

Teacher Perceptions of Triple-Shift Schooling System: A Case Study of Chikonohono Primary School in Chinhoyi Urban

By

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Abstract

This study was prompted by the existence of a unique teaching arrangement where there was a triple-shift schooling system at Chikonohono Primary School. The objective was to find out teachers' perceptions of the situation they were actually experiencing. Qualitative methodology was used in which a case study was adopted as the research design. In order to establish teachers' perceptions of the phenomenon of triple shift schooling system, interviews and Focus Group Discussion were used as data collection tools. A sample of ten participants was purposively selected for the study. Data were qualitatively analysed in relation to the interview items. The study found out that while the teachers were doing their best working under very hard and frustrating conditions of triple shift system, they did not support a permanent existence of such a teaching scenario. It also emerged that even the school administration was tired of the system and would want to do away with it as soon as possible as it was impacting negatively on the smooth running of the school. The study recommended that, as a matter of urgency, government, through its education ministry and Council should mobilise resources for the construction of a school in one of the newly established high density suburbs. Building a new school would ease pressure on the existing infrastructure and other facilities thus ensuring quality education provision.

Keywords: *multiple shift; triple shift; perceptions; transition period; quality education*

1. Introduction

The realisation that basic education is both a necessity and a human right has been recognised by the international community. The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights asserted that everyone has the right to education (Education For All, 1998). As enshrined in the Dakar Framework of Action 2000, one of the Millennium Development Goals is to achieve universal primary education for both boys and girls by 2015 (Education For All Global Monitoring Report, 2006). Being a signatory of the Dakar Framework, Zimbabwe is seized with making efforts to realise this goal.

The expansion of primary education was witnessed when it was made free and compulsory at independence in 1980 as government adopted an education for all policy (Chanakira, 1998; Mavundutse et al 2012; Ngara & Ngwarai, 2012). The Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training (1999) concede that there has remarkable advancement in education provision in Zimbabwe at all levels. Satellite primary schools have also been established to increase access to education. The 2000 land reform programme has also seen the rapid establishment of primary schools in the resettlement areas where schools were nonexistent at all. These resettlement schools are referred to as Fast Track schools (Mavundutse, etal, 2012) and whatever their nature, Fast Track schools serve the purpose of increasing access and equity in education. This robust change in education policy resulted in the increase in access to education by the formerly marginalised Zimbabwean children. Massive enrolments outpaced what schools could accommodate (EFA, 1998). Classrooms became overcrowded, witnessing a higher student ratio of more than the norm of 1: 40(Zimbabwe National Strategic Plan for the Education of Girls, Orphans and other Vulnerable Children, 2005-2010). To this effect, Theunyk (in EFA, 2010: 191) says, "The number of classrooms is growing at less than half the required rate."

The overflowing of schools, where available school places could not match learning infrastructure pressurised education authorities to come up with ways of increasing access to education. Many urban primary schools and some rural schools introduced double-session schooling system, also called 'hot-seating' in Zimbabwe. So called hot-seating because the seats will never have time to cool (Bray, 2000). The introduction of double session schooling was meant to increase the supply of school places while avoiding strain on the budget (Bray, 2000) and consequently to allow access and equity (Mertens, 2005). However, despite the introduction of double session schooling, some primary schools have continued to witness phenomenal increases in enrolments as demand for school places continue to rise. Classrooms have become unbearably overcrowded resulting in the consummation of the idea of introducing triple-shift schooling system- a very unique schooling system in Zimbabwe. Apart from exerting pressure on school infrastructure, teachers are also overburdened by the triple-shift schooling arrangement. Since teachers are the principal factor in educational provision, their perceptions towards the implementation of triple-shift schooling affect the quality of education in a significant way. In order to achieve quality education, quality teaching and learning material in the correct quantities must be made available to teachers. Against the background of triple-shift schooling system, it was justifiable to find out teachers' perceptions of triple-shift schooling system.

Background to the Study

The expansion of the Zimbabwean education is a result of the attainment of independence in 1980 when government proclaimed an ambitious education for all policy (Chanakira, 1998). Testimony of this expansion in education is borne when one looks at the number of primary schools that emerged after independence. There were 2401 primary schools enrolling 819 586 at independence, and a decade later, there were 4611 schools enrolling in excess of 2 476 575 pupils (Chanakira, 1998). In accordance with government objectives and those of the 1990 Thailand Jomtien World Conference which set itself to attain education for all by the year 2000, "Zimbabwe continues to focus on universal literacy and remains committed to universal basic education" (Chanakira, 1998: 37). According to EFA Monitoring Report (2010) progress towards universal education in the past decade has been encouraging. The report notes that, since 1999, enrolment rates in sub Saharan Africa have been increasing five times as fast as during the 1990s.

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Despite all these efforts, the problem of high enrolments continues unabated. Theunyck (in EFA, 2010: 191) says, "The number of classrooms is growing at less than half the required rate." Owing to low investment in the construction of new schools and other learning infrastructure, education authorities have been forced to come up with ways solving the problem. In urban areas for example, despite the introduction of double-session, the demand for school places continues to haunt school authorities. A case in point is Chikonohono Primary School which has witnessed unprecedented high enrolments leading to the introduction of triple shift schooling in the year 2013.

Rationale for Multiple Shift Schooling

Historically, the introduction of multiple-shift system was politically motivated. Before Zimbabwe's attainment of independence, the colonial regime did not regard education for Blacks as a matter of concern. Consequently building of enough schools was not one of their priorities. Literature suggests that multiple-shift systems are introduced in most developing countries like Zimbabwe to expand the number of school places and consequently to allow access and equity. Multiple shift schooling is necessitated by a situation where demand for school places outpaces available school capacities thus allowing a single set

of buildings to serve more pupils. This is especially critical in urban areas where land is scarce and buildings are expensive. Bray (2005) points out that multiple-shift schooling system has helped many countries to move towards universal primary and secondary education. The expansion of the number of school places broadens access thus helping governments to achieve goals of social equity (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2006).

Models of Multiple-Shift Schooling System

The phenomenon of multiple shift schooling system is not unique to Zimbabwe. The system is practised the world over in a variety of models in both poorer countries and in better-off systems (unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0008/000835/083509eo.pdf). A multiple shift system means one in which a school caters for two or more entirely separate groups of pupils during a school day (Bray, 1989). In Botswana for example, double session schools have different pupils in the mornings and afternoons, the same number of hours as pupils in single session schools, and different teachers for each session. The first group of pupils usually attends school from early morning to midday and the second group attends from midday to late afternoon using the same buildings and other facilities (Bray, 1998). In some models of double session schools, the teachers who teach in the morning session are the ones who teach in the afternoon session. The Zimbabwean scenario is the same as what prevails in Botswana. Depending on the arrangement of the school, the sessions alternate to use the school facilities thus, each session is neither permanently in the morning session nor permanently in the afternoon session.

Triple-Shift Schooling System

Where schools are already overcrowded, some education authorities extend the double-session model into Triple Shift system (Bray, 1989). This means that three groups of pupils study for example, from 6.30am-10.55am; 11.00am-3.25pm; 3.30pm-7.55pm. According to Bray (2005:15) in countries like Zambia where triple –shift system is used, the shifts are as follows:

- 1st shift: 7.00 am-10.45am
- 2nd shift: 11.00am-2.45pm
- 3rd shift: 3.00pm-6.45pm

While this system increases access and equity, Bray (2000:12) is convinced that triple shift schooling system creates problems. According to Bray (ibid) the school day, in triple session systems is often shortened. This implies quality is being sacrificed for quantity, that pupils are losing some classroom teaching and extra- curricular activities. If teachers work in more than one session, they are likely to be tired. Teachers and pupils do not like to work in hot afternoons and they are usually tired before they start school. This can cause a further deterioration of quality as teachers get frustrated and stressed due to work overload (Nhundu, 1999).

General Atmosphere in Triple Shift Systems

Bray (2000) reports that, in general, many countries view triple shift schooling as something negative and inferior. Bray is of the opinion that most educators agree that the atmosphere of multiple shift schools particularly triple shift schools is inferior to that of the traditional single shift. This is on the basis that school days are shorter because each day must accommodate all the three shifts. Breaks are shortened and teaching time is somewhat reduced as all shifts must fit in the day. Afternoons are hotter, children and teachers find it hard to concentrate on learning and teaching tasks. The shift change can also have its own complications as transition periods can be chaotic (Bray, 2000). Each shift can be disturbed somehow. Teachers and pupils have less ownership of their classrooms because the classes are used by different groups. This creates problems of maintenance of resources in the classrooms resulting in their rapid deterioration.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers have had to contend with multiple-shift schooling system in the primary school since Zimbabwe attained political independence in 1980. Multiple-shift schooling was introduced to deal with the demand

for school places as well as increase access and equity. The model adopted in Zimbabwe is double-session schooling also called 'hot seating' which experts say has compromised education standards (Towindo, 2012). It appears in some schools; demand for school places has continued to soar, forcing school authorities to come up with alternative ways of solving the problem. The introduction of triple-shift schooling system, where a school has three sessions attending school in a day, further complicates the already dire situation. This study sought to establish teachers' perceptions of the triple-shift schooling system at Chikonohono Primary School in Chinhoyi urban.

Research questions

- Are all the teachers at the school affected by triple-shift schooling?
- What reasons do teachers give as leading to the introduction of triple-shift schooling system at the school?
- Have the teachers embraced the introduction of triple-shift system at the school?
- How do teachers say triple-shift schooling is organised at the school?
- Does triple-shift schooling compromise education standards?
- What do teachers suggest can be done to deal with the challenges of triple-shift system?

2. Research Methodology

Case Study

This study is situated within the qualitative paradigm in which a case study research design was adopted. Mertens (2005:237) says, "A case study a method for learning about a complex instance, based on a comprehensive understanding of that instance obtained by extensive descriptions of that instance taken as a whole and in its context." Best and Kahn (2006:259) say "a case study is way of organising social data for the purpose of viewing social reality. It examines a social unit as a whole..." Yin cited (in Winegardner, 2001:4) defines a case study in terms of the research process as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context..." Thus a case study has been considered appropriate as this study is about a single phenomenon namely the triple shift schooling system. The intention behind the case study was to understand teachers' perceptions of triple shift schooling as they experienced this situation on a daily basis. The researcher's purpose was to try to understand the way participants experienced and perceived the triple shift schooling system at Chikonohono Primary School.

Population

Since Chikonohono is the only primary school in Chinhoyi urban that has introduced triple-shift schooling, the population consisted of all the sixty teachers at the school. The school became the 'case' as it enabled the researchers to obtain rich information about triple-shift schooling.

Sample

Purposive sampling was used in this study. In contrast to probabilistic sampling, "purposive sampling is selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study when one wants to understand something about those cases without generalising to all cases" (Patton in McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:397). This means that the researcher searches for information-rich informants. The researchers purposively selected ten teachers including the school head as the study sample. This sample was chosen because it was likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon of triple shift schooling system.

Data Collection Instruments

In qualitative research, varied data gathering tools can be utilised, such as questionnaires, observation, interviews, documents and focus groups. Only interviews and focus groups were used as data gathering tools in this study. Interviews allow the obtaining of rich descriptive that helps in understanding the participants' construction of knowledge and social reality (Maree, 2010). Focus groups are group interviews that rely on interaction within the group rather on question and answer format of interviews.

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According to Krueger and Casey (in Mertens, 2005) focus groups result in the researcher obtaining more of the participants' view points than would be evidenced in a more researcher- dominated interview. These tools were considered appropriate in this study as the researchers were interested in how participants perceived the triple shift schooling system.

Data Analysis

Data in this study were analysed qualitatively. The narrative form of data presentation was used with some verbatim statements from the research participants being recorded. In this context, Patton (1990:19) says, "Much of the qualitative data comprise people and the words they say."

Research Findings

This section summarises the research findings in relation to interview questions. While the findings are presented per interview item, it is critical to view the findings as giving a holistic picture of what transpires at the school in relation to the research problem.

School Enrolment

The Acting Head indicated that that there were 2 500 pupils and a staff compliment of 60 teachers excluding the head who retired in 2012. Against such high pupil enrolment, there were only twenty-one classrooms. The Acting Head also indicated that there were fifty-five classes which share the mentioned rooms.

Classes Affected by Triple Shift

During interviews, the Acting Head reported that there were nine classes without classrooms which range from Grade 1 to 5. This information was corroborated with information got from interviews with teachers who confirmed the number of classes that were affected by the triple shift system. The Acting Head said that, in essence, triple shift system affects twenty-seven classes since each of the nine classes without a room shared with two other classes hence the three sessions. During Focus Group Discussion (FGD), participants said that triple shift system did not only affect the twenty-seven classes, but the entire school. They said that the smooth running of the whole school was disturbed in many ways by the existence of triple shift system.

Factors Leading to High Enrolments

During separate interviews with teachers and the Acting Head, it was established that the expansion of the town in the form of new residential areas was the main contributory factor to increased enrolments at the school. Participants pointed out that the mushrooming of new high density suburbs of Rujeko, Rusununguko, Ruvimbo Phases 1 and 2 and Garikai resulted in unprecedented high enrolments at the school over and above the traditional catchment areas of Chikonohono, Cherima, Gunhill, Whitecity and some neighbouring farms. During FGD, it emerged that these new high density suburbs were occupied by young couples who are still sexually active and are still bearing children. The Acting Head said that while the new residential areas expanded, no schools were being built to cater for the children in those areas. The absence of schools in these areas has resulted in pressure being exerted on the nearest school which is Chikonohono Primary.

Reasons for Introducing Triple Shift System

During interviews, participants indicated that the phenomenal increase in enrolment as a result of expansion of new suburbs (Mutasa, 2011) was the major reason for the introduction of triple shift schooling system at the school. This is in line with Bray's (1989) observation that where schools are already overcrowded, authorities extend double session to triple shift system. In this regard, increased enrolment owing to low investment in the construction of new schools (Towindo, 2012) was the major reason leading to the introduction of the triple shift system at the school. All participants reported that classes had become unbearably large, in some cases numbering up to seventy pupils. The Global Monitoring Report(2006) reports that, in sub Saharan Africa, pupil/teacher ratios(PTRs) exceed 40:1 and

are as high as 70:1 in some countries. This report confirms what was obtaining at the research site as reported by the Acting Head. In FGD, participants said that they complained about the high teacher-pupil ratio which made individual attention to pupils very difficult. This is what led to the introduction of the unique phenomenon of triple shift schooling system. The rationale for the introduction of the triple shift system was to reduce class sizes. On average, each class of those teachers who participated in the study had forty-eight pupils which, is still quite high considering the 40:1 pupil/ teacher ratio.

Support for the Triple Shift System

In order for any education programme to succeed, teachers must be motivated to support it. Although the participants agreed to the introduction of three sessions at the school which they thought was going to be a temporary solution to an emergency, they revealed during interviews that they do not support the three shifts at the school. Participants' sentiments in both interviews and FGD were that the triple shift system hindered teaching progress especially when one was teaching outside for the whole week as is part of the mechanism of implementation of the system at the school. One participant said, "It is not comfortable for both the teacher and the pupil especially during this rainy season. There are so many distractions outside." Another participant added, "The classroom is the only environment that fosters meaningful learning for pupils. Infant classes must do a lot of indoor activities, but this situation is causing more harm than good to beginners." Another participant scoffed at the system but said that she could not do anything but to play ball asked, "Can I put on my pulling socks to go and teach outside for the whole week? I will put on clothes that suit where I will be seated." Participants said that the system was killing their zeal to meaningfully contribute to wholesome pupil development. One participant said in vernacular, "*Handigone kubetsera mwana zvandinonzwa kuti apa yaa ndaita basa*" (I cannot be convinced that I have assisted the child to the satisfaction of my ego). These sentiments by the participants paint a gloomy picture on the triple shift system.

It emerged from the contribution of the Acting Head, that while the triple shift system was the brainchild of the school, teachers did not like it totally. During FGD the participants said that they wanted the system done away with as soon as possible. One participant actually said, "We want the education authorities including the Minister of Education to come and address us. We want to air our views. We are the people on the ground. We are the ones experiencing problems." These sentiments clearly indicated that teachers did not support triple shift system for the reasons mentioned above.

The Triple Shift School Day

The mechanism of implementation of triple shift schooling at Chikonohono is not the same as what happens in Zambia. The school has been divided into three sessions which fit into a single day. The shifts are named Morning In Session, Afternoon Session and Morning Out Session. The Morning In session is the traditional morning session which starts school in the morning and finishes around midday. The afternoon session starts school at midday and finishes late afternoon. The third session, the Morning Out session starts school in the morning and ends at midday just like the morning session but they learn outside for the whole week regardless of the weather condition. For instance, Room 3 is shared by three classes; 2B, 2C and 1D, which shows that during weekending 01-10-13 class 2B was in the Morning In session, weekending 08-02-13 it was in the Afternoon session and weekending 15-02-13 it was in the Morning Out session. Below is an example of how the triple shift system is organised at the school. The example shows how the affected classes share rooms for a period of three weeks.

Key: MORN IN means Morning Session; NOON means Afternoon session and MORN OUT means Morning Out session.

Room Allocation For 1st Term – 2013: Adapted From Chikonohono Timetable

WEEK-ENDING 01-02-13				WEEK-ENDING 08-02-13				WEEK-ENDING 15-02-13			
ROO M	MOR N IN	NOO N	MOR N OUT	ROO M	MOR N IN	NOO N	MORN OUT	ROO M	MOR N IN	NOO N	MOR N OUT
3	2B	2C	1D	3	1D	2B	2C	3	2C	1D	2B
7	1E	2A	3F	7	3F	1E	2A	7	2A	3F	1E
22	4C	3A	5G	22	5G	4C	3A	22	3A	5G	4C
23	5B	4B	4G	23	4G	5B	4B	23	4B	4G	5B
24	3B	5C	4F	24	4F	3B	5C	24	5C	4F	3B
27	4A	3C	3G	27	3G	4A	3C	27	3C	3G	4A
28	5D	4D	5H	28	5H	5D	4D	28	4D	5H	5D
29	3D	5E	5F	29	5E	3D	3E	29	5E	5F	3D
S/R	4E	3E	4H	S/R	4H	4E	3E	S/R	3E	4H	4C

Triple Sessions and Education Standards

It is critical to note that teachers are an important factor in the provision of quality education. During interviews, all participants said that triple shift system compromised education standards. The participants were unanimous in saying that when children are learning outside where there are no desks and chairs, the nature and quality of their work is greatly affected. They said that there are so many distractions and disturbances resulting in lack of concentration by children thus damaging the psychological environment that supports learning (Omrod, 2009). An ideal environment is one in which pupils feel safe and secure, where learning is the high priority. It was established that, in triple shift system, learning time is shortened as all children must take part in co-curricular activities regardless of the session they are in. Participants said that they tried to make up for the lost time when they are in class but usually they overloaded the pupils with instructional content which they cannot master. This creates problems again because children are being hurried to master content which they, in most cases, fail to. The participants said that because the whole school yard is full of pupils, it is usually very difficult to control them. The ultimate measure of any education system is what and how well pupils learn (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2010). During interview, one participant pointed to a group of pupils saying, “*Oh, tarisai vana ava vari kukikiritsana, havagoneke ava, ini ndini ndovadii?*”(Look at those children who are wresting, you cannot control them, what do you think I can do?).

During FGD all participants said that triple shift schooling compromised education standards. They pointed out that it was not possible to teach all subjects thus short changing the children. The Acting Head also added his voice by saying that the system compromised education standards in many ways. He admitted that supervision of all teachers within a term posed the greatest challenge even when the Deputy Head and the T.I.C were involved. He went on to say that, against all odds, they were trying their best to keep the school afloat. He was quick to praise the teachers for working hard always despite working under unfavourable conditions. The Acting Head said that teachers’ hard work contributed to the rising Grade seven pass rates. To this effect, he pulled out a file which showed an upward trend in Grade seven pass rates for three consecutive years: 2010; 2011 and 2012 which reflected 47%; 54% and 64% pass rates respectively. This trend bore testimony that teachers were indeed working hard at the school despite the challenges posed by the triple shift schooling system.

It also emerged from the study that the general outlook of the school had deteriorated. Due to the large pupil population, the lawn had been trampled and died, the flower beds had been destroyed and the whole school was often littered with papers, stones and bricks. Pieces of cloth were strewn all over the school yard. This was indicative of a school reeling against the impact of triple shift system as the school yard was always filled with pupils.

Sitting Places for Outside Learning

During interview and FGD, participants said that there were no special sitting places for those pupils learning outside. The absence of furniture (desks, chairs) makes teaching and learning very difficult (Mavundtse et al, 2012). Participants said that there were no chairs for pupils to sit on and only the teacher sat on a chair while pupils sat on the ground. Some teachers have resorted to asking their pupils to bring with them to school pieces of cloth to sit on so as to reduce dirt on their uniforms. One participant said, “In my class I have introduced the ‘Zambia system’ referring to cloths worn round the waist by women when they doing dirty chores at home or at funerals. The Acting Head also confirmed what the teachers had said that pupils sat under trees and those places had become more or less permanent ‘open air classrooms’ which they could rightfully own and defend from occupation by any other class. The Acting Head went to say that pupils sat on anything including stones, bricks, and pieces of cloth. This scenario highlights the plight of the school as it grapples and waddles in the mud of triple shift schooling system.

Availability of Teaching Resources

It must be noted that the availability of teaching resources is the backbone for successful pupil learning. Mavundtse et al (2012:303) say, “Resources are a very important factor in the provision of quality education.” Resources influence the kind of teaching/learning environment teachers create for their learners. During interviews and FGD, participants indicated that the administration was doing its best in providing teaching and learning materials to all teachers despite the size of the school. However, some participants found it difficult to use some materials such charts when conducting lessons outside. They felt that the writing boards, which could be written on one side only, were too small to accommodate enough chalkboard work. Some of the boards did not have stands and had to be leaned against trees. It was not comfortable when writing as teachers had to bend acutely or kneel on the ground to write on them. It also emerged that sometimes these writing boards, because they did not have stands, fell down and hit children. However, some participants said that lack of resources had invoked creativity in them. They pinned the charts on trees whenever they wanted to use them in a lesson. The creativity was scoffed at during FGD when some participants asked in vernacular, “*Unenge uchivavarira chii kunamatidza chati pamuti, mirira wazopinda mukirasi?*” (What will you be trying to achieve by pinning a chart on a tree, why not wait for your turn to use the classroom?) It can be seen from teachers’ sentiments how triple shift schooling system frustrates, angers and renders their efforts redundant.

Rainy Season and Triple Shift System

When it starts raining pupils learning outside had to find shelter and usually they got into classrooms that were already occupied. However, participants indicated that entry into other classrooms was dependent on how the teachers understood each other. In cases where children are denied shelter, they crammed in verandas which did not offer enough cover from rain. When the children were allowed in, the classrooms usually became overcrowded and learning stopped even if it rained the whole day. One participant asked, “How do you teach two different grades in one class when I teach Grade 2 and the other teacher teaches Grade 5?” During FGD, participants said that competition for rooms had become a source of misunderstandings, confrontations and enmity between teachers. The Acting Head also added his voice when he confirmed that the rainy season brought in insurmountable challenges in relation to the three shift system. He said that children have to find shelter in verandas which were not big enough to offer shelter to pupils. After the rains, when lessons resumed, it is regrettable that children had to sit on wet ground, a situation which one participant described as unhealthy and inconsiderate for the human child.

Efforts to Normalise the Situation

All participants were in agreement that their school administration was working extremely hard to finding a lasting solution to the nagging problem. They said that they were constantly apprised of any developments regarding triple shift system. These sentiments were also echoed during FGD when it was said that the Acting Head had gone to talk to the Education Officers on many occasions. To show how much effort they were putting as administration, the Acting Head showed one of the researcher’s a letter

they had written to district office asking them to expedite the process of finding a solution to problems affecting the school before schools opened in January 2013. The opening of schools would coincide with the onset of rains which would make teaching and learning very difficult. According to the Acting Head, the solution to the problem seems a mirage. The education authorities do not seem to be seized with the situation at the school as it still remains dire. One Education Officer who is now late is reported to have said, "*Haisi mhosa yangu ini, endai kumachechi uko.*" (Its not my baby, go to the churches) in apparent response to teachers' plight at the school. Such statements show the gravity of the problem to the extent that those who should be spearheading the hunt for help are actually distancing themselves leaving the administration and teachers to play ball.

Management of Transition Periods

Misbehaviours most frequently occur during transition times as students end one activity and begin a second or as they move from one classroom to another (Omrod, 2009). Effective classroom managers take steps to ensure that transitions proceed quickly without a loss of momentum. They should establish procedures for moving from one activity to the other. The moving in and out of classrooms at the start and ending of sessions by pupils has to be managed properly. Asked how they view transition periods at the school, participants reported that, generally, transition periods are noisy and chaotic because the pupils are too many. One participant said, "We can hardly hear each other as the children shout at each other, run all over and sometimes falling during stampede, in fact I run short words to describe what happens during transition periods." Another participant said that the school had become too big for the head and the situation, if not managed, can be dangerous. At assembly, teachers have to be there to supervise their children. Asked how transition periods were like at the school, the Acting Head would only say, "*VaGorongwa, dai manga muripo nezuro kuseni maizvionera.*" (Mr Gorongwa, { referring to one of the researchers}, if you were here yesterday morning, you would have seen for yourself). Implicit in this statement is that transition periods at the school are chaotic due to the large numbers of pupils. This confirms Bray's (2000) observation that generally, transition periods in triple shifts are chaotic. However, the Acting Head was quick to explain that they try as much as possible to be orderly.

Suggestions for Solving the Problem

The availability of infrastructure such as buildings and water resources contribute positively towards the quality of education teachers can provide (Mavundtse et al, 2012). In both interviews and FGD, participants were unanimous that the long term solution to the problem bedeviling the school lay in the building of a school in one of the new suburbs. As a short term solution, participants indicated that temporary structures in the form of tents could be sourced and pitched to accommodate classes without rooms. Tents would offer shelter above the children's heads. The tents would be pitched within the school yard to enable the head to supervise the school as a single entity. The Acting Head also echoed what teachers had suggested that a school should be built to cater for children in the new suburbs. To highlight the uniqueness of the teaching arrangement at their school, all participants including the Acting Head said that they had never heard of any primary school in Zimbabwe that is running a triple shift schooling system. In his own words the Acting Head said, "This is a unique arrangement, the first of its kind in Zimbabwe perhaps. Some school heads are actually inquiring how we are coping under such a 'strange' situation."

The Acting Head went on to highlight that, other facilities like toilets are also strained since they are being used by more pupils than they were built for. There is hardly any time during school day when there are no less than five pupils in the toilet. Another challenge which he highlighted was that the school has had no water running in taps since 2005 thus making the situation a serious health hazard and a recipe for the outbreak of water borne diseases. To go round the water problem, at least for cleaning the toilets, the Acting Head said that all pupils are required to bring two litres of water to school every day. The challenge is, sometimes water may not be available where children come from hence they bring water they have used for bathing. The Acting Head went on to say that all available space had been converted into classrooms, for example, the staffroom and two storerooms were being used as 'classrooms.' During

interviews, one of the researchers saw a class learning in the carport, the school car had been driven out to make way for the class to use the 'classroom.'

4. Conclusion

While it is commendable that the school has been able to offer school places to all deserving pupils leading to triple shift schooling system, there is need to seriously consider the plight of the school. The school is experiencing massive enrolments that have put pressure on the available rooms resulting in overcrowded classrooms. The furniture is also in short supply such that those who learn outside sit on the ground even when the ground is wet. The school has no reliable source of water for cleaning the toilets worse still when there are so many pupils. When at school, pupils also want water to drink and wash their hands after using the toilet. Government, through its education structures at district and provincial levels as well as Council, should mobilise resources for the building of a school in one of the new suburbs to cater for children coming from those areas thus reducing pressure on the existing facilities at the school. Based on the information got from the study, the triple shift schooling system is unworkable and that it has more challenges than advantages for which it was created. The major finding of the study is that teachers and school administrators do not like this unique teaching arrangement to continue hence the need to do away with sooner rather than later. There is need to validate the findings of this study by conducting research to find out parents' perceptions of triple shift schooling system as it is affecting many education stakeholders.

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