

**CHALLENGES FACING THE IMPLEMENTING OF THEMATIC CURRICULUM IN  
LOWER PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN UGANDA**

**A CASE OF NABINGOOLA SUB-COUNTY, MUBENDE DISTRICT.**

**BY**

**MOHAMMED MABIRIZI**

**2017/FEB/MEMP/M222659/DIST/KYE**

**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A  
DEGREE OF MASTERS IN EDUCATION  
MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING,  
OF NKUMBA UNIVERSITY**

**AUGUST, 2018**

**DECLARATION**

I, Mbirizi Mohammed, declare that this is my own original work and has not ever been presented to any examiners in any university for the award of a Masters Degree, Bachelors Degree Diploma or any other award

Signature

.....

Mbirizi Mohammed

Date: .....

**APPROVAL**

This is to certify this study was carried out by Mabirizi Mohammed under my supervision as the university supervisor.

Signature

.....

Dr. Joyce Bukirwa

Supervisor

Date: .....

## **DEDICATION**

This piece of work is dedicated to my dear wife, my dear children, parents, brothers, sisters and my entire friends for their moral and material contribution to the completion of this course.

May their tireless, commitment, encouragement and determination turn into prosperity.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The accomplishment of this work could not have been possible without the valuable contribution of the various categories of people below; whom I would like to thank.

Firstly, let me thank, Dr. Joyce Bukirwa, Dean of the School Of Education, Sciences & Humanities at Nkumba University for the academic guidance and encouragement as a supervisor of this research report.

Secondly I am greatly indebted to the authors of the various books I consulted, this work would have been impossible without their contribution.

My sincere thanks go to the respondents especially head teachers, teachers, head of departments and Parents of sampled primary schools in Nabingoola Sub-County, Mubende District who scarified their valuable time when providing useful response and readiness to attend to me.

Let me also acknowledge with gratitude the contribution of my fellow students; namely Mr. Ssaka Roberts, Mr. Katongole Gerald, Mr. Nnaalima Benedict and Hajji Ssekabira Abdul Lukooya whose material and moral support enabled me to complete this work successfully.

Lastly, I wish to extend my gratitude to my dear parents Kabasiita Zaituni, Haji Ssebagala Abdalah and Muzee Isa Nsereko for their foresightedness to educate me. May Allah bless you and reward you abundantly.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
DECLARATION .....	ii
APPROVAL .....	iii
DEDICATION.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	vi
LIST OF TABLES .....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	x
ABSTRACT .....	xi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Back ground of the study.....	1
1.2. Problem Statement .....	4
1.3. Objectives of the study .....	6
1.4. Research questions .....	6
1.5 Scope of the Study.....	6
1.6 Significance of Study. ....	7
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	8
2.0 Introduction.....	8
2.2. The challenges teachers & head teachers face in implementing the thematic curriculum. ....	21
2.3 Parents' perceptions towards the implementation of thematic curriculum in lower primary schools .....	24
2.4. Solutions to the challenges of implementing the thematic curriculum in lower primary schools. ....	25
CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY .....	30
3.0 Introduction.....	30
3.1 Research Design.....	30
3.2 Study population .....	30
3.3 Sample size and sample selection .....	30
3.4 Area of Study: .....	31
3.5 Data Collection Methods and Instruments: .....	31
3.5.1 Self-Administered Questionnaire:.....	31

3.5.2. Date analysis, percentages, Mean and simple deviations .....	32
3.5.2.1 Qualitative Data.....	32
3.5.2.2 Quantitative data.....	32
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS .....	34
4.0 Introduction.....	34
4.1 Research question one .....	34
4.2 Research questions two .....	39
4.3 Research question four .....	44
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	49
5.0 Introduction.....	49
5.1. Discussion.....	49
5.1.1 Research question one (1).....	49
5.1.2. Research question stated that;.....	50
5.1.3 Research questions three;.....	51
5.2. Summary.....	52
5.2 Conclusion .....	53
Factors influencing the use of the thematic curriculum .....	53
Challenges in implementing the curriculum in Nabingoola Sub-County schools.....	53
Solution towards curriculum implementation in schools of Nabingoola Sub-County .....	54
5.3 Recommendations .....	55
5.4 Areas further research.....	55
REFERENCES .....	56
APPENDIX: QUESTIONNAIRES TO HEAD TEACHERS .....	58
APPENDIX 11.....	60
QUESTIONNAIRES TO TEACHERS .....	60
APPENDIX IV .....	63
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS.....	63
APPENDIX V.....	64
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MEMBERS OF SMC. ....	64

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. A table showing the distribution of the study population .....	31
Table 2: Showing whether there is need for the ministry of education to continuously review the curriculum as a broad strategy for change in the education system. ....	34
Table3: Showing the need for strengthening and facilitation of education agencies in Uganda.....	35
Table 4: showing whether there is pressure from politicians to review the primary school curriculum.....	36
Table 5: Showing whether the changing lifestyle of Uganda makes it necessary for the ministry of education to review the primary school curriculum.....	36
Table 6: Showing why ICT should be a requirement in primary schools. ....	37
Table 7: showing whether reviews of the primary school curriculum help to meet competition in the global economy. ....	37
Table 8: showing the need for evidence to justify curriculum review in primary education. ....	38
Table 9: showing whether the media also boosts motivation of reviewing the primary school curriculum.....	38
Table 10: showing whether schools have well equipped libraries to facilitate academic work. ....	39
Table 11: showing the availability of electricity in primary schools in Nabingoola sub-county. ....	40
Table 12: shows whether instructional materials for subjects taught in primary schools in Nabingoola sub-county affects the implementation of the thematic curriculum. ....	40
Table 13. Show the need for a well-developed computer laboratory .....	41
Table 14: showing children’s attitude towards new subjects in their learning time table. ....	41
Table 15: showing whether the new subjects are sometimes introduced in schools when no teachers with the knowledge and experience to deliver its content.....	42
Table 16; showing whether the curriculum reviewer discuss the new curriculum content with teachers.....	43
Table 17: shows the efforts made to distribute curriculum guides. ....	43
Table 18: shows whether there is need for representation of teachers view in designing the curriculum.....	44
Table 19; shows the need for competent and experienced persons in curriculum development.....	45
Table 20: showing whether the development of new subjects suit the capabilities of the schools. ..	45
Table 21: shows the needs for teacher’s development and capacity building. ....	46
Table 22: shows the need to invest more in primary schools. ....	46
Table 23; showing the need for decentralization policy in primary school management.....	47



Table 24: Shows the need for a commission to review the progress of implementation of the curriculum.....	47
Table 25; showing the need for pilot scheme before introduction of the new curriculum .....	48

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure1. The analytical framework.....28

## **ABSTRACT**

This study addressed challenges facing the implementing of thematic curriculum in lower primary schools in Uganda in general. Nabingoola Sub-County, Mubende District in particular. Four research questions were tested:

What are the factors that influence the use of thematic curriculum in lower Primary in Uganda?

What are the challenges teachers and head teaches face in implementing the thematic curriculum in Nabingoola sub-county schools Mubende District?

What is the parents' perception towards the implementation of thematic curriculum in lower primary schools Nabingoola sub-county?

What are the possible solutions available towards solving challenges of implementing the thematic curriculum in primary schools of Nabingoola sub-county?

A descriptive research design was used and both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were used to obtain findings from a total of 160 respondents who were selected both through purposive and simple random selection.

The study findings revealed that the factors influencing the use of the thematic curriculum in Uganda were both external and internal to the country, there was an effort to make a curriculum based in local language to enable pupils quickly learn how to read, understand and write in their local language, however, all this not forthcoming because the implementation phase was still lagging behind. Further revealed that financial incapability's of the school in the sub-county, lack of enough instructional materials and competent teachers and many others could not enable effective implementation of the thematic curriculum.

The study suggested that, Stakeholders should receive appreciation from the implementers in order to effectively put the curriculum into practice, adequate facilitation of the schools by the government to ensure that instructional materials are provided to the school.

The study recommends that thematic curriculum implementation should be based mainly on the trends of globalization and its products should be well suited for the society and tailored to the need of the pupils.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Introduction.**

This chapter consists of the back ground of the study, problem statement and objectives of the study, research questions and the scope of the study. Also included are the significant of the study.

### **1.1 Back ground of the study**

The study is about challenges facing the implementing of thematic curriculum in lower primary schools in Uganda. A case of Nabinoola sub-county, Mubende District.

Curriculum implementation according to Omstein and Hunkins (2009) involves presenting new ideas into practice. Omstein and Hunkins (2009) found that, implementation is also a systematic process of ensuring that the planned curriculum reaches the learners. This entails persuading the policy makers, teachers and parents to accept the new curriculum, providing in-service and pre-service to teachers, providing the materials and administrative means to make the process possible.

The origin of life skills originates from 1986 Ottawa charter of health which stated under the rubric of personal skills and health promotion should support personal and social development by providing information, advantage for health and enhancing of life skills (global evaluation, 2012). According to (WHO, 1997) the implementation of curriculum requires the input from the school, education authority for teachers and learning materials. Errecart, Walberg et al (1991) insist that teaching life skills could form a base of life skills education for the promotion of mental well-being and healthy interaction and behavior.

For the implementation of thematic curriculum, teachers need to get deep understanding of the curriculum because they are the ones who disseminate the curriculum. This is in accordance to (Omstein and Hunkins, 2009).

Omstein further points out that teachers need more than one or two days training workshop so that they make sense of content and to gain competence in the new instructional practices that

will engage pupils since thematic curriculum is child centered. According to (Sharon and Susanne, (2008) teachers in the United States of America are given in-service courses before the implementation of a given curriculum, where workshops are organized for two days.

In Cambodia teachers are given pre-service training on thematic curriculum before the implementation through the ministry of Education, Youth and sports (MOEYS, 2008).

In America a rental program was introduced by American government in conjunction with United Nations children's fund (Global evaluation, 2012) to ensure enough text books for the implementation of thematic curriculum (Achton, 2001).

In Barbados, teaching and learning resources are provided by UNICEF and in Myanmar, teaching and learning resources are insufficient this is according to, global evaluation (2012).

Many nations, which are committed to education for all goals (EFA) and the convention of the rights of children have included the implementation of thematic curriculum as basic learning for the young children which in future will empower them with knowledge to encounter challenging situations (United Nations Children Funds, 1997). The rights of a child (Article 29) states that education of the child shall develop his/her personality and prepare the child to be responsible in life and co-exist peacefully with other people. Most importantly, international and national political commitments have been made to the implementation of thematic curriculum. The commitments are included in key global documents such as Dakar framework for action on education for all (EFA) and the United Nations general assembly special sessions (UNGASS). The implementation of thematic curriculum has been a success in central and Eastern Europe, East Asia, southern Asia Indonesia and Jordan (Global Evaluation, 2012).

In East and southern Africa, the implementation of thematic curriculum has been used to pass knowledge skills and attitudes on literacy, Numeracy and language development while in Malawi, thematic education is examinable and more often does not deal with HIV and AIDS education and drugs, (Global evaluation, 2012). In some countries like Mozambique, Burundi, Malawi, United Nations children's fund has helped in the implementation of thematic curriculum by developing teaching and non-teaching materials developing national policies especially in Burundi and training teachers in Malawi (Global evaluation, 2012). According to

(Global evaluation, 2012) head teachers in many countries have not been given training or guidance for internal supervision in schools where thematic curriculum is being implemented. According to (Omstein and Hankins 2009) curriculum implementation must be supervised and monitored for a successful implementation.

Uganda has engaged in various curriculum reforms in the post-independence period after 1962. The new curriculum for primary schools, called the “thematic curriculum’, has been recently developed and implemented national wide starting from February 2007. There is high expectation associated with the new curriculum. A literate and numerate population is imperative for sustainable development and economic growth in Uganda. In this context, thematic curriculum is believed to contribute to such process by improving education quality, and more specifically by increasing the achievement levels of literacy, numeracy and life skills (MOES, 2008).

However, there are still a number of weaknesses and challenges as evidenced in the education system, such as poor student performance, frequent student absenteeism, high dropout rate and repetition rate, and poor quality of the infrastructure (Hoppers, 2008). In fact, the quality of education at primary level remains largely unsatisfactory. For instance, as a result of high rates of poor performance in Literacy, only 22 percent of the 1997 primary one cohorts was progressing through seven years in 2003. Various studies have also shown that the majority of Ugandan pupils were failing to achieve adequate levels of literacy and numeracy. For instance, studies conducted by Uganda national examination board (UNEB) in 2005 revealed that only 38 percent of the primary three pupils and 30 percent of the primary six pupils reached the defined competency levels in literacy. Figures for numeracy were 14 percent and 33 percent for primary three and primary six pupils respectively (UNEB, 2005). These results were considered by many researchers to be both disappointing and unacceptable. A number of studies have tried to analyze the underlying causes of low quality at primary schools. These studies highlighted lack of the qualified teachers (especially in rural areas), inadequate lesson planning and overly large compacted classes.

Although an effort was made to introduce this thematic curriculum, its implementation was still inadequate in Nabingoola sub-county schools. The study observed that although the thematic

curriculum encourages the use of teaching and learning materials, such as wall charts, flash cards and sentence cards, These were supplied to these schools in limited amounts, which made teaching and learning difficult. The report mentioned that schools were allocated a budget to buy such resources; however, since printed materials were expensive this was only a fraction of what was needed. Consequently, head teachers and teachers noted that their School budgets were further constrained and therefore, could not effectively continue with the thematic curriculum. This formed basis of this research to identify the challenges facing the implementing of thematic curriculum in lower primary schools of Nabingoola Sub-County Mubende District.

### **1.2. Problem Statement**

Primary schools in Nabingoola are faced with an ever-increasing demand to implement the thematic curriculum based largely on the traditional academic subjects- English, social studies, mathematics and science. The pressures put on the teachers to produce results in these traditional subjects are overwhelming. With thematic curriculum, teachers have become torn between the traditional line or going with the contemporary way of how they can deliver content to the pupils. According to the UWEZO report, (2010) this has consequently made teachers fail to deliver appropriate content to pupils in most primary schools of Mubende District which has resulted in poor performance and made the District to be ranked low in quality of education especially in the rural primary schools of sub-counties like Nabingoola. Failure of teachers to deliver and to implement the thematic curriculum has been attached to having little access to instructional materials, and inadequate funding from government and school proprietor for government and private sponsored schools in that respect. Fact 4 of the same report noted that 98% children among all P.3 children in Nabingoola could not read and understand a story text of P.2 correctly. This implies that there is a problem with teaching the syllabus hence a justification for the study.

Further still, challenges of inadequate Classes, lack of basic materials, and high teacher –Pupil ratio and Absenteeism of head teachers were highlighted by the Education Standards Agency (ESA, 2003). These studies also raised questions about the quality and appropriateness of the thematic curriculum.

Indeed, there had already been some criticism of the thematic curriculum before it was introduced into primary schools. Therefore, the thematic curriculum issue was kept very much

at the Centre of the growing debate on education quality in the past years. Consequently, the MOES initiated a curriculum review process, and installed a task force to consider the 2000 primary curriculum (Penny et al, 2008) and (Vard et al, 2006). The subsequent report of the overall performance of pupils at primary level had not significantly improved, and that literacy levels in English and in local language were unacceptably improved little, especially outside Kampala and in rural areas. The curriculum was overloaded, emphasized the acquisition of facts in various subject, and the teaching and learning also focused mainly on recall and other lower cognitive skills. In addition, reading, writing, listening and speaking were not allocated sufficient time in the primary curriculum and that literacy and numeracy teaching skills in lower primary grades were seriously inadequate. Because students failed to develop early literacy, they performed poorly in all curriculum subjects and failure to perform led directly to loss of interest by both parents and students with consequent high dropout rates; (Read & Enyutu 2005:9). The review report also highlighted that reform of the primary curriculum, by itself, would not be sufficient to achieve higher education quality and suggested a number of other, closely related areas that needed urgent reforms, including local language policy, learning materials provision and use, pre-service teacher training, primary school supervision and mentoring, and assessment (Read & Enyutu 2005).

These findings were not exceptional to Mubende District, Nabingoola sub-county in particular. In 2006, the NCDC developed a thematic curriculum based on principle such as, rapid development of literacy, numeracy and life skills at lower primary; treatment of concepts holistically, under themes of immediate meaning and relevance to the learner; and presentation of learning experiences in language in which the learners are already proficient (NCDC), 2006). The UWEZO report (2012) on the status of primary schools in Mubende District revealed that teachers fail to deliver appropriate content to pupils in most primary schools of Mubende District which has resulted in poor performance and made the District to be ranked low in quality of education especially in the rural primary schools of sub-counties like Nabingoola. Therefore the need for the study to establish challenges facing the implementing of thematic curriculum in lower primary schools in Uganda. A case of Nabingoola sub-county, Mubende District



### **1.3. Objectives of the study**

- i. To identify the factors that influences the use of thematic curriculum in lower primary in Nabingoola Sub-county, Mubende District.
- ii. To establish challenges teachers and head teachers face in implementing the thematic curriculum in Nabingoola Sub-County schools MubendeDistrict.
- iii. To establish perceptions of parents towards the implementation of thematic curriculum in lower primary schools Nabingoola sub-county.
- iv. To find out the possible solutions towards thematic curriculum implementation in schools of Nabingoola sub-county, MubendeDistrict.

### **1.4. Research questions**

- i. What are the factors that influence the use of thematic curriculum in lower primary in Nabingoola sub-county schools MubendeDistrict?
- ii. What are the challenges teachers and head teaches face in implementing the thematic curriculum in Nabingoola sub-county schools MubendeDistrict?
- iii. What are the parents' perceptions towards the implementation of thematic curriculum in lower primary schools Nabingoola sub-county?
- iv. What possible solutions are available towards solving challenges of implementing the thematic curriculum in primary schools of Nabingoola sub-county?

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

#### **Geographical scope**

The study conducted in Nabingoola sub-county in Mubende District.

#### **Content scope**

The study was conducted to identify the factors that influenced the use of thematic curriculum in lower primary schools in Nabingoola sub-countyMubendeDistrict, to identify the challenges in implementing the thematic curriculum in lower primary school Nabingoola sub-county, MubendeDistrict and to find out the possible solution towards thematic curriculum implementation in school of Nabingoola sub-county, MubendeDistrict.

## **Time scope**

The study was conducted between May 2014 to June 2014

### **1.6 Significance of Study.**

The study might be significant in the following ways;

- The findings of the proposed study might guide the policy makers for example the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOEs) and the Board of Governor (B.O.G), as individuals charged with formulating policies, to enact favorable polices that can enhance the implementation of the curriculum.
- The findings of the proposed study might help to alert the head teachers of the ways of good management practices to overcome the actual and potential challenges associated with implementing the curriculum.
- The proposed study might help the parents to realize their role and responsibilities and how they can effectively support teachers and to lead their children to academic success.
- The study finding might be a basis for further research.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter presented the literature the various scholars have discussed in line with the challenges facing the implementing of thematic curriculum in primary schools. The gaps the scholars left unfilled justify the current study. It was presented by the subthemes of objectives.

### **2.1. Factors influencing the use of thematic curriculum in lower primary schools in Uganda.**

Erden (2010) conducted a study on problems that pre-school teachers face in the curriculum implementation in Ankara. This study aimed at investigating the challenges teachers face in the curriculum implementation and whether these challenges differ in relation to teacher's level of education. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. The qualitative data were gathered through questionnaire from 223 pre-school teachers teaching in public and private kindergartens in Ankara.

The results indicated that the most frequently reported issues by the participants were the problem related to evaluation and physical facilities followed by the ones related to planning science and mathematics activities organizing field trips, providing parent involvement and inclusion. Results showed that the problem related to top physical facilities experienced by pre-school teachers working in public kindergartens were significantly differed compared to teachers working in private pre-schools. Although the study identified the bottlenecks to the implementation of curriculum, it did not provide solution to overcome these bottlenecks, yet it is proper that the challenges are overcome to have better and quality education in primary schools. The current study therefore seeks to identify solutions to bridge this gap.

Primrose and Alexander (2013) in their study of curriculum development and implementation; the factors contributing towards curriculum development in Zimbabwe higher education system, observe that curriculum development is a key education process that can boost the innovative capacity of a higher education institution. Their study sought to investigate factors that guide curriculum development in higher education in Zimbabwe. It was prompted by continuous Changes in the Curriculum of higher education institution which include Universities,

Polytechnic colleges and teachers colleges. The study was qualitative by nature. Open-ended

Questionnaires were used as the main data gathering instrument. The major findings of the study were that curriculum development in Zimbabwe is influenced by factors such as technological advancement, demands by students, society expectations, industry and commerce, globalization, partnership by institution, the need for professionalism in business, academic research to revamp the economy, competition among institution and government expectations among others.

Although the study was conducted in Zimbabwe, the findings are worth consideration for the case of Uganda since both are in the Africa nations in the context of developing countries, however, their study mainly focused in curriculum implementation in higher institution of learning, yet it is important that the grass root of education (primary school) is made firm through ensuring quality primary education in order to have better higher education.

Altinyelken (2010) conducted a study on curriculum change in Uganda; teacher perspectives on the new thematic curriculum. It was a fieldwork study, and sought to investigate the implementation of thematic curriculum in Uganda from the perspectives of teachers. The study revealed that although the majority of teachers were enthusiastic about the new curriculum, their implementation efforts were constrained by a multitude of challenges. The findings raised questions with regard to the appropriateness of the new curriculum initiative to the structural realities of Uganda classrooms, and called for increased attention to the implementation process. Further research however is needed to justify the need for development of curriculum and to provide practical solutions to ensure its effective implementation, a gap which the study did not fill, hence the reason for the current study.

Curriculum is defined as the sum of learning experiences offered by Schools (Harris, 1991: 70). A curriculum is a three dimensional document and takes into account the needs of the students, the content and the instructional methodology while the syllabus is a dimensional document, which lists the subjects, and contents outline with broad time allocation (Karisiddappa and Sangam, 1994). Nevertheless, even the presence of essential components in the curricula may not mean that they are of appropriate quality.

The quality Assurance Handbook (CVCD and UGC, 2002) comments that;

Curriculum is the foundation of the teaching –learning process. The development of programs of study, leaning and teaching resources, lesson plans and assessment of students, and even teacher education are all based on curriculum. Curriculum and curriculum development at first glance appear to be of chief concern to educators, governments and parents, and both have relevance and impact to the development of communities and prosperity. According to De Coninck (2008), curriculum, more than ever before is now viewed as being at the centre of daily life and the responsibility of society as a whole.

Aims should cover both the level of achievement expected of students (knowledge, understanding, intellectual and personal. Transferable skills), and the effort and resources provided by the department) concerned to enable students to meet these levels of achievement. Curriculum development refers to the process of selecting and refining the content of an education system with an aim of implementing it in schools or educational institutions (Thungu, Wandera, Gachie and Alumande, 2008, p.52). It involves a series of steps which include.

- i. Planning of learning experiences on the basis of national policies.
- ii. Production of instructional materials
- iii. Trial and testing of instructional plans and educational materials.
- iv. Implementation of the programme of instruction
- v. Assessment of learning outcomes

John Dewey (1938) viewed education from another perspective. He points out that philosophy is the general principle of education and Philosophy plays an important role in deciding the aims of education, teaching content and organization. Hence, its impact on curriculum design cannot be over-emphasized Dewey stress that education should equip children with the ability to solve social problems to promote their growth. It is important that they develop continuously to meet the ever-increasing challenges of the world. In accordance with this, Dewey deems it necessary to design a curriculum based on children’s experience and let children be involved in interesting and challenging problems (Dennis, 2002). This is the basis of curriculum design even at tertiary level because curriculum has to address the needs of students and society.

Uganda has made enormous effort and invested substantially through UPE to increase access to primary education. These efforts have resulted in dramatic increase in primary school enrolment rates. Initially in 1997, enrolment rates doubled and continued to increase afterwards. Enrolment at primary level rose from 2.6 million in 1996 to 7.5 million in 2008. Gross enrolment ratio for all grades was 113.1 percent in 2008 and the net enrolment ratio was 93.3 percent in the same year (MOES, 2008) other major gains include construction of new schools and classrooms, deployment and training of additional numbers of teachers, and increase in the production and distribution of textbooks. In 2008, there were 104,899 classrooms and 127,694 teachers on government payroll. Pupils –teacher ratio in government schools was 53 (MOES, 2008)

Nevertheless, since the primary goal of UPE has been on access to primary education, it has significantly overshadowed issues relating to education quality. There is a widespread perception, especially among parents, that the quality of primary education has suffered because of the rapid expansion of the system with the UPE. There are indeed a number of weaknesses and challenges evident in the education system, such as poor student performance, frequent student absenteeism, high dropout and repetition rates, and poor quality of new infrastructure (Hoppers, 2008). In fact, the quality of education at primary level remains largely unsatisfactory. For instance, as a result of high dropout rates, only 22 percent of the 1997 primary one cohort was progressing through primary seven in 2003.

Various researchers have also shown that the majority of Ugandan pupils were failing to achieve adequate levels, of literacy and numeracy. For instance, studies conducted by Ugandan National Examination Board (UNEB) in 2005 revealed that only 38 percent of the primary three pupils and 30 percent of the primary six pupils reached the defined competency levels in literacy. Figures for Numeracy were 14 percent and 33 percent for primary three and primary six pupils, respectively (UNEB, 2005). These results were considered by many to be both disappointing and unacceptable.

A number of research studies have tried to analyze the underlying causes of low quality education at primary schools. These studies highlighted lack of qualified teachers (especially in rural areas). Inadequate lesson planning, overly large classes, lack of basic materials, and high

teacher and head appropriateness of curriculum indeed, there had already been some criticism of the 2000 curriculum before it was introduced into primary schools. Therefore, the curriculum issue was kept very much at the centre of the growing debate on education quality in the past years. Consequently, the MOBS initiated a curriculum review process, and installed a task force to consider the 2000 Primary curriculum (Penny et al, 2008; Ward et al, 2006).

The subsequent report of the task force confirmed earlier concerns over the curriculum. The report concluded that the overall performance of pupils at primary level had not significantly improved, and that literacy levels in English and in local languages were unacceptably low, especially outside Kampala and in rural areas. The curriculum was overloaded, emphasized the acquisition of facts in various subjects, and the teaching and learning also focused mainly on recall and other lower cognitive skills. In addition, reading, writing, listening and speaking were not allocated sufficient time in the current primary curriculum and that literacy and numeracy teaching skills in lower primary grades were seriously inadequate. Because students failed to develop early literacy, they performed poorly in all curriculum subjects and failure to perform led directly to loss of interest by both parents and students with consequent high dropout rates (Read & Enyutu, 2005:9)

The review report also highlighted that reform of the primary curriculum, by itself would not be sufficient to achieve higher education quality, and suggested a number of other closely related areas that needed urgent reforms, including local language policy, learning materials provision and use, Pre-service and in- service teacher training, primary schools supervision and mentoring, and assessment (Read & Enyutu, 2005). The review report was subsequently shared with all education stakeholders in Uganda and their views were sought on various meetings. These meetings informed the road map, which was intended to guide the curriculum development and implementation processes.

#### Thematic curriculum

The thematic curriculum is based on three main principles (NCDC, 2006A)

1. Rapid development of literacy, numeracy and life skills at lower primary.
2. The treatment of concepts holistically, under themes of immediate meaning and relevance to the learner; and,

3. The presentation of learning experiences in language in which the learners are already proficient.

In terms of content, the thematic curriculum covers almost the same areas that existed in the 2000 curriculum, however, the knowledge and competencies are arranged in accordance with a thematic approach. At the same time, it strives to adopt a child-centered approach by putting the Child's interests, experience and needs at the centre of the curriculum. The thematic approach also helps to avoid content overlaps and repetition that existed in the subject-based curriculum, although a theme-based approach is used for curriculum for primary one, two and three, the subject-based curriculum will remain at upper levels (NCDC., 2006 a).

The thematic curriculum also stipulates that wherever possible the child should learn in the home language or at least in a language that is familiar to the child. It is based on the conviction (and evidence recorded by various research studies) that higher achievement levels are reached in literacy when children study in a language of which they already have a strong oral command. Therefore, all learning materials used in the first three years of primary education will be provided in the child's own language or a language familiar to the child in addition, all written tests that are used for assessment purposes will be administered in the local language except for the assessment of English language competence. However, English will be the language of instruction in schools in which there is no predominant local language or area language. At p.4, both English and the local language will be used during teaching and learning, yet a gradual transition from local language to English is expected. By the end of the year at P.4, the local language will be used only for explaining the most difficult concepts.

Written materials, including textbooks will be in simple English and all assessment will be carried out in English (NCDC, 2006a). During the remaining three years of primary education, English will be used as the language of instruction across the country.

The language of instruction policy was the most controversial issue during curriculum development process. There are more than 60 local languages used in Uganda, hence, there are many potential languages of instruction. Selection of a local language as the language of instruction at school has financial, staffing and training as well as political implications. Such



cultural and political considerations assume huge importance particularly in Districts with various different and sometimes rival, competing languages (Read&Enyutu, 2005).

Furthermore, urban schools are allowed to use English as the language of instruction as there are pupils from various language backgrounds in such schools. However, since all schools are expected to teach in English in upper grades and since the primary leaving examination is in English, some considered schools in urban areas to be in an advantageous position. There were fears that such a language policy would augment the performance gap between urban and rural schools.

The “child- centered” approach of the thematic curriculum is further emphasized in teaching and learning methodologies. By child entered, the new curriculum particularly refers to the following (NCDC, 2006B, P.3).

1. Children should have chance to interact with each other and with the teacher during the lesson;
2. Class activities should be organized so that children learn by doing. They should be able to move around from time to time, and so use their hands;
3. Activities should be organized around a variety of learning materials, and children should be able to handle the materials.
4. Children should have an opportunity, from time to time, to have influence on the direction that the lesson (or day) takes. Allow the lesson to reflect the interests, abilities and concerns of the children.

According to the official curriculum documents, several components of the thematic curriculum reflect a child-centered approach, such as the focus on thematic areas and choosing themes that closely relate to children’s interests, experiences and background. The recommended pedagogical approach emphasizes children’s activities rather than teachers.

Therefore, there is a strong focus on activating children during lessons, encouraging them to participate and perform. Instead of being passive receivers of what they are told, children are expected to engage actively in learning by way of exploring, observing, experimenting, and practicing. The curriculum also suggests some enjoyable activities, such as games, acting, drawing, dancing, and singing.

According to the new approach, the majority of lesson time should be spent on classroom activities, which might involve group or pair work or individual pupils working on assignments, independent of the teacher. A rich and varied literature environment is viewed important, therefore the curriculum recommends the use of a range of learning resources, such as flash cards, sentence cards, wall charts, work cards, simple readers and children's own written work. The teacher is also encouraged to think of other creative ways that would engage children in learning, and stimulate learning through play (NCDC, 2006a; 2006b).

With regard to student evaluation, the thematic curriculum adopts continuous assessment and requires teachers to assess their pupils on a daily basis. The purpose of such assessment is considered to be diagnostic and remedial. It is assumed that frequent assessment would facilitate appropriate feedback and corrective action on the part of teachers. For instance, it would enable teachers to identify individual learning difficulties and provide adequate help so that the child would catch up with the rest of the class. Likewise, high achievers can be identified and given more challenging tasks to stimulate their learning (NCDC, 2006a). The main principles of assessment are laid down within the curriculum. Thus:

1. The assessment should be done during the normal lesson as children carry out their daily tasks.
2. Teachers keep records for each child, showing competencies achieved.
3. Assessment is cumulative. For example, if a child –has not achieved a particular competence in one theme, the same child may achieve it at a late stage and this should be recorded at that time.
4. Assessment can be conducted through the following; by the teachers observing children, listening to them in class, looking at their exercise books, marking handwriting and looking at the class work products and recording what they have achieved. The teacher should not set separate assessment tests/ examinations (NCDC, 2006 A, P. 12).

### **Development of a thematic curriculum**

The thematic curriculum development has therefore been both a technical and social process. In order for the process to proceed effectively and efficiently, the context in which it is carried out

must be considered. This paper discusses the context of curriculum development in Uganda by considering six major factors that influence the curriculum development process. These are political forces, the socio-economic context, the cultural context, the ICT context and the networking context.

Curriculum literature abounds with models of curriculum development. Each of these models advocates procedures and strategies that are presumably most effective in developing curriculum. However, curriculum development models appropriate for one situation may be impractical in another. This is because the curriculum is a social construct and diverse societies do not hold universal views (Hopkins, 2001). It is therefore important to consider context when developing curriculum.

Much of the literature on curriculum context deals with context relevance (Tyier, 1949; Bonser and Grundy, 1988; UNESCO, 2000). Context relevance is concerned with the fidelity of the curriculum to its stated goals. The premise here is that the stated goals are a true reflection of what society expects from the school system.

Curriculum development is, therefore, an improvement, change or modification of already existing educational programmes, as curriculum is never static. Curriculum development is a key innovative process for educational institutions and when applied to fostering enterprising qualities among students can aid the economy. Creating and developing a curriculum though, is a process common to all disciplines. It is often described as a cyclic process. (Argyris, 1993; Kolb, 19984; Roffe, 2004) comprising of four stages:

1. Identification of needs
2. The design of a course of study.
3. Delivery of the learning programme
4. Evaluation of the outcomes in relation to the initial objectives.

There are many models for curriculum development. Generally, as a process, curriculum development is concerned with reviewing, planning, development, implementing and maintaining curriculum while ensuring that the stakeholders engaged in this process have a high level of commitment to and ownership of the curriculum. In formulating policy, the challenge

lies in the discourse on the form, content, aims and goals of curriculum, often referred to as curriculum orientations (Eisner & valance, 1974, as cited in Joseph, 2011). These curriculum orientation have a profound impact on roles of stakeholders, parents, educators and students as they relate to vision and practice, decision making, curriculum planning, development, implementation and evaluation.

The National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) is the National Educational Research and Curriculum Development Centre in Uganda. The Uganda institute of education works closely with other related agencies and organizations in curriculum development. These include the Uganda. National Examination Board (UNEB) which is responsible for national public examinations, the Uganda Nation Teachers Union (UNATU) which represents teachers at NCDC, the Directorate of quality assurance and standards which is responsible for curriculum supervision and quality control, the Education Service Commission (ESC) which handles teacher recruitment, promotion and placement, and religious organizations whose views are sought regarding the teaching of religious education and other ethical-moral issues in curriculum (Ministry of education, 2008).

The curriculum development process follows cyclic pattern as shown below:

- i. Monitoring, evaluation and improvement
- ii. Needs assessment
- iii. Policy formulation
- iv. National implementation
- v. Pre-testing/ piloting/ phasing –in
- vi. Syllabus development and approval
- vii. Development of curriculum support materials.
- viii. Preparation of curriculum implementations
- ix. Curriculum design (Source: NCDC)

A number of factors that influence curriculum development are discussed here. These are not all the factors; they are just those deemed to be most salient in characterizing the Ugandan curriculum context.

## **Political forces**

In the politics of the school curriculum, Dennis Lawton (2002) observes that curriculum development is about selecting “the most important aspects of culture for transmission to the next generation. One of the crucial questions to ask is the political question “who makes the selection” Lawton, 1980:6)

In Uganda, as elsewhere, politics occupy a central place in the daily affairs of the nation. The political class seeks to control and manipulate the policy, either overtly or covertly. Education is normally a covert tool in the stratagem of the political class (Freire, 1972). The influence of politics in curriculum development in Uganda is best seen through the formation of various education commissions, committees, and working parties. Since independence, there have been seven major commissions on the school curriculum. The composition of these commissions is largely oblivious of expertise in curriculum; rather, it mostly exhibits political connectedness. Moreover, the findings and recommendations of most of these commissions are implemented at the discretion of the ruling elite. In most cases, these commissions end up being just grand academic exercises since their recommendations are never adopted (Ntarangwi, 2003).

Due to the centralized, nature of the politics in Uganda, most decisions on education are top – down. Such a power-coercive approach does not discuss well especially for curriculum development which should ideally be a deliberative, consultative, and participatory exercise.

(Mutch, 2001) noted that the government of Uganda, through the ministry of education, has devolved some powers in the education sector to the grassroots. These include the hiring of teachers and, to some extent, the financing of education infrastructure through the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) (Ministry of education, 2004). However, all matters pertaining to curriculum are still centrally controlled by the ministry of education and its agencies, mainly NCDC, the directorate of quality assurance and standards and the Uganda National Examination Council.

Obviously, in such a scenario, teachers feel left out. The voice is seldom heard since their participation in the whole process is superficial. The teacher’s role is narrowed to implementation of curriculum. However, as Fullan (1991) notes, the implementation of

curriculum innovations is bound to be unsuccessful if teachers are not involved in the entire process of curriculum development.

### **Socio-economic factors**

The current population of Uganda is estimated at 36 million with an annual population growth rate of 2.3% of the total population, 60% are youth under 30 years (UNESCO, 2008; World Bank 2008). This necessitates that the government allocates over 30% of its annual budget to education (Kinuthia, 2009). Despite such a seemingly huge budgetary allocation to education, curriculum development is still poorly funded (NCDC, 2006). This is because most of the funds in the education sector go for recurrent expenditure at the expense of research and development. In the last seven years, the government has embarked on Education For All (EFA) initiative by introducing universal primary education (UPE) and free secondary education (Ministry of Education, 2004, Oketch & Rolleston, 2007). Ideally, these are two giant steps in the right direction. Realistically, however, achieving both is a big challenge of the country. Kinuthia (2009) outlines four factors that illuminate this challenge and its implication on curriculum development.

1. When UPE was introduced, the enrollment significantly rose. However, most schools were not equipped to handle such large number in terms of number of teachers, physical classroom space, and learning resources. This scenario replays itself in the free secondary education program. Obviously, it jeopardizes effective curriculum implementation.
2. In 1998, the government instituted structural adjustment programs recommended by the World Bank and IMF. A direct consequence of this was a freeze on the employment of teachers by the teacher service commission. This resulted in a significant shortage of teachers. Since 2003, the government has made efforts to address this shortage. However, to date, there is a need for over 60,000 teachers to fill the gaps in the school system.
3. The government reliance on donor funding means that local priorities are not necessarily dealt with. As already noted, research and development activities are less funded than

administrative and recurrent costs. Thus, for instance, teachers are paid salaries to implement the same old curriculum.

4. The some socio-cultural practices and absolute poverty make many areas in the country fail full participation of learners in the school system. Although enrolment rates have improved, especially for girls, many communities still hold back their children either due to cultural reasons-like engaging the children wage earning activities to supplement the family income.

### **Cultural factors**

Although Uganda is a unitary state, it comprises over 42 ethnic groups. Each of these groups has its own unique cultural identity which it guards jealously. The centralized nature of the Ugandan curriculum may not always accommodate the diverse cultural norms of the population. Invariably, this has implications on the curriculum. There are now calls for the inclusion of peace education, with a strong component of conflict resolution, in the school curriculum, to deal with, among others, the concept of living together harmoniously. This is notwithstanding the fact that there are already subjects like social studies in the primary school, and religious education and history in the secondary school which deal with similar if not the same themes. Instead of tailoring single subjects to ensure cultural context relevance, the entire curriculum should be transformed “to give children, youth and adults the type of quality education that promotes appreciation of diversity, richness, and dynamism of our cultures....” (UNESCO, 2000:27)

### **ICT Context**

The role of ICT in education cannot be over emphasized. The world is going the digital way, and education is at the forefront of this journey. Yet Uganda is still lagging behind.

According to Kunuthia (2009), computers were introduced in Uganda in the 1970s and the internet became available in 1993. By March 2008, only 7.9% of the population had access to the internet. While the number of internet service providers continues to grow, access is still limited, especially in the rural areas. Uganda has close to 20,000 secondary schools of which only about 15% have electricity and only about 500 schools have computers albeit with limited

internet access. In the secondary school sector, out of about 4,000 schools, 65% are connected to electricity. Only about 750 schools have an average of 10 computers each although internet connectivity is limited (Kinuthia, 2009). Another challenging factor in the ICT context is the preparation of teachers. Few teachers in the school system in Uganda are computer literate, and even fewer can competently use a computer as a teaching resource or a tool for instruction (Kinuthia, 2009). Thus all efforts towards integrating ICT in the curriculum must be comprehensive enough to provide the requisite infrastructure and prepare teachers adequately to use it effectively.

Several scholars have reported the factors influencing the use of thematic curriculum but the case of lower Primary schools in Uganda in general and Mubende district in particular have not been revealed.

## **2.2. The challenges teachers & head teachers face in implementing the thematic curriculum.**

In the past few decades, almost all sub-Saharan Africa countries have been involved in educational reforms, particularly in development of new curricula (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008). Often, these curriculums are well-designed and have laudable aims to achieve. Nevertheless, in many cases, their implementation has resulted in less than desirable outcomes and led to waste of considerable resources, time, and effort since well-intentioned policies were never translated into classroom reality (Rogan & Grayson, 2003). The literature on education reforms in developing countries has been increasingly focusing on the extent to which numerous educational reform initiatives were rarely effectively implemented and have often failed to achieve their objectives (Fullan, 2007; Higgins, 2004; O'sullivan, 2002; Psacharopoulos, 1989; Ward et al. 2003). There is now a common acknowledgement that policymakers need to consider and plan for the implementation stage if reforms are to be successful.

Therefore policymakers need to view implementation as a critical stage and understand all stages to reform process as interdependent, rather than as distinct from each other (O' Sullivan, 2002).

Nevertheless, sufficient analytical attention has not been given to the implementation process in developing countries; hence, many aspects of such process are not yet well understood.



Consequently, there is a limited information base meant policymaker can draw (Dyer, 1999). For this reason, Dyer (1999) argue that there is an urgent need for research that focuses on the implementation process in order to improve our knowledge on the actual processes of change, the potential problem and issues that can emerge, as addressed by Altmeyelken (2010) include;

### **Results pressure**

The goodness of a primary school in Uganda is gauged by how well its candidates perform at the National examination called P.L.E done after seven years of primary education, in a bid to impress, head teachers of primary schools force teachers to fore-go all co-curricular activities like gardening, home economics, crafts, physical education etc and force them to put all emphasis on ‘‘sdrumming’’ examinable material into pupil’s heads. The pupils will not be given any time to engage in non-examinable disciplines. The ministry of education policy emphasizes co-curricular engagement but the pressure on the teachers from the parents, the community and the school owners’ overrides all professional and policy reason.

### **Non-examinable disciplines**

Computer education is not examinable at primary school level and so teachers and school owners look at this as a waste of time, teaching a subject that is not examinable. The teachers forget one very important thing and this is by the time these children grow up, computer will be a way of life.

### **Absence of trained teachers**

Most teacher training institution in Uganda does not integrate computer literacy into their curriculum. This means that when teachers qualify, they are computer-illiterate. How can a computer-illiterate teacher be expected to teach pupils in it? Such a teacher will not be able to appreciate the importance of IT in a child’s life in this direction; ITCT- Africa has come up with a program of training a team of multiplier teachers who can reach out and train their fellow teachers and pupils about the use and importance of computers.

## **Absence of Equipment**

Poverty, the inability to manufacture computer in the country and high transport costs are some of the factors that come to play to make computer hardware unavailable in most Uganda schools. Most schools in Uganda cannot afford to buy, let alone maintain even one computer set. The few that own them do not have enough for their pupils. In most schools the ratios stand at 1 computer to 10 pupils. The pupils will crowd the machine, each eager to lay a little finger on the keyboard. The struggle degenerates into a fight as the muscular ones subdue the weak ones. The teacher will be forced to spend more time arbitrating than imparting knowledge.

## **Power**

Power distribution is still very poor especially to the rural areas in Uganda. Schools that would consider buying computers are forced to abandon the idea because of lack of power. Also, Uganda's power is rather unstable or low in rural areas. This means that damage to computer hardware will be considerable. In rural areas, low power means that the machines will not be able to perform.

Power charges are another power setback in Uganda. Computer is heavy power guzzlers and power tariffs in Uganda are rather high. Rural schools look at a computer power bill as wastage of valuable financial resources. Finally, the development of computer education in primary schools in Uganda requires a bilateral cooperation between the government and the key players in the education sector.

One thing is certain; computer is about the most fascinating gadget to the contemporary child. Remember these children were born into the computer age. It is part of them. Let us do everything possible to accord them the opportunity to learn how to use the computer.

As noted, much of the work on probability and data handling is suitable for and, in fact, requires co-operative work and discussion amongst learners. For example in the call of probability, learners come to the classroom with varying experiences be unpacked and explored if learners are to develop a meaningful understanding of formal probability- and it is only in a setting in which learners feel safe to discuss their views and to assess the validity of different views that this can take place.

Fennema and Franke (1992) point to recent research suggesting that where the emphasis of the mathematics is placed on problem solving and on the power of learners to do and understand mathematics, learners are engaged in rich mathematical discourse with peers and teachers. This is particularly relevant in the case of probability in which, as noted above, such a discourse is regarded as being necessary for an understanding of the topic. Research in South Africa, however, suggests that the creation of such a discourse community in the classroom is not going to be easy; the work of Reeves and Long. Setati and the primary mathematics project as quoted by Taylor and Vinjevold (J-999) indicates that much of the classroom discourse does not proceed beyond the procedural level –it was also observed in a number of PEI studies that, although learners might be seated in groups, little interaction takes place amongst learners.

In the view of the researcher, teachers attend to large number of pupils so individual attention becomes inadequate. There is inadequate classroom space and the like. This situation develops different feelings and thinking about thematic curriculum implementation. This therefore, forced the researcher to carry out an investigation to find out exactly the factors that influence the use of thematic curriculum in lower in lower Primary schools in Uganda particularly in Nabingoola sub county Mubende District.

### **2.3 Parents' perceptions towards the implementation of thematic curriculum in lower primary schools**

Curriculum implementation entails putting into practice the officially prescribed courses of study, syllabuses and subjects. The process involves helping the learners to acquire knowledge or experience. It is vital to note that curriculum implementation cannot take place as the learners acquire the planned or intended experiences, knowledge, skills, ideas and attitudes that are not aimed at enabling the same learners to function effectively in a society.(University of Zimbabwe 1995:8).

The introduction of thematic curriculum into schools without teachers being sufficiently prepared or outcomes- based pedagogy, including continuous assessment this could not led to its successful implementation. Teachers went for in-service training to equip them but even this was inadequate because of lack of capacity in the provinces in most schools to implement major changes as proposed. The government scaled down its plans to implement the new curriculum to primary schools from the outset as a result of these inflows and inadequacies, a review

committee was established to look at possibilities of refining curriculum 2005 and this led to the introduction of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) which was a refined version of out-based education (Christie 1999:279).

The implementation of the thematic curriculum did not merely involve the direct and straight forward application of plans. It was a dynamic organizational process that was shaped over time by interactions between projects, goals and methods and the institutional setting (Gulting et al 2002:183).

Several scholars have reported the parents perception in regards the implementation of thematic curriculum but the case of parents in Uganda in general and Mubende district in particular have not been revealed.

#### **2.4. Solutions to the challenges of implementing the thematic curriculum in lower primary schools.**

Decision -making is a complex and crucial event in the policy process. It is preceded by analytical and their political activities and followed by equally significant planning activities. Although both types of activities are crucial in development and realizing education reforms, more attention has often been given to policy formulation at the expense of implementation stage. This is particularly the case in developing country contexts (Haddad, 1995). As Rogan (2007) confirms, the attention and energies of policymakers are too often focused on the “what” of desired educational change and neglect the how. A considerable amount of planning and even the facto policy formulation takes place during the actual implementation process.

These include the following questions:

1. Circumstance related to implementation constraints cause policy modifications to take place.
2. Feedback obtained during implementation causes reassessment of aspects of the policy decision and subsequent modifications by policymakers; and
3. The more translation of abstract policy intentions into concrete implementation causes reassessment and redesign.

Undertaking such changes is not exceptional during educational reform process since implementation problems are frequently under-estimated during policy planning. Indeed, misjudging the ease of implementation is probably the most frequent error in policy –making

(Haddad, 1995, p. 36), Dyer (1999) warns that when implementation stage has not been well planned and structured, it may result in strong resistance to policy messages and unexpected outcomes. Consequently, the reform policy may be diluted by ad hoc adjustments and short term strategies for coping.

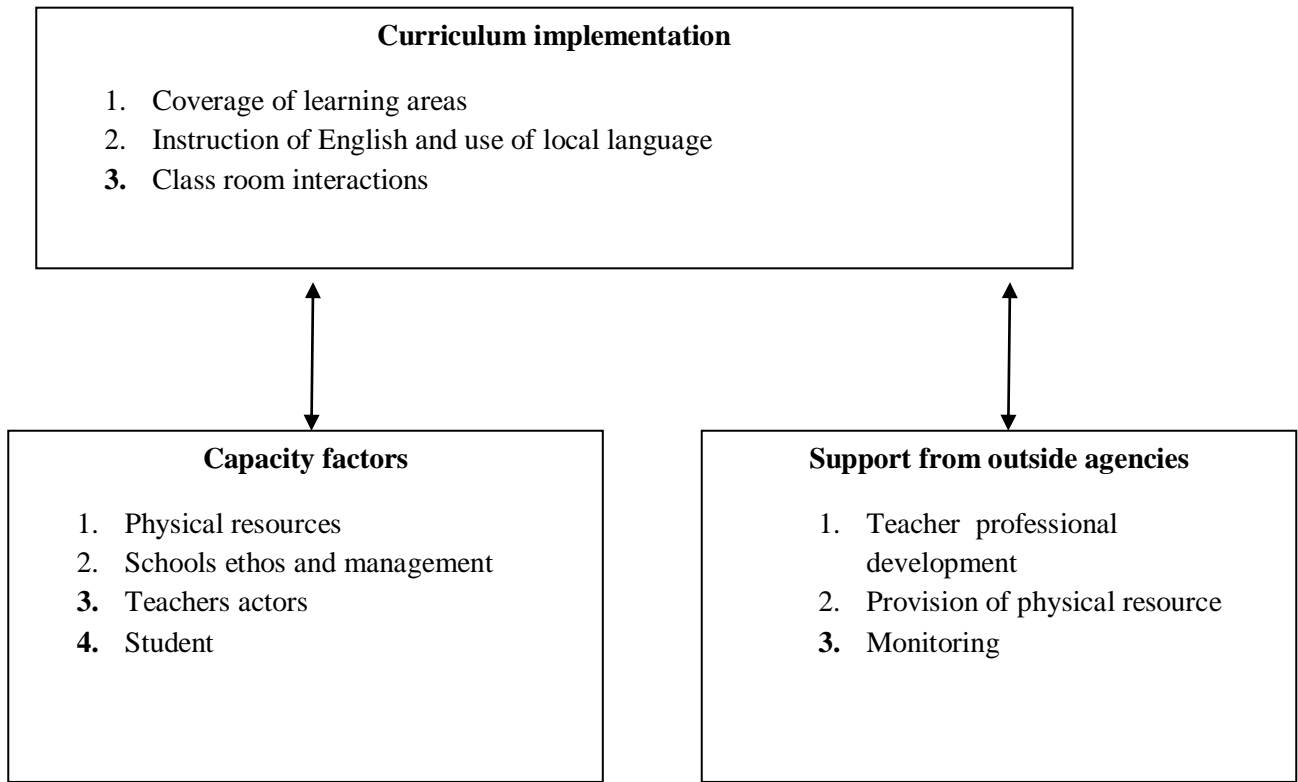
Referring to the experiences of USA and Australia in education change, Porter (1980) notes that those who are concerned with policymaking and enacting the relevant legislation hardly ever pay attention to the implementation stage. Likewise, in his analysis of the World Bank supported education reform programs, Verspoor (1989) conclude that such programs tend to emphasize adoption and neglect implementation phase. Therefore even if these programs were essentially based on a good idea, the majority of them resulted in low outcomes due to poor implementation. Dyer (1999) also maintains that such neglect is highly regrettable, particularly in developing country context, as they can ill afford the wasted resources, time and effort, moreover, cumulative and comparative knowledge of successful and less successful implementation experiences is hardly used in the design of new reform programs. Therefore, the same mistakes can be repeated rather than being avoided (London, 1993).

Within this study, in order to explore how teachers implemented the curriculum in Nabingoola sub-county, a framework developed by Rogan and Grayson (2003) is used with some adaptations (see figure 1). The framework draws on the school development, educational change, and science education literature, and attempts to overcome some of the shortcomings of earlier frameworks developed by Beeby (1966), and Verspoor and Wu (1990), Beeby (1966) categorized schools, and education systems according to four development stages (Demo school, formalism, transitional and meaning), and assumed that schools progress from lower to higher stages. However, Beeby's model underestimates the complexity of an educational system and focused only on teachers, making no reference to other aspects of the school context. The more comprehensive model. This was developed by Verspoor and Wu (1990) and later on adapted by De Feiter et al. (1995), broadens the focus of development by including factors related to teachers, curriculum and school. However, this model neglects students, similar to baby model; it proposes four stages of development; unskilled, mechanical, Routine and professional. This model also implies a linear view of curriculum change, moving from one stage on the next higher stage. Therefore, both models tend to obscure the complex and

idiosyncratic nature of the process – (Rogan & Grayson, 2003). Rogan and Grayson (2003) base their theory of implementation on three main construct; support from outside agencies, capacity to support innovation, profile of implementation.

The support from outside, agencies describes the kinds of actions undertaken by outside organizations, such as departments of education, to influence practices, either by support or sanction, in many development countries, outside agencies may also involve international development agencies and local or international NGOs. The sub constructs are divided into two; Material support and non-material support, material support may include provision of physical resources such as building, books, or apparatus, and direct support to students (such as school lunch programmes). Non –material support is mostly provided in the form of professional development. It is probably one of the most visible and obvious ways in which outside agencies attempt to bring about change in schools. As the literature on learning organization suggests, teacher’s professional development can also be promoted through cooperation and support among teachers (Karsten et al. 2000). Therefore, it can also be regarded as a sub construct of school capacity. To bring about change, outside organizations can also exert pressure, such as by way of monitoring.

**Figure1. The analytical framework**



**Adopted from Rogan & Gray son, 2003 as cited in Altinyelken (2010)**

Altmyelken (2010) note that the construct capacity to support innovation is concerned with factors that are likely to support or hinder the implementation of new ideas and practices in the new curriculum. This Construct recognizes that schools differ in terms of their capacity to implement innovations. Possible indicators fall into four categories; physical resource, school ethos and management, teacher factors, and student factors. Physical resources are crucial as poor conditions and limited resource can limit the performance of even the best teacher and students. The school ethos and management are not the same. Yet they are considered together as they are closely intertwined, particularly in schools in developing countries. If the school is in disarray and not functioning well, innovation cannot or will not be implemented. Research has also shown that the leadership role of the principal is critical in reform implementation (Fullan, 2007). Teachers play a pivotal role in reform processes, and factors such as their background, training, subject matter knowledge, motivation, commitment to teaching, and attitudes towards proposed innovation influence their capacity and willingness to implement change. Likewise, the background of students, and the kind of strengths and constraints they

might bring to the school are crucial. A range of issues influence student attitudes to learning and responses to change, such as their home environments, parental commitment to education, health and nutrition, and proficiency level in the language of instruction. The contribution of these four factors to the capacity of school to support innovation is likely to be dynamic and changing over time.

The third construct, curriculum implementation assists in understanding, analyzing and expressing the extent to which the objectives of the reform programmes are put into practice. It recognizes the fact that there can be multiple ways of putting a curriculum into action. However, it assumes that some broad commonalities of what constitutes excellence will emerge, in addition, the profile recognizes that there can be different levels at which implementation might be said to occur. Therefore, implementation of a new curriculum is not an all or-nothing proposition.

Several scholars have reported a number of possible solutions in regards to the challenges facing the implementation of thematic curriculum but the case of those in Uganda in general and Mubende district in particular have not been revealed.



## CHAPTER THREE      METHODOLOGY

### **3.0 Introduction.**

This chapter describes the frame work within which the research was conducted. The chapter presents the research design, study population, sample size and sampling techniques, data collection instruments, validity and reliability of research instruments, procedure and data analysis.

### **3.1 Research Design**

The study used a cross- sectional survey design adopting qualitative methodology to a larger extent and quantitative method to a smaller extent. The research used this research design because of its advantages in obtaining data, it is also the simplest and leas cost alternative compared to longitudinal (Neumann, 2003). According to Neumann, (2003), cross-sectional research can be exploratory, descriptive or explanatory. Babbie (2007) shares the same views by starting that there are three purposes of social research, exploration, description and explanation each of them with different purposes for the research design. The study was qualitative and quantitative.

According to Creswell et al. (2003), qualitative research helps in getting an in-depth analysis of the problem under investigation and qualitative research was applied in order to describe current conditions or to investigate relationship, including effects relationships, in addition, it helped in answering questions concerning the current state of the subject under study.

### **3.2 Study population**

The study population constituted mainly primary school head teachers, Parents, Members of SMC and teachers. This population was chosen because it had adequate knowledge of the subject under investigation and the research variables under investigation.

### **3.3 Sample size and sample selection**

The sample size was 160 respondents of which 100 were teachers, 10 were head teachers, 20 were parents and 30 were members of school management committee members. The purposive sampling technique was used to select teachers, head teachers, Parents and members of School management Committee in order to get in depth information about the problem under study,

in addition, simple random sampling was used to select teachers since this category of respondents comprises of a big number. The study was carried out in 10 primary schools randomly selected from Nabingoola sub-county, Mubende District.

**Table 1. A table showing the distribution of the study population**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Sampling type</b>	<b>No</b>
Head teachers	Purposive	10
Teachers	Random	100
Parents	Random	20
School management committee members	Random	30
<b>Total</b>		<b>160</b>

### **3.4 Area of Study:**

The study was carried out in Ten (10) Primary Schools randomly selected from Nabingoola sub county Mubende District. The area chosen was because it was convenient to the researcher. The researcher is a resident of the same area. This could save on the transport expenses. Also no study had ever been carried out about challenges facing the implementing of thematic curriculum in lower primary schools in Uganda. Nabingoola Sub-County, Mubende District.

### **3.5 Data Collection Methods and Instruments:**

The researcher used primary data which were collected using self-administered questionnaires to get information from all the respondents.

#### **3.5.1 Self-Administered Questionnaire:**

This researcher used self-administered closed ended questionnaires, to obtain responses from the respondents. These were distributed among the respondents in their respective schools. The justification for using this instrument is that questionnaires are easy to quantify and analyze. Also, closed ended questionnaires were used because they are easy for respondents to fill and return on time.

Copies of the questionnaire consisting the objectives of the study were given to the research supervision to find out whether the instruments measures what they were intended as per the objectives of the study and also to check on the phrasing, understandability and wording of the statements.

### **3.5.2. Date analysis, percentages, Mean and simple deviations**

#### **3.5.2.1 Qualitative Data**

All the qualitative data collection from key informants were edited on a continuous basis to ensure completeness. Content analysis was the main method of analyzing the data collected. Data collected were categorized according to emerging variables from each question in the interview guide.

#### **3.5.2.2 Quantitative data.**

Data collected at the end of each day, were checked to ensure regularity and accuracy; this was useful in ensuring that the objectives of the study were being addressed. Analysis was done according to the objectives of the study; data generated by questionnaires was cleaned, edited and coded before analysis was done; then analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) PROGRAM. Summary statistics in form of qualitative and quantitative measures, frequencies and percentages were run and interpretations made. Finally, conclusions and recommendations were derived at and presented in chapter five and capacity building programmes about the changes in the syllabi is was one of the cheapest and easier way to get the implementers of the curriculum have the capacity to put all ideas and plans on ground.

Being that most primary schools of Nabingoola sub-county were inadequately financed, the need to invest more in primary school education by the government especially in support of UPE schools would provide a solution to challenges of insufficient instructional material, infrastructure and running teacher development programs (Altinyelken 2010). Having a commission in charge of monitoring and reviewing the progress of curriculum implementation would was found to be important, the continuous follow up of the implementation process would be a way of identifying bottlenecks in the system and proving prompt solutions towards overcoming these bottlenecks. It was also revealed that before new changes in the curriculum

are introduced, pilot studies should be in selection primary schools in the sub-county, to find out whether or not the schools in the area can afford to implement the changes, this was found to be a solution towards finding timely ways on how to introduce these changes as a gradual process in the sub-county primary schools, after discovering how best they can be put into practice and how they can overcome the potential effects.

## CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study.

#### 4.1 Research question one (1).

This research question stated that;

What are the factors influence the use of thematic curriculum in lower primary in Uganda?

Items 1,2 and 3 of the head teachers questionnaire (see appendix1), items 1,2,3,4, and 5 of the teachers questionnaires (see appendix ii) were targeted to test this research question. The results are as indicated below.

**Table 2: Showing whether there is need for the ministry of education to continuously review the curriculum as a broad strategy for change in the education system.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	2	20
Disagree	2	20
Not sure	1	10
Agree	3	30
Strongly Agree	2	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Primary Data.*

Results from the table 2 above, show that two (2) respondents representing 20% strongly disagreed, two (2) respondents representing 20% disagreed, one respondent representing 10% was not sure three (3) respondents representing 30% agreed while two (2) respondents represents 20% strongly agreed,. Majority of the respondents therefore agreed that, there is need for the ministry of education to continuously review the curriculum as a broad strategy for change in the education system.

**Table3: Showing the need for strengthening and facilitation of education agencies in Uganda.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	2	20
Disagree	1	10
Not sure	1	10
Agree	4	40
Strongly Agree	2	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Primary Data:*

Results from the table 3 above, show that two (2) respondents representing 20% strongly disagreed, one (1) respondent representing 10% disagreed, one (1) respondent representing 10% was not sure, four (4) respondents representing 40% agreed and two respondents representing 20% strongly agreed. This means majority of the respondents generally agreed.

This implies that the mentioned agencies still need to improve on their operations to provide quality services to the education sector in Uganda. These agencies need to be provided with experienced and competent staff who can analyze the education system and provide practical recommendation towards effective implementation of the curriculum.

**Table4: showing whether there is pressure from politicians to review the primary school curriculum.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	3	30
Disagree	1	10
Not sure	1	10
Agree	3	30
Strongly Agree	2	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

**Results: Primary Data.**

Results from the table 4 above, show that three (3) respondents representing 30% strongly disagreed, one (1) respondent representing 10% disagreed, one (1) respondent representing 10% was not sure, three (3) respondents representing 30% agreed and two (2) respondents representing 20% strongly agreed. This means that the majority of the respondents therefore agreed. This implies that the government is in most cases being pressured by politicians to review the primary school curriculum yet this should be among the national agendas to streamline the education system and improve the quality of primary education.

**Table 5: Showing whether the changing lifestyle of Uganda makes it necessary for the ministry of education to review the primary school curriculum.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	16	10	10
Disagree	12	7.5	17.5
Not sure	15	9.4	26.9
Agree	55	34.4	61.3
Strongly Agree	62	38.7	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>	

**Source: Primary Data.**

Table 4; above indicates that sixteen (16) respondents representing 10% strongly disagreed, twelve (12) respondents representing 17.5%, fifteen (15) respondents representing 9.4% were not sure fifty five (55) respondents representing 34.4% agreed, sixty two

(62)respondentsrepresenting 38.7% strongly agreed. This means that majority of the respondents therefore agreed. This implied that the changes the people’s lifestyles create a gap in the need of the nation, which has to be filled by reviewing the primary school curriculum.

**Table 6: Showing why ICT should be a requirement in primary schools.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	17	10.6	10.6
Disagree	27	16.9	27.5
Not sure	14	8.8	36.3
Agree	67	41.9	78.2
Strongly Agree	35	21.8	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>	

*Source: primary data.*

Results from the table 6 above, show that seventeen (17) respondents representing 10.6% strongly disagreed, twenty seven (27) respondents representing 16.9% disagreed, Fourteen (14) respondents representing 8.8% were not sure, Sixty seven (67) respondents representing 41.9% agreed and thirty five (35) respondents representing 21.8% strongly agreed. This means that the majority of the respondents therefore agreed that primary schools need ICT in the curriculum in order to cope with changes in the world.

**Table 7: showing whether reviews of the primary school curriculum help to meet competition in the global economy.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	19	11.9	11.9
Disagree	16	10	21.9
Not sure	12	7.5	29.4
Agree	54	33.8	63.2
Strongly Agree	59	36.8	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>	

**Source: Primary Data**

Results from the table 7 above show that nineteen (19) respondents 11.9% strongly disagreed, six respondents representing 10%disagreed; twelve (12) respondents representing 7.3% were not sure, fifty four(54) respondents representing 33.8 % agreed and Fifty nine (59) respondents



representing 36.8% strongly agreed. This implies that the competition in the global economy should be considered a factor in adding value to the primary school curriculum. Equally, competitive subjects should be emphasized.

**Table 8: showing the need for evidence to justify curriculum review in primary education.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	10	6.3	6.3
Disagree	24	15	21.3
Not sure	12	7.5	28.8
Agree	48	30	58.8
Strongly Agree	66	41.2	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>	

Table 8 above show that ten (10) respondents representing 6.3% strongly disagreed, twenty four (24) respondents representing 15% disagreed, twelve (12) respondents representing 7.5% were not sure, forty eight (48) respondents representing 30% agreed and sixty six (66) respondents representing 41.2% strongly agreed, this means that majority of the respondents agreed that there is need for evidence to justify curriculum review in primary education in Uganda.

**Table 9: showing whether the media also boosts motivation of reviewing the primary school curriculum.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	9	5.6	5.6
Disagree	13	8.1	13.7
Not sure	8	5	18.7
Agree	53	33.1	51.8
Strongly Agree	77	48.2	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>	

*Source: Primary Data.*

Results from table 9 above show that nine (9) respondents representing 5.6% strongly disagreed, thirteen (13) respondents representing 8.1% disagreed, Eight (8) respondents

representing 5% were not sure, fifty three (53) respondents representing 33.1% agreed and Seventy seven (77) respondents representing 48.2% strongly agreed.

This means that the majority of the respondents agreed that the media also boosts motivation of reviewing the primary school curriculum. The government should therefore use the media as a way of finding a justification for changes in the primary school education system.

#### **4.2 Research questions two**

This research question stated that:

What are the challenges teachers & head teaches face in implementing the thematic curriculum in Nabingoola sub-county schools MubendeDistrict?

Items 1, 2, and 3 of the head teacher’s questionnaire (see appendix 1), item 1,2,3,4 and 5 of the teacher’s questionnaires (see appendix ii) and items 1,2,3,4 and 5 of the heads of department questionnaires (see appendix iii) were targeted to test this research question. The results are as presented below;

**Table 10: showing whether schools have well equipped libraries to facilitate academic work.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	1	10	10.0
Disagree	2	20	30.0
Not sure	2	20	50.0
Strongly Agree	4	40	90.0
Agree	1	10	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>	

*Source: Primary Data;*

Results from the table 10 above, show that one (1) respondents representing 10 % strongly disagreed, two (2) respondents representing 20% disagreed, two (2) respondents representing 20% were not sure, forty (40) respondents representing 40% agreed while one (1) respondents representing 10% strongly agreed. This means that the majority of the respondents agreed that schools have well equipped libraries to facilitate academic work.

**Table 11: showing the availability of electricity in primary schools in Nabingoola sub-county.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	1	10	10.0
Disagree	1	10	20.0
Not sure	2	20	40.0
Strongly Agree	4	40	80.0
Agree	2	20	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>	

*Source: Primary Data;*

Table 11 above indicated that one (1) respondent representing 10% strongly disagreed, one (1) respondent representing 10% disagreed, two (2) respondents representing 20% were not sure, four (4) respondents representing 40% agreed as well as two (2) respondents representing 20% strongly agreed. This implies that schools in Nabingoola cannot effectively implement new subjects introduced in the curriculum, like computer lessons, would be foregone or taught only in theory and this effects the quality of knowledge delivered to pupils.

**Table 12: shows whether instructional materials for subjects taught in primary schools in Nabingoola sub-county affects the implementation of the thematic curriculum.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	1	10	10.0
Disagree	1	10	20.0
Not sure	1	10	30.0
Strongly Agree	4	40	70.0
Agree	3	30	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>	

*Source: Primary Data;*

Result from table 12 above show that one (1) respondent representing 10% strongly disagreed, one (1) respondents representing 10% disagreed, one (1) respondent representing 10% was not sure, four (4) respondents representing 40% agreed and three (3) respondents representing 30% strongly agreed. This means that majority that of the respondents agreed that the absence of instructional possess a barrier to the implementation of the primary school curriculum.

**Table 13. Show the need for a well-developed computer laboratory**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	16	10	10
Disagree	28	17.5	27.5
Not sure	7	4.4	31.9
Strongly Agree	40	25	56.9
Agree	69	43.1	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>	

Source: Primary Data;

Table 13 above indicated that sixteen (16) respondent representing 10% strongly disagreed, twenty eight (28) respondents representing 17.5% disagreed, seven (7) respondent representing 4.4% were not sure, forty (40) respondents representing 25% agreed and sixty nine (69) respondents representing 43.1% strongly agreed. This implies that the implementation of thematic curriculum in lower primary schools in Nabingoola Sub-County would be unachievable without having well facilitated computer rooms.

**Table 14: showing children’s attitude towards new subjects in their learning time table.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	11	6.9	6.9
Disagree	6	3.8	10.7
Not sure	12	7.5	18.2
Strongly Agree	50	31.3	49.5
Agree	81	50.5	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Source: Primary Data;

Table 14 above indicated that eleven (11) respondent representing 6.9% strongly disagreed, six (6) respondents representing 3.8% disagreed, twelve (12) respondent representing 7.5% were not sure, fifty(50) respondents representing 31.3% strongly agreed and eighty one (81) respondent representing 50.5% agreed. This means that children in most primary school of Nabingoola sub-county have no positive attitude towards new subjects on their learning time tables.

**Table 15: showing whether the new subjects are sometimes introduced in schools when no teachers with the knowledge and experience to deliver its content.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	14	8.8	8.8
Disagree	26	16.3	25.1
Not sure	18	11.3	36.4
Strongly Agree	57	35.6	72
Agree	45	28	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

*Source: Primary Data:*

Table 15 above indicated that fourteen (14) respondent representing 8.8% strongly disagreed, twenty six (26) respondents representing 16.3% disagreed, eighteen (18) respondent representing 11.3% were not sure, fifty seven(57) respondents representing 35.6% agreed while 45 respondents representing 28% strongly agreed. Majority of the respondents generally agreed. This implies that teachers in Nabingoola sub-county are not given opportunity to enrich their ideas on new subjects being introduced; this affects their capability to teach pupils and the end become discouraged to work.

**Table 16; showing whether the curriculum reviewer discuss the new curriculum content with teachers.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	24	15	15
Disagree	14	8.8	23.8
Not sure	17	10.6	34.4
Strongly Agree	49	30.6	65
Agree	56	35	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

*Source: Primary Data:*

Result from table 16 above, show that twenty four (24) respondent representing 15% strongly disagreed, fourteen (14) respondents representing 8.8% disagreed, seventeen (17) respondent representing 10.6% were not sure, forty nine (49) respondents representing 30.6% strongly agreed and fifty nine (59) respondents representing 35% agreed. Majority of the respondents therefore agreed that the curriculum reviewer discuss the new curriculum content with teachers.

**Table 17: shows the efforts made to distribute curriculum guides.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	13	8.1	8.1
Disagree	14	8.8	16.9
Not sure	26	16.3	33.2
Strongly Agree	63	39.4	72.6
Agree	44	27.4	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

*Source: Primary Data:*

Result from table 17 above, show that thirteen (13) respondent representing 8.1% strongly disagreed, fourteen (14) respondents representing 8.8% disagreed, twenty six (26) respondent representing 16.3% were not sure, sixty three (63) respondents representing 39.4% strongly agreed while forty four (44) respondents representing 27.4% agreed.

This means that majority of the respondents agreed which implies that although the NCDC has developed these guides to be supplied to schools; most teachers in Nabinoola sub-county have not had access to them.

#### 4.3 Research question four

This research question stated that;

What are the solutions towards the challenges of implementing the thematic curriculum in Nabinoola sub-county, Mubende District?

Items 1,2, and 3 of the head teacher's questionnaires (see appendix 1), items 1,2,3,4, and 5 of the teacher's questionnaires (see appendix ii) as well as item 1,2,3,4 were targeted to test this research question. The results are indicated below;

**Table 18: shows whether there is need for representation of teachers view in designing the curriculum.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	2	20	20.0
Disagree	1	10	30.0
Not sure	2	20	50.0
Strongly Agree	2	20	70.0
Agree	3	30	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>	

*Source: Primary Data.*

Table 18 above, show that two (2) respondent representing 20% strongly disagreed, one (1) respondents representing 10% disagreed, two (2) respondent representing 20% were not sure, two(2) respondents representing 20% agreed and three (3) respondents representing 30% strongly agreed. This implies that teachers will be motivated to put in practice what has been designed and will have a better understanding of the curriculum.

**Table 19; shows the need for competent and experienced persons in curriculum development.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	1	10	10.0
Disagree	2	20	30.0
Not sure	1	10	40.0
Strongly Agree	4	40	80.0
Agree	2	20	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>	

*Source: Primary Data.*

Result from the table 19 above indicated one (1) respondent representing 10% strongly disagreed, two (2) respondents representing 20% disagreed, one (1) respondent representing 10% were not sure, four(4) respondents representing 40% agreed and two(2) respondents representing 20% strongly agreed. The results imply that these stakeholders are key in effective development of the curriculum and their views and thoughts can be utilized to develop a curriculum that is implementable by the teachers and adds values to the nation.

**Table 20: showing whether the development of new subjects suit the capabilities of the schools.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative percentage</b>
Disagree	2	20	20.0
Not sure	2	20	40.0
Agree	5	50	90.0
Strongly Agree	1	10	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>	

*Source: Primary Data.*

Table 20 above, show that two (2) respondent representing 20% strongly disagreed, two (2) respondents representing 20% disagreed were not sure, five(5) respondents representing 50% agreed while one(1) respondents representing 10% strongly agreed. This means that the need to match the capabilities of the schools to the new subjects being created is important because there is no way the school will put them into practice without relevant instructional materials and competent staff.



**Table 21: shows the needs for teacher’s development and capacity building.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative percentage</b>
Disagree	18	11.3	11.3
Not sure	24	15	26.3
Strongly Agree	29	18	44.3
Agree	59	37	81.
Strongly Agree	30	18.7	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>	

*Source: primary data*

Result from the table 21 show that eighteen (18) respondent representing 11.3% strongly disagreed, Twenty four (24) respondents representing 15% disagreed, twenty nine (29) respondent representing 18% were not sure, fifty nine(59) respondents representing 37% agreed and thirty (30) respondents representing 18.7% strongly agreed. This means that capacity building helps to improve teacher’s knowledge about the new systems in the curriculum and how they can put them into practice

**Table 22: shows the need to invest more in primary schools.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	20	12.5	12.5
Disagree	22	14	26.5
Not sure	28	17.5	44
Strongly Agree	62	39	83
Agree	28	17.5	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>	

*Source: primary data*

Result from the table 22 above indicted that twenty (20) respondent representing 12.5% strongly disagreed, twenty two (22) respondents representing 14% disagreed, twenty eight (28) respondent representing 17.5% were not sure, sixty two (62) respondents representing 39% agreed while twenty eight (28) respondents representing 17.5% strongly agreed. This shows that majority of the respondents like adequate financing of primary schools.

**Table 23; showing the need for decentralization policy in primary school management**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	14	8.8	8.8
Disagree	15	9.4	18.2
Not sure	09	5.6	23.8
Strong Agree	65	40.6	64.4
Agree	57	35.6	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>	

*Source: primary data*

Result from the table 23 above show that fourteen (14) respondent representing 8.8% strongly disagreed, fifteen (15) respondents representing 9.4% disagreed, nine(09) respondent representing 5.6% were not sure, sixty five (65) respondents representing 40.6% agreed while fifty seven(57) respondents representing 35.6% strongly agreed. This means that most of the respondents agreed that decentralization could be an instrument that needs to be utilized to enable primary schools of Nabingoola sub-county have well qualified and skilled teachers.

**Table 24: Shows the need for a commission to review the progress of implementation of the curriculum.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	16	10	10
Disagree	11	6.9	16.9
Not sure	09	5.6	22.5
Strong Agree	54	33.8	56.3
Agree	70	43.7	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>	

*Source: primary data*

Result from the table 24 indicates that sixteen (16) respondents representing 10% strongly disagreed, eleven (11) respondents representing 6.9% disagreed, nine (7) respondents representing 5.6% were not sure, fifty four (54) respondents representing 33.8% agreed while seventy (70) respondents representing 43.7% strongly agreed. Majority of the respondents

generally agreed. This therefore will help the school present their challenges to the commission and will be advised on how to overcome them.

**Table 25; showing the need for pilot scheme before introduction of the new curriculum**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	26	16.2	16.2
Disagree	9	5.6	21.8
Not sure	6	3.7	25.5
Strong Agree	58	36.2	61.7
Agree	61	38.3	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>	

*Source: primary data*

Result from the table 25 above show that twenty six (26) respondents representing 16.2% strongly disagreed, nine (9) respondents representing 5.6% disagreed, six (6) respondents representing 3.7% were not sure, fifty eight (58) respondents representing 36.2% agreed while sixty one (61) respondents representing 38.3% strongly agreed. Majority of the respondents generally agreed that there is need for pilot studies to be conducted to measure the relevance of the new curriculum to the area.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.0 Introduction.**

This chapter presents general discussion of the findings. There after a summary is made, conclusion is drawn and recommendations suggested.

### **5.1. Discussion**

The discussion is done research question by research question as is here under.

#### **5.1.1 Research question one (1)**

What are the factors influencing the use of thematic curriculum in lower primary schools in Uganda?

With reference to tables 2,3 and 4, six head teacher out of ten (10) who participated in the study representing 60% indicated that;

There is need for the ministry of education to continuously review the curriculum as a broad strategy for change in the education system.

They further that the education agencies in Uganda still need to improve on their operations to provide quality services to the education sector in Uganda. These agencies need to be provided with experience and competent staff who can analyze the education system and provide practical recommendation towards effective implementation of the curriculum and

The government of Uganda is in most cases being pressured by the politicians to review the primary school curriculum yet this should be among the Nation agendas to streamline the education system and improve the quality of primary education.

The results are therefore in agreement with Ntarangwi (2002) who observe that political pressure is very instrumental in enhancing the use of thematic curriculum in Uganda. He further asserted that politicians acted as advisers to the government in order for it to work efficiently. This is through identifying future problem in the curriculum and put it on pressure to adjust according.

At table 5,6 and 7 teachers and heads of department indicated that; the changing life style of the people of Uganda made it necessary for the ministry of education to review and adjust the primary school curriculum, and enforce the use of the thematic curriculum.

The result future indicated that primary schools need ICT in the curriculum in order to cope with changes in the worlds. The introduction of computer lessons should therefore be the main aim of the new changes in the primary school curriculum.

The result are therefore in agreement with Kinuthia (2009) who observed that, primary schools need ICT in the curriculum in order to cope with changes in the world, socially and in business economically.

At table 9 ninety (90) teachers and heads of department representing 77% indicated that the media motivates the use of the thematic curriculum in Uganda through making research and company results with their other countries.

### **5.1.2. Research question stated that;**

This research question stated that;

“What are the challenges of implementing the thematic curriculum in Nabingoola sub-county, MubendeDistrict? Started that;

“What are the challenges of implementing the thematic curriculum in Nabingoola sub-county, mubendeDistrict?

- a). There is no electricity in primary schools in Nabingoola sub-county which cannot facilitate effective implementation of the new subjects introduced in the new curriculum.
- b). Absence of instructional materials posses a barrier to the implementation of the primary school curriculum.

At table 13 teachers and heads of department respectively, indentified that there is need for well developed computer laboratories to enable them effectively teach the pupils.

At table 14 teachers and heads of department respectively, indicated that children in most primary schools in Nabingoola sub-county have no positive attitudes new subjects on their leaning time tables.

The results from 15 shows that teachers and heads of departments expressed that new subjects are sometimes introduced in schools when no teachers with the experience and knowledge to deliver its content.

### **5.1.3 Research questions three;**

It stated that;

“What is the solution towards the challenges of implementing the thematic curriculum in Nabingoola sub-county Mubende District? Results of tables 18, 19 and 20 show ways expressed by headquarters on how to improve on the challenge of implementing the thematic curriculum in Nabingoola sub-county. Among these included;

Presentation of teachers views in designing the new curriculum which would help increase the ownership of the curriculum by the teacher and increases their appreciation towards it.

There is need to have competent and experienced persons on board during the curriculum development process which helps in developing a curriculum that is implementable by the teachers and adds value to the nations.

There is need to match the capabilities of the school to the new subject being created because there is no way the school will put them into practice without relevant instructional materials and competent staff. This will aid effective implementation of the curriculum.

Table 21 further found that conducting teacher development and capacity building programmes about the changes in the syllabus is one of the cheapest and easier way to get the implementers of the curriculum have the capacity to put all ideas and plans on ground.

Tables 22, 23, 24 and 25 teachers and heads of departments suggested that;

There is need for a commission in charge of monitoring and reviewing the progress of curriculum implementation.

This will help in continuous follow up of the implementation process as a way of identify bottle necks in the system and providing prompt solution towards overcoming these bottle necks.

There should be pilot studies in selected primary schools in the sub-county to find out whether or not the schools in the area can afford to implement the changes.

## 5.2. Summary

The major purpose of the study was to establish issues and challenges of implementing thematic curriculum in lower primary schools in Uganda. A case of Nabingoola sub-county Mubende District

The study covered ten (10) primary schools. The subject involved in the study included ten (10) head teachers, one hundred (100) teachers, thirty (30) members of School Management Committee and twenty (20) parents and statistical analysis was based on them.

Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected. The research tools were only questionnaires which were administered to head teachers, teachers and heads of departments respectively.

All subjects were given questionnaires at either their work places or places of resident and questionnaire collected later.

Data collected was edited on continuous basis and organized it according to the research question for analysis. These research questions were;

- i. What are the factors influencing the use of thematic curriculum in lower primary schools in Uganda?
- ii. What are the challenges of implementing the thematic curriculum in Nabingoola sub-county Mubende District?
- iii. What are the solutions towards the challenges of implementing the thematic curriculum in Nabingoola sub-county, Mubende District?

Literature related to the study was reviewed and was later compared with the researcher's findings in chapter five.

For the research procedure, the researcher used an introductory letter from the faculty of education Nkumba University introducing him to the head teachers who in turn introduced him to the various teachers and heads of departments of their respective schools.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

### **Factors influencing the use of the thematic curriculum**

The use of the thematic curriculum in Uganda was seen as a continuous effort that stakeholders and government should undertake, it was found that the changing needs of society was the most influential factors towards the use of the thematic curriculum in the country. The study revealed that since Uganda is in a dynamically competitive world, which is in a digital migration and embracing IT, it was essential to redesign the national primary school curriculum. The study revealed that if the curriculum is not adjusted to meet the needs of society, it is possible that the nation's development goals will not be achieved.

Therefore the factors influencing the use of the thematic curriculum in Uganda were both external and internal to the country. The study found that there had been an effort to make a curriculum based in local language to enable pupils quickly learns how to read, understand and write in their local language, however, all this was not forthcoming because the implementation phase was still lagging behind. The study revealed that it is one thing to formulate a new curriculum and it is another to implement it, and this was found to be the hardest part in implementing the thematic curriculum in Uganda.

### **Challenges in implementing the curriculum in Nabingoola Sub-County schools**

The study revealed that the implementation of the primary school thematic curriculum in Nabingoola sub-county has been mainly affected by the financial capabilities of the schools in the sub-county. It was found that the schools lacked enough instructional materials and competent teachers to take on new subject in the new curriculum, although some schools had libraries, teachers could not have access to teaching guides which meant that most of these libraries were actually equipped but with material that was irrelevant to enable to effective implementation of the thematic curriculum. The study found it important for teachers to have manual guides to the curriculum in order to have a follow up on how best they can deliver to the pupils. Of the schools that had these guides, the school management had little time to discuss their usage with the teachers, which affected their progress. Most schools found challenges with their infrastructure which was not adequate and available to enable them introduce new subject like computer, they did not have computer and most had a problem of electricity and therefore teaching ICT was impossible.



### **Solution towards curriculum implementation in schools of Nabingoola Sub-County**

The study suggested solutions to eliminate bottlenecks in the implementation phase of the primary school thematic curriculum. The study found that the success of curriculum implementation is dependent on the teachers and pupil's perception of the thematic curriculum, the adjustments in the curriculum must first receive appreciation from the implementers in order to be effectively put into practice. The study found that there were problems of pupils accepting new subjects introduced on their time tables in most primary schools of Nabingoola sub-county.

This implied that the curriculum lacked a foundation for implementation and therefore it was hard for teachers to deliver content to biased classes. Involvement of teachers in Nabingoola sub-county in designing the curriculum was also found to be important to win ownership of the curriculum by the teachers to enable effective implementation. The study found that once the curriculum lacks ownership, it is hard that the implementers (teacher) will effectively make it work, teachers views should therefore be represented when designing the new curriculum and the ministry should ensure that competent and experienced person are on board in the curriculum development process. Further still the study revealed the developing a curriculum that did not fit the capabilities of most schools in Nabingoola sub-county created problems in its implementation. It was revealed that capability in form of availability of instructional material, skilled and qualified teachers were still lacking in most primary schools of Nabingoola sub-county. The ministry should ensure that new subjects are developed to suit the capabilities of the schools otherwise teacher development and capacity building programmes were also encouraged as a way to enable teachers implement development in the curriculum.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

In the line of the above conclusions, the study recommends that:

- Thematic curriculum implementation should be based mainly on the trends of globalization.
- Products of lower primary school should fit well in society and without the requisite skills and knowledge needed by the market, they will not survive.
- It is also important to base the thematic curricula on the needs and expectations of the learners. Curriculum designers should therefore keep in mind that gone are the days when primary schools come and take what we offer but to say we offer what you want to take.

### **5.4 Areas further research**

Some areas for further research were identified and these included;

- i. Factors contributing towards curriculum development in primary schools of Uganda
- ii. Problems that preschool teachers face in the curriculum implementation.
- iii. The study might be replicated.

## **REFERENCES**

Altinyelken HK.(2010) curriculum change in Uganda. Teacher perspectives on the new thematic curriculum.International Journal of Educational Development

Amin M.E (2005). Social science research: conception, methodology and analysis

Kampala: Makererer University printer

Argyris, 1993; Sustainability of curriculum development for enterprise education

Observations on cases from wales. Education + training Vol. 52 Iss: 2, pp. 140 -64

Chisholm L. and leyendecker, R. (2008) Curriculum reform in post -1990S sub-Saharan

Africa. International Journal of education development 28, 195-205

Creswell, J.W, V.L. Piano Clark, M.L Gutmann, W.E Hanson 2005, Advanced mixed methods research deigns. In Handbook of mixed in social and behavioral research, eds-A. Tahakkori and C. Teddlie, 209-240. Thousand Oaks, CA; Sage Publications.

De Coninck, C (2008). Core affairs; Flanders, Belgium; case studies basic education in Europe.ELAchede, Netherlands, SLO Nethelands institute of curriculum development. Retrieved from [www.slo.nl/downloads/webversie-core-affairs-LR-Be!gi-](http://www.slo.nl/downloads/webversie-core-affairs-LR-Be!gi-)

De Feiter et al (1995) using Design research to develop teacher support materials in order to facilitate the successful implementation of a new science curriculum in post-apartheid Namibia.

Dennis, K.H. (2002) Quality education through a post –modem curriculum.Hongteachers’Centre Journal, 1(1), pp. 56-71

DEO’s report (2009) higher local government statistical obstructMubendeDistrict.

Dew J (1938) Researching the implementation of education policy a back ward mapping approach comparative education, March 1990, 35 (1).

Eisner & Vallance (1974) five conceptions of curriculum. Their roots and implications for curriculum planning M E W.E.E. VALLANCE (ED) CONFLICTING conceptions of curriculum (pp.1-18) Berkley , PA: McCutchan publishing.

Erden e (2010) (2010) problems that preschool teachers face in the curriculum implementation dissertation M. E.D Middle east technical university

Jose S (2011) curriculum and culture. Retrieved from

Http: [www.udayton.edu/provost/-research=/docs/2011-fall-provost-speech.pdf](http://www.udayton.edu/provost/-research=/docs/2011-fall-provost-speech.pdf)

Karisidappa and sangam, (1994).Promoting entrepreneurship education; the role of the teacher? Education and training 52(2), 117-27

Karsten.Andreas (2000) literature review of the principles and practices relating to inclusive education for children with special educational needs. Retrieved from <http://homepage.uibk.ac.at/~c603207dokumente/L21%20WPi-%20Literaturesynthesis.pdf>

Kinuthia D.A (1984) Learning styles and disciplinary differences in A. Chickering (ed), the modern American college, san Francisco. CA;Jossey Bass.

## **APPENDIX: QUESTIONNAIRES TO HEAD TEACHERS**

Dear colleagues

I am conducting a research on challenges of implementing thematic curriculum in Uganda. You are kindly requested to respond to the various questions in the questionnaire attached. Your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and for the purpose for which it is intended only. I would be grateful to you for your cooperation in this regard.

Part 1: Background information

Instruct; please tick where applicable

Ownership

Government aided

Private school

Gender      male                  female

Academic qualifications

Grade v                          graduate                          master                          other

### **PART 2:**

In this section, Please use the rating below and tick in the box containing the most appropriate Rating; strongly agree (SA) 4: Agree (A) 3: Disagree (D) 2: strongly.

**SECTION A: the factors influencing the use of thematic curriculum in lower primary schools in Uganda.**

No	Question	SA	A	NS	D	SD
1	There is need for the ministry of education to continuously revised the curriculum as a broad strategy for change in the education system					
2	There is still need to strengthen and facilitate the different education agencies in Uganda					
3	We believe that the national curriculum cannot be upgraded without pressure from politicians					

**SECTION B: Challenges of implementing the thematic curriculum in Nabingoola Sub-county.**

No	Question	SA	A	NS	D	SD
1	Our school has well equipped library to facilitate our work					
2	We do not have electricity in our school					
3	There are no instructional material for most of the subjects we teach					

**SECTION C: Solutions towards solving the challenges of implementing the thematic curriculum in schools if Nabingoola sub-county.**

No	Question	SA	A	NS	D	SD
1	Teacher views should be represented when designing the curriculum					
2	The ministry should ensure that competent and experienced teachers are on board in the curriculum development process					
3	The ministry should ensure that new subjects are developed to the capabilities of the schools.					

## APPENDIX 11

### QUESTIONNAIRES TO TEACHERS

Dear Colleagues

I am researching on challenges of implementing thematic curriculum in Uganda you are kindly requested to respond to the various questions in the questionnaires attached. Your response will be treated with utmost confidentiality and for the purpose for which it is intended only.

I would be grateful to you for your cooperation in this regard.

#### PART 1: Back ground information

Instruction: Please tick where applicable ownership

Government aided

Private schools

#### Demographic information

Gender                      Male                      Female

#### Academic qualifications

Graduate                      Grade v                      Masters

## PART 2

In this section, Please use my rating below and tick in the box containing the most appropriate rating.

Strongly agree (SA) 4 Agree (A)3, Disagree (D)2. STRONG DIAGREE (SD) 1:

### SECTION A: The factors influencing the use of thematic curriculum in lower primary schools in Uganda.

No	Question	SA	A	NS	D	SD
1	The changing lifestyle of Uganda makes it necessary for the ministry of education to adjust the school curriculum					
2	Global digitization makes ICT a requirement in the primary schools					
3	There should be redevelopment of the curriculum in order to teach what is of value and is competitive in this global economy					
4	Curriculum redevelopment should be supported by evidence of its contribution towards progress in academic and cultural heritage of society					
5	The media also boosts motivation of redesigning the curriculum					



**SECTION B: Challenges of implementing the thematic curriculum in Naingoola sub-county**

No	Question	SA	A	NS	D	SD
1	We need a well-developed computer laboratory to enable us effectively teach the pupils					
2	The children show resentment to new subject being introduced on their learning timetable					
3	The new subject are sometimes introduced in our school when no teacher has knowledge and expertise to deliver its content					
4	The school management endeavors to discuss new curriculum					
5	Content with the teachers					
6	There is little effort made to distribute new curriculum guides to					

**SECTION C: Solution towards solving the challenges of implementing the thematic curriculum in schools of Nabingoola sub-county**

		SA	A	NS	D	SD
1	Teacher development and capacity building programmes should be sponsored by government whenever new changes are made to the syllabi					
2	There is need to invest more in primary school education especially in financing UPE schools					
3	The decentralization policy of government should be encouraged if better qualified and skilled teachers are to be recruited in the primary school system					
4	There should be a commission to monitor and review the intentions of the new curriculum with what is actually being delivered in schools					
5	Pilot schemes should be conducted before a new curriculum is introduced					

**APPENDIX IV**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS.**

1. What are your level of education? .....
2. How long have you been a parent of this school? .....
3. Are your children studying in a school that implement thematic curriculum? .....
4. What problems have you faced under thematic curriculum programme? .....
5. What is your opinion about thematic curriculum programme? .....
6. In your opinion what aspect of thematic curriculum need improvement? .....
7. How can we improve on them? .....

**APPENDIX V**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MEMBERS OF SMC.**

1. What are your level of education? .....
2. How long have you been SMC memberat this school? .....
3. Does this school implement thematic curriculum? .....
4. What problems have you faced under thematic curriculum programme? .....
5. What is your opinion about thematic curriculum programme? .....
6. In your opinion what aspect of thematic curriculum need improvement? .....
7. How can we improve on them? .....