

**PARENTS AND TEACHERS' INVOLVEMENT IN
EDUCATING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
IN MITUNTU PRIMARY SCHOOL MERU
NORTH DISTRICT, KENYA**

**BY
HARUN M. RAIBUNI
BED/10040/52/DF**

**A RESEARCH REPORT PRESENTED TO THE INSTITUTE
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DECLARATION

I HARUN M. RAIBUN, Registration no. BED/10040/52/DF here by declare that this special study paper is my own original work. It is not a duplication of any scholarly or presented paper. It has never been submitted to any other institution or anywhere for academic or non-academic purposes.

I therefore take full responsibility for any inaccuracies that may be here within.

Signed *Harun Raibuni*

Harun M. Raibuni

Date of submission *15/07/2008*

APPROVAL

This is to certify that this research report has been carried out under my supervision as and is ready for submission to the board of examiners of Kampala International University with due approval.

Signed


Ms. Charity. K. Kagubaire

Date
20/07/08

DEDICATION

This research report is dedicated to; My dear wife Winfred Karimi for supporting me in this relentless struggle to accomplish my studies. More so, this research work is dedicated to my children Kim and Nkirote.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It has not been easy for the researcher to complete this special study paper, It would have been much more difficult for me to finish this task if it were not for the moral support and encouragement I got from well –wishers.

I therefore wish to acknowledge the kind assistance I received from my supervisor, Madam Charity Kagubaire for she guided me from the beginning to the final draft with a lot of patience and dedication.

I cant forget also to thank the head Teacher Mituntu Primary school for the easy time and encouragement he offered to me.

May I also extend my sincere gratitude to my beloved wife Winfred Karimi Mbabu who tirelessly supported me morally and financially throughout the period of the study.

God bless you all.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of this study the following terms were defined operationally.

Parent's involvement refers to: - children, parents who took part in the interview.

Teachers' involvement refers to; - teacher in the inclusion school who deal with both special need children in the regular school.

Children with special needs:- Learners having various disabilities, which limit them, to interact with the environment and to perform in education program.

Research Environment: - Area where research activity was carried or done.

Attitude; - Feelings towards something it can be positive or negative.

ABBREVIATIONS

N.G.O :-	None governmental organization
Pt : -	Parents
Tr :-	Teachers
I.E.P :-	Individualist Educational Plan or Program

ABSTRACT

In every society there is always a group of people that disadvantaged in one way or the other of which Kenya is not an exception in this. The concept of inclusive education in Kenya had taken grounds after evolving from integration. The history of special needs education in Kenya dates back to 1945 after the 2nd world war (Randiki 2003). It all started from rehabilitating the army officers who were wounded in the war. It was against such a background therefore that, this study was conducted so as to establish how parents and Teachers are involved in educating children with special need which was the major objective of the study as regards the topic under study. In the same manner, this study reviewed related literature by other scholars in relation to the study objective and hypothesis which all were well sorted using an appropriate methodology. Since the study was open –ended, the researcher devised an interview method, where by he prepared an interview guide for both teachers and parents. This involved entering the data collected and then analyzing it which gave the study findings.

The results indicated that there is a big role played by teachers and parents in the education of pupils with special needs. All in all, the researcher concluded that is important for parents and teachers to work together for the benefit of the children with special needs for they are part of the community they live in. A lot has to be done by the stakeholders, religious leaders, N.G.O.s (Non governmental organization) to educate community about the importance of educating children with special needs. The involvement of parents should be through work shops, seminars and chief's baraza since little has been done. Basing on the Finding of the study, the researcher has some recommendations to make. The ministry of Education, Science and Technology should formulate policies, aimed at assisting and equipping schools with special need learners through funding the schools and training the personnel.

The main objective to this study was to determine the involvement of the parents in Educating children with special need basing on the finding of the study that there is little involvement thus resulting to negligence of the special need children. This is also agreement with mittle theory and the previous literature review.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The concept of inclusive education in Kenya had taken grounds after evolving from integration. The history of special needs education in Kenya dates back to 1945 after the 2nd world war (Randiki 2003). It all started from rehabilitating the army officers who were wounded in the war.

Therefore the term 'special needs' purely meant care for the physical injuries, brain damage, visual and hearing impairments suffered during the war.

To care for the soldiers, churches and N.G.O.s (Non governmental organization) with other volunteers started homes to cater for them. They categorized them into;- Hearing impaired, physical impaired, visually impaired, mentally impaired.

The special care was given in form of:- Medicine, prayers, guidance and counseling. As support for these homes continued the government come in to strengthen the move. This come about through presidential directives session paper, educational commission legal notices. It is note worthy that Kenya is a signatory to the universal declaration of human rights (1948) in which article 26 states in part ' everyone has a right to education since independence, the government has come up with commission to look into and improve special needs education. They are:- Gachathi report (1976) Ngala Mwendwa report (1964), Ominde report (1988), Koech report of (1999), Kamunge report (1988).

Following the commissions, several schools and institutions for children with special needs come up stronger, such schools were:- Jacaranda special school, Dagoreti school for mentally handicapped. Also Institutions for training teachers in special education increased in number and expanded, one such Institution is Kenya institute of special education

(KISE) which was established through legal notice No 17 of February, Apart from Training Teachers on special education, (KISE) runs, an assessment training unit for integration of he handicapped.

At the district level there are assessment centers (EARC'S), which serve children with special needs. They assess the children and recommend appropriate placement. They offer guidance and counseling units in the regular schools. The current practice today in inclusion where by children with special needs are being brought back from the special schools and units where they have been segregated and taken into the regular class to learn alongside the 'normal' children. (Okot, Eron and Kutosi) 2001.

Inclusive education can improve the quality of education for all. However, for the policy on inclusive to take positive effect the role of parents can not be underrated. The education act empowered parents to be involved in the education of their children. Through schools committees and parents associates, parents are able to deliberate on matters attending the learning of their children including those with specific needs. In this study the researcher focused on parents and teachers involvement in educating children with special needs in regular primary school.

1.2 THEORY

This study is based on the theory of mittler (1982) which states that:- It is important that parents work together with he school to support children with disabilities both at home and school. Parents should work together because children learn from environments in their life where teachers and parents play a key role. Mittler (1982) Stresses in learning, children can only be understood in relation to the various environments in which the are living. The environment includes the immediate family, peers, schools local community and the wider society.

Teaching children with disabilities is a special task because it requires a combined effort of both the teachers and parents. Both teachers and parents aim at similar goals in educating children with disabilities, it is then sensible for them to work as a team. They can both help children with disabilities learn self-care and social independence skills, which include self-feeding, dressing, toileting and also early cognitive skills.

Mittler (1982) emphasizes that parents and teachers should identify situations and behavior in the life of children with disabilities and encourage independent functioning from the earliest years and builds self esteem, parents being involved in their children schooling is based on the acknowledged, importance of the home environments and the recognition of the right of parents to have an influence on education matters.

This study shows that, the influence of the home and school on children's intellectual and educational achievements strongly suggest that, the influence of the home was comparatively greater in the early years and children who come from homes which had taken higher schools achievement. Therefore Parents need to be aware of the teaching methods and strategies being used by teachers so that they may reinforce the skills at home. Such skills may include mobility, self-care and use of special equipment like wheel chairs, computers and vision aids.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose determine the insight relationship between parents and teachers and how it can improve the learning situation of children with special needs in the Mituntu Primary School, it will also be a starting point for future researchers to building on the study findings.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Parents of regular children strive to find out from school how their children are progressing in academic work. The education of children with special needs takes a combined effort from both the parents and teachers. However it has not been the case for Kenya and most especially in Meru north district, a reason as to why the researcher would like to find out whether and how teachers and parents have handled the challenge at hand with special attention on Mituntu Primary school where there is evidently little contact between parents and teachers regarding the education of children with special needs.

1.5 OBJECTIVES

15.1 GENERAL: - This study will determine the parents and teachers involvement in the education of children with special needs at Mituntu Pry School.

1.5.2 SPECIFIC: - This study seeks to determine the parents and teacher involvement in these aspects.

- Ways of contacting each other.
- Reasons why teachers call parents.
- Type of language used by teachers and parents.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The finding of this study will benefit the following disciplines:-

- 1) The ministry of education will be able to formulate policies aimed at assisting and equipping schools that have learners with special needs through funding the schools and training the personnel.
- 2) The district supervisors will be able to plan for workshop for both teachers and parents with special need learners.

- 3) The teachers will be able to prepare (I.E.P) individualistic programmes for learners with special needs in regular schools.
- 4) Parents will be able to understand the areas where they can support teachers in educating their children with special needs which include provision of medical care, clothing and dressing of their children and feeding them.
- 5) Students will be able to work together with others like members of the same family without discrimination or labeling each other.
- 6) The future researchers will be able to use this study to provide guidance and counseling to parents with special needs children and also use it as a source of literature review when need be.

1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The research was quit conversant with the local 'Kimeru' language, hence communication was easy. Having undergone the special needs training for some years. The researcher was aware of the challenges a head and was able to face them with a lot of ease. For instance the attitude towards teachers teaching these children with special need.

1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In the process of the study the researcher faced many challenges of which he overcome by God's grace.

Researcher noted that not very many teachers had any training on special needs education, hence have little knowledge on information about children with special needs, which may limit the researcher's information.

Some teachers had negative attitudes towards the teachers teaching children with special needs, and teaching children with special needs,

and teacher undertaking distance learning and hence treated our research work and questions with some degree of contempt. Some parents were not very open while at the same felt that they were not benefiting in any way and were only wasting time. There were financial constraints, which the researcher overcame through friends' supports and well wishes. Also to get reference books for the study was a problem which made the researcher to visit a number of libraries.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

According to benedict M.K (2001) the concept of inclusive education in Kenya is taking grounds after evolving from integration. In "Schools for all" Published by save the children (2002) where he defined inclusive education as a process of increasing the participation of all students in school including those with disabilities, which is about restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools, Including those disabilities. He states that parents with special need children should be involved in curriculum planning (informal curriculum) where they should work together with teachers who are teaching their children in order for the child to benefit fully with the school community activities.

In "school for all, inclusive education can improve the Quality of education for all and help overcome discrimination, However for inclusive education to take effect smoothly the parents' role cannot be ignored, The parents need feelings and abilities should be fully taken into account as it is reflected by parent sentiment "parents are exports too, help should begin with an understanding of what they believes, expect and capable instead of giving instructions all through CLIFF.C. H (2002)

Teachers are seen as the implements of education policies. They play a vital role as they act as counselors to prepare the children with special needs in education.

Teachers make and implement individualized educational programme (I.E.P.) for children with special needs in education. However for the I.E.P to work effectively the teachers need to fully involve the parents and take him or her as a partner in educating the child. It is the responsibility of the teachers to explain to the parents the changes they expect from their children, teachers should help the parents understand

the processes involved in the educational programme. Cunningham W.J (1985) Parents provide security to their children when taking them to schools or learning centers. Also this happens at their homes since they know their children better than anybody else. When children report problems to their teachers, parents are called by teachers to provide the information starting from home to school. Where parents play a big role on the education of the child. Fallon (1985).

Community and religious leaders should be involved in educating children with special needs and provide guidance and counseling to parents. This is because they are the one who provide all basic needs and should work together with the teachers so that the child can benefit.

Mostly in churches, community activities, and interact freely with other peers. Fanuel. O Randiki (2002).

Parents should participate in the writing of individual education programme (I/E/P) and must be involved and included if the child is to be fully provided with education experiences. School personnel need to develop education by adequate and sophisticated skills in enabling parents become full partners Freeman and Person (1978).

Parents used to be kept at a distance in the training of children and that teachers blamed parents for their failures related to children's training. 'Ferrelli', Points out that parents failed to enforce good study habits or were negligent about the care of low vision aids. He recognizes the importance of training their children by pointing out that it is the parents who can make a difference, between a one time exposure to a skill and its generalization to other areas of a child's life. Ferrelli G.N (1986).

During pre-school years children depended on the parental training for behaviour, shaping and social emotional educators. The roles of

parents start at home and continue into adulthood. As a result it is fair for parents to be accorded a far more dynamic role in the education of their children.

Since all the activities of daily living start at home, then school where teachers improves the Holen (1974)

Parents are the one who are involved in identification of their children's areas of strengths and weakness areas. Since they have them in their living environment. Where they are exposed to various activities. Therefore the parent should be involved in educating their children and teachers can not do alone.

It is clearly known that parents plays a very important role both at home and school where their children learn. They provide all basic needs for their children for example feeding the children, clothing them and providing safety shelter, we don't also forget that they cater for medical services for their children. So they need to be involved in education of their children, since parents have knowledge of their children's development for example medical service they need, areas, they have been assessed and appointment dates, Melsels (2000).

Education of children with disabilities must be seen in a broader context other than of the school alone. There is more need for parents of children with handicaps to cooperate with teachers. Parents of the children with special needs play a major role in their education. Their role is recognized by international organizations such as international council for the education for visually handicapped (I.C.E.V.H) which passed resolution that the education for children with visual impairment can only be effective if parents are strong participants. The American legislation stresses the role. Parents have in training and counseling of their children with disabilities.

The act in Kenya empowers a parents to take in the schools management the parents do not seem active in the academic progress of children. Michael (1982).

Importance of involving parents in educating children with special needs. Parents are naturally teachers they understand their children better than any other professional as they interacts with their children beginning at conception through birth and in life before the child goes to school. In inclusive schools, parents feelings of self worth's and recognition will be strengthened and their understanding of their children will increase. Paul (1981).

Parents being involved in their children schooling is based on the acknowledged importance of the home environment and the recognition of the right of parents to have an influence on educational matters. Children intellectual and educational achievements strongly suggest that influence of the home is comparatively greater in early years and that children who come from homes which take active roles in their education tend to have higher school achievement. So parent need to be aware of the teaching methods and strategies being used by teachers, so that they may reinforce the skills at home, e.g. mobility, self care and use of special equipments like wheel chairs, computers, and low vision aids. Rose. K. (1961).

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 DESIGN

This study utilized the case study research design method. The qualitative category of research was employed to describe the parents and teachers, involvement in the education of the children with special needs.

3.2 ENVIRONMENT

The study was conducted at Mituntu Primary School, Kianjai Location, Tigania West Division of Meru North District, Kenya. Where the researcher involved headteacher, parents and teachers. The researcher interviewed them privately in the guidance and counseling office, Recording the information.

3.3 RESPONDENTS

This study involved teachers in inclusive classrooms upper primary and lower primary and parents who had special needs children.

Criteria, used to select the teachers were as follow:-

A teacher who has taught for a minimum of five years.

Has taught both lower primary and upper primary.

We had worked as a class masters and mistress

Criteria, used to select parents

2.2 Parents who had children with special need.

2.3 Parents who had children in regular 'inclusive classrooms

3.4 INSTRUMENTS;

Since the study was open -ended researcher devised interview method, where by he prepared an interview guide for both teachers and parents.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The researcher wrote a transmittal letter addressed to the head teacher Mituntu Primary School requesting for permission to conduct research in the institution. When the permission was granted, the interview schedule for teacher and parents,

where he collected the needed information.

After collecting the data, researcher collated, analyzed and interpreted the data, The researchers calculated the frequency and percentage to determine the profile of parents and teachers age and Gender.

3.6 STATISTICAL TREATMENT OF DATA

The frequencies and percentages were used to describe and analyse the data collected: Formula: $P = (F/N) \times 100$

P = Percentage

F = frequency

N = Total number of respondents

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The research aimed at investigating the involvement or co – operation between parents and teachers in educating children with special needs in Mituntu Primary School.

The main themes of the study were: -

Activities involving parents and teachers

Communication between parents and teachers

Ways of contacting parents,

Obstacles to cooperation.

This chapter is aimed at presenting and analyzing data collected during the study. The researcher is going to analysis the data according to the theme outlined which are based on the interview guide Questions for both parents and teachers.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents (Parents)

PARENTS GENDER	RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
PtA Male	Positive	1	25%
Pt B Female	Negative	1	25%
Pt C Female	No answer	1	25%
Pt D Male	Negative	1	25%
Total		4	25%

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents (Teachers)

TEACHERS GENDER	RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
TR A MALE	NO ANSWER	1	25%
TR B FEMALE	NO ANSWER	1	25%
TR C FEMALE	POSITIVE	1	25%
TR D FEMALE	NEGATIVE	1	25%
Total		4	100%

The result of table 1 shows that quarter ($\frac{1}{4}$) of the parent knows the importance of educating children with special needs, while another three quarter ($3 \frac{1}{4}$) see it as the waste of resources and time.

The result of table II shows that half of the teachers have negative attitude towards education of special need children while another half they support this education of children with special needs in regular school.

All in all, the researcher concluded that is important for parents and teachers to work together for the benefit of the children with special needs for they are part of the community they live in. A lot has to be done by the stakeholders, religious leaders, N.G.O.s (Non governmental organization) to educate community about the importance of educating children with special needs. The involvement of parents should be through work shops, seminars and chief 's baraza since little has been done.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSION

The main objective to this study was to determine the involvement of the parents in Educating children with special need basing on the finding of the study there is little involvement this resulting to negregece of the special need children.

This is also agreement with mittle theory and the previous literature review.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Basing on the Finding of the study, the researcher has some recommendations to make. The ministry of Education, Science and Technology should formulate policies, aimed at assisting and equipping schools with special need learners through funding the schools and training the personnel.

The District supervisors should facilitate workshops, seminars for both teachers and parents with special need learners to create awareness and the importance of educating Children with special needs.

Teachers should prepare (I.E.P) Individualist programmers for learner with special needs in regular schools, in order to cater for different levels or abilities. Parents should be involved in educating their children with special needs which include provision of medical care clothing, and dressing of their children, and feeding them since they know their children better.

Students should be encouraged to work together with others like the members of the same family without discrimination or labeling each other.

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Appendix A: Transmittal Letter for the Headteacher

**MR. FRANCIS KAUNYANGI,
HEADTEACHER, MITUNTU PRIMARY SCHOOL,
P.O. BOX 88 KIANJAI,
MERU – KENYA.**

DEAR SIR,

I am a graduate student at (KIU) Kampala International in Uganda.

Sir am a student at the above and currently pursuing a degree in special need education.

My area of interest is involvement of parents and teachers in educating children with special need in Mituntu Primary school. So I kindly request you to allow and assist me to interview your teachers and parents at their convenience date and time, be informed also that information provided will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Respectfully yours,

Harun Mbaabu Raibuni

Noted by:-

MS CHARITY KAGUBAIRE

SUPERVISOR

Appendix B: Interview Schedule Guide

PART 1: FOR THE TEACHERS

PROFILE OF THE TEACHER

AGE: _____

GENDER: **MALE;** _____

FEMALE; _____

STATUS _____

1. How do you contact the parents of the children with special needs?
2. What are your reasons for calling the parents?
3. Which language do you use in communicating to the parents?
4. What difficulties do you encounter?

PART 2: FOR THE TEACHERS

PROFILE OF THE TEACHER

AGE: _____

GENDER: **MALE** _____

FEMALE _____

STATUS _____

1. How are you contacted by the Teachers, teaching your children with special needs?
2. What are the reasons why the teachers call you?
3. Which language do you use in responding to the teachers?
4. What are your difficulties in involving yourself in the education of your children?