

## Research Issue Brief into Secondary Schools Arson Crisis in Kenya



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## **LIST OF ACCRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

BOG	Board of Governors
BOM	Board of Management
FDSE	Free Day Secondary Education
KNUT	Kenya National Union of Teachers
KUPPET	Kenya Union of Post-Primary Education Teachers
MOE	Ministry of Education
NACADA	National Agency for the Campaign against Drug Abuse
PA	Parents' Association
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TSC	Teachers Service Commission
UFPE	Universal Free Primary Education

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The findings and recommendations of the study will go a long way to assist stakeholders in the education sector to formulate sound policies to address the recurrence of student unrests and violence in Kenya.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The education sector in Kenya is a key programme component in the realization of the objectives of Vision 2030 with a focus on reduction of illiteracy, increasing access to education, improving transition rate from primary to secondary schools, as well as raising the quality and relevance of education in Kenya. However, the disturbing events witnessed in between the month of May-to-August, 2016 brought to the fore major underlying problems that could be existing in secondary schools. Over 130 secondary schools suffered burning of school infrastructure as a result of student unrest and violence.

Student unrests and strikes have been perennial occurrences in Kenya, resulting in wanton destruction of school property and loss of life. There have been various efforts to address this phenomenon. This research focused on problem of the recurrence of student unrests, violence and particularly the burning of secondary schools in second term of the 2016 school calendar. The objective was to specifically establish the underlying causes of recurrence of student unrest and violence in secondary schools in second term. In the past decade, there have been reported incidences of student unrests particularly in second term.

The research findings revealed that the underlying cause of recurrence of student unrests and violence is as a result of the convergence of many factors finding expression in second term for various reasons. These factors included: the multiplicity of exams in second term that has generated a *'flight mode culture'* in the minds of candidate students; school workload in second term means students are simply fatigued after a long, activity-packed, overloaded and grueling term; peer pressure factors as understood in the context of collegiality of students as a group bound together by common interests and experiences where the spread of student violence is an expression of solidarity; long absence of the 'person of authority' that resides in school principals in second term imply lack of administrative authority with implications for decision making and this often generates suspicion and a feeling of abdication of responsibility among students and other teachers; the

proliferation of indiscipline across schools means schools have to contend with the challenges of negative influence from indisciplined students who transfer between schools; lack of effective guidance and counseling support services in secondary schools; and perceptions on the proposed Ministry of Education's reform measures that elicited negative reactions from the students fraternity.

When these factors find convergence in second term, it presents a simmering problem and major ticking bomb in secondary schools. This means a small trigger could lead to escalation of frustration resulting in ugly scenes of student unrests and violence, including criminal arson.

The study findings have important implications for the design of appropriate policy interventions and strategies to help address the perennial recurrent problem of student unrests and violence in second term in Kenya. This report recommends the following: the need to address the disconnect between policy and practice with regards to administration of exams, as the banned mock exams have been replaced by joint zonal exams; the need to moderate multiple exams administered to students, especially the form four candidates; the need for administrative and policy action to decongest the over-loaded second term school calendar; the imperative to address policy gaps in profiling indiscipline cases across Kenyan schools; urgent need to establish functional guidance and counseling departments in schools; the Ministry of Education needs to undertake consultative and strategic implementation of reform policies in secondary schools; as well as the need to institute further forensic investigation into the 2016 secondary schools' burning crisis in regard to the level of organization, the pattern of coordination and the scale of escalation of the burnings.

# **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Background of the Study**

### **1.1.1 History and Context of student unrest and violence in Kenya**

The education sector in Kenya is an important pillar in the realization of the objectives of Vision 2030 with regard to the attainment of socio-economic and political development of the country. The sector, however, has in the recent years been witnessing unusual student unrest and violence especially at the secondary school level. This often has caused interrupted school learning programmes, loss of human life in some cases and massive destruction of school properties as well as students' belongings.

Incidences of student protest actions and violence in Kenyan secondary schools have been perennial and could be traced as far back as the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century when the first case was reported at Maseno School in 1908 (Republic of Kenya, 2001). The 1960s-1970s periods recorded few student protest actions that were less violent and which took the form of boycott of classes, mass walk-outs and simple protests (Sagini Report, 1991).

However, the period from 1980s, through to 2000s saw an increase in both the frequency and intensity of student protests. Student protest actions became acts of deadly violence targeting other students rather than more generalized protests against school conditions (Republic of Kenya, 2001). The late 1990s and early 2000s were marked by violent student protest phenomenon that often resulted in catastrophic school fires, rapes, loss of student lives and destruction of school property. The most unfortunate of these incidences are: in July 1991, male students at St. Kizito Mixed Secondary School violently attacked their female students and set their dormitory on fire where over seventy girls were raped and nineteen killed. In May 1997, twenty-six female students at Bombolulu Girls Secondary School died in a dormitory fire suspected to be an act of arson by fellow students. In March 1999, students from Nyeri Boys High School locked up four prefects in their cubicle and burnt them up with petrol. In May 2001, a fire set by students at Kyanguli Secondary School in Machakos killed sixty seven students.

These school unrest occurrences have received national attention and condemnation. There have also been concerted efforts and discussions among different stakeholders in the education sector in trying to find lasting solutions to this problem. The Ministry of Education officials have often condemned student violence, indiscipline and juvenile hooliganism cases stating that: *'the wanton destruction of school property will not be tolerated'*. The government's response through the Ministry of Education has been the appointment of Committees of Inquiry/Task Forces whenever student unrests and violence occur in unprecedented scale.

These committees of inquiry and task forces often are mandated to look into the issues of student unrests and other educational matters in Kenya. They include: National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (Gachathi Report) of 1976; Report on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond (Kamunge Report of 1981); Dr. Lawrence Sagini Committee/Task Force (1991); Nicodemus Kirima (1995) Commission of Inquiry into alleged infiltration of devil worship into Kenyan secondary schools; P.M. Macharia Committee/Task Force (1999/2000); Dr. Naomi Wangai Committee/Task Force (2001); and David Koech Committee/Task Force (2008).

### **The Report of the Presidential Committee of 1991 on Student Unrest and Indiscipline in Kenyan Schools (Sagini Report of 1991)**

The report of Dr. Lawrence Sagini Committee/Task Force found out the causes of student unrests to include: lack of role models; overloaded school curriculum; communication breakdown between the students and the administration; mismanagement of schools; teachers' lack of commitment to their work; inadequate guidance and counseling services; inadequate school inspection services; political interference with school affairs; negative impact of western values on the African traditional values; inadequate teaching/learning facilities and amenities; lack of adequate welfare services; mismanagement of school funds; poor performance in national examinations; and lack of adequate opportunities for girls' participation in co-curricular activities.

### **The Report on Causes, Effects and Remedies of Indiscipline in Secondary Schools in Central Province (Macharia Report of 2000)**

The report of P.M. Macharia-led Committee/Task Force identified sets of factors leading to student unrest in schools. There were school-based factors which included: inadequate quantity or quality of food; attempt to change some long established school traditions; drug abuse in schools; lack of observance of professional ethics by teachers; the prefect factor; fear of examinations and poor results; school administrative styles; corporal punishment; lack of recreation facilities; low supply of amenities such as electricity and water; communication breakdown; and strict school rules. The second set of factors were: low achievement in class work; forced repetition; theft; inter-class conflicts at school; coupling in school; peer pressure; and adolescence as a stage of emotional instability and adventure. The third set of causes were external factors such as: geographical circumstances e.g. proximity to slums; the negative influence of the mass media that tended to glorify violence; undue political interference for example in the nomination of Board of Governors (BoG) membership; national culture of violence; the changing society; poor parenting; and the general hopelessness and despair caused by the prevailing economic and social hardships.

### **The Report of the Task Force on Student Discipline and Unrest in Secondary Schools of 2001 (Wangai Report of 2001)**

The Dr. Naomy Wangai-led Committee/Task Force report identified a number of causes as follows: cultural conflicts filtering into the school; influence of opinion leaders at variance with the students' interests; the largely abdicated role of parents; moral decay afflicting the current generation of youths; deteriorating levels of nationalism; external school environment full of vices and images of violence; drug and substance abuse; rejection of some head teachers by the communities around some schools; fear of examinations; insecurity within and outside the school; out of school peer group influence; devil worshipping which was gradually permeating into schools; child labour inductive environment; unauthorized visitors and visiting days; increased human rights awareness; bad role models; role of mass media that appeared to glorify violence; hopelessness of school leavers given the hard economic times; and the huge disparity in resource distribution in the society.

## **The David Koech Special Commission (2008) to investigate the causes of school unrest and violence**

The Koech Report of 2008 was never released to the public. The media, however, was able to retrieve and make available to the public sections of the report. The causes of the student unrests identified by the taskforce included: overloaded curriculum; autocratic school administration; drug and substance abuse; poor living conditions in schools; fear of mock examinations; excessive use of corporal punishment; lack of avenues of expressing student grievances; delay by the Ministry of Education to disburse funds for free secondary education; lack of an effective school guidance and counseling service; pressure for excellent academic performance; abdication of parental responsibility; incompetent boards of governors; culture of impunity in the society; adolescence identity crisis; mass media campaigns; Children's Act which outlawed caning in schools; prefect system deemed autocratic; misuse of mobile phones; weak institutional management; political influence; poor quality food; harsh school rules; and the 2008 post-election violence.

Despite these efforts and the various findings and recommendations of the task forces, student unrest and violence continue to occur in Kenyan secondary schools. The causes of school unrest have been varied as evident from the taskforce's investigations in the education sector<sup>1</sup>. In the more recent times, the secondary education sub-sector faced serious challenges of school arson. Over 130 secondary schools experienced burning of school property in a period under 15 weeks between May and August, 2016. Of interest was that this phenomenon mostly affected public secondary schools (at almost 99%) and specifically during the second term school calendar (almost at 90%). A similar situation of second term school unrests were also witnessed in 2008, where over three hundred secondary schools were closed down between July and September 2008.

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<sup>1</sup>poor managerial styles, leadership and administration; strict school rules; fear of exams; adolescence peer pressure; incitement; alcohol and drug abuse; punishment; lack of guidance and counseling; strained teacher-student relationships; dysfunctional family background; lack of parental concern over children; lack of spiritual guidance; bad food and poor diet; too much free time to students; inadequate teachers in some schools; lack of role models; and lack of strict rules to moderate student behavior;banning of corporal punishment; role of the non-teaching support staff;Ministry of Education raft of measures to curb exams cheating among others.

The current wave of school burning has prompted swift action by education stakeholders and various levels of the country leadership to delve into the root causes of the school burning incidences.

The impact of the secondary school burning has been felt throughout the public and the private sectors. It threatens to undermine communities' peaceful co-existence and costs the country significant financial losses. This threat is wide-ranging, complex and ranges from malicious burning to radical tendencies. The perpetrators appeared highly motivated and determined in pursuing their goals and hence the government's response must be both resourceful and relentless.

Pursuant to the National Crime Research Centre's Act, 1997, the Centre is mandated to carry out research into causes of crime, its prevention and to disseminate findings to inform policy implementation and planning to Government Agencies charged with the administration of criminal justice.

Thus, the research into the pervasive nature of secondary school fires was commissioned in accordance with Section 5 (C) which empowers the Centre to carry out research into any criminal activity and in particular:

- (i) crime causation and prevention;
- (ii) group or culture related crimes;
- (iii) socio-political and economic causes of criminal behaviour including drug trafficking, peddling or addiction;
- (iv) the *modus operandi* of persons engaged in any criminal activity; and
- (v) juvenile delinquency.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Kenya has recently been experiencing an unprecedented wave of school unrests and wanton destruction of school properties in secondary schools during the second term period. The school learning program during this period often is adversely affected. The

problem taints the image and integrity of the entire education sector and by extension the country at large. The negative socio-economic and political consequences of the school unrests cannot be underrated. The commentaries from official sources, various stakeholders, print and electronic media are not helping with regard to amicable resolution of the problem. Each stakeholder has assigned different causes, adding to more bewilderment as schools continue to burn.

The Cabinet Secretary for Education had previously been quoted affirming that this was only a case of second term and once schools closed, the problem would come to an end. However, in the past decade, the country has witnessed a recurrence of large scale school unrests and violence in second term. The current wave of arson attacks in secondary schools appear to mirror previous years in which school strikes happened every second term of the school calendar. Consistent with this narrative, the research aimed at finding out the root causes of the school burning menace in general and specifically in second term in Kenya.

The need to unearth the underlying factors and to recommend prevention measures and strategies through in-depth research cannot be overemphasized.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this research were three-fold:

- a) To examine the prevailing factors that have been assigned to student unrest and violence in general.
- b) To establish the specific factors responsible for the recurrence of burning of secondary schools in second term and the pervasiveness during the period under review.
- c) To make recommendations on how to address the identified causative factors, seal loopholes and opportunities for burning of secondary schools in second term.

#### **1.4 Justification of the study**

This study is justified because of the need to put in place appropriate and sustainable policy interventions and strategies to address the recurrence of student unrest and violence, specifically arson in secondary schools in second term. This study therefore seeks to get in-depth understanding of the perennial and undesirable learners' behaviour and how best it can be addressed by the state, non-state actors and the society in general.

The need to amicably address perennial student violence is informed by the fact that education is not merely to impart knowledge and skills to the learners but also to fashion their attitude and morality for the fulfillment of complete individuals useful to themselves and the society at large.

#### **1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

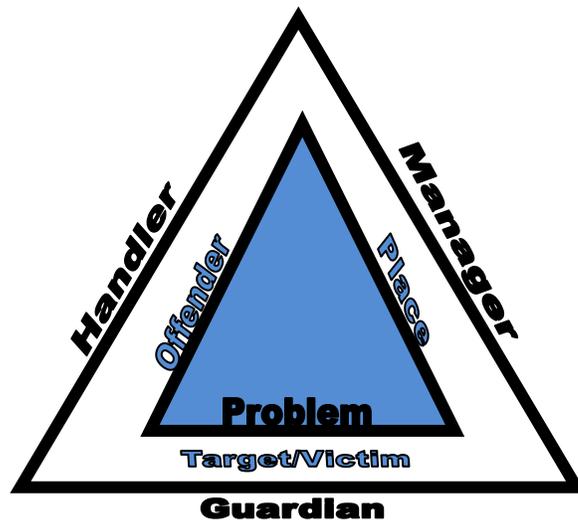
The study was conducted in only sixteen counties in Kenya between July-August, 2016 as a rapid assessment of the problem of burning of secondary schools in second term. Given the sensitive nature of the issues around the problem, targeted respondents viewed the study as very sensitive and hence there were instances of reluctance in some schools to provide information. These findings may provide a general idea about the unique factors that contribute to the recurrence of student unrests and violence in second term in public secondary schools. Although these findings may not necessarily be common to all secondary schools, they hold implications for remedial actions to address the recurrent phenomenon of student arson in secondary schools in second term.

#### **1.6 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework used in this research is anchored on the Problem Analysis Triangle, sometimes referred to as the crime triangle postulated by Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson (1979).

The theory provides a way of thinking about recurring problems of crime and disorder and in this case, second-term school fires in secondary schools in Kenya. The problem analysis triangle assumes that crime or disorder results when (1) likely offender and (2) suitable target come together in (3) time and space, in the absence of capable guardians for that target.

It further holds that offenders can sometimes be controlled by other people and such people are known as handlers. Targets and victims can sometimes be protected by other people and such people are known as guardians. Places are usually controlled by someone and that person is known as a manager. Thus, effective problem-solving requires understanding how offenders and their targets/victims come together in places, and understanding how those offenders, targets/victims, and places are or are not effectively controlled.



**Figure 1: Illustration of the problem analysis triangle**

Based on this framework, school fires problem can be understood and described in a variety of ways since no one way is definitive. In general, the framework can be used to understand the school burning incidents in four ways:

- *Behavior.* Certain behaviour(s) is/are common to the incidents. For example, making excessive demands such as ‘must watch football match’ irrespective of scheduled school routines.

- *Place.* Certain places can be common to incidents. Incidents involving one or more problem behaviours may occur at, for example, a school dormitory, in abstract places such as cyberspace, on the telephone, or through other information networks.
- *Persons.* Certain individuals or groups of people can be common to incidents. These people could be either offenders or victims. Incidents involving one or more behaviours, occurring in one or more places may be attributed to, for example, a youth peer pressure, a lone student, a group of racketeers, a group of chronic bullies. The incidents may be causing harm to, for example, students of a school, teachers, young children, or a lone individual.
- *Time.* Certain times can be common to incidents. Incidents involving one or more behaviors, in one or more places, caused by or affecting one or more persons may happen at, for example, intensified school curricular, traffic rush hour, the holiday season, or during an annual festival.

In conclusion, understanding the weaknesses areas in the problem analysis triangle in the context of school fires in second term in secondary schools is critical in informing the appropriate measures necessary to address the problem.

## **CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This section presents the research methods used in the study. Specifically, it presents the research design, sampling methodology, data collection methods and tools, data analysis and research ethics.

### **2.2 Research Design**

This study employed the descriptive research study design. The design was considered most helpful in obtaining desired information on the subject area of student unrests and violence in Kenyan secondary schools generally and particularly in second term. The research was undertaken between July-August, 2016.

### **2.3 Sample Selection**

The survey was undertaken in sixteen (16) Counties that had experienced incidences of student unrests and arsons between May and July, 2016. The sixteen Counties<sup>2</sup> were purposively selected on the basis of having experienced some student violence, unrest and incidences of arson.

Simple random sampling was used in selecting schools and students who participated in the study. Two students per class based on the class register were selected and the distribution was across the entire form/class categories, that is, Form one to Form four. Class teachers from Form one to Form four were systematically selected as sample respondents.

A total of 240 students and 124 teachers were selected and interviewed (see table 1 below). Student and teacher population for this study was drawn from 40 targeted schools categorized as either:

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<sup>2</sup>Isiolo; Nairobi; Kisii; Vihiga, Taita Taveta; Nyeri; Kericho; Migori; Elgeyo Marakwet, Machakos; Kilifi; Uasin Gishu; Makueni; Nakuru; Meru; and Murang'a.

- (i) Burnt schools;
- (ii) Schools where attempts to burn took place;
- (iii) Schools where there were neither actual burnings nor attempts.

The actual students interviewed were from 33 schools (see Table 2.3 below) whereas teachers interviewed were from 37 schools (see Table 2.4 below) of the targeted 40 schools. School principals and their deputies were interviewed as key informants. The Tables below capture the sampled counties, schools, students and teachers.

**Table 2.1: Sample of Counties, Students and Teachers**

County		Students		Teachers	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Nairobi	16	6.7%	8	6.5%
2	Meru	13	5.4%	11	8.8%
3	Uasin Gishu	15	6.2%	7	5.6%
4	Migori	17	7.1%	8	6.5%
5	Elgeyo Marakwet	13	5.4%	7	5.6%
6	Vihiga	16	6.7%	5	4.0%
7	Nyeri	10	4.0%	8	6.5%
8	Makueni	17	7.1%	8	6.5%
9	Taita Taveta	16	6.7%	8	6.5%
10	Muranga	12	5.0%	10	8.0%
11	Kisii	17	7.1%	8	6.5%
12	Kericho	16	6.7%	4	3.2%
13	Nakuru	16	6.7%	5	4.0%
14	Isiolo	16	6.7%	8	6.5%
15	Machakos	16	6.7%	8	6.5%
16	Kilifi	14	5.8%	11	8.8%
<b>Total</b>		<b>240</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 2.2 School's type by accommodation arrangement and status of burning**

	School	Type of School	Accommodation Status	Burning Status
1	Waso Secondary	Mixed School	Day School	Attempted
2	St Lawrence Kiong'ongi	Mixed School	Boarding School	Attempted
3	St Anne's Secondary School	Girls School	Day School	Attempted
4	Senende Boys	Boys School	Boarding School	Attempted
5	PCEA Bahati Girls	Girls School	Boarding School	Attempted
6	Mbaikini	Boys School	Boarding School	Attempted
7	Magereza Secondary School	Mixed School	Day and Boarding	Attempted
8	Koimbi High School	Boys School	Boarding School	Attempted
9	Kitobo Secondary School	Mixed School	Day School	Attempted
10	Kibirichia Boys	Boys School	Boarding School	Attempted
11	Kambi Mawe Secondary School	Mixed School	Boarding School	Attempted
12	Huruma Girls	Girls School	Boarding School	Attempted
13	Ganze Girls Secondary	Girls School	Boarding School	Attempted
14	St Patrick High School Iten	Boys School	Boarding School	Burnt
15	Ruiga Girls	Girls School	Boarding School	Burnt
16	Mwaani Girls High School	Girls School	Boarding School	Burnt
17	Meru School	Boys School	Boarding School	Burnt
18	Malindi High School	Boys School	Boarding School	Burnt
19	Magen Boys High School	Boys School	Boarding School	Burnt
20	Langata High School	Boys School	Boarding School	Burnt
21	Kokuro Boys	Boys School	Boarding School	Burnt
22	Kithangaini	Mixed School	Day and Boarding	Burnt
23	Kirobon Boys High School	Boys School	Boarding School	Burnt
24	Kibutha Girls High School	Girls School	Boarding School	Burnt
25	Kaimosi Boys	Boys School	Boarding School	Burnt
26	Isebania High School	Boys School	Boarding School	Burnt
27	Gachika Secondary School	Mixed School	Day and Boarding	Burnt
28	Cheptenye Boys High School	Boys School	Boarding School	Burnt
29	Timbila High School	Boys School	Boarding School	No Incident
30	The Great Rift Valley Girls	Girls School	Boarding School	No Incident
31	St Mary's Boys High School	Boys School	Day and Boarding	No Incident
32	St Catherine Gaturi	Girls School	Boarding School	No Incident
33	Singore Girls	Girls School	Boarding School	No Incident
34	Kilifi Township Secondary	Boys School	Day and Boarding	No Incident
35	Kiborok Girls High School	Girls School	Boarding School	No Incident
36	Kagumo High School	Boys School	Boarding School	No Incident
37	Isiolo Boys	Boys School	Boarding School	No Incident
38	Eldoret Central Secondary	Mixed School	Day School	No Incident
39	AIC Chebisas Boys High School	Boys School	Boarding School	No Incident
40	Murang'a School for the Hearing Impaired	Mixed School	Boarding School	No Incident

**Table 2.3: Actual School and Student sample Respondents**

	<b>School</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
1	Waso Secondary	8	3.3%
2	St Lawrence Kiong'ongi	8	3.3%
3	Senende Boys	9	3.8%
4	PCEA Bahati Girls	8	3.3%
5	Mbaikini	8	3.3%
6	Magereza Secondary School	5	2.1%
7	Koimbi High School	8	3.3%
8	Kitobo Secondary School	8	3.3%
9	Kibirichia Boys	4	1.7%
10	Kambi Mawe Secondary School	9	3.8%
11	Huruma Girls	8	3.3%
12	Ganze Girls Secondary	7	2.9%
13	St Patrick High School Iten	10	4.2%
14	Mwaani Girls High School	8	3.3%
15	Meru School	9	3.8%
16	Magena Boys High School	9	3.8%
17	Langata High School	8	3.3%
18	Kokuro Boys	9	3.8%
19	Kithangaini	8	3.3%
20	Kirobon Boys High School	8	3.3%
21	Kaimosi Boys	7	2.9%
22	Isebania High School	8	3.3%
23	Cheptenye Boys High School	8	3.3%
24	Timbila High School	8	3.3%
25	St Mary's Boys High School	5	2.1%
26	Singore Girls	3	1.4%
27	Kilifi Township Secondary	7	2.9%
28	Kiborok Girls High School	8	3.3%
29	Kagumo High School	5	2.1%
30	Isiolo Boys	8	3.3%
31	Eldoret Central Secondary	6	2.5%
32	AIC Chebisas Boys High School	4	1.7%
33	Murang'a School for the Hearing Impaired	4	1.7%
<b>Total</b>		<b>240</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 2.4: Actual School and Teacher Sample Respondents**

	<b>School</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
1	Waso Secondary	4	3.2%
2	St Lawrence Kiong'ongi	4	3.2%
3	Senende Boys	2	1.7%
4	PCEA Bahati Girls	2	1.7%
5	Mbaikini	4	3.2%
6	Magereza Secondary School	2	1.7%
7	Kitobo Secondary School	4	3.2%
8	Kibirichia Boys	3	2.4%
9	Kambi Mawe Secondary School	4	3.2%
10	Huruma Girls	4	3.2%
11	Ganze Girls Secondary	3	2.4%
12	St Patrick High School Iten	3	2.4%
13	Mwaani Girls High School	4	3.2%
14	Meru School	5	4.2%
15	Magenia Boys High School	4	3.2%
16	Langata High School	3	2.4%
17	Kokuro Boys	4	3.2%
18	Kithangaini	4	3.2%
19	Kirobon Boys High School	3	2.4%
20	Kaimosi Boys	3	2.4%
21	Isebania High School	4	3.2%
22	Cheptenye Boys High School	4	3.2%
23	Timbila High School	4	3.2%
24	Singore Girls	4	3.2%
25	Kilifi Township Secondary	4	3.2%
26	Kagumo High School	5	4.2%
27	Isiolo Boys	4	3.2%
28	Eldoret Central Secondary	3	2.4%
29	AIC Chebisas Boys High School	1	0.8%
30	Murang'a School for the Hearing Impaired	2	1.7%
31	Ruiga Girls	3	2.4%
32	The Great Rift Valley Girls	1	0.8%
33	Gachika Secondary	3	2.4%
34	St Catherine Gaturi	4	3.2%
35	Kibutha Girls High School	4	3.2%
36	Malindi High School	4	3.2%
37	St Annes Secondary School	1	0.8%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Key informant interview respondents for this research were purposively selected based on their knowledge on the subject. A total of 98 key informants were interviewed for this study. They included: School Principals/deputies; boarding master/school matrons; County Directors of Education; Teachers Service Commission officials; KNUT/KUPPET officials; National Government Administrators (County and Deputy County Commissioners); Board of Management (BOM) officials; Parents Association (PA); Village elders of the surrounding school; schools' security personnel; and members of the public from the school's immediate surrounding community.

#### **2.4 Data Collection Methods and Tools**

The study utilized both primary and secondary data collection methods. Primary data was collected from students and teachers and key informants through face to face interviews. Open ended interview schedules and questionnaires were used to collect data from students and teachers respectively. A key informant guide was used to gather information from the key informants.

Secondary data collection was done through review of published books, journals, articles, schools reports, media reports, government reports from commissions of inquiries/task forces into student unrests and official statistics from various sources.

#### **2.5 Data Analysis**

Dully filled and completed interview schedules and questionnaires were cleaned and cross-checked for data integrity. The data was then coded and entered into code books for analysis. Quantitative data analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequencies were generated to categorize the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Cross tabulations and descriptive statistics were generated, including averages in order to identify trends and factors that accounted for student unrests, violence and burning problem.

Qualitative data was analyzed by coding responses and interpreting them in line with key themes of the research questions. The results of this study are presented in tables, graphs, pie charts, explanatory texts and summary statistics to correlate the key variables regarding acts of arsons in Kenyan secondary schools.

## **2.6 Ethical Considerations**

This study took into consideration ethical issues in research. As such, informed consent was obtained from respondents who were fully informed about the purpose of the study and thereafter requested to participate voluntarily. Confidentiality of respondents' identity and information was safeguarded by collecting data anonymously.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 3.1 Introduction

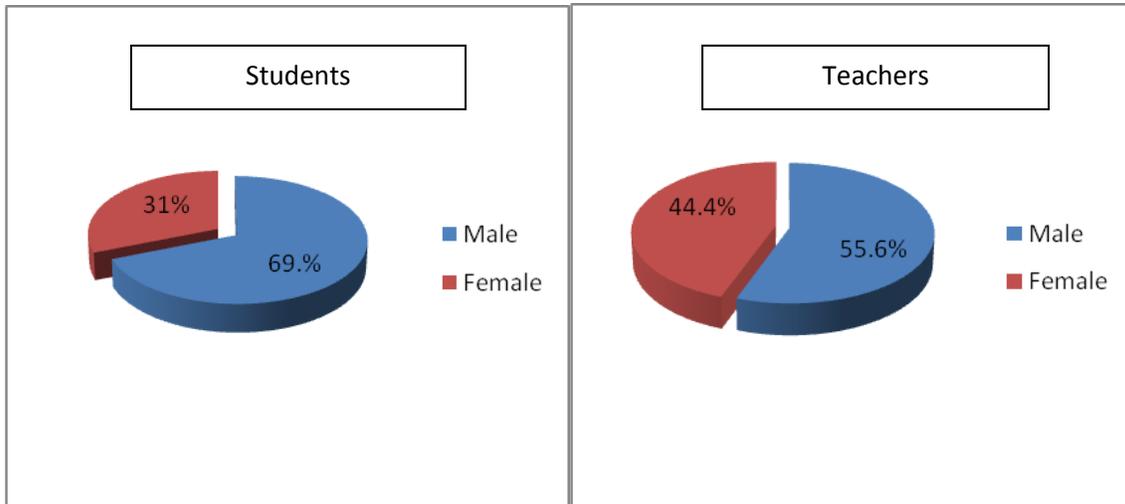
This section provides results and discussions of the study findings. It outlines the socio-demographic characteristics of sample respondents and then discusses the findings thematically.

### 3.2 Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

#### 3.2.1 Gender of Respondents

From a total of 240 students interviewed, 69% were males while 31% were females. For the 124 teachers interviewed, 55.6% were males and 44.4% females.

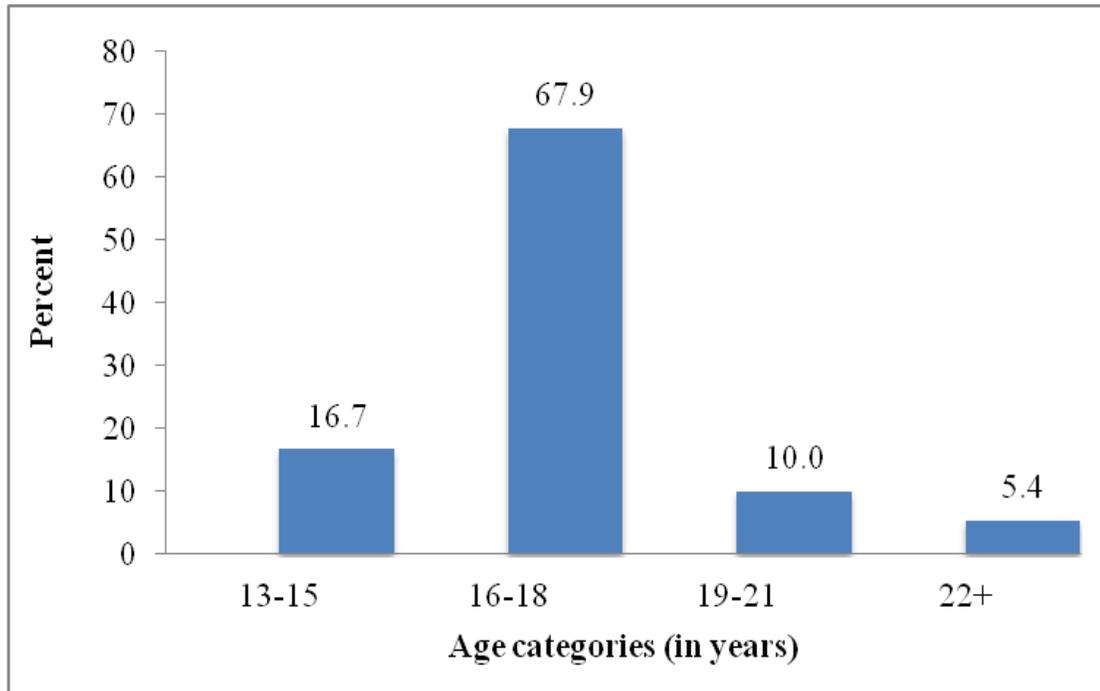
**Figure 2: Gender of Students and Teachers**



#### 3.2.2 Age of Respondents

From the study findings, 67.9% of the students interviewed were in the age cohort between 16 – 18 years, 16.7% were aged between 13 – 15 years, 10.0% were in the age category of 19 – 21 years while 5.4% of the students were aged 22 years and above as shown in Figure 3 below.

**Figure 3: Age of Students**



### **3.2.3 Teachers' and Students' length of stay in the Schools**

In terms of length of stay, 46.7% of the students interviewed had been in the schools for between 3-4 years; 32.5% students had been in the schools between 1-2years; while 3.3% had been in the schools for 4 and above years. For the teachers, 30.6% had been in the schools between 3 - 4 years; 22.2% had been in the schools for nine years and above; 24.1% had been in the schools for between 1-2 years; 8.3% had stayed between 7- 8 years; 7.4% of teachers had been in the schools between 5 -6 years; and another 7.4% had been in the schools for a year as shown in Table 3.1 below.

**Table 3.1: Teachers' and Students' length of stay in School**

<b>Teachers' length of stay in School (years)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Below 1 year	7.4%
1-2	24.1%
3-4	30.6%
5-6	7.4%
7-8	8.3%
9 +	22.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>Students' length of stay in School (years)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Below 1 year	17.5%
1-2	32.5%
3-4	46.7%
4 +	3.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

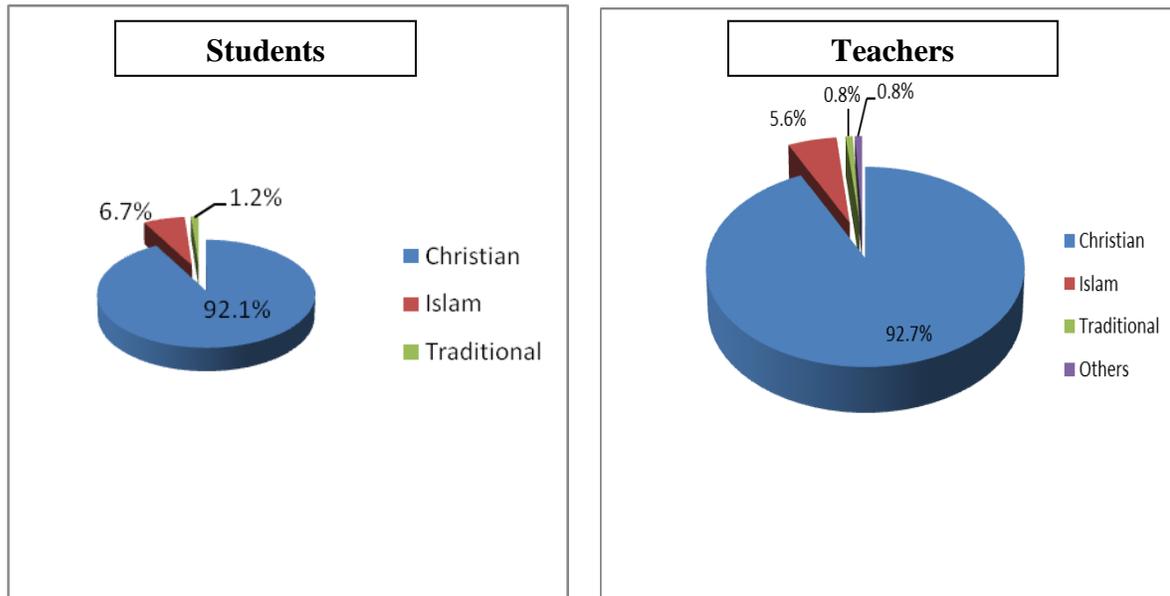
### **3.2.4 Nationality of Teachers and Students**

The results showed that 99.0% of the students interviewed were Kenyans while the rest were non-Kenyans. All the teachers interviewed were Kenyans.

### **3.2.5 Religion of Respondents**

On religion, 92.1% of the students interviewed were Christians, 6.7% were Muslims, and the rest belonged to the Traditional faith. With regard to teachers, 92.7% were Christians, 5.6% were Muslims while the rest professed the Traditional and other faiths. Figure 4 shows these findings.

**Figure 4: Religion of Students and Teachers**



**3.2.6 Form or class of the Student and Teacher Respondents**

Most (27.9%) students interviewed were in Form 4, followed by Form 3 (25.4%) of the student respondents. Most (49.2%) of the teachers interviewed were Form 4 class teachers followed by Form 1 class teachers (17.7%). Table 3.2 shows the results for student and teacher respondents by class or form.

**Table 3.2: Form or Class of the Student and Teacher Respondents**

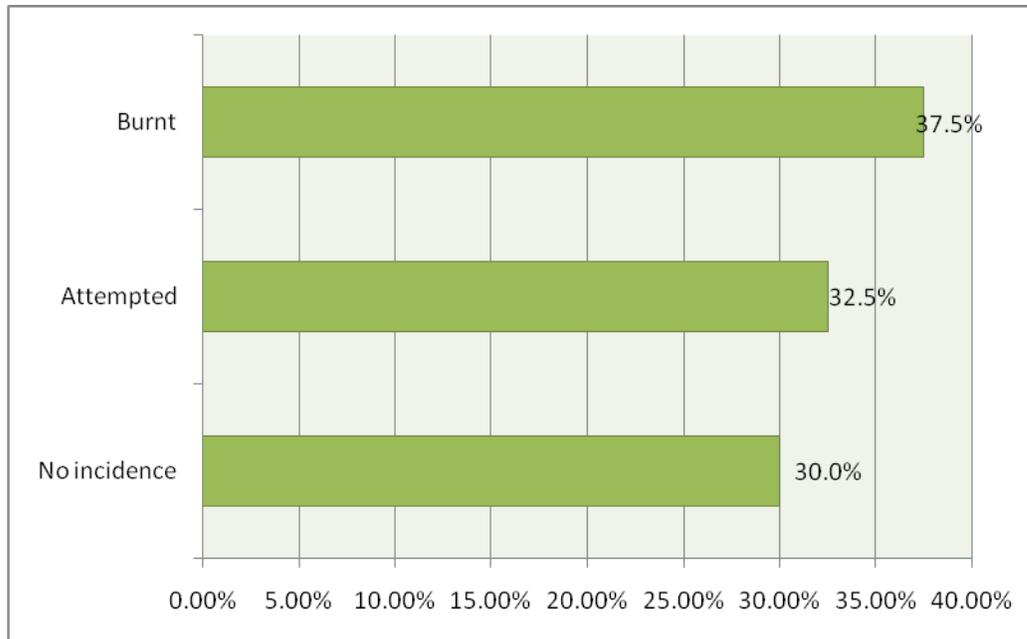
Student Form	Frequency	Percent
Form 1	54	22.5%
Form 2	58	24.2%
Form 3	61	25.4%
Form 4	67	27.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Class Teacher	Frequency	Percent
Form 1	22	17.7%
Form 2	20	16.2%
Form 3	21	16.9%
Form 4	61	49.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### 3.2.7 Status of Schools in Terms of Burnings

From the findings as shown in Figure 5 below, 37.5% of the schools were burnt, 32.5% were schools where attempts to burn took place while 30.0% of the schools had no incidence and formed the control group for the study.

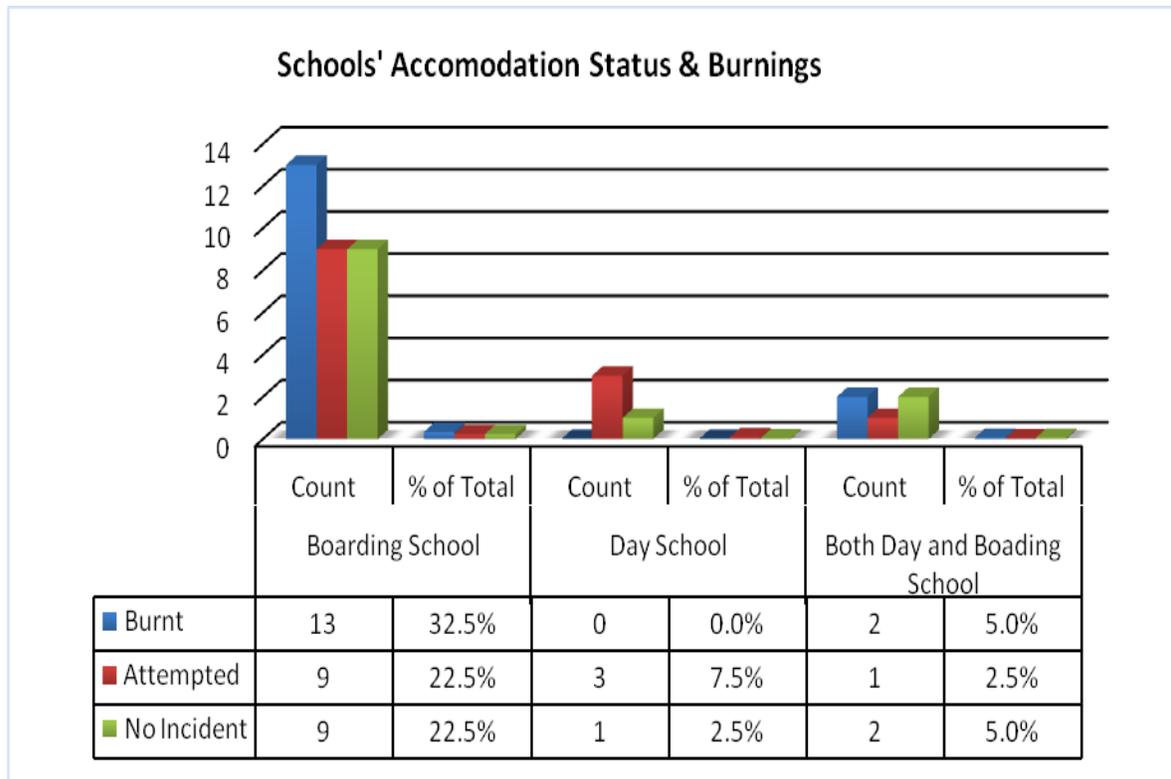
**Figure 5: Status of Schools in terms of burnings**



### 3.2.8 Cross Tabulation of School's Accommodation status and burnings

From this study, 32.5% of the schools burnt were public boarding secondary schools, 22.5% of schools with attempted burnings were boarding schools. Additionally, 22.5% of the boarding schools had no incidents. The schools that recorded no incidents were included in this study as a control group. This finding shows that public boarding secondary schools were the highest casualties of school arsons. Day schools and those with both boarding and day school accommodation arrangements recorded fewer incidences of actual burning or attempts to burn. Boarding schools are therefore more likely to be burnt than day schools as revealed in this research, *see Figure 6 below*.

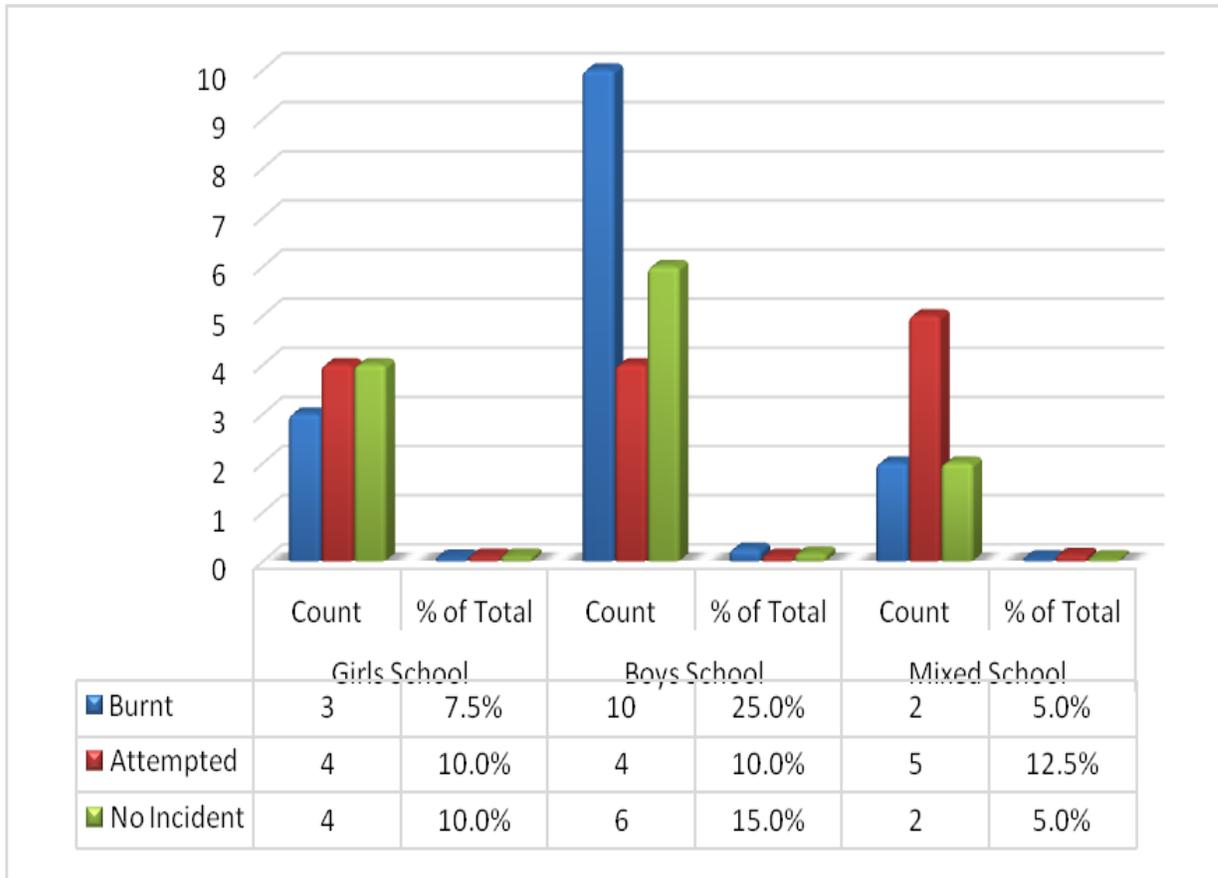
**Figure 6: Cross Tabulation of School's accommodation status and burnings**



### 3.2.9 Cross Tabulation of type of School by gender and burnings

Figure 7 below shows that 25% of the burnt schools were exclusively boys schools, 7.5% of the burnt schools were exclusively girl's schools, whereas 5% were mixed schools. These findings are indicative that boys boarding schools are more likely to be burnt compared to exclusively girls' and mixed schools. There were more attempts to burn schools in mixed secondary schools. Therefore, there is a high likelihood of student unrest and violence occurrences in exclusive boys' schools. Policy measures that anticipates such occurrences and how to curb them should therefore be adopted paying particular attention to boys' boarding schools as well as other categories of school in general.

**Figure 7: Cross Tabulation of Type of School by gender and burnings**



### 3.3 Causes of burning of Secondary Schools in Second Term

The following were cited by students and teachers as the causes of burning of schools in second term in Kenya, *see Table 3.3 and 3.4 below.*

**Table 3.3: Causes of burning Secondary Schools in Second term**

<b>Causes of burning schools in second term</b>	<b>Students %</b>	<b>Teachers %</b>
Peer pressure/influence	27.9%	34.7%
Fear of exams	26.5%	27.4%
Extension of second term dates	23.5%	27.4%
Strict reforms initiatives by Cabinet Secretary, Education	23.0%	18.9%
Poor student - teacher relations	18.1%	15.8%
Student indiscipline	9.3%	11.6%
Drug and substance abuse	9.3%	10.5%
Poor response to students concerns	8.8%	11.6%
Exam leakage	7.8%	10.5%
Poor living conditions in school	6.9%	7.4%
Harassment by teachers	6.4%	0%
Removal of midterms	4.4%	3.2%
Strict school rules	3.9%	5.3%
Inadequate resources	2.9%	2.1%
Unprofessionalism among teachers	2.5%	1.1%
Copying societal behaviours	2.5%	5.3%
Student idleness	2.0%	1.1%
Harsh punishment	1.5%	3.2%
Too many exams/assignments	1.5%	3.2%
Cults/ religion	1.0%	4.2%
Lack of coordination between the schools and government	1.0%	1.1%
Poor parental upbringing	1.0%	1.1%
School rules and regulations	1.0%	3.2%
Removal of visitation days	1.0%	0%
Lack of guidance and counseling	0.5%	1.1%
Poor / lack of security in schools	0.5%	0%

**Table 3.4: Response on causes of burning Schools by students and class Teachers**

Causes of burning of secondary schools in second term	Student Responses%				Class Teacher Responses%			
	Form 1	Form 2	Form 3	Form 4	Form 1	Form 2	Form 3	Form 4
Extension of second term dates	27.9%	20.4%	25.0%	21.7%	5.3%	5.3%	6.3%	10.5%
Peer pressure	16.3%	20.4%	36.5%	35.0%	5.3%	5.3%	8.4%	15.8%
Strict regulations imposed by the Cabinet Secretary, Education	20.9%	8.2%	32.7%	28.3%	3.2%	5.3%	3.2%	7.4%
Drug and substance abuse	9.3%	8.2%	7.7%	11.7%	1.1%	1.1%	3.2%	5.3%
Fear of exam	16.3%	28.6%	21.2%	36.7%	7.4%	4.2%	4.2%	11.6%
Poor response to students concerns by school management	16.3%	6.1%	9.6%	5.0%	1.1%	0.0%	1.1%	9.5%
Poor relationship between students and teachers/administration	11.6%	16.3%	21.2%	21.7%	6.3%	1.1%	1.1%	7.4%
Poor living conditions in schools	9.3%	6.1%	3.8%	8.3%	3.2%	1.1%	1.1%	2.1%
Strict school rules	7.0%	2.0%	1.9%	5.0%	1.1%	0.0%	1.1%	3.2%
Exams leakage	7.0%	8.2%	9.6%	6.7%	1.1%	2.1%	3.2%	4.2%
Student indiscipline	4.7%	18.4%	9.6%	5.0%	0.0%	1.1%	2.1%	8.4%
Harassment by teachers	4.7%	4.1%	7.7%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Lack of adequate resources	4.7%	6.1%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	1.1%
Lack of midterms	4.7%	8.2%	0.0%	5.0%	1.1%	0.0%	1.1%	1.1%
Harsh punishment	2.3%	0.0%	1.9%	1.7%	1.1%	1.1%	0.0%	1.1%
Too much assignments	2.3%	2.0%	1.9%	0.0%	1.1%	1.1%	0.0%	1.1%
Lack of visiting days	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	1.70%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Aping societal behaviours	2.3%	2.0%	3.8%	1.70%	0.0%	2.1%	1.1%	2.1%
Limited coordination between government and schools	2.3%	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
Idleness among students	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
Poor implementation of school rules and regulations	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	1.7%	1.1%	0.0%	1.1%	1.1%
Lack of guidance and counseling services	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%
Poor parental upbringing	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%
Media influence	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	1.1%	0.0%	2.1%
Poor security in schools	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Lack of professionalism among teachers	0.0%	2.0%	3.8%	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
Cults or religion	0.0%	2.0%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	1.1%	2.1%

### **3.3.1 Peer Pressure Factors**

Peer pressure was ranked the highest by teachers (34.7%) and students (27.9%) as the main factor causing the burning of secondary schools in second term *see Table 3.3 and 3.4 above*.

Peer pressure influence was a key factor explaining much of the burning of schools between June and August, 2016. This can be understood in the context of collegiality that depicts students as a group bound together by common interests and experiences in such a way that the ‘unfavourable situation’ affecting one school is also likely to affect the next school. In such a case, the next school may go on rampage not necessarily because of copying their colleagues but as way of expressing their empathy for their colleagues as well as protesting against the possibility of the unfavourable situation happening to their school. The spread of student violence in this case is an expression of solidarity (Malenya, 2014). Student respondents in this study intimated to being in constant communication with peers in other schools and the outside world through various channels, including smuggled mobile phones and other social media networks. This is why the copycat patterns of burnings were quickly replicated across many schools in Kenya.

Most students in secondary schools are at the teen-adolescent stage of life, which is sometimes characterized by identity crisis, affinity for rebellion against authority and a tendency to identify with peer pressure (Garfinkel, Hoberman, Parsons and Walker, 1986).

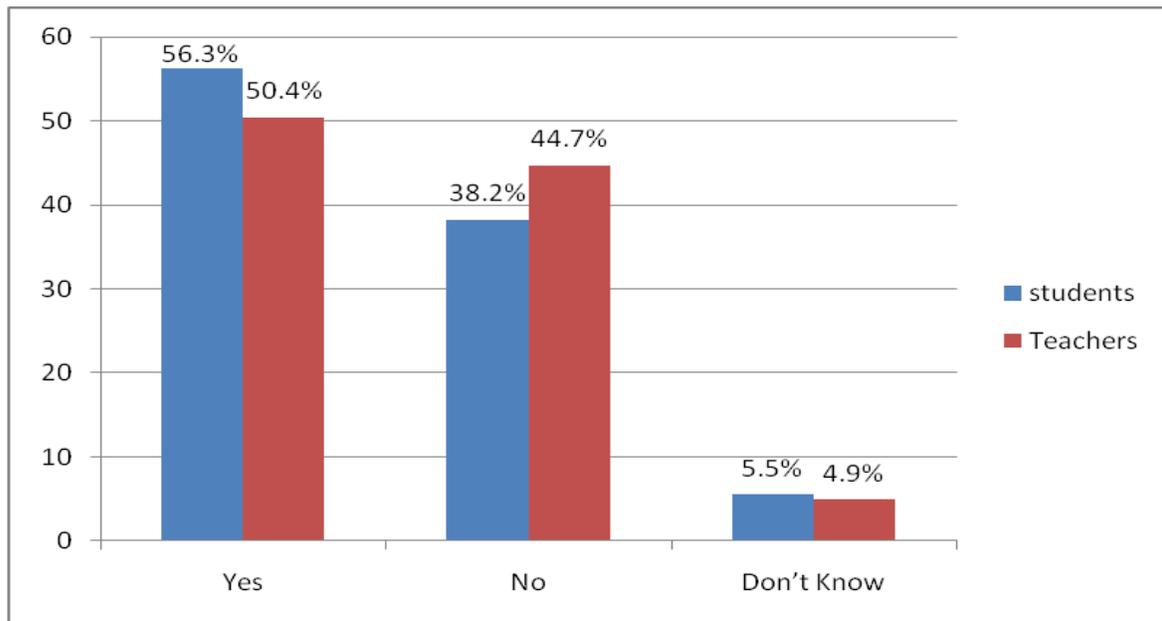
### **3.3.2 Exams Fatigue in Second Term**

Students and teachers ranked fear of exams as the second major reason for the burning of secondary schools in second term. Four students and teacher respondents intimated that the multiplicity of exams administered in second term has generated a ‘*flight mode culture*’ in the mind of students. For most Kenyans, excelling in academic and professional examinations is considered key to overall life success hence the rigorous testing of the level of preparedness for Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education candidates. These loads of internal trial examinations and joint zonal exams overstretch the students and may lead to burn outs in some learners. Regarding the second term overload, one teacher in one of the affected schools in Eastern Kenya had this to say:

*“it’s a working term; it’s always been a tough term for candidates. However, collective outrage has marked a watershed for a Country that had often shut eyes to the teen violence in secondary schools in second term”.*

During the survey, when students and teachers were subjected to a further question on whether fear of final second term exams was a contributing factor to the burning of schools, 56.3% of the students and 50.4% of teachers affirmed that indeed it was, 38.2% of the students and 44.7% of the teachers said it was not, while 5.5% of the students and 4.9% of the teachers did not know whether it was a contributing factor. See Figure 8 below.

**Figure 8: Whether the fear of final second term exam is a contributing factor to the burning of secondary schools**



This study also found out that despite mock examinations being banned in Kenya, they were still widely administered in schools under different name ‘Joint trial exams’. The other difference is that they are being administered at the Sub-County level. In the minds of students, these are still the same dreaded mock exams despite the change in name and context of administration. From the causes of burning schools cited by students from different classes/forms indicate that the fear of exams ranked highest among Form four students as shown in Table 3.4 above.

On the basis of these findings, it is noteworthy that the pressure to excel in exams is high stakes for students. Education in Kenya is a 'zero sum game' and exams have an aura of finality – pass exams and you are guaranteed a bright future. This is likely to lead to very high levels of anxiety and negative energy around mock exams in second term. Psychologists posit that adolescents struggling with panic, stress and extreme anxiety will tend to be more agitated, reactive and therefore likely to make fewer decisions that have been carefully thought out, evaluated and may thus resort to absurd behaviours like burning of dormitories just to escape exams (Garfinkel, Hoberman, Parsons and Walker, 1986).

The findings on continued administration of disguised mock exams reveal apparent disconnect between policy and practice as regards administration of exams in secondary schools. Further, the Kenyan academic system appears to mainly focus on exams as a measure of success, which has contributed to student tensions. There is need for a paradigm shift in measurements and evaluation methods for learning that is all inclusive taking into consideration the diverse learners abilities in academic and non-academic performance areas. This will ultimately lessen societal pressures and premium placed on students that academic success is a do-or-die life battle. This will allow students to explore their full potentials and talents in non-academic areas of interests.

**Figure 9: Kaimosi boys' high School dormitory on fire, Vihiga County**



### **3.3.3 Extension of Second Term Dates**

Extension of term dates was considered by 27.4% of teacher respondents and 23.5% of student respondents as the third most prominent factor causing the burning of secondary schools witnessed in 2016, *see Table 3.4 above*. Students expressed their fears that extending term dates would mean subjecting them to more examinations and hence a source of conflict between teachers and students. Teachers, however, had mixed feelings on the extended term dates; it was an opportunity to complete the workload yet on the other hand a challenge on how to deal with resistance from the students.

### **3.3.4 School workload in Second Term**

Teacher and student respondents alike observed that second term was not only the longest (with fourteen weeks) and busiest academic term (with over six examinations) but also the term with planned intensification of co-curricular activities compared to term one and three. In all the sampled schools, almost all the teachers indicated that certain groups of students were out on ball games, music, poems and drama festivals, science congress and other school club trips. Whereas the teachers found this to interfere with the academic workload of finishing the syllabus, the students on the other hand, found this to be a well-deserved break from the school routine, especially the number and frequency of examinations.

An interesting finding in this study links the workload on form four candidates in second term to probable incitement to violence and the burning of school dormitories. Interviews with some student respondents suspected to have been involved in arson in some of the schools hinted that burning of the place of sleep was the only surest way to have a school break in second term.

It was further established that form four students are sometimes excluded from these intensive co-curricular activities in second term in order to have sufficient study time and adequate preparation for the approaching final examinations. This presents a dilemma; on one hand, with teachers keen to finish the syllabus, while on the other hand, are form four students under immense pressure. This could be a key factor leading to the progressive buildup of fatigue and disguised tension in schools.

On further probe if there were school activities taking place in second term which could contribute to the pattern of unrests and burnings, 49.4% of the students and 53.3% of the teacher respondents indicated there were no activities attributable to unrests and arsons. While 36.2% of the students and 37.7% of the teachers said there were activities in second term contributing to unrests and arsons. 14.5% of the students and 9.0% of teachers said they did not know. Students and teachers who said there were activities taking place in second

term that could be responsible for the pattern of unrests and arson pointed out the pressure to clear the syllabus and intensification of co-curricular activities.

During these co-curricular activities students sometimes make unhealthy contacts with outsiders that expose them to negative vices such as drugs and substance abuse, smuggling of drugs and sharing of critical planned unlawful activities in schools. For instance, a teacher in one of the burnt schools in Nyanza reported encountering students smuggling drugs into the school after ball games. NACADA's Rapid Assessment Drug and Substance Abuse in Kenya indicates that one out of three students is reportedly using one or more drugs<sup>3</sup>.

In conclusion, students tend to be simply fatigued after a long, activity-packed, overloaded and grueling second term. Thus, a simple trigger could easily turn into ugly acts of student protests, violence and arson attacks seen in schools sometimes.

### **3.3.5 Absence of Principals from Schools in Second Term**

The presence or absence of the 'person of authority' that resides in school principals presents opportunities and challenges in the management of secondary schools in Kenya. This is particularly the case where important and timely administrative decisions have to be made, failure to which may lead to volatile situations.

This study pieced together the timelines of secondary school Principal's presence during the second term and found a season of prolonged absence, thus posing an administrative and management problem which schools could no longer ignore. Principals in some of the affected schools acknowledged that their time in the schools during second term suffered from competing out of school assignments. These assignments include Sub-County, County, Regional and National meetings that, in a typical month, took an average of nine (9) working days. This translates into an absentee rate of about 45% per month given that one month has twenty (20) working days. This is besides the time taken off for private engagements.

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<sup>3</sup> NACADA, 2012 Report

Interviews with Board of Management officials as key informant established that prolonged absenteeism of school heads is indeed a serious matter with likely implications for student unrests across many secondary schools. For instance, this study came across a case in Meru County where the County Director of Education had to deal with a case of an absentee school principal whose school had serious management concerns.

The period of absence of Principals from schools is a significant finding. The gap arising from prolonged absence of administrative authority could have an impact on decision making thus creating backlogs and generating suspicion and a feeling of abdication of responsibility among students and other teachers. When this is analyzed together with increased enrollment, inadequate corresponding school infrastructure in some schools, it means a small trigger could lead to escalation of frustration resulting in student unrests.

### **3.3.6 Proliferation of indiscipline across Schools**

One of the findings of this study is that there is a major policy gap and weak system of profiling indiscipline cases of students who transfer between schools in Kenya. Indiscipline ranked sixth among causes of burning of secondary schools by (11.6%) teacher respondents and (9.3%) of the student respondents (See Table 3.3 above). Students who have been expelled have end up getting admission in other schools, thus making it difficult to protect the rest of the students from negative influence of such students.

The current dispensation of the juvenile justice system in Kenya further complicates matters for the school fraternity on how to effectively deal with indiscipline cases. While it outlaws corporal punishment in learning institutions, it also reinforces several child rights. Many students who are still in the child-age bracket largely enjoy these rights guaranteed by the Constitution and other supporting legislations. Therefore, most schools have had to contend with the challenges of lethargic disciplinary process for fear of getting into conflict with the law.

Sagini Task Force Report of 1991 had recommended that indisciplined students should be expelled from the schools and where necessary be prosecuted according to the laws of the

land. Additionally, Sagini had recommended that the Ministry of Education should ensure that expelled indisciplined students should never be re-admitted in other public schools in the republic. The education sector in Kenya needs urgent policy interventions to deal with the recurrent student unrest and violence as discipline is an indispensable component for productive school community.

**Figure 10: A burnt out dorm at Kokuro secondary school, Migori County**



### **3.3.7 Limited Professional Guidance and Counseling Services**

Lack of effective guidance and counseling services in secondary schools was a causal factor attributed to the burning of schools. Although lack of guidance and counseling services was least considered by the student respondents (0.5%) and teacher respondents (1.1%), most of the key informants pointed out that it was a major cause of student unrests and violence. Indeed most of the secondary schools covered by this survey did not have professional counsellors.

A principal in one of the burnt schools in Kisii County opined that...'*whereas guidance and counseling is provided for in policy, it is not funded in practice*'. The underutilization of guidance and counseling in schools was also attributed to perceptions that it was a reserve for disciplinary cases and students in conflict with school authorities.

In a few of the schools that had counseling services, the programmes were run by teachers designated as 'counselors' but some with very limited or lacking professional training in counseling. Even where there are teacher designate-counselors, they are time-constrained to offer adequate counseling services to the students as they are expected to continue performing their regular classroom instruction duties. The need for professional guidance and counseling as well as mentorship services for students cannot be over-emphasized.

### **3.3.8 Effects of the proposed Ministry of Education's reform measures**

The findings indicated that some of the proposed reform programmes by the Ministry of Education could have elicited negative reactions from students that led to some of the criminal arsons witnessed in secondary schools in 2016. Asked about the contribution of specific reform measures of the Ministry of Education to the burnings in second term, the responses were as follows: 80.0% of the students and 73.8% of teachers considered extension of term dates as a key factor in the 2016 school burnings; 73.9% of the students and 58.2% of teachers considered abolition of mid-term a factor; 66.2% of the students and 53.8% of the teachers indicated that abolition of visitation in third term as contributory factor; 56.8% of the students viewed the proposed penalties to be imposed on students and teachers for exams cheating as a crucial factor; and 54.0% of the students regarded abolition of exam prayer days in third term as a motivating factor in the burnings of secondary schools witnessed in 2016. All the student and teacher respondents did not consider the ban on holiday tuition as a major factor in the burning of schools. *See Table 3.5* for these findings.

**Table 3.5: Effects of the proposed Ministry of Education’s reform measures in the burning of secondary schools in second term**

Factor	Response on effects of reform measures by the Ministry of Education					
	% Students			% Class Teachers		
	YES	NO	Don’t Know	YES	NO	Don’t Know
Abolition of exam prayer days in third term	128 (54.0%)	92 (38.8%)	17 (7.2%)	58 (47.9%)	54 (44.6%)	9 (7.5%)
Abolition of mid-term	176 (73.9%)	56 (23.5%)	6 (2.6%)	77 (58.2%)	44 (36.1%)	7 (5.7%)
Abolition of visitation in third term	155 (66.2%)	67(28.6%)	12 (5.2%)	63 (53.8%)	48 (41.1%)	6 (5.1%)
Ban on holiday tuition	42 (17.8%)	183 (77.5%)	11 (4.7%)	19 (15.8%)	94 (78.4%)	7 (5.8%)
Extension of term dates	192 (80.0%)	45 (18.7%)	3 (1.3%)	90 (73.8%)	25 (20.5%)	7 (5.7%)
Penalties imposed on students and teachers for exams cheating	134 (56.7%)	74 (31.4%)	28 (11.9%)	51 (43.2%)	54 (45.8%)	13 (11.1%)

A number of the Ministry of Education’s policy reforms for schools were to be implemented in the second term school calendar of 2016. Under the proposed changes, second term had been extended by a week – shortening holidays to only two weeks from the previous four and third term would last nine weeks from the previous twelve weeks.

The policy initiatives by the Ministry of education, though well intended, may have received hostility from students, teachers and other stakeholders in the education sector for various reasons. The alleged non-consultative nature of the sudden radical policy changes seemed to have elicited stiff opposition. For instance, teachers interviewed in this survey thought that the Ministry of Education was condescending and arbitrary in its approach to the proposed policy changes. Students interviewed were discontent with the manner in which the policy proposals were initiated and communicated. Some of the students interviewed said they burnt schools to protest the extension of second term that would have kept them in school for an extended period of time yet they needed the holiday break to ease off school pressures.

It is noteworthy that mid-term break and school holidays are important in the school calendar since they help ease off students pressures. Psychologists emphasize that prayers have psychological effects on students and the visits from family members and friends offer temporary self upliftment, appreciation and revitalization for the students.

In light of these findings, the reform measures by the Ministry of Education may have aggravated the magnitude of school burnings experienced in 2016. Students protested against these policy changes by burning school properties.

### **3.3.9 Possible contribution of various Individuals and Institutions to the burning of Secondary Schools**

This study had also sought to find out the possible role or contribution of various individuals and institutions in the burning of schools. From the findings as shown in Table 3.6 below, 56.7% of the students and 84.4% of teachers indicated media influence as contributory factor. Media highlights of cases of schools burnt may have influenced students in other schools to burn as a way of expressing sympathy or simply peer approval.

**Table 3.6: Possible contribution of various individuals and institutions in the burning of Secondary Schools**

Individuals/Institutions	% Student Responses			% Teacher Responses		
	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know
Media	56.7%	25.2%	18.1%	84.4%	9.8%	5.7%
Ministry of Education officials	46.2%	42.0%	11.8%	38.7%	47.6%	13.7%
Non-teaching support staff	33.5%	51.7%	14.8%	35.5%	43.8%	20.7%
Parents and guardians	15.4%	74.2%	10.4%	53.3%	37.5%	9.2%
School Principals and deputies	36.7%	52.1%	11.3%	47.6%	40.3%	12.1%
Religious leaders	7.5%	57.1%	35.4%	18.7%	51.2%	30.1%
School security personnel	37.0%	49.2%	13.9%	45.1%	38.5%	16.4%
Human Rights Activists	7.5%	57.1%	35.4%	17.1%	52.8%	30.1%
Students	86.1%	8.4%	5.5%	91.1%	6.5%	2.4%
Politicians	14.2%	50.4%	35.4%	32.5%	37.4%	30.1%
Teachers	44.6%	46.7%	8.8%	48.0%	41.5%	10.6%
Immediate school's surrounding communities	45.8%	44.5%	9.7%	54.0%	32.3%	13.7%
School's contractors or suppliers of goods, works and services	19.1%	57.2%	23.7%	14.8%	58.2%	27.0%
Teachers Service Commission officials	16.3%	69.5%	14.2%	32.3%	50.8%	16.9%
Teachers Union(KNUT/KUPPET) officials	15.7%	55.9%	28.4%	26.6%	55.6%	17.7%

From Table 3.6 above, 91.1% of the teachers attributed the school burnings to students; while 53.3% of the teachers said parents and guardians were responsible, emphasizing that parents have abdicated their role in child upbringing and discipline.

Over 50% of the students, however did not consider the schools' non-teaching support staff, principals and their deputies, parents and guardians, religious leaders, human rights activists, politicians, school contractors/suppliers, Teachers Service Commission officials, and Teachers Union (KNUT/KUPPET) officials to have had a contribution in one way or the other in the burning of secondary schools in second term.

Similarly, over 50% of the teachers did not consider religious leaders, schools' contractors and suppliers, Teachers Service Commission officials, human rights activists and Teachers Union Officials (KNUT/KUPPET) to have had a role in the burning of schools. These findings dispel some of the wide speculations in the public sphere as to the causes of the 2016 school burnings.

**Figure 11: Burnt dormitory of Leseru Secondary School in Uasin Gishu County**



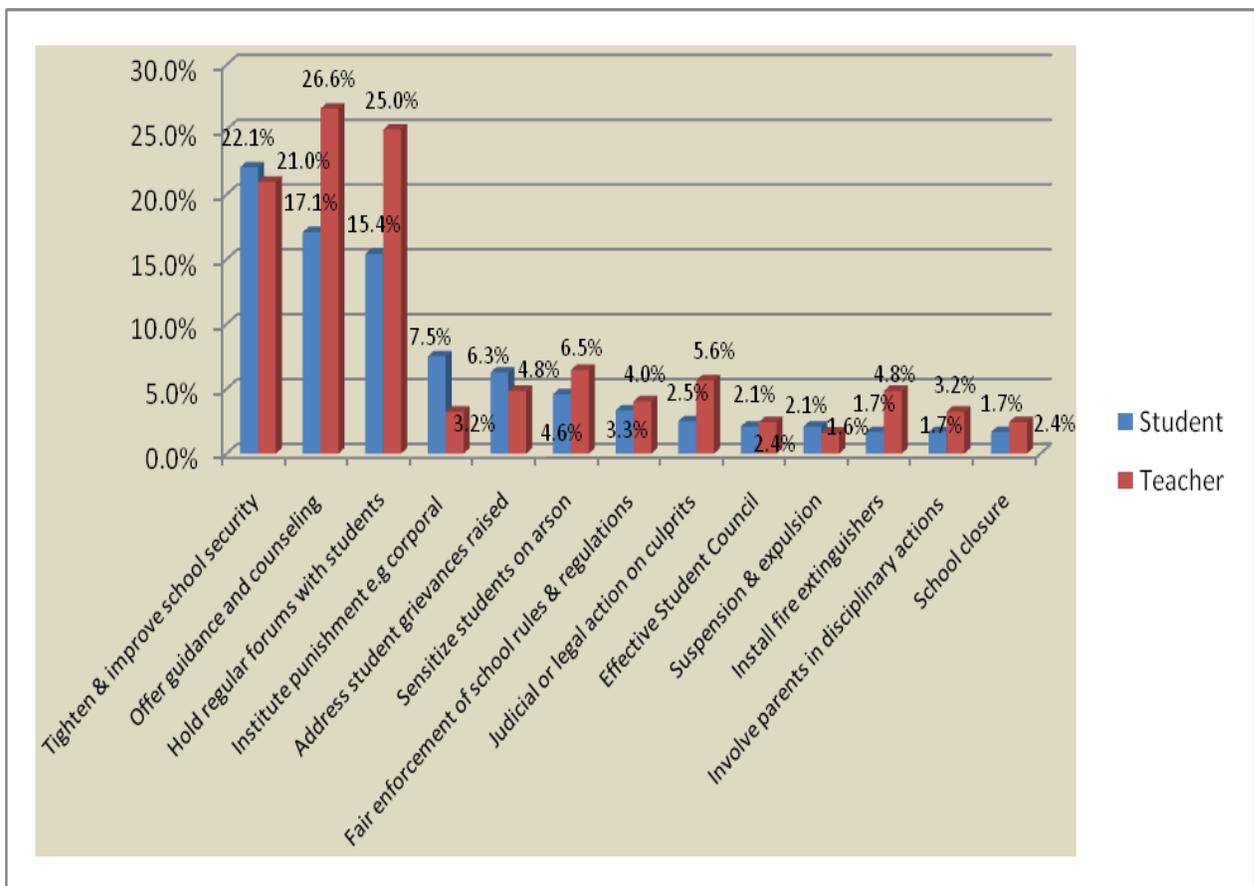
### **3.4 Measures needed to address unrests and burning of Schools in Kenya**

Figure 11 enumerates the findings on measures necessary to mitigate against school unrests and burnings. In order to address unrests and burning of schools in Kenya, of Students were in greater favour of tightening and improving school's security infrastructure(22.1% ); offering guidance and counseling services to students (17.1%) and school authorities holding regular consultative forums with students(15.4%).

Students also suggested the need to institute corporal punishment for serious offensive behaviours (7.5%); addressing student grievances raised (6.3%). Teachers on the other had advocated for tightening and improving school's security (21.0%); offering guidance and counseling services to students (26.6%); holding regular consultative forums with students(25.0%); need to sensitize students on arson(6.5%); and taking judicial or legal action against culprits (5.6%). Other measures advocated for by both the students and

teachers included: fair enforcement of school rules and regulations; having in place effective student councils; suspension and expulsion of culprits; installation of firefighting equipment (extinguishers); involvement of parents in the disciplinary actions being taken against their children; and school closure as a remedial action. These results are shown in Figure 12 below.

**Figure 12: Measures needed to be put in place to address unrests and burnings in secondary schools**



### 3.5 Challenges Faced in addressing unrests and arsons in Secondary Schools

The most prominent challenge in addressing unrests and arsons in secondary schools was the of poor student-teacher relations in schools as cited by 25.2% of the students. Other challenges reported by students included: fear of victimization (11.8%); poor communication in schools (10.1%); peer pressure (9.2%); poor implementation of strategies identified to

address unrests and arsons in schools (8.4%); poor investigation of issues in schools (8.4%); student indiscipline (5.9%); bureaucracy and long chain of decision making in schools (5.0%); and poor relationship between teachers and school administration (4.2%).

On the other hand, teachers pointed out the following as major challenges faced in addressing unrests and arsons in secondary schools: poor student-teacher relations in schools (16.8%); poor implementation of strategies identified to address unrests and arsons in schools (14.9%); poor investigation of issues in schools (14.9%); lack of cooperation between teachers and parents (12.9%); poor relationship between teachers and school administration (10.9%); fear of victimization (8.9%); poor communication in schools (8.9%); lack of role models and expert advice to students (6.9%); poor parental upbringing of children (5.9); and lack of guidance and counseling services in schools (5.9%). Other challenges identified by both students and teachers were: corruption in schools; poor framework of reintegration of students after punishment; and media influence. The findings are captured in Table 3.7 below.

**Table 3.7: Challenges faced in addressing unrests and arsons in secondary schools**

<b>Challenges in addressing unrests and arsons in secondary schools</b>	<b>% Student responses</b>	<b>% Teacher responses</b>
Poor students–teacher relations in schools	25.2%	16.8%
Fear of victimization	11.8%	8.9%
Poor communication in schools	10.1%	8.9%
Peer influence/pressure	9.2%	4.0%
poor implementation of strategies identified to address unrests and arsons in schools	8.4%	14.9%
Poor investigation of issues in schools	8.4%	14.9%
Student indiscipline	5.9%	3.0%
Bureaucracy and long chain of decision making in schools	5.0%	1.0%
Poor relationship between teachers and school administration	4.2%	10.9%
Lack of cooperation between teachers and parents	3.4%	12.9%
Corruption in schools	1.7%	0.0%
Lack of guidance and counseling services in schools	0.8%	5.9%
Poor framework of reintegration of students after punishment	0.8%	3.0%
Poor parental upbringing of children	0.8%	5.9%
Lack of role models and expert advice to students	0.0%	6.9%
Media influence	0.0%	3.0%

## **CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1 Conclusions**

The research findings revealed that the underlying cause of recurrence of student unrests and violence is as a result of several general factors converging and finding expression in second term of the school calendar for various reasons. When the different factors find convergence in second term, it presents a simmering problem and major ticking bomb in secondary schools. It means a small trigger could lead to escalation of frustration resulting in ugly scenes of student unrests and violence, including criminal arson.

The findings of the study bring to attention many undeniable issues that require intervention both at the policy making and general societal levels. The Ministry of Education and other key stakeholders in the education sector must pay particular attention second term of the academic calendar.

Most of the efforts directed towards curbing student unrests and violence in secondary schools in Kenya have been more general rather than specific to the underlying factors or causes, hence the periodic recurrence of this problem. There is need for strategic policies and interventions to address the likelihood of various factors finding a convergence point in second term, and thereby occasioning recurrence of student unrests and violence.

### **4.2 Recommendations**

Arising from the findings and conclusions of this study, the following are key policy recommendations and areas for further investigations.

#### **4.2.1 Establish functional Guidance and Counseling Departments in Schools**

Student unrests and violence are manifestations of psychological and behavioural factors influenced by family, school and the larger societal environment.

There is need to put in place professional, regular guidance and counseling and mentorship services in schools for students in need of psycho-social support. The government must of necessity prioritize establishment of functional guidance and counseling departments in Kenyan secondary schools as a key policy intervention. The Ministry of Education should deploy full time and adequate professional counseling specialists to all schools. School authorities must also help change perceptions among students that guidance and counseling programmes are not a reserve for unruly students but meant to address varying needs of all students.

#### **4.2.2 Abolish joint trial Exams that have replaced Mock Exams**

Despite mock examinations being banned in Kenya, they are still widely administered in schools. The joint trial exams that have replaced the much feared mock exams were found to contribute to increased students' anxiety, stress and fears prompting school unrests and violence in some instances. The continued administration of disguised mock exams is an apparent disconnect between policy and practice in secondary schools as regards examinations. The government should enforce total abolition of these exams being administered at the Sub-County levels.

#### **4.2.3 Moderate multiple exams administered to Students**

Schools should stop administering excessive exams to the learners, and regulate the amount of exams that students, especially those that the candidates are subjected to. It is hereby recommended that different systems of evaluating students' abilities be explored. Importantly, students need to be subjected to regular school-based testing and prominence be accorded to non-academic areas of sports, music, drama and other talents to lessen the premium and importance placed on passing exams and the attendant negative consequences for young people in schools..

#### **4.2.4 Decongest overloaded Second Term**

There is need for administrative and policy action to decongest the over-loaded second term school calendar. This will ensure that some of second term co-curricular engagements are spread out to other terms, especially first term that is quite relaxed.

#### **4.2.5 Address policy gaps in profiling indiscipline cases across Schools**

There is need to put in place a system to profile, track and share information on cases of student indiscipline across secondary schools in Kenya. A national system of ‘student-offender profiling’ will help monitor inter-school transfer of students with delinquent and criminal behaviours. This is aimed at curbing the transfer of such criminal acts and anarchy across schools.

#### **4.2.6 Consultative and Strategic Review and Implementation of Ministry of Education Policies in Secondary Schools**

Empirical evidence has pointed out that radical policy changes in any sector of the society may sometimes meet stiff opposition from target stakeholders however well intended these could be. The Ministry of Education needs to engage in consultative decision-making processes on the policy changes in secondary schools. This will help to minimize possible negative reactions by the different stakeholders, including students.

#### **4.2.7 Recommendation for further Forensic Investigation**

There is need for further forensic investigation of the 2016 arson crisis in Kenyan secondary schools by the directorate of criminal investigations to establish the extent of planning, the level of organization and the pattern of coordination involved in these arson acts. This is in light of the fact that the burnings occurred with no loss of human life and serious injuries unlike past student strikes and arson attacks that were characterized by massive loss of human lives, grave injuries and destruction of property. Even more puzzling was the scale of escalation of the burnings across the many schools.

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# APPENDIX: 1

## Interview Schedule/Questionnaire for Students/Teachers



### Interview Questionnaire for Students/Teachers

Name of County \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Sub- County \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

Form/Class \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_.The National Crime Research Centre is conducting a study on school unrests/burning in Kenya. This study aims at informing policy and programmes towards addressing unrests and arsons in secondary schools. As an important stakeholder you are requested to participate in the exercise by providing information on this subject matter. All the information you will provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will not be used against you.

## Respondent's Background Information

1. Gender

1. Male
2. Female

2. Age of Respondent in years.

1. Under 18
2. 18-25
3. 26-33
4. 34-41
5. 42-49
6. 50-57
7. 58-65

3. Religion:

1. Traditional
2. Christian
3. Islam
4. Other

(Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Nationality

1. Kenyan
2. Non-Kenyan

(Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Length of stay in the school (study site)

**(a) For Student respondents ONLY**

1. Below 1 year
2. 1-2 Years
3. 3-4
4. Above 4

**(b) For Teacher respondents ONLY**

1. Below 1 year
2. 1-2 Years
3. 3-4 Years
4. 5-6 Years
5. 7-8 Years
6. Above 9

**Specific Information:**

**1. (a)** What do you think has been the cause of school unrests in second term of the school calendar?

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**(b)** What do you think is causing the burning of secondary schools in second term?

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**2.** Are there school activities which take place in second term and which may be contributing to the pattern of the unrests and arsons occurring in schools?

1. YES    2. NO    3. Don't Know

Please explain your answer:

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**3.(a)** In your opinion, do you think exams cheating is contributing to the burning of schools we are witnessing in 2<sup>nd</sup> term?

1. YES    2. NO    3. Don't Know

Please explain your answer:

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**(b)** Do you think the fear of final second term exams is contributing to the burning of schools?

1. YES    2. NO    3. Don't Know

Please explain your answer:

---

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**4.** In your opinion, do you think the following have contributed to the burning of secondary schools in 2<sup>nd</sup> term?

i) Abolition of mid-term? 1. YES    2. NO    3. Don't Know

ii) Abolition of exam prayer days in 3<sup>rd</sup> Term? 1. YES    2. NO    3. Don't Know

iii) Abolition of visitation in third term? 1. YES    2. NO    3. Don't Know

iv) Extension of term dates? 1. YES    2. NO    3. Don't Know

v) Penalties imposed on students and or teachers for exams cheating 1. YES    2. NO  
3. Don't Know

vi) Ban on holiday tuition 1. YES    2. NO    3. Don't Know

**5.** Is there a connection between the late 2015 teachers strike and current burning of schools? 1. YES    2. NO    3. Don't Know

Please explain your answer:

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**6.** Would you say poor management and school leadership is contributing to the schools unrests and arsons?

1. YES    2. NO    3. Don't Know

Please explain your answer:

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**7. (a)** In your opinion do you think the following have contributed in one way or the other in the burning of schools?

(i) Principals/Head Teachers/and their deputies 1. YES    2. NO    3. Don't Know

Please explain your answer:

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ii) Teachers 1. YES 2. NO 3. Don't Know

Please explain your answer:

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iii) Students 1. YES 2. NO 3. Don't Know

Please explain your answer:

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iv) School's security personnel 1. YES 2. NO 3. Don't Know

Please explain your answer:

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v) Other non-teaching support staff 1. YES 2. NO 3. Don't Know

Please explain your answer:

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vi) Parents or Guardians: 1. YES 2. NO 3. Don't Know

Please explain your answer:

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vii) Peer pressure 1. YES 2. NO 3. Don't Know

Please explain your answer:

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viii) Media 1. YES 2. NO 3. Don't Know

Please explain your answer:

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ix) Immediate school's surrounding communities/environment 1. YES    2. NO  
3. Don't Know

Please explain your answer:

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x) Ministry of Education official 1. YES    2. NO    3. Don't Know

Please explain your answer:

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xi) Teachers Service Commission (TSC) officials 1. YES    2. NO    3. Don't Know

Please explain your answer:

---

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xii) Teachers Union Officials (KNUT/KUPPET): 1. YES    2. NO    3. Don't Know

Please explain your answer:

---

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xiii) School's contractors/suppliers of goods, works & services: 1. YES    2. NO

3. Don't Know

Please explain your answer:

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xiv) Alcohol and drug abuse: 1. YES    2. NO    3. Don't Know

Please explain your  
answer: \_\_\_\_\_

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**(b)** In your opinion, apart from the **ONES** listed above, are there **OTHERS** contributing in the burning of secondary schools?

1. YES    2. NO    3. Don't Know

Please list them:

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**8. (a)** Are there measures put in place to address unrests in secondary school during second term? 1. YES    2. NO    3. Don't Know

**(b)** If YES, Please list them:

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**(c)** If YES, how effective are these measures generally:

1. Effective  
2. Not Effective  
3. Not Sure  
4. Don't Know

**9.** Are there categories of persons and/or institutions that are assisting in addressing or preventing unrests in schools?

1. YES    2. NO    3. Don't Know

Please explain:

---

---

**10.** Are there challenges faced in addressing unrests in secondary schools?

1. YES    2. NO    3. Don't Know

**(b)** If YES, Please list them:

---

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**(c)** If YES, how can the challenges be addressed?

---

---

**11.** In your opinion, what measures needs to be put in place to address unrests/burnings of schools in Kenya?

---

**Thank You**

## APPENDIX: 2

### Key Informants Interview Guide



### Key Informants Interview Guide

Name of County \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Sub- County \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School (**in the case of Principal/Head Teachers and Deputies**) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

#### INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ The National Crime Research Centre is conducting a study on school unrests/burning in Kenya. This study aims at informing policy and programmes towards addressing unrests and arsons in secondary schools. As an important stakeholder you are requested to participate in the exercise by providing information on this subject matter. All the information you will provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will not be used against you. We would highly appreciate if you spared some time to respond to the questions on the subject.

Thank you in advance.

Signature of interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

[ ] RESPONDENT AGREES TO BE INTERVIEWED

[ ] RESPONDENT DOES NOT AGREE TO BE INTERVIEWED —————> **END**

**Respondent's Background Information**

1. Occupation of respondent\_\_\_\_\_
2. Length of stay in the school (in case of teachers) or locality in years (study site)
  1. Below 1 year
  2. 1-2 years
  3. 5-6 years
  4. 7-8 years
  5. 9 years and above

**Specific Information:**

3. (a) What do you think has been the cause of secondary school unrests during the second term of the school calendar?  
(b) What do you think is causing the burning of secondary schools in second term?
4. Please comment on the following with regard to the burning of secondary schools in 2<sup>nd</sup> term:
  - i) Abolition of mid-term
  - ii) Abolition of exam prayer days in 3<sup>rd</sup> Term
  - iii) Limitation on visitation in third term
  - iv) Extension of term dates
  - v) Penalties imposed on students and or teachers for cheating in exams
  - vi) Ban on holiday tuition

5. Would you say there is there a connection between the late year 2015 teachers' strike and the current burning of secondary schools? Please explain your answer.
6. Would you say poor management and school leadership is contributing to the school unrests and arsons? Please explain your answer.
7. Based on your knowledge and/or experience, are there categories of institutions and/or individuals who have contributed in one way or the other in the burning of secondary schools? Please explain your answer.
8. Please comment on the measures put in place to address unrests (arsons included) in secondary schools during second term and their effectiveness.
9. Based on your knowledge and/or experience, are there categories of persons and/or institutions that are assisting in addressing or preventing unrests (arsons included) in secondary schools? Please explain your answer.
10. Please comment on challenges faced in addressing unrests (arsons included) in secondary schools and how the challenges can be addressed.
11. In your opinion, what measures need to be put in place to address unrests (burnings of schools (arsons) included) in secondary schools in Kenya?
12. Please give any other relevant comments.

**Thank You.**