

**CHALLENGES FACED IN TEACHING MENTALLY RETARDED PUPILS  
IN REGULAR PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF NGIMA ZONE, MBINGA  
DISTRICT, TANZANIA.**

**BY**

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## Declaration

I, Kapinga Agnes hereby declare that the work embodied in this dissertation with the exception of acknowledged references, citation and ideas, is my original work and it has never been submitted for the award of a degree in any university or for publication.

Kapinga Agnes  
14/7/2009

## **Dedication.**

With great joy and respect, I dedicate this work to my parents, Mr and Mrs. O.Kapinga, for their moral and financial support toward my education, My grandparents Mr and Mrs E.kapinga, My lovely husband Mr Joas Makwati and our lovely daughter Cindy for their support.

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I thank my close friends from my class for their co-operation during my stay in Kampala International University.

**APPROVAL**

This is to certify that this report has been written under my supervision as a University lecturer and I have approved it for submission.

Signed: .....  
VINCENT KAYINDU

Date: 17/7/2009.....

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.0 Overview**

This chapter focuses on the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, scope and significance of the study.

### **1.1 Background of the study**

Co-operation is a very good moral aspect for one to grow, develop and live a healthy life. When people work together, they are able to achieve something. For a country to eradicate tribalism and any other form of ethnicity, co-operation must be present in all corners of a specific nation. By maintaining cooperation good results are got either academically, socially, politically and even in religious matter.

In Ngima zone, Mbinga district of Tanzania cooperation has been there in the field of educating learners with special needs among the government, teachers, learners and other stake holders. This has led to the start of several special schools for the physically handicapped both primary and secondary, school for the visually impaired and even special units within primary schools in the District.

In Mbinga district, education of learners with special needs is being catered for quite well from the start of distance learning program conducted by the Kenya institute of education (KISE) a good number of special needs teachers have now graduated.

More are still undertaking training and more will still apply for the course after being aware of the importance of the course. This has been possible and will continue being so because of the co-operation which has been there among the concerned stake-holders.



Inclusion is now being introduced slowly by slowly so that learners with special needs in Education are not separated from their parents and siblings. This will enable them to benefit from the FPE (2003) free primary provided by the government. A number of challenges are being faced by both the learners and the teachers and the community at large as they try to make their learning possible. Despite the disability, every child has a right to education according to the Dakar conference (2002) which effected on for all (EFA) learners with special needs in education especially h mental retardation sometimes are viewed as objects of pity in the society and even in the families.

In schools, they are viewed as underachievers even without being attended to or provide with the basic Education. Some are hidden in homes and never exposed for interaction purposes. The researcher has therefore undertaken to research on the challenges faced by teachers in teaching earners with mental retardation (MR).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Disability is not inability. Although this saying is there, children with any kind of impairment in regular schools learn with many difficulties. These range from curriculum content which is not very conducive to them, regular teachers who do not know how to handle them, and even their peers who do not accept them. Due to these difficulties and many others, learners with mental retardation do not benefit much from free primary Education FPE.

The researcher therefore carried out a research and investigated the challenges faced by teachers in teaching learners with mental retardation in regular primary schools in Ngima zone, Mbinga district.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges teachers in regular schools faced in teaching the mentally retarded pupils in Ngima zone, Mbinga district, Tanzania.

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

This study was carried out to'

- (i) Establish the challenges facing teachers in teaching learners with mental retardation and how they affected their learning.
- (ii) Find out the best approaches towards teaching learners with mental retardation in Ngima zone, Mbinga district.
- (iii) Find out what schools have done or are doing to enable the mentally retarded learners perform better.
- (iv) To establish the resources that can help the mentally retarded learners in Ngima zone, Mbinga, Tanzania.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

- (i) How does good co-operation of learners and teachers affect the education of mentally retarded learners?
- (ii) What are the best approaches in educating learners with mental retardation in primary schools of Ngima zone, Mbinga?
- (iii) What have the schools done to enable the mentally retarded perform better?
- (iv) iv) What resources can help the mentally retarded learners in?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study was carried out and it is hoped that the findings will be useful in these ways. Providing fruitful information to the regular teachers on how to handle the mentally retarded learners in their classes.

The teachers will therefore be able to train these learners with activities of daily living (ADL) as well. The report will also be able of help to the administrators like the head teachers in maintaining the mentally retarded earners within the school compound. This is because they will give relevant activities to the learners which can benefit them rather than treat them like quick learners. The Ministry of Education officials can now be more aware of what mentally retarded learners require after going through the report.

Peers of these mentally retarded learners will be enabled to accept them as part of them and be able to work with them. To the policy makers they will be able to realize which policy is there to create and assist those collections of mentally retarded learners. The researcher is now a proud woman who will be the ambassador of the mentally retarded learners so that they get what is needed for them and also for early intervention.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

Before the 17th century, people with disabilities all over the world were considered socially and physically less capable. They were not easily accepted and regarded as part of the family and community. Some African communities used to throw such children in the bush. The people of Sparta in Greece used to kill babies with distinct disability as not capable of reasoning therefore could not learn.

According to Randiki (2002), education of persons with special need in Kenya started after the Second World War. The salvation Army and the Lutheran churches involved themselves in praying, counseling and rehabilitating the war victims. It was from these rehabilitation homes that earliest special schools grew. The earliest special schools for mentally retarded children was started at St. Nicholas Special School (now Jacaranda).

In 1948 by the rotary club from there on so many other schools for the mentally retarded have been started.

#### **1 Definition of Mental Retardation**

According to Ogonda (2002) mental retardation refers to a condition where brain development is incomplete and certain abilities become very low. Like reasoning, thinking, attention, conceptualization, perception, memory and others. Hornby (2002) describes mentally retarded person as somebody who is not intelligent or who has not developed normally for a particular age.

Mwaura and Wanyara (2002) refers to children with cognitive differences as children characterized by significant sub average intellectual functioning existing concurrent with related limitations in two or more applicable adaptive skill areas such as communication, self care, social skills among others.

## **2.2 Causes of Mental Retardation**

According to Mwaura and Wanyera (2002), very many factors may cause developmental disability. The most common cause of mental retardation is damage to the child's brain. This can happen before birth, during birth and even after birth.

### **2.2.1 Before Birth**

According to Mwaura and Wanyera (2002) a child may be born with a developmental disability if during pregnancy the mother:-

- Does not eat nutritious food; Has HIV/AIDS; Has accidents and shock; Suffers from venereal diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhoea; Uses narcotic drugs, cigarettes and alcohol; Suffers from diseases such as Rubella (German measles) diabetes and those involving very high fever; Uses certain drugs such as quinine, aspirin and antibiotics, which may be harmful to the baby; Is exposed to x-ray especially during the first three months of pregnancy; Has blood incompatibility between her and the foetus (the Rhesus factor incompatibility) is too old or young; Has anaemia during pregnancy.

### **2.2.2 During Birth**

The likely causes of developmental disability during birth includes:

- Breech birth. This is where baby's legs come out first during delivery; Pre-mature birth; Low birth weight; Lack of oxygen during birth; Prolonged delivery/Labour resulting to oxygen deficiency and head injuries; Umbilical cord strangulation of the foetus; Poor hygiene; Venereal diseases in mother such as syphilis and gonorrhoea; Head injuries caused by misuse of delivery instruments such as forceps delivery; Neo-natal jaundice.

### **2.2.3 After Birth**

Causes after birth may include:

- Brain tumor; Misuse of drugs (medicines); Severe diarrhea and dehydration; Poor nutrition such as unbalanced diet and deficiency of iodine and vitamins in children especially in the first six months; High fever with fits; Accidents, such as head injuries and brain damage; Diseases, such as meningitis, measles encephalitis that affect the brain.

### **2.3 Nature of Mental Retardation**

In the 18th century, Jean Gaspard Itard of French Physician brought the nature of mentally retarded to limelight. He attempted to educate an apparently "Wilboy" who had been found in the woods of Aveyron. Some as a man considered him in his natural state, untainted by culture. He substituted on nuts, roots, and berries and wore no clothes. Itard undertook to train him. By the end of five years of training Itard demonstrated that even a child was diagnosed as an idiot could be taught many social skills if he was exposed to systematic training program.

In this way, Itard made a major contribution to the attitude of society towards retarded people. Edward Seguin was Itard students who attempted to train more retarded children and wrote what is probably the first text on the education of mentally retarded. His great contribution lie primarily in the fact that he was among the first to demonstrate that with proper training many mentally handicapped people could be taught to do great deal more than anyone else had thought possible. In 1848 he migrated to the United States and in 1876, Seguin was elected the first president of the Association of Medical Officers of American association on mental deficiency. In 1850's, Samuel Howe established the first training school for mentally retarded in the United States. The school is

still in existence today as the Fernalds states school with the origin of the mentally retarded movement in the United States. Piagets characterizes intelligence as an adaptive process more over. He posits that adaptation is the most basic characteristics of all life that the adaptations involved in intellectual functioning are only special cases. The environment is seen as constantly forcing the organism to adjust itself to the reality situation and reciprocally the organism is seen as constantly imposing on the environment a structure of its own.

#### **2.4 Identification of Learners with Mental Retardation in an Inclusive Setting**

Some of the possible indicators according to Wanyera and Randiki (2002) include:

- Being slow at acquiring and developing skills; Such as speaking and walking; Being unnecessarily slow in carrying out tasks; Not able to transfer the same activities into different situations; Not able to understand what is said or follow instructions; Failing to acquire, understand and use language to express need; Failing to develop social and emotional relationships; Having retarded motor development; Having difficulty in remembering experiences or things learned; Lacking the ability to connect a picture or object with an activity or word or name; Having excessive purposeless movements in class, home or play field; Having difficult in paying attention or focusing on an activity to its completion; Lacking rhythm of movement; Having disorders of attention.

#### **2.5 Study of Attitudes**

According to H.C Triads (1984), the term altitude is widely used by public to denote a psychological state that predisposes a person to action. The scientific study of attitudes started in the middle of the 19th century in

German with the use of number of the unethical terms to designate person's preparations to respond to a class of social stimuli. Later in the 20th century, the concept was given more definition that is restricted. For example, Thurston (1928, 1931) emphasized the persons feeling or effect towards an altitude.

Triad's (1971) following many other theorists used a three part definition "An attitude is an idea charged "with emotions, which predisposes a class of action to a particular class or social situations,' This definition has three components', the Idea of cognitive component the emotion attached to it [affective component] and the predisposition at action [behavioral component].

Buttery [1978] examined students, attitudes towards exceptional children found that they perceived mainstreaming to be more acceptable when only one handicapped person needed to be integrated to the class.

## **2.6 Categorization of Mentally Retarded Persons**

Special education in the U.K developed out of medical services. By 1944, it was a law that every parent had to take a child of two years to the nearest hospital to enable a doctor to carry out a medical examination to discover whether the child suffered from any disability of the body or the mind. After the medical examination, children with mental retardation were categorized into groups namely;

- Those with mild developmental disability; Those with moderate development disability; Those with severe development disability  
Those with profound development disability.

### **2.6. I Children with Mild Development Disability**

These children deviate only to a relatively minor degree in their level of functioning from 'normal children 'of the same chronological age. Their motor social and language skills develop at slower rate social and



language skills develops at a slower rate. This is only noticeable when they enter school

### **2.6.2 Children with Moderate Developmental Disability**

Children under this category show signs of delayed development very early in life. They demonstrated developmental delays in such skills as sitting, crawling, walking and language. They may not begin to walk and talk until two or more years after the usual age. During school years, they show extreme difficulties and in academic subjects and usually cannot progress beyond standard two. However, they can learn self help skills like feeding themselves, bathing, dressing selecting daily clothing and even ironing clothes. Children under this category can also attain social adjustments in the family and their neighborhood. For example learn the need to respect other people and property they can also attain economic usefulness at home like assisting in chores round the house and can also do routine jobs under supervision .Educators refer these children as trainable mentally retarded Ndurumo (1993).

### **2.6.3 Children with Severe Developmental Disability**

Children in this category show remarked deficit in adaptive behavior in most cases severe impairment will be evident from birth Ndurumo (1993). Most of them have genetic disorders and severe sensory and emotional problems, their difficulties are pronounced in the area of motor, social, speech and language skills. Ndurumo (1993). With proper training those of school going age can develop minimal communication skills and teach basic self-help skills.

### **2.6.4 Children with Profound Developmental Disability**

These children are identified at birth or within a few weeks after birth. The nature and degree of their handicaps are so great that without

various famous of intensive trainings and therapy they will exhibit virtually no adaptive behavior. Many are confined to bed and or are unable to move about on their own and cannot survive without help and need almost complete care and supervision through out their lives.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

Children with special needs are faced with different types of problems. Some will have problems in mobility, activities of daily living and interaction problems. Early intervention should be done to reduce these problems. Awareness of why the disability is also very necessary. This assists one to be able to know how to solve some of the problems that they face. This research is a good study that helps in this.

In inclusive settings, mentally retarded learners do not get what they require maximally. There is therefore need to take a study on this in order to know it is like that and the possible remedies to take.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The researcher used the survey approach whereby questionnaires were prepared. The questionnaires enabled the researcher to meet many participants within a short time. Different opinions were obtained from the sample group. The researcher was able to get different answers on the challenges faced by teachers in educating the mentally retarded learners.

#### **3.2 Population**

The study was carried out in Ngima zone, Mbinga district, Tanzania. The teachers were from different schools within the zone. The schools were from different localities within the zone and varied in size. There were twenty eight teachers.

### **3.3 Sampling Procedure**

The researcher used multistage sampling procedure whereby she selected four schools at random. The researcher also selected the lower classes and upper classes all at random. The survey approach of questionnaires was used. Participants answered the questionnaires on what challenges hindered them in educating learners with mental retardation. Some questions were open-ended while others were closed. The questionnaires were of great help to the researcher as the respondents told freely what they experienced in class.

### **3.4 Sample Size**

The sample size of the study was twenty eight (28) teachers from four schools within Ngima zone. Three teachers in each school were male and four were female. Three were from lower primary and four were from upper primary. The four schools were out of twenty-five schools within the zone. This was sixteen percent (16%) of the sample population. The schools were Gatunguru, Giachuki, Ndunyu Chege and Gatura.

### **3.5 Research Instruments**

Questionnaires were used in collecting the data. The questionnaires had both open and closed ended questions. The questions were based on the research objectives and research questions. The participants answered the questionnaires in writing. The questionnaires had simple, clear and straightforward language and asked one question at a time. The questionnaires targeted any class teacher in a public primary school. These questions were meant to find out the challenges faced by teachers in educating the mentally retarded learners in Ngima zone, Mbinga district. With the use of questionnaires, the researcher sampled many respondents.

### **3.6 Procedure of Data Collection**

The researcher was able to visit all the sampled schools. The researcher carried with her the authorizing letter and produced it to every head teacher in the selected schools. The head teachers were of great help to the researcher for offering permission to meet respondents. The head teacher also played a great role of requesting the teachers to be cooperative in the exercise. The researcher gave the respondents enough time to answer the questionnaires after which the questionnaires were analyzed.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.0 Over View

In this chapter the results of the study were recorded and the raw data were analyzed and interpreted. The data collected was arranged in accordance with the research questions. The questionnaires consisted of fourteen questions. The researcher issued the respondents with the questionnaires after getting permission from the head teacher. To the others the researcher sent the questionnaires to the respondents. Some respondents answered the questions as the researcher waited. With others the researcher left the questionnaires and then could get them after a few days. After all the data was collected the researcher analyzed it using frequency distribution tables as shown below.

#### 4.1 Tabulation and analysis of data

**Table 1: Showing challenges faced by teachers in teaching learners with mental retardation.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Negative attitudes towards education	8	40
Lack of support from parents	5	25
Large classes	2	10
Lack of support by other teachers	1	5
Many learners with learning difficulties	1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Primary data**

According to the above table negative attitudes towards education of mentally retarded learners was the leading challenge it had 40% of the total response. Lack of support from parents came second with a percentage of 25% fifteen percent 15% of the teachers have heavy work load as a challenge. This could be due to under staffing in the schools.

Teachers who had large classes were only 10% percent of the total population. Lack of support by teachers had 5% of the total population. Teachers with many learners with learning difficulties were only five percent of the total population.

**Table 2: Showing the best approaches towards teaching learners with mental retardation.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Give words of encouragement	15	53
Conduct remedial	3	10.7
Use of real objects	5	17.8
Modifying teaching methods	2	7.1
Making the class a learning environment	3	10.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Primary data*

The above analysis indicated that the major approach of teaching learners with mental retardation is by giving words of encouragement. It had 53%, those teachers who conduct remedial are only 10.7%, use of real objects was second with a percentage of 17.8%, other teachers modify teaching methods and they were 2 out of 28 which was 7.1% making the class of learning environment had a percentage of 10.7%.

**Tables 3: Showing what the schools are doing or have done to enable the mentally retarded learners to perform better.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Conducting seminars and workshops	8	40
Human resources	5	25
Using appropriate teaching learning resources	2	10
Modifying the curriculum	1	5
Involving them in co-curricular activities	2	10
Sensitizing fellow learners, teacher and community	2	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Primary data**

The above table shows that the majority of the schools are conducting seminars and workshops to enable teachers to gain skills in handling mentally retarded learners. It had 40% of the total response. Training human resources is another thing that the schools are doing. It had a percentage of 25%. Teachers are being trained in handling mentally retarded learners. Using appropriate teaching resources is also being done though not very much, it had a percentage of 10%. Involving them in co-curricular activities is another thing the schools are doing to help these learners. Sensitizing fellow learners, teachers and community is also being done. Modifying the curriculum took the lowest percentage of 5%. This could mean that more needs to be done.



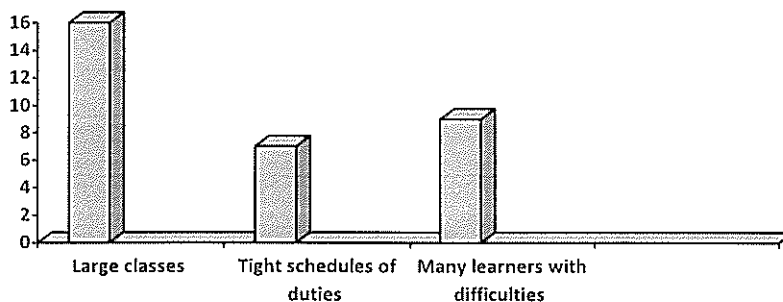
**Table 4: Showing the resources that teachers use to teach learners with mental retardations.**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Real objects	10	40
Charts	8	25
Visual aids	2	10
Audio aids	1	5
Memory aids	2	10
Models, pictures and cuttings	5	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Primary data*

Many teachers use real objects to teach mentally retarded learners 40 percent of the total respondent. Those who use charts cause second with a percentage of 25% followed by use of model, pictures and cuttings. Teachers who use memory aids were the same number as those who use visual aids in teaching these learners. However few teachers use audio aids as they are not easily available only 5% of the total use audio aids.

**Figure 1: A bar graph showing reasons**



The above bar graph shows that majority of teachers cannot get time to remediate learners with mental retardation because they have large classes. The suggestion took the highest frequency of 15 out of 25. Those

with tight schedule of duties were only 4 out of 25 and this was 16% of the total. Those who can offer remedial because they have many learners with learning difficulties were 6 out of 25 which 24% of the total was.

### **Problems Teachers Face In Teaching Mentally Retarded Learners in Classes**

The sample population was able to raise other problems that they normally encounter as they teach learners who are mentally retarded. They gave the following responses:

- These learners beat other young children; The learners are always upset during the learning process; These learners are uncooperative to the teachers and also peers; The average learners do not accept these learners; The mentally retarded do not cope with the current curriculum; They also cannot cope with the tight schedule of duties; Some mentally retarded learners have negative (bad) emotions; Others are hard to tame them so as to concentrate in class work; Some drop out of school; There is lack of proper resources which these children need; There is no adequate time to guide these learners; These learners are always interrupting the average learners as they keep on moving around.

### **Resources Which Facilitate Learning Include:**

- Regalia; Charts; Visual aids; Audio aids; Teachers own collection; Models picture cuttings; Newspaper cut outs; Drawings; Field trip; Supplementary books; Memory aids.

### **Source of Resources That Can be of Help**

- Study trips to schools with mentally retarded learners will help the teachers gain skills of handling these learners.

- Inviting special needs teachers who know how to handle these learners. This will enable the teachers to understand the mentally retarded children better.
- Use of resource people. This will enable the teachers to become aware of other individuals who can help the mentally retarded learners e.g. Association for the mentally retarded people.
- Resource centers will help to provide the mentally retarded learners with the appropriate resources. It will also help in assessment and placement.
- Therapists will help in offering therapeutic services to the severally retarded learners.
- Drama and games. This will help the mentally retarded learners to participate actively in the lessons.
- Group discussions will help mentally retarded learners to contribute hence raise their self esteem.
- Stories will act as a source of enjoyment and this will make the lessons more lively.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Over view**

This chapter deals with summary, discussion, and conclusion and recommendations of the findings of the results. The summary comprised of what the researcher did in the previous chapters. The objectives are explained why the results are the way they are.

In the discussion section the researcher relates research questions with what is therein the literature review. The researcher also gives her own experiences in the findings. Conclusion highlighted the major findings in descending order from the lowest to the highest frequency. Some recommendations are also highlighted here. The recommendations were made in view of the researcher's findings, so as to find solutions on the research topic.

#### **5.1 Summary**

The researcher first decided on which topic to base the study. The title came into the researchers mind as a result of observation she made. The mentally retarded learners were not being handled properly in class by the regular teachers. The researcher then formulated the objectives were to guide the researcher in the study and then finally led to resolutions.

From the objectives the researcher then formulated the research questions. The questions followed the order of the objectives. The questions helped in making conclusions and recommendations. The researcher stated the value of the study and the people likely to benefit from the study and also how they are to benefit.

The researcher then reviewed the literature in relation to the study topic. The literature review was written in accordance with the objectives of the

study and also the research questions. They also included the background of the study topic. From the many literature review sources which were both primary and secondary the researcher got information on the causes, nature development and even categorization of the mentally retarded persons.

After the researcher reviewed all the literature concerning the topic the researcher prepared the questionnaires as the research instrument tool. This is one survey methods used in research. Questionnaires are of an advantage because the participants have the freedom to write what they feel like, the questionnaires can be sent to distant respondents, also many respondents can be reached within a short time and also one can send them by post.

The researcher then used both the qualitative and quantitative approaches of data collection. This means that the researcher analyzed and interpreted the data using both words and numerals. The raw data was collected from primary schools in Ngima zone, Mbinga district. The schools and the teachers were sampled using the multistage sampling where by they were selected at random. The researcher gave the respondents the questionnaires through the head teacher's permission of the targeted schools. The data collected from the teachers was processed and analyzed using the frequency tables.

In the frequency table response, frequency and percentage columns were used to interpret the data. From the data analysis the researcher was able to establish a number of things. Teachers in Ngima zone, Mbinga district are able to identify mentally retarded learners.

Almost all the teachers have difficulties in educating mentally retarded learners. The percentage was 100%. This might be because these

learners are not interested in learning others are not tidy and this might interfere with the teacher -learner co-operation in class leading to poor performance. Buttery (1978) examined students' - teachers' attitudes towards exceptional children and found that they perceived mainstreaming to be more acceptable when only one handicapped pupil needed to be integrated into the class. Regular teachers should be advised on how to handle, care and live with this kind of children (learner) by organizing courses or seminars for them.

## **5.2 Discussion**

The researcher conducted a study and wanted to know how teacher learner cooperation affects the education of mentally retarded learners. The data was to be collected from teachers from Ngima zone, Mbinga district. From the researches findings the researcher was able to know that quite a good number of teachers in the zone have never attended special needs seminars. This was 71.5% of the total respondents. This showed that these teachers do not have even the slightest knowledge on how to handle learners with mental retardation.

Other respondents wrote that they know the term mental retardation, they have such learners in class but they do have difficulties in educating them. When it came to state why the difficulty some wrote that these learners are very noisy. Others said that the learners were very untidy. According to the researcher's findings, these regular teachers have a negative attitude towards the learners.

Otiato (2002) states that attitudes play a major role in inclusive education. Children with special needs in education require love and understanding in areas they experience difficulties. Your positive and caring attitude is seen in the way you support, encourage and include all learners in learning activities as active participants and not observers.

Respondents also indicated how they try to support the mentally retarded learners, Some wrote that they give them words of encouragement. Others wrote that they try and use real objects, a few conduct remedial classes; others modify the teaching methods whereas others try to make the class a learning environment. The classroom is where you make all the students feel liked and accepted. The teachers teaching style should vary so as to benefit all learners in the classroom. According to Itards, with proper training many mentally retarded people could be taught to do a great deal more than anyone else had thought possible. The participants also responded about what problems they face while educating the mentally retarded learners in class. Majority of them said that they could not offer remediation to the learners because they have very large classes. A few had tight schedules of duties within the school and others said they had many learners with learning difficulties. Other problems that the teachers face included:

- (i) Harassment; the mentally retarded learners harass the little ones in the class or even outside the class.
- (ii) Many of the learners not being interested in learning hence being absent minded.
- (iii) Learners being uncooperative. They want to do their own things.
- (iv) Negative attitude from the learners' peers.
- (v) The curriculum not being suitable to the learners.
- (vi) Some learners having bad emotions and habits.
- (vii) Lack of proper resources for the learners.
- (viii) Inadequate time to cover the syllabus.
- (ix) Lack of knowledge on how to handle the learners and train them in activities of daily living (ADL).

Otiato (2002) states that a good teacher of an inclusive class must understand learners needs and plan on how best to ensure they benefit

from learning experiences without being ridiculed by others. Learners who are mentally retarded should be made to participate in classroom activities. One should not ignore them in class. Instead, you should speak to them in a clear friendly voice and praise and encourage them after successful attempts. In the eighteenth century, Itard demonstrated that even a child who was diagnosed as an idiot could be taught many social skills if he was exposed to systematic training programme. In this way Itard made a major contribution to the attitude of society towards retarded people.

According to the researcher's findings, regular teachers have a negative attitude towards mentally retarded learners. Awareness should be created to them by organizing seminars. Role models like special needs teachers should be invited to talk to the pupils so that they may also accept the retarded learners. Regular teachers should be trained on how to be good inclusive teachers who can help retarded learners to learn for example on how to give individual attention. Awareness of the causes of mental retardation should be made known to the teachers so that they can accept and love these learners. Lack of acceptance will hinder their education.

Hall and Kaufman and Payne (1979) recommended self help skills for moderately mentally retarded persons such as toileting and feeding. Communication skills like speech, language, listening, and gestures, both verbal and non-verbal speech should be encouraged.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The result of the analysis showed that teachers in Ngima zone, Mbinga district have difficulties in educating mentally retarded learners. This was shown by "yes" response which had 100%. This is because the teachers refer to these learners as noisy, not interested in learning and untidy learners. This showed the researcher that there's no good co-operation between the teachers and retarded learners. Use of terse words



clearly showed this. If cooperation is not there between the two parties no development results. If teacher-learner co-operation is not present no learning will take place.

Teachers should be aware that it is not the wish of these learners to be the way they are. There are different causes which lead to this. Teachers should also remember that education is for all and even the retarded have a right to education. Instead they should smile to them, call them by their names (not labeling them), be physically near them and give individual attention

To add on to these best approaches, teachers should use simple language along with gestures, pictures drawing spas to benefit all learners. Shouting should be avoided as this scares learners especially those from abused families.

The result of the study also indicated that majority of teachers 69,3% of the total cannot get time to remediate the mentally retarded learners. This is due to the large classes they have, hence workload is more. Some have tight schedule of duties within the school while others have many learners with learning difficulties. Problems that teachers encounter in class with the mentally retarded learners leads to bad co-operation between the teacher and the learner. The retarded learners should be referred to either Assessment centers or hospitals if their conduct differs from normal. This is because you may keep a learner in an inclusive class and not benefit because his or her position should be in a special school (extreme cases) other learners maybe sick and therefore behave differently making your teaching task to be difficult. Teachers should therefore visit schools for mentally retarded learners so that they can see for themselves that these learners are also useful members of the society. Here teachers can be able to learn that the retarded can produce valuable items of quality which a normal man cannot. By so doing the teachers will start to love these learners and they will thus benefit.

The government should make sure that teaching and learning resources for these mentally retarded learners are available. This can contribute a lot in good cooperation of teachers and learners when they work together in class. When learning resources are readily available the mentally retarded learners will benefit maximum.

#### **54 Recommendations**

Regular teachers should be advised on mental retardation. Creating awareness on this will help the teachers to understand these learners more and know what they need. The teachers will thus become advisors especially to the parents. Parents also need to know more of such children for early intervention. This should be done by special needs administration.

In-service courses should be organized to guide and council the regular teachers and also the peers so that each should know his or her role in an inclusive classroom. The government should provide some of the special education facilities which are needed by the mentally retarded learners. With these provision difficulties in educating these learners will be minimal for example teachers can make use of real objects, charts, memory aids, visual aids and other resources.

Excursion tours can also be organized for the regular teachers. Here teachers can visit schools for the mentally retarded children. They can be able to see what these learners do in reality and also be able to interact with them. By so doing these, teachers will be able to help their own learners in classes back in their schools with a positive heart.

Teachers should also be encouraged to participate in the local seminars and workshops so that they get the necessary skills to help these learners. They get the necessary skills to help these learners. They should also be encouraged to join such institutions. So that they can

learn how to handle these learners better. This will enable them to sensitize the learners, the parents and the entire community on disabilities and how to cater for learners with special needs. Networking with other resource people such as therapists, social workers and other organizations that assist learners with special needs is also very important.

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Qualifications

A T S

P 1

P2

P3

Teaching experience:

0-10 years

1-20 years

21-30 years

31 years and above

**QUESTIONS**

1. Have you ever attended a special needs course/seminar?

Yes

No

If yes how long?

One day

One year

More than one year

2. Have you ever heard of the term mental retardation?

Yes

No

3. Do you have any learner in your class with mental retardation?

Yes

No

If yes how many?

One learner

Two learners

Three learners

More than four

4. Do you have difficulties in educating mentally retarded children?

Yes

No

5. How do these mentally retarded learners behave in class?

Are quiet

Are noisy

Interested in learning

Not interested in learning

Are tidy

Not tidy

6. What support do you give to these learners?

Give words of encouragement

Conduct remedial

Use of real objects

Modifying teaching methods

Making the class a learning environment

**Tick any three**

7. Can you get time to remediate these learners?

Yes

No

If no why?

Large class

Tight schedule of duties

Many learners with learning difficulties

3. What other problem do you face as a teacher with mentally retarded learners in class?

.....  
.....  
.....

9. Other than course books what other resources do you use to facilitate learning?

.....  
.....

10. Please mention other sources that can be of help

.....  
.....  
.....

11. How do you find the teaching of mentally retarded learners in your class?

Enjoyable

Disturbing

Annoying

Tiresome