Zanzibar Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (ZSGRP III) commonly known as MKUZA III. The strategy indicated that in order to enhance children's early experiences which affect their future, emotional and social development; teachers, caregivers and educators should understand the need to invest in young children and creates a more positive experience which supports learning and helps children to perform better.

The strategy also insists on the conducive teaching environment which enables children to extend the learning experience from the class to actual activities happening in their surroundings. The strategy emphasizes the need to involve the educational stakeholders in PPE so as help to enhance social relationship and promote a sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy [5]. Therefore, it can be said that both ZSGRP III and Education Policy of 2006 in Zanzibar have prioritized PPE that enable young children to get early experiences and stimulation.

At global level, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has also set goals and targets that are required to be met by the member states through the localization approach. Among the goals that are important for young children include goal number 4 target 4.2 which stated that

“By 2030 countries should ensure that all young girls and boys have access to quality PPE and development so that they are ready for primary education” [7]. SDG goal 4 which aims at ensuring equitable education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities at its target 4.2 is more relevant under this context. This implies that member states are required to ensure that they initiate and implement interventions that at the end will enable children and other target groups to develop their skills and hence increase opportunities for quality education.

The perceptions of educational stakeholders regarding PPE have long and variously been addressed by different scholars. Đurišić and Bunijevac [8] argue that parent's involvement in PPE is very significant because it helps to improve the learning of their children by exchanging ideas on the success and setbacks while at home and school. Thus, if parents follow up children's progress at school, communicate with teachers, attend various school programs then children are encouraged to learn. In line with this, Choi [9] comment that parents play various roles in children's learning activities however some activities are out of the classroom activities. They mentioned that parents play their roles through helping in children's homework and studies, communicating with teachers, follow up children's learning progress, picking up and dropping children to school together with attending parent teacher meetings and various types of teacher meetings.

It was said by Nsamenang [10] that both teachers and parents play roles in children's learning at home. Parents encourage their children in the study at home, provide opportunity to play, sing and dance and arrange study materials of their children before going to school. Smetana [11] noted that parental interest, approval and support on PPE create the right conditions for children's motivation to learn and their regular attendance to school. They also perceive that PPE is a time when children learn critical social and emotional skills and a partnership is formed between the child, their parents and teachers. Another study conducted in Tanzania by Ndiujye et al. [12] who found that PPE has low status and quality compared to other levels of education because of being practiced by many teachers with low qualifications. This implies that there is need for employing skilled teachers in PPE for better provision and implementation of PPE programs.

Beach [13] and Mlaki and Athuman [14] asserted that PPE impact positively on pupils academic performance as it is more effective in preparing children for academic competencies in reading, writing, building mathematics and science skills. On the same track a study by Ali [15] adds that PPE programs make children to establish good habit of eating, having more regular routine, learn more knowledge and become more polite to others. Another study by Lemaire et al. [16] researched on Perceptions of the Educational Stakeholders toward PPE in Ghana found out that PPE contributes significantly to the educational development of the children in terms of reading, writing, language and mathematical development. The study adds that parent's involvement in PPE has great impact in their children's educational activities including school decision making and helping their children's home works. The study recommended that active participation of parent in the implementation of PPE activities would help to promote PPE provision so that solid foundation could be laid for the child to have high quality education.

In supporting the above studies, Oluwafemi et al. [17] researched on the implementation of PPE in Nigeria and the findings depicts that PPE is perceived to have positive influence on a child's education background later in life. Therefore, the national PPE policy statements should be implemented to achieve and maintain its objectives and goals. In so doing, the government should provide adequate facilities, fund and encourage teacher training programs in PPE. A study conducted by Lemaire et al. [16] about the Mission and Vision of PPE in Nigeria perceive PPE as bedrock upon which other levels of education rest. Lemaire et al. [16] argues that the skills developed in PPE form the basis for future learning and labor market success. Also, PPE prepares the child for the primary level of education and it inculcates social norms, teaches child rudiments of numbers, letters, colors, shapes and effects a smooth transition from home to the school.

In the light of the above studies, it can be said that there is need for parents and pre-primary school teachers to join their hands in the administration and management of PPE so as to ensure effective implementation of PPE which believed to lay solid foundation of children to primary education. Furthermore, increasing parent's awareness would help them to do

everything possible in supporting PPE teachers to effectively teaching of pre-primary school children for better provision and outcomes. Therefore, this study explored educational stakeholder's perceptions on the provision of PPE in Zanzibar. The intention is to understanding how educational stakeholders behave and think on what is going on PPE in Zanzibar as an anchor of localization of global SDGs towards the provision of quality PPE in the Islands. The research questions that guided the analysis are: (a) What are the educational stakeholder's perceptions on the importance of PPE?; (b) What are the educational stakeholder's perceptions on the quality of PPE?; (c) What are the educational stakeholder's perceptions on the wastage of resources in PPE?; (d) What are the educational stakeholder's perceptions on the involvement of parents in PPE?

## RESEARCH METHOD

In this section the study design, participants, data collection methods as well as ethical considerations were discussed.

### Design

The study used case study design. Case study design refers to a form of interpretive research which focuses on providing detailed information of one or more cases [18]. Therefore, this design was used so as to get detailed information about educational stakeholder's perceptions on the provision of PPE.

### Participants

The study was conducted in Zanzibar and specifically in Mjini Magharibi Region. The target population of this study was pre-primary school teachers, pre-primary school head teachers, QAO from the Ministry of Education and parents with children studied in PPE. A total number of 20 participants participated in the study where by 6 were pre-primary school teachers, 3 were pre-primary school head teachers, 5 were QAO from the Ministry of Education and 6 were parents.

Purposive sampling was used to select the sample. The selection of these participants was primarily based on their knowledge, participation and experiences in PPE [18], [19] as follow; the study selected three PPE schools, one from each district found in Mjini Magharini Region so as to get representative of the entire region. Two

teachers who teach in PPE were selected from each school involved in each district found in Mjini Magharibi Region, three heads of PPE school were selected from the school involved, QAO who has five years' experience in assessing PPE teachers in the region were selected and therefore, five QAO participated in the study. Also, the study selects two parents with children attending in the three PPE schools making a total of six parents who participated in the study.

### Data collection methods

Qualitative research methods (Interview and focus group discussion) were used to collect qualitative data in this study. Semi structured interviews were conducted to PPE teachers, head teachers and QAOs. Focus group discussion was only conducted to teachers. The proceedings of group discussion and interviews were recorded by using tape recorder. Thereafter, they were recorded in Kiswahili and then translated into English. The collected data were analyzed by

using thematic analysis framework developed by Clarke and Braun [20].

### Ethical considerations

The study adhered to the ethical issues and fundamental principles in conducting a study. Among the ethical issues observed in this study were: First, the researcher obtained research clearance letters from the concerned authorities, Second, the researcher prepared a consent form and request participants to sign accepting their participation after assuring them that the information used for research purposes only. Third, the participants were assured confidentiality to be maintained during and after the data collection.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results are presented in four sub-themes as shown in the Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of the Main and Sub-themes

Main Theme	Sub-themes
Educational stakeholder's perceptions on the provision of PPE in Zanzibar	(1) Educational stakeholder's perception on the importance of PPE (2) Educational stakeholder's perception on the quality of PPE (3) Educational stakeholder's perception on the wastage of resources and time (4) Educational stakeholder's perception on the involvement of parents in PPE

Source: Field data

### Educational stakeholder's perception on the importance of PPE

#### Parents

The study notes that parent's occupations and level of education affect pupils' enrolment in PPE centers that educated parents are more aware on the importance of PPE hence send their children at early age to different pre-primary schools to get the necessary education which lay their foundation. This study found that those parents who are motivated by their educational background were marked to be helpful in school activities of their children like assisting their home works, buying learning materials and get involved in school activities. Furthermore, it was reported by some parents that during their time in early age they didn't attend PPE, but they were successful in primary school and they appreciate the learning of their children in PPE. This evidenced different perception on the important of PPE in the society. One of parents had this to comment:

*"Before joined in PPE, my child was very lazy. But, after joining PPE, She became active in learning, charming and talkative. I am very happy with such achievement and indeed it helps to lay good education foundation to my child".* (Parent-3/ Interview/June, 2021).

Another parent had the view that;

*"I didn't attend PPE. I think my parents didn't realize the importance of it at that time. No need to blame them. But, I appreciate PPE because my child has five years now and is able to read, write and sing different songs. What is amazing, my child has many friends at school who interact with her during play and singing. By such interaction with her fellow children, it strengthens children's interaction, language and physical development".* (Parent-5/Interview/ June, 2021).

On a similar way of believing PPE that it lays educational foundation and equip children with good morals, parent-4 clarified the view that:

*“Since my child enrolled in PPE, He is always greets and respects every people in the house and outside. He is also very thankful to every good action done to him and says sorry to any bad mistake happen”.* (Parent-4/Interview/ June, 2021).

#### *PPE Teachers*

PPE teachers perceived that PPE helps to build good starts in children's education and prepare them to become good citizens. It was reported that giving children special attention in early age help in good start of education for their future. Teachers added that during the class children gain the social, emotional, physical and cognitive development which help them to brighter their future in education. It was further narrated that during teaching, teachers linked the knowledge, skills and attitudes about the environment to prepare children to have good respect, personality, commitment, good socialization and cooperation in doing works. This help to prepare good leaders and citizens in our society. On this, teacher-1 had the views that:

*“The first things we teach our children are respect, love and corporation through different activities like play, songs and drama. In so doing, it helps to improve children's good attitude in learning. Many parents are very thankful to the school administration and teachers for their efforts in building good morals to their children”.* (Teacher-1/Interview/May, 2021).

Another teacher emphasized that:

*“Children in PPE are taught the socialization which help to improve their cooperation which build confidence, love, dignity, respect other opinions and listening others. It is insisted in the PPE guidelines. My fellow teachers try their level best to ensure this goal is achieved. Some parents appreciated the hard work done by teachers in our school”.* (Teacher-2/ FGD / June, 2021).

#### *School Heads*

Head mistresses/ teacher's perceived that PPE help to develop hunger for learning. It was explained that if PPE programs are well arranged and taught in fun and exciting activities like play,

songs and drama can increase eagerness and love for learning to children in their entire lives. This holds an implication that the perfect time for children to start learning is at the PPE centers. Based on this, it can be suggested that parents should enroll their children in PPE centers once they attain the recommended age for schooling. In this respect, head teacher-4 argued that:

*“PPE helps in brain development of the child through activities like plays, storytelling and group discussion. This made children to love learning and develop logical skills. Indeed, PPE promote socialization among children and equip them with life skills including respect, reading, writing and love”.* (Head teacher-4/ /Interview/ June, 2021).

On the same concern, another head mistress emphasized that:

*“Children who passed in PPE behaved well, have high confidence and self-esteem in learning through interaction with others. This increases their passion in learning. It is insisted in the PPE guidelines that apart from basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic. PPE pupils should be taught how to socialize with other people for them to learn from others”.* (Head mistress-2/Interview/ July, 2021).

#### *Quality Assurance Officers (QAOs)*

QAOs perceived that PPE helps to develop holistic development of the children. Also, PPE helps children to have a strong educational foundation which improve their personality in physical, mental, social and emotional development through the interaction of teachers in different learning activities. On this basis, PPE is believed to improve the commitment skills and induce the patience to children. In this regard, one QAO said that:

*“Engagement of pupils in different learning activities like role play, storytelling, reading, writing, jumping and doing school exercises like homework promote children with confidence and commitment skills in doing work. Also, through interaction while doing works, pupil learn from one another and develop communication skills”.* (QAO-1/ Interview/June, 2022).

Another QAO had this to emphasis during the interview.

*“Children are taught different things in PPE including how to handle their emotions. This induces them with the patience and love among others. PPE guidelines directed teachers to induce these skills to young children so that they can grow into good mannered and behaved way”.* (QAO-2/Interview/ June, 2021).

The findings of this study concur with the findings of the study by Annonciata and Nadege [21] who found that parents are the first teachers to their children. They are the ones who enroll their children in PPE by expecting to learn different skills in life including reading, writing, communication skills, cooperation, confident, respect, love and dignity. This holds an implication that parents are conscious on the vital role of PPE in the education and development of their children. This study finding provides an indication that some parents engaged and supported their children’s learning in PPE. Additionally, in order to effectively develop pupil’s skills in reading, writing, respect, love and dignity in PPE, teachers should be trained on how to impact the skills [22]. This argument is in line with the studies conducted in Tanzania by Mligo [23] and Mtahabwa [24] who found that PPE help pupils to become more self-determining, confident and promote their all-round development in life.

Researching on the parent’s perception on PPE, Li [25] in China observed that social skills and values that children learn in PPE help to stimulate their adult age personalities and relationships. This has got an implication that, in PPE pupils are guided by trained teachers who are able to identify the strengths and weaknesses to improve pupils mental and physical development which help them to behave and grow in a good manner. This corresponds to the result of the study conducted by Epstein and Sanders [26] that pupils enrolled in PPE behaved well and have high intelligent quotient scores and learned quicker than children who are not enrolled in PPE. Again, evidences from the literatures indicates that PPE is an initial training institute of children which help to equip them with long life skills in learning including reading, writing, respect, love, cooperation and enthusiasm in learning [27], [28].

In another study conducted in China by Chen and Guo (2021) revealed that children’s ability in knowing how to write, read, listening to reading, identify letters and small words are the benefits

of PPE. This indicates that different teaching and learning strategies applied by teachers during teaching facilitate pupils to master the contents taught in different subjects and equipped them with different life skills [16]. In that sense, it could be suggested that teachers should be trained to update their knowledge and skills for better teaching and learning in PPE.

In line with the study findings, Herrington [29] found that some parents do not take PPE as a priority to their children because of low awareness. Such children from those families were characterized with absenteeism and drop out from school. As a results children experience poor writing and reading skills. Another study conducted in Tanzania by Mghasse and William [30] revealed out that many parents do not show readiness to enroll their children in school at an early age. This indicates low awareness among parents on the important of PPE in children’s education. In that sense, it can be suggested that policy makers should integrate PPE with parenting so as to raise awareness and equip parents with knowledge on the importance of PPE to their children’s learning and development in future.

The present study establishes that educational stakeholder’s perception on the importance of PPE differed with respect to education qualification, awareness, experiences and expectations from the PPE as well as parent readiness in enrolling their children in PPE. The study notes that most conscious and educated parents sent their children in PPE schools compared to low economic and uneducated parents who delayed to send their children in PPE schools. This holds an implication that most conscious parents support fully the learning of their children in PPE. Based on this, it can be summed up parents and guardians should be educated on the importance of PPE so as to raise their awareness to enroll their children in PPE for better educational foundation and development.

### **Educational stakeholder’s perception on the quality of PPE**

#### *Parents*

The findings obtained from the interview with parents show that some PPE schools provide quality learning because of having teachers who are qualified and trained in teaching compared to other schools. Also, findings indicate that there is a claim from parents that many teachers both in public and private schools are not qualified and

not more conscious with the PPE. In line to this, it was claimed that some of private PPE schools don't care on the quality of teachers but only care on cheap salary they provide to teachers so as to make more income. In this regard, one parent said:

*"Now days, there is a tendency of some schools especially private schools to employ personnel from other fields like administration to teach in PPE. Because, private employers want to make money meanwhile people want employment. You may find unqualified teachers teaching in PPE in some schools. This is very unfortunate because such teachers do not have enough knowledge and skills in teaching PPE. I advise the user ministry to take care on this issue because of good future of our children's education and development".* (Parent-2/Interview/June, 2021).

On the same concern, another parent emphasized that;

*"PPE schools need to be taught by knowledgeable and skilled personnel. This can help to impact skills to our young children. I am not satisfied with trends in some schools to use unqualified teachers in teaching young children. If possible, I advised the government to allocate enough budgets to train PPE teachers. Also, the unqualified personnel used in PPE as a teachers need to undertake short courses to equip them with necessary skills for teaching in PPE".* (Parent-6/Interview/June, 2021)

#### *PPE Teachers*

PPE teachers perceived quality in PPE is influenced by physical environment of the school and materials, teacher's competencies, number of children in the classroom, the child-teacher ratio, teacher child interactions, as well as parental education and development. In this regard, it was found that the schools that these teachers are working, quality PPE is not yet achieved due the high number of pupils which limit teacher child interactions during teaching. Also, high number of pupils led teachers to have many works and lack time to deal with children. In that matter, teachers were not able to teach effectively hence the intended quality not achieved. In this regard, one of teacher said:

*"Everything that enable child to receive good education is referred as quality. In our school,*

*there is a lack of teaching and learning materials, so many pupils in one class, many parents do not participate in school meeting to discuss the learning of their children. Also, teachers do not attend in-service training. In that sense, teachers are only teaching to make children able to read and write, but the issue of quality is a dream in our school".* (Teacher-1/Interview/ June 2021).

Also, PPE teachers perceived that quality of PPE can be improved not only by upgrading the physical conditions of the schools and teachers' qualification but also good and stable school administration. It was noted from these participants that quality in PPE require stable and good school administration to be the first in place. In this regard, attitudes of the school administrators have a great impact on the attitudes and behaviors of teachers and other school staffs. In this regard, one teacher said:

*"Good administration is a major determinant of quality education in PPE. The school administration knows all workers, their strengths and weaknesses as well as what is missing and what is needed in schools. Every good thing in school depends on the accurate decision made by the school administration. However, our school administration favored some teachers and isolates others in making decision of the school and even planning school activities. Such teachers disappointed in working. I don't know when we can achieve good education quality in such situation".* (Teacher-4/I FGD / June, 2021).

Another teacher emphasized that:

*"School administration is a major source of quality education provision. It is the one which motivate or demoralize teachers in teaching and learning of pupils. The school administrator of our school is a source of teacher's conflict due to their unfair treatment of teachers. Some teachers are given priority in participating in-service training and any interventions like seminar while others are not valued. This affects teaching and learning of the school children because some teachers missed important knowledge and skills for teaching".* (Teacher-7/Interview/ June, 2021).

#### *School Heads*

Head mistresses/teachers perceived that quality PPE can be achieved not only by upgrading the

physical conditions of the schools and teachers' qualifications but also by taking into consideration all areas of children's development including cognitive, social, emotional, intellectual and moral developments in a conducive learning environment. Such environments should provide opportunity for children to know and discover the nature, interact freely with others and express their views. This may enable children to become socialized, improve their creativity and mostly important they can feel themselves independent in learning. In this regard one head mistress said:

*"Apart from the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic that many pupils in PPE achieved. Pupils also need to be equipped with skills on how to interact and live with others, how to control their emotions, how to solve their problems and how to be faithfully to others. All of these can be achieved by having conducive learning environment which enable children to interact freely with teachers and express their views and discover things in the environment. However, due to higher number of pupil in our PPE classes, it is very difficult to achieve all areas of children's development".* (Head mistress-5/Interview/May, 2021).

#### *Quality Assurance Officers*

QAOs perceived that teacher's qualification and physical infrastructures are poor hence our PPE is appraised in low quality. The shortage of qualified PPE teachers, shortage of teaching and learning materials as well as shortage of professional development to PPE teachers hindered the provision of effective teaching and learning of young children. This led the quality of PPE provided to be perceived in low quality. In this regard head mistress-2 commented that:

*"There is shortage of qualified PPE teachers, lack of play grounds, shortage of teaching and learning materials as well as the shortage of professional development to the teachers in Zanzibar pre-primary schools. This drawbacks the effective PPE teaching and learning in our schools. Consequently, teachers are only teaching the 3rs (reading, writing and arithmetic) and defeated to meet some areas of children's development including cognitive, social, emotional, intellectual and moral developments. So, I suggest the government to employ qualified teachers and undertake*

*frequent professional developments to update teacher's knowledge and pedagogies in PPE so as to achieve the standards and quality n PPE".* (Head mistress-2/Interview/June, 2021).

The findings of this study are in line with the finding of the study conducted in Tanzania by Ndiujye et al. [12] who found that PPE has low status and quality compared to other levels of education in Tanzania, Zanzibar in particular and compared with other countries. This is because the importance and benefits of PPE are yet to be understood by policy makers. Consequently, teachers in PPE are not selected on the basis of their specialization and the PPE subsector appraised to be a field of academic failures with teachers that missed qualification to teach in PPE.

Also, the present study finding consonance with another study conducted by Qi and Melhuish [31] who emphasizes that initial teacher education and professional development are very important aspects which contribute to the improvement of pedagogical quality which associated with better child learning. These study findings holds an implication for government and user institutions to train and equip teachers with the skills qualified them in teaching PPE for quality teaching and learning.

Another study by Zhou [32] found that quality in PPE fall in structural quality which includes the number of pupils in the classroom, number of pupils per teacher, education and training of teachers as well as school administrator. It also involves process quality which includes interactions, activities, materials, health and safety. However a study conducted by Beyza Ateş and Sodacı [33] in Turkey alerts that a quality in PPE is not only limited to physical and process qualities but also influenced by teacher's competencies, curriculum implementation, parental education and involvement in PPE. Based on this, it makes sense to stress that to improve quality in PPE there must be an improvement in the quality of teacher's qualifications during their pre-service and in-service trainings for better teaching and learning.

The study establishes that quality between one PPE school to another differ in terms of teachers qualifications, resources and facilities, child centered teaching methods, responsible parents or guardians and the learning environment of the school including classroom settings and play grounds. Different perceptions

on the quality of PPE teaching and learning practices found to affect parents in sending their children to school. However, the study affirms that PPE schools in Zanzibar have low quality in terms of the teacher qualification, physical infrastructure, school administration and the school ownership. This can lead into a suggestion that the government and user institutions should increase their budgets on PPE so as to improve school teaching and learning infrastructures, train teachers as well as improving their working conditions.

### **Educational stakeholders perception on the wastage of resources and time**

#### *Parents*

Parents perceived PPE as wastage of money. Such parents believed that they pay some money for school fees, buying teaching and learning materials together with other charges. Also, the study notes parent's complaints that PPE is declared free in Zanzibar but why they are supposed to pay certain amount of money each year. One of the parents said:

*"Since my child joined PPE, I spent nearly 100,000 for paying the school contribution, transport and food. I found myself to spend a lot of money that I can use for other things. Also, we have been told if PPE is free to all children attained four years of age. I don't know where this cost come from". (Parent-3/Interview/ June, 2021).*

Also, parents were on the perception that large numbers of Zanzibaris children are rooted in Islamic culture which requires children to learn family morals and Islamic knowledge from their relatives before joining PPE. These parents believed that when their children attend PPE at a very young age can learn bad behaviors from children of other families and waste time. Such parents dared saying that they delay to enroll their children in PPE. Instead, they sent their children in Quran Madrassa. In this regard one of parent said:

*"Our children are supposed to attend Qur-an Madrassa before going to school. This is because, they are required to know their religion which teaches them what is good and what is bad at an early age. When they start school before passing Madrassa, they might learn bad*

*behaviors from other children and waste their time". (Parent-5/Interview/ June, 2021).*

Additionally, parents perceived PPE schools as a place where children play and there is no serious learning. Such parent believes that most of the time used by their children in school is for playing and singing. In this regard, one parent commented that:

*"Every day, I heard my child singing different songs once she comes from school. The songs are very impressive. I think they are only taught how to sing and play with other children. I never see my child doing some school works at home. I hardly go to school seeing her progressive because of my busy life schedule". (Parent-8/Interview/June, 2021)*

Contrary with above views, the study note one parents perceived that the cost of PPE that parents paid to school help to ensure good education foundation of their children. The study observed that such parents paid money by expecting good return from the education of their children. In this regard one of the parents emphasized that:

*"Education is very important to my family and has been for generations. I have three children in PPE that I fully sponsored their tuition fees and other costs. The only problem faced is the increasing of tuition fees without involvement of parents to know what happens or reach consensus of which amount to be added". (Parent-2/Interview/ June 2021).*

#### *PPE Teachers*

PPE teachers were on the perception that the costs present in PPE are there to solve the problems in school including the shortage of teaching and learning materials and not wastage. Other teachers particularly from private schools explain that the school fees paid by parents used to pay teachers' salaries and buying teaching and learning materials. It was further emphasized that fees paid in school are used by pupils themselves through paying teachers' salaries and improvement of school infrastructures. In this regard, one of teacher said:

*"In our school (government school), there are no monthly fees as there in private school. Parents are only required to contribute small amount of*

*money which cannot exceed 20,000 per year. That money is used in construction, buying of chalks, manila sheets and some first aid materials". (Female teacher-3/Interview/ June 2021).*

Another teacher emphasized that;

*"In our school (private school) parents pays only 20,000 per month. The money used to pay teachers' salaries and procure teaching and learning materials like chalk, pencil, toys as well as for repairing the broken parts. Sometimes parents delay to pay the fees which cause the delay of teacher's salaries too". (Teacher-4/Interview/ July 2021).*

#### *School Heads*

Head mistresses/teacher perceived that it is a parent's responsibility to educate their children and help them to overcome educational disadvantages. Therefore, parents should invest in PPE by incurred all the costs. In this regard, parents should not worry about the cost because the experiences that children have during PPE have the power to shape their health and well-being for number of years to come in the future. This has got an implication that children who participate in PPE are expected to grow up to be healthier, low possibility in repeating grades and better prepared for primary and other levels of education. In this regard head mistress from school A emphasized that;

*"Parents have nothing to lose by spending money in PPE. There are clear economic gains of the working parents to children who attend PPE in terms of money. There are parents who did the business, they drop their children to school during the morning and pick them at early evening. Such parent's thanks teacher for their support, care and good morals taught to their children. They paid any cost on time because they heard saying that they earn more than they paid because they got money from their business at the same time their children are learning good behaviors for their future lives and education". (Head mistress-3/Interview/ May, 2021).*

#### *Quality Assurance Officers*

QAOs perceived that PPE reduces family costs in later year's children education and development. The study affirms that PPE schools are not only provide basic and fundamental education to

children but also provide parents and guardians with opportunity to understand the growth and development of their children. In that sense, opportunities that children experiences in PPE cannot be compensated with the cost spent by parents for learning of their children. In this regard QAO-4 quoted saying that:

*"The skills that PPE children get in PPE including reading, writing, arithmetic and communication skills have more values than the cost that parents incurred. This is because the children who pass in PPE have less chance of repeating grades and being absent from school. Experiences show that such children are active, love learning and behaved well. Their parents do not get any troubles in their schooling". (QAO-4/Interview/June, 2021).*

The findings of this study concurs with study conducted in England by Sellgren [34] who found that some parents claim to pay a lot of money in PPE without knowing the return. The study evidences that many parents in England, Wales and Northern Ireland blames that the cost of sending their children in PPE is raising without being informed. This shows that parents are willing to incur the study cost of their children. However, they are not informed about the raising of school fees. This implies that parents are not involved in some matters in PPE. In that regard, parents might refuse to get involved in other school activities. Also, it may cause parents to squeeze their budgets for balancing the PPE cost and family needs hence might result into heavy burden to parents to serve their families.

Contrary with the Sellgren [34] finding, the study by Herrington [29] affirms that PPE is costly program, but without holding PPE opportunities to children would cost more in future. This implies that failure to invest to day in PPE would incur more cost in the future. This is to argue that PPE programs cost some money to parents, but the benefits associated with such programs also come with monetary gains and servings in the future. In that sense, it is open to say that enrolling a child in PPE open the door of good education which expected to yield higher returns on investment in the future life of the child.

In line with the above arguments, Epstein and Sanders [26] emphasizes that money spent in PPE would means less money spent on further children's education. The study adds that while

there are both benefits and costs to provide in PPE programs, the costs are mostly financial in nature but pupils attended in PPE are benefited academically, socially, physically, emotional and cognitively. Based on this, it makes sense to note that in PPE there is a possible relationship exists between parent's appraisals, pupil's academic performance and success.

The findings of this study are also consonance with the finding of the study by Tandika Basil [35] who found that government, user institutions and parents should spend more on education than they spend. The study adds that the future of any nation truly rely and depends on how well its citizens are educated to deal with world challenges. Based on this argument, the study notes that the only way to compete with those challenges is on how children are educated in PPE for the future life. It is therefore very important to appraise that spending money and other resources in PPE is not wastage. Instead, it is an investment which ensures long life learning of children.

Another study by Huebler and McGee [36] diverge with the present study that there is a concern and worry of parent on the education provided in different PPE schools. Some schools provide better education than the other. This make even the lower middle class parent to use private schools for the education of their children by paid a lot of money. This implies that what parents need is good PPE for the betterment of the future education of their children. This corresponds to the result of the present study that PPE is the responsibility of the family to educate its children. This could lead into an argument that contributions and fees paid by parents would ensure availability of teaching and learning materials for successful development of skills in PPE.

Again, the findings from another study conducted by Qi and Melhuish [31] concurs with the present study findings that the value of money comes from the ability to trade it for something else. Therefore, money and other resources invested in PPE, its values shall be there for long. Based on this, it could be argued that parents should not worry in spending money for their children's learning in PPE because they want their children to do better in life. That is to say that there is no possibility of wasting money and other resources in PPE since families expect more outcomes compared with cost they invested.

The study establishes that educational stakeholder's perceptions on the wastage of resources and time in PPE vary between parents, teachers, head teachers and QAO. The study observed that parents who perceived PPE as wastage are found to be affected in the way they play their roles in the implementation of PPE. However, they enrolled their children in PPE and supported the learning of their children. Also, teachers, head teachers and QAO were noted to perceive that there is no wastage of money and other resources in PPE, but the cost incurred by parents in PPE help to pay teachers salary and improve school infrastructures for better teaching and learning. This can lead into a suggestion that government and user institutions should educate educational stakeholder to perform their roles effectively so as to promote effective implementation of PPE for better educational foundation and future of their children.

### **Educational stakeholder's perception on the involvement of parents in PPE**

#### *Parents*

In this aspect parents perceived no need for them to participate in the study of their children. Such parents sent their children to school because teachers are skilled enough to provide education to their children. This make them to hold the notion that parents main role are to prepare children, pick up and drop them to school. In this regard one of the parents quoted saying that:

*"I have no any role to play except for preparing my child, send him to and pick up from school. I don't know how to teach. I found myself to be very busy. I lack even the time to ask my child what He learnt at school". (Parent-4/Interview/ June, 2021).*

Contrary with the above finding, some parents perceived that there is need for them to get involved in the study of their children. Such parents believed that PPE is an important and a required part of education for the success of their children. The study notes that such parents get involved in the study of their children because they are very conscious and knowledgeable with the important of PPE to their children's future educational carrier. In this regard, one of the parents emphasized that:

*"I assist my child in doing her home works and participate in school activities like parent day*

*and school meetings. I am very happy when called at school to know the progress of my daughter. I make a follow up in her studies every month at school and every day at home. It helps me to know her strengths and weaknesses in her studies for improvement".* (Parent-2/Interview/May, 2021).

#### *PPE Teachers*

PPE teachers hold the perception that there is need for parents to get involved in the learning of their children for better education and overall children's development and future. It was reported that some parents communicate with teachers to know the information regarding their children's studies and learning progress. However, some of parents were hardly communicate with teachers to know the academic progress of their children. In this regard, one teacher commented that:

*"Parents play a great role in the studies of their children. In this school, some parents have a tendency of communicating with teachers to understand the learning progress of their children. Others come to school to share ideas with the teacher and participate in school activities like school meeting and parent day. However, some parents do not communicate with teachers. Such parents are very rare coming school to exchange ideas with teachers. So, there is need to consult such parents on why they are required to participate in the study of their children".* (Teacher-2/Interview/June, 2021).

#### *School Heads*

Heads of PPE schools were on the perception that there is need for parents to get involved in the study of their children. This is because it helps parents to make follow up and understand what their children learn at school. It also makes parents to have close relationship with teachers for better learning of their children. One head of school emphasized that:

*"There is need for parents to get involved in the study of their children. It makes them to have close relationship with teachers for the learning of their children. Also, it helps parents to make follow up to their children's learning by knowing their strengths and weaknesses".* (Head teacher/School-D/Interview/June, 2021).

#### *Quality Assurance Officers*

QAOs perceived that there is higher need of involving parents in the study of their children. This is because it helps to build a collaborative approach between teacher and parents aimed at promoting the relationship between the two sides for improving children's performance in learning. In this regard, one QAO said:

*"It is very important to involve parents in the study of their children. It helps to build a collaborative approach between teacher and parents. In my experiences, very few parents make time to visit teachers at school to make follow up to their children. Such parents cared and their children performed well. Some schools do not have collaborating activities with the school so that parents can be impressed and get involved. However, some parents do not participate in any school activities because they are busy and lack time. Meanwhile, some parents visit teachers at school only for solving their children's problems. I think such parent need to be educated for the study of their children".* (Male QAO-4/Interview/June, 2021).

Studies on the educational stakeholder's involvement in PPE advocate that there is a link between parental involvement and children's success [26], [37]. These studies illustrates that when parents get involved in children's activities at home like helping their children's homework, provide them opportunity to play, arrange children's learning materials, drop and pick them from school. In so doing can help to encourage the learning of their children. This implies that parents can get to know what their children's learn at school, know their academic results as well as identify children's strength and weaknesses in learning for better improvement and development.

Another study by Savacool [38] supports the study finding that parents need to get involved in PPE to observe classroom activities so that they can experience on various type of learning activities. It appears to argue that when parents get involved, they can get full picture and ideas about the learning of their children. Another study by Đurišić and Bunijevac [8] affirms that PPE children who do not succeed in school have parents who do not get involved in school activities. Based on this, it can be said that parent's involvement is extremely important for

effective teaching and learning as well as for the overall children's educational development.

Also, the findings from another study conducted by Angela [39] in England consonance with the study findings that some parents had negative school experiences which made them to feel unwelcome and intimidated at school. As a result they appraised no need for them to get involved. However, studies by Choi [9], Đurišić and Bunijevac [8] make clear that teachers must provide a welcoming and inviting atmosphere to make the school less intimidating, more comfortable and pleasant to those parents who have negative experiences. This can lead into an argument that when parents get involved in the education of their children, make the education experiences more positive to everyone involved.

The study establishes that success in PPE is a result of parental involvement and partnership with teachers. Interactions between home (parents) and school (teachers) found to be limited due to poor communication. Consequently, some parents perceived no need to get involved in the study of their children. The study has also notes that some parents communicate with teachers only when problem arise. This is very unfortunate because problems are seldom occurred while the teaching and learning activities of their children are there daily and for so long. Based on this, it can be suggested that policy makers should initiate and integrate the learning and partnership programs like parent volunteering, parent day, community collaboration and learning at homes in PPE curriculum to ensure maximum involvement and

engagement of parents in the study of their children.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the study establishes that the existence of educational stakeholder's perception on the provision of PPE in Zanzibar help to understanding how educational stakeholders behave and think on what is going on PPE in Zanzibar. Therefore, government, user institutions and people concerned in PPE should ensure that quality standards in terms of teachers, school environments, school administration, parent's involvement, materials as well as the infrastructures and all the resources needed are improved and maintained for better teaching and learning in PPE. Also, the interactions between home (parents) and school (teachers) in PPE schools are unavoidable for better provision of PPE.

The study recommends that professional development training for pre-primary school teachers should be conducted and maintained. Such trainings should be handled by PPE experts. This would improve the knowledge, skills and performance of teachers on pedagogical skills to ensure the supportive teaching in PPE for better learning of children.

The study recommends that school administrators should provide counselling services and share ideas with parents as a way to raise the awareness of the community by placing on the agenda that parent, communities, and schools are an integral part to work cooperatively for ultimate success of quality PPE in Zanzibar.

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