

**TRADITIONAL BELIEFS ON EDUCATIONAL
AND SOCIAL PROVISION TO THE LEARNERS
WITH MENTAL HANDICAPS IN
LAIKIPIA DISTRICT-KENYA.**

BY

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DECLARATION

I Domitillah M. Muithya declare that, this special research study paper is my own original work and not a duplication of similarly published work of any school for any academic purpose as partial requirement for any college, university, or other wise.

It has therefore never been submitted be any other institution of higher learning for the award of a certificate, diploma or degree in special Needs Education. I further declare that, all materials cited in this paper which are not my own have been duly acknowledged.

Signed.....*DM*.....

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Date*28/08/2008*.....

APPROVAL

This report has been under my supervision as a university supervisor

Signature.....

Ms. Nakakande Margaret

Date

DEDICATION

This special research paper is dedicated to my three children; Faith Mutheu, Eric Ngeli and Steve Muithya more thanks to their Aunt Justina for taking care of them and also for their patience during the two years in-service course at Kampala International University. Thanks for their encouragement.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

U.A.M.H – Uganda Association for the Mentally Handicapped.

U.S.S.- Uganda Spactic Society

U.S.D – Uganda Society for the Deaf

U.F.B- Uganda Foundation for the Blind

M.H – Mentally Handicapped.

A.A.M.D – America Association on Mental Deficiency.

EFA – Education for All.

OPERATIONAL DEFINATION OF TERMS

Education –is the process of importing and acquiring desirable skills, altitudes and knowledge to and by learners resulting to a permanent change of behavior.

Society- A group of people sharing common cultural values.

Mental retardation / handicap- (currently referred to as intellectually challenged)

Meaning significantly sub-average general intellectually functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period AAMD GROSSMAN(1973).

Handicap – Is the disadvantage imposed an Individual as a result of society’s altitude toward a particular disability.

Disability- is the loss or reduction of functional ability due to impairment such as loss of limbs or sight.

Annihilation- terminating lives of handicapped individuals.

Veneration – Keeping the handicapped persons in a secluded area away from the non-hand capped

Word status – housing or planed and handicapped persons in holy places to be servants.

Special schools- This refers to schools for the offered specialized educational services by specially trained teachers

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Education is a precious legacy and basic human right. It aims at fulfilling the goals of the community involved, both politically and socially. Further experience shows that it is largely the environment that determined the effects of Impairment or a disability on a person's daily life. A person is regarded disabled when he/ she is denied opportunities that are necessary for the fundamental elements of living.

Historically, in the ancient days before 18th century, handicapped children especially severely and profoundly were referred to as mongoloids, morons, imbeciles and so they were exterminated. In ancient Greek and Roman societies, handicapped children were thrown in rivers and forests for wild animals to eat. They were seen as nature's mistakes.

In the traditional African societies, some communities preferred treating the handicapped as annihilation – being put to death. Yet others practiced veneration secluding the handicapped persons away from the non-handicapped. A slightly fair treatment the handicapped was that of ward – keeping orphaned and handicapped persons in holy places such as Churches, to serve as wards of society.

In the 18th Century the nature of mental handicaps was brought to light by Jean Gaspard Hard, a French Physician (1775-1835). He attempted to educate a severely handicapped boy. Although he did not meet much success, the publicity the case attracted stirred up considerable interest in the problems of the mentally handicapped. A number of educational centers were only to free themselves through talents; - most of them were known by their talents such as musicians, poets and many others.

Humbling the effectiveness of these services has been traditional beliefs among other factors.

Certain African Societies are still glued to Traditional beliefs. Some of which are put forth to explain the occurrence of persons with mental handicaps and the social implications.

Education to mentally handicapped children has been seen by other people as an ideological movement which is prepared to sacrifice individual children at the altar of an abstract principle in spite of the controversy; learners with special needs equally deserve their rights to education. Today various education policies have been put forth to address the

interest of handicapped persons in 1975, public law 94-142 was passed in the United States where all the handicapped individuals had receive their education in the least restrictive environment possible within the limitations of their capabilities.

To cater for these educational and social needs, An effective programme must be put in place which may not be provided by home or any other Community resources except at school.

Therefore planning and programming educational and social services for handicapped learners is very important since it will determine their social and vocational development and adjustment.

Such important educational polices to cater for handicapped persons included the United Nations universal declaration for Human Right (1948), World Programme of Action (1983), Child's Right Chapter (1989) and also same policies are pictured in World conference on special needs education (1994) and finally on the standard rules on equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities (1994) and the conference on education for all Dakar (2000).

The treatment took five stages in many parts of the world and were stipulated as this. The first and foremost was the stage of the era of extermination. followed by the era of ridicule and the era of asylum. There was also the era of education and finally era of occupation, adequacy and combating mental retardation. The extermination era saw the handicapped being wiped from the society.

The Sapartans in Greece and the Romans "removed" "Society burden" of defective children by killing them. They believed in Man's basic guest for survival. Every member of the society had to had to carry his own weight for the community growth.

During the era of ridicule, dwarfs acted as clowns and Imbeciles as court justers for the rulers and noble man Dunn (1973).

The Roman Catholic led the Society to see the handicapped as children worth and loved by God. They put asylums and institutions for protective purposes and to meet the physical needs of the handicapped individuals.

The monks during the 18th Century added education to their programmes. This change in attitude from custodial service to education represented a step towards rehabilitations.

At the time of era of occupational adequacy and combating mental retardation, developments of occupational, oriental programmes as well as laws for the handicapped came into being. Duncan (1948) developed a programme for the mildly retarded in England. Richardson (1971) estimated that 87% of the mildly retarded persons could be employed. A plan was proposed in America (1961) and got the approval of President John F. Kennedy who had a mentally handicapped Sister. This through published reports led federal law PL 294 -142 on the rights of the handicapped children.

This law, which has taken full meaning in the United States of America (U.S.A) and a number of countries in Europe has yet to be fully fulfilled in East Africa Countries such as Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

Historical development of special needs Education in Uganda shows that special Needs Education was started by the then Governor of Uganda Sir Andrew Cohen in 1952, who had a visually impaired relative. Following the interest by the Governor, the need to start organizations for the persons with disabilities was felt. These organizations in Uganda had the main objective of providing education to persons with disabilities. The objectives included, the Uganda Foundation for the Blind (U.F.B), Uganda Society for the Deaf (U.S.D), Uganda spastic society (U.S.S) and also the Uganda Association for the Mentally handicapped (UAMH).

1.1 Back ground of the study

According to Samuel Kirk,(1972), Frampton and Gall, put up three stages in the historical development in traditional beliefs on educational and social provision to learners with mental handicaps. These stages include;

The pre-Christian era; during which the handicapped were persecuted, neglected and mistreated.

The Christian era; during which the handicapped were pitied and also protected.

The recent years; where the handicapped were cared and educated.

In support of Frampton and Gall, historical records shows that up to about hundred and fifty years ago, children who were found to be mentally handicapped in some community and culture were eliminated from the society. In South Africa, the "Koffir," clubbed to

death the sick and deformed children. The Spartans abandoned and even killed anyone who was handicapped to prevent racial degeneration of the society.

In later, years, the handicapped were not killed but continues to be exploited and mistreated, Kanner (1964).

While there is no such written evidence in Kenya, in most communities, the handicapped were considered to be a bad Omen in the society and hence in many cases were treated as second class persons. Jean Hard (1774-1838) pioneered the programmes of educating the mentally handicapped. He started his programmes with "Victor" the wild Boy of Avero in France. Later, Edward Onesmus sequin took over from hard in training victor and well improved the education of the mentally retarded.

In 1839, Seguin established the first experimental class for "idiots" in Paris France.

In 1848, Sequin migrated to the U.S.A and there he created awareness to mental retardation. In 1876, together with others he (sequin) formed the American Association on mental deficiency (AAMD). The association started requesting for protection of the rights of the retarded.

By the year 1900, several institutions had been established in the U.S.A and the mentally retarded persons were confined in these institutions, the mentally retarded were to depend wholly on the "normal society" for their livelihood.

This attitude was meant to keep them out of the public eye and hence out of the public conscience (Gearheart et,al 1980)

Between 1900 and 1970, special education classes for the mentally retarded were established in America, and then referred to as "low achievers". This was after the revision of the Stanford-Binet intelligence test, which was used to determine the IQ of the children.

In 1975, the United states of America on the rights of the handicapped persons i.e., PL 94-142 of 1975, which came up with the demand for the "least restrictive educational environment for the handicapped children. This marked the beginning of placing the demands for educational and social provision to the mentally handicaps (Gear heart et,al 1980).

According to Haron and Skinner, "least restrictive environment is that educational setting, which minimizes the students, opportunity to respond and achieve, permits the

regular teacher to interact professionally with all students in the classrooms, and foster acceptance of social relations between the handicapped and non-handicapped students". (Heward Olanshy, Exceptional children, 2nd Edition, Bell and Howel Co.1984, page 42-43).

In Kenya, the first special school for the mentally handicapped was opened in 1948, by H, H Agha Khan at the place where Jacaranda special school is situated.

After independence, Hon,EN.Mwendwa, the then Minister of social services headed a commission which debated on education, training and placement of the handicapped children.

In 1976, the Gachathi commission came up with the present educational and social provision to the persons with mental handicaps. In section 3:2:9b and C respectively handicapped children in ordinary classes with modified programmes involving specialized training. As a result, many special schools and integrated units for the mentally handicapped children have been established throughout the Countr

1.2 Statement of the problem

Since education and healthy, social relations are vital aspects in the life of mentally handicapped learners, it is important to investigate, traditional beliefs on educational and social provision to the mentally handicapped.

This study is also aimed at investigating the reasons as to why this view is taken by many in the teaching profession and the ability of teaching fraternity to handle problems of the handicapped persons, in traditional beliefs on educational and social provision to the learners with mental handicaps.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The general objective of this study paper is to investigate the influence of traditional beliefs on Educational and social provisions for the learners who are mentally handicapped.

The study specifically;

1. Identified the influence of traditional beliefs on education and social provisions of mental handicaps in the society.

2. Established the educational provisions available to the mentally handicapped.
3. Determined the learning characteristics of mentally handicapped.
4. Identified some of the possible solution/ recommendations to mentally handicap.

1.4 Research questions

1. What are the influence of traditional beliefs on education and social provisions of mental handicaps in the society?
2. What educational provisions are available to the mentally handicapped?
3. What are the learning characteristics of mentally handicapped?
4. What are some of the possible solution/ recommendations to mentally handicap?

1.5 Significance of the study.

Education is one of the human rights according to both handicapped and non-handicapped person as it is quoted in Educational policy in Kenya which is education for all (EFA) –Kenya 2001”. educational for all advocates for education to be free and available to all Kenyans by the year 2015. This study shall thus highlight ways of creating awareness on the importance of educating mentally handicapped persons with in the society.

The results of this study will help instill positive altitude in members of the society towards the abilities of the mentally handicapped persons. The results will also ignite more research into ways of initiating and improving educational and social programmes meant for mentally handicapped individuals. Through the initiative of this study, awareness shall be created to the society on the relationship between certain beliefs (Traditional) and the success of educational and social programmes for the mentally handicapped individuals

1.6 Scope of the study

The study was conducted in the selected schools of Laikipia district of Kenya particularly in the two zones of Nanyuki and Daiga Zone. Parents to children with mental handicaps, Government administrators, clergymen and social workers were considered.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.

2.0 Introduction.

Historical aspects of special education. This history of the education and treatment of learners with special needs is rather limited. This is because the delineation and definition of what we now consider as persons with special needs has been fairly recent developed.

According to Ndurumo (1930) St John Beverly, a Catholic Bishop was regarded as the first person to have attempted to teach a handicapped learner in AD 685 in the united Kingdom, Didymus (AD 309395) gave his contribution by devising touch reading materials for the visually impaired in Alexandria, Pedro pounce de Leone a monk from Spain (1520-1584) taught, reading, writing arithmetic and speech reading to the hearing impaired.

The pioneers in the field of intellectual challenges were Jean Hard (1775-1838) a French man demonstrated that a learner diagnosed as an idiot could be taught many social skills if she/ he is exposed to systematic training programme. Edward Senguin (1812), also from France proved through his experiments that were possible to educate persons with mental handicaps pyne and mercer (1975) and pyne and Thomas (1978) cited historical eras through which the disabled were treated. These include;

The era of extermination, the era of ridicule, and asylum. There was also the era of occupational adequacy together with the era of combating mental retardation.

Finally, there was the era of education.

Era of extermination- According to Kauffman and Payne (1975) those who were not physically or mentally fit were a liability to the community and hence they were done away with. In Rome and Greeks similar methods were used.

Era of ridicule- This was more lenient era since the handicapped acted as downs and imbeciles as court jesters (Dum 1973) although ridicule was a step above extermination.

The handicapped were still regarded to a debilitating place within the society.

Era of asylum- the disabled were recognized as people who needed to be cared for by the society. Monasteries and asylums were constructed for the handicapped that became wards of the church.

Era of education – There was a shift in attitude from custodial service to education, which was a step towards rehabilitation. Many educational programmes for the handicapped sprang from the economic needs of society.

Era of Occupational Adequacy- Duncan (1943) initially developed the first occupationally oriented program for mental handicapped were documented.

Era of combating Mental retardation- promotion of National planning and basic programmes on research, education and prevention were emphasized.

It is during this last era that the knowledge of handling mentally handicapped was highly enhanced. This are however continued to face many challenges. Ndurumo (1993) cited der riager (1989) who argues that the fate of disabled in African countries depended upon cultural practices and beliefs of various ethnics communities.

In Kenya reformations which begun in 1948 were humbered by stigmazation and labeling of mentally handicapped. Kennedy (1988) concurred with this nation and suggested parameters leading to societal sensitivity, dissemination of information and better understanding of the human worth of the disabled.

Churches, voluntary and charitable organizations pioneered special needs education programmes according to the ministry of education in Kenya (1981)

Educational institutions began to establish. St Nicholas and AgaKhan both established in 1948 and became Jacaranda special school. Other markable occurrences during these same year was the establishment of the Kenya Society of the mentally handicapped whose main aim was to care, treat, educate and rehabilitate the mentally handicapped (Ministry of basic Education 1981). Ndurumo (1993) points out the growth in number of programmes slowly from 1968 to 1980.

The enrolment also went up accordingly. It was after 1981 that the programmes started to expand, registering an enrollment of 1728 children in 1986 in approximately fifty two (52) programmes which included seventeen (17) schools thirty (30) units, three pre-vocational school and one sheltered workshop.

2.1 Theoretical frame work

According to oxford advanced learners a theory is a formal set of ideas that is intended to explain why something happens or exists, or a principal on which a particular subject is

based on an opinion or idea that believes is true but that is not proved. This means that theoretical is concerned with the ideas and principles on which a particular subject is based rather than with practice and experiment.

Therefore, superstitions are beliefs or practices that result from ignorance, fear of unknown, trust in magic or chance or false perception of Causation. They are attitudes maintained despite evidence to the contrary Memaian Websters Dictionary (1994). The treatment of disabled persons in African and other developing countries is not well documented. However in Kenya according to Muchiri (1982) as cited by Ndurumo (1993) reviewed literature showed that the disabled were perceived as incapable of engaging in gainful employment. Anderson (1968) lamented that the disabled were made to sit idly on their family farms and watch helplessly. Such treatments can be equated to mistreatment of the disabled.

Der Lieger (1989) argued that the fate of the disabled persons in African countries depended upon cultural practical and beliefs of various ethnic communities. He cited Songye tribe in Zaire where cause of disability is viewed in terms of relationships with others and their ancestors. Such relationships included:-

Relationships between family members of one lineage and family members of another lineage through the dowry systems. In such case the child's disability is attributed to the father's inability to pay the dowry for his wife. Such relation in the modern society has long been ironed out. Although this varies from one family to another.

Also focused on the relationship between the family and its physical environment.

Eating of forbidden animals such as snakes resulted to the expectant mother bearing a child who cannot walk upright. These however were only taboos examined as certain the cause of a disability.

There were also traces of beliefs based on the relationship between the family and its ancestors through incarnation; the belief of living behind a curse by departed ancestors due to mistreatment prior to or during his/ her funeral was responsible for children born with deformities. Incidentally most communities in Africa still adhere to these beliefs.

Similarly, disabilities in many African societies were connected with relationship between the family and God. A child born with a disability was certain to have been sent by God. The child was thus killed and sent back to God so that He sent an able one.

Therefore, attitudes that hold key positions in our lives can be internalized. Personal destructive attitudes can be observed from particular circumstances from single traumatic events or without serious reflections, from general social surroundings. Thomas (1978).

The African journal of special needs Education March (1996) cited by Farasi (1965) whose research in Tanzania reflected that Kiswahili beliefs were extremely and had a practical and scientific basis.

Superstitions are part of attitudes and it's through attitudes that superstitions behavior acquired and generalized in the society. Folk tales from Europe indicate that misconduct among parents was a main cause of deformity in infants.

In Kenya there was as many superstitions as there are tribes. Many cultures have their own traditional ties, which bind them together. Generally many ethnic communities, associated disability with witchcraft example, Kamba people, a factor which led to concealment of many children with disabilities Thomas (1978).

2.2 .Traditional beliefs on education and social provisions to the mentally handicapped

It has been noted that retarded people have high degree of emotional disturbances as well as other character disorders. Traditional beliefs and other experiences among the mentally handicapped can reasonably be accepted to produce certain types of personality traits in the majority of impaired individuals. This includes;

Social isolation and rejection: There is considerable evidence that mentally handicapped learners regardless of their academic placement tend to be isolated by their peers. This rejection is not due to the retardation label but rather is attributed to the deviant behavior or many of the mentally regarded learners. The main cause of this rejection according to the arc (1993) is inability of the retarded learners to learn many of the social skills that lead to acceptance and popularity. Cultural emphasis introduces rejection and isolation right from the family levels where the whole family is rejected by society. For instance due to fear that the family has unacceptable associations with ancestors. Isolation is thus likely to lead to deviant personality and adjustment patterns. This then leads to contribute to their unusual personality patterns.



Labeling and stigma: Isolation and rejection is invariably made worse by experience of being labeled mentally handicapped. African culture puts considerable emphasis on being normal and many deviation leads to interference with that person's acceptance by others. Labeling and stigmatization makes a person seem less worth than other people. Such deviance is called stigma. Kozma and stock (1992).

The effects of labeling are further compounded by the fact that many persons are ignorant of the nature of mental retardation. Education and creation of awareness are the current active trends against effects of labeling and stigma. The current global trend of inclusion has more prospects of curbing this trend. Batshaw and Parret (1992).

Family stress: The presence of a retarded child in a family is likely to create tension and stress. March of Dimes (1995). Parents tend to receive the news that their child retarded with either guilt, defense mechanism or over protectiveness which is likely to produce behavior and emotional problems in the child. The reaction of the parents of the parents to a greater extent is dictated by societal stand in regard to traditional beliefs with the weight of these beliefs on their shoulders the family automatically regards itself an outcast in society.

Frustrations and failure: Batshaw et al' (1992) stated that the inability of mentally handicapped learners to perform to the standards of their non-handicapped peers leads to experiences of frustrations and failure.

The stress associated with repeated failure experiences is likely to result in anxiety reactions and defense mechanisms. In addition, the negative attitude the society has over their abilities lower their opinion of themselves and their abilities. They usually avoid undertaking new projects and have a general lack of confidence in their ability to effect change in their lives.

It is important that the society is educated not to capitalize on what these learners cannot do but rather encourage them on their abilities.

Kennedy (1988) as cited by Ndurumo (1993) discussed parameters to curb frustration and failure as societal sensitivity, dissemination of information and better understanding of the human worth of disabled.

Academic achievement: Children with mental handicap are unique individuals just as all people are individually different. Each individual is unique and should be valued as a person with gifts, strengths and abilities, the Arc (1993)

The historical view of disabled persons perceived these persons as incapable of performing academically. The traditions dictated their fate and this meant that education to the mental handicapped was left hanging on a balance.

However, according to Ndurumo (1993) many people with intellectual challenges live full and productive lives holding employment and raising families. The abilities of these individuals are basically determined by the degree of severity.

2.3 Educational services for the mentally handicapped.

Regardless of the classification system, used definitions and eligibility criteria can be operationalized only through the process of identification, evaluation, educational programming and placement. The fluid nature of these procedures contrasts with the static nature of definition criteria. The type of personnel used and the nature of their qualifications is considered as integral part of identification, evaluation and educational programming. The appropriateness of child's educational programme depends in great part on the ability of qualified personnel to operationalize definition and eligibility criteria through established procedures; (Council for exceptional children 1977). The established educational programmes include;

The Residential School, Special School, Special Classes, Resource Rooms and finally the peripatetic Services and mainstream programmes.

Residential special schools: Accommodate children with a specific type of handicap or disability. They provide a wide range of specialized facilities; materials and teachers are trained in teaching and managing such children, special equipments includes audiometers, hearing aids, loop systems, prosthetic devices, brailers, wheel chairs and so on. However, Rusalem and Rusalem (1998) criticized such school for segregating the children from environment.

Special day schools / boarding: This arrangement aims at keeping the children with their parents and the community while at the same time retaining specialist personnel equipment, facilities and materials. Children are also assisted to develop an adequate self concept and proper view of society. They also retain the family bond which may

otherwise be absent in residential school placement. Example of such schools among others in Kenya includes; Jacaranda, AgaKhan Special schools and Likii special school for the mentally handicapped in Laikipia District Central Division, Nanyuki.

In Uganda, they include: Iganga Centre for the blind, Ngora Primary School for the Deaf and Victoria Nile Primary School for the mentally handicapped among others.

Special classes: Also called self-contained classrooms. Allow integration with non-handicapped counter parts in selected subjects.

Examples; - Physical Education, Art, and school assembly activities; special classes were established due to shortage of funds and personnel (Suran and Rizzo 1979)

Resource room: These are rooms within regular school used by the fully integrated children for the additional help or intervention. They can be used by children with behavior or learning problems Kauffman et al (1975) states that the function of the resource room teacher is varied and can include teaching, intervention and consultation.

Peripatetic services: a peripatetic teacher is traveling teacher who visits several schools within his jurisdiction to teach and monitor the progress of children integrated in regular school.

The effectiveness of this teacher depends on the ability of the school system to finance the service including the transportation expenses of the teacher.

Mainstream programmes: These are programmes where children with handicaps learn together with non-handicapped. They aim at keeping children with their community and allow them to attend classes with non handicapped counterparts. This concept has been legally backed under PL-94-142, which stresses that children should be educated in the less restrictive environment.

2.4. Teacher attitudes towards traditional beliefs on Educational and Social Provision to the learners with mental Handicaps.

The educators attitude towards traditional beliefs on educational and social provision to the learners with mental for handicaps is the thought be very important for education of mentally handicapped (MH) many researchers have tried to establish the nature of class teacher attitudes in different learning environment.

Quite a good number of these studies reported relatively unfavorable teacher attitudes towards working with the mentally handicapped learners and at certain levels, showed

unwillingness on the part of the teachers to receive a handicapped child into their classes (Alexander et al 1978).

Against the above, Jones (1966) had revised several studies on preference for teaching handicapped children.

His research suggested that “teaching of retarded is a highly valued position, particularly among those interested in teaching younger children and those who believe that the retarded child has a great need for sympathetic understanding”

Lucas et al (1981) in this finding begs the question “why some class teachers willingly accept retarded learners into their classes and others do not, and what are the definite factors underlying such teacher attitudes.

Many researchers try to relate attitudes with other “teacher” or “institutional” variables in order to gain insights into the reasons as to why teachers’ attitudes might be “fair” or unfair. In their review, of research on special education, Cave and Madison (1978), suggest that unfavorable teacher attitudes towards accepting retarded children stem from insecurity and some times resentment, arising from ignorance and inexperience of the teacher with the mentally handicapped learners. According to these researchers, what seems to be important in influencing teacher’s attitude towards the retarded child is their “knowledge” of the consequence pupils with a particular handicap.

The knowledge is a critical factor in determining a teacher’s attitude towards the handicapped as confirmed by the research carried out by Murphy et al (1960) in the USA. The researchers investigated the teachers’ knowledge of the handicap. The study revealed that, a handicapped child’s position on the teacher’s desirability scale had a direct relationship to the teacher’s knowledge of the handicap. They concluded that;

“The more informed a teacher is about the handicapped condition, the more inclined he /she is to feel comfortable with the child having the condition and the more accepting he / she will be towards the child”.

A variety of studies from a variety of countries shows that class teacher’s attitudes towards traditional beliefs on educational and social provision to the learners with mental handicaps is unfavorable due to lack of knowledge on the handicapping condition (Milgram et al, 1980). Teachers need to be informed and understand the handicaps if they

are to feel comfortable and competent to teach the handicapped children and receive them willingly into their classes.

Experience with the pupils helps the teachers to feel more confident in having such children in their classes. Cruickshank (1958). Investigated on teachers' attitudes towards the handicapped children and he suggested that, experience may be even more important than abstract knowledge.

His research attempts to separate the two variables, experience and knowledge, and concluded that while knowledge of the handicaps was important, previous direct experience of working with handicapped children was more critical of positive acceptance of those pupils by the class teachers.

Johnson and Cartwright (1979) Investigated the differential effect of knowledge of handicap, and experience with handicapped children, on attitudes of class teachers towards traditional beliefs and educational and social provision to learners with mental handicap. In the study, 29 teachers who attended an information course on children with special needs, and some classroom experience of teaching retarded children, 27 teachers were enrolled on information course but no experience of teaching handicapped pupils. A third group of 28 teachers had classroom experience but were not information course.

The study revealed that, teachers attitudes and Social provision beliefs on educational and social provision on learners with mental handicaps, significantly improved as a result of combination of information about and experience with the handicapped children.

Other factors which have proved to be fostering positive attitudes among class teachers towards the handicapped children (learners) are:-

The ideological commitment to the Principle of integrating handicapped children into adequate resources and support services to help the teacher cope with the additional responsibility towards the handicapped learners with regard to the issue of ideological commitment, findings by Stephens and Braun (1980) suggested that, a belief that retarded children "should be educated is an important independent factor in promoting attitudes in teachers towards the handicapped learners.

Schutts (1982), emphasized that teachers, given extra assistance, like, supportive specialist teachers and special facilities will feel more favored in the presence of

handicapped children in their classes and hence more confident in their service to the special needs of the children.

Larrivee and cook (1979), conducted a large scale investigation on attitudes of 1,000 school teachers towards traditional beliefs on educational and social provision to the learners with mental handicaps in New England, and found that most important variables for creating a favorable and accepting attitudes in a teacher towards the handicapped children was” “the perception of the degree of success with learners with special needs”. As such, class teachers are likely to have positive altitudes towards the handicapped learners if they belief they can make contributions towards their educational development. This is possible if teachers have knowledge of the handicapped and familiarity with the handicapped child saying that teachers have favorable attitudes towards retarded pupils is not, however, exactly equivalent to saying that they are positively willing to have them in their classes nor that they teach them effectively. Willingness is considerably influenced by Institutional variables such as class size, teaching organization and the mode of administration in the school.

Bitter et-al (1973) found that most class teachers receiving the handicapped frequently complained of already overcrowded class.

payne and murry (1984) suggest that the nature of a class may also be important.

For example, if a class already contains a significant proportion of children with various learning problems, then the teacher will not be ready to take another child with a handicap, He found out that teachers complained of extra time and efforts and attention needed by the retarded pupils, thus depriving the normal pupils the needed necessary attention.

A review by Semmel et-al (1979), indicates towards receiving a mentally retarded pupils in their classes range from neutral to negative.” informal discussions showed that, these attitudes depend on various factors lack of knowledge to special education, level of mental retardation and class size.

Similarly, studies by Mc Gettigan (1972) revealed that, most teachers have least positive attitudes towards traditional beliefs on educational and social provision to the learners with mental handicaps. Informal discussions showed retarded learners due to the

learners low performance in class room achievement, failure to participate in class activities and often fun made on them (Bryan,1979).

However, research by miles M.(1985) reveals that some teachers feel that mentally retarded children are human beings with their own rights.

As such, they should be provided with educational and social facilities together with the non-handicapped other than being segregated.

William and Algozzine (Florida, 1977) carries out a study to investigate the teacher's attitudes towards traditional beliefs on educational and social provisions to the learners with mental handicaps.

The respondents were required to indicate their attitudes towards children with special needs. These included the physically, handicapped, the learning disabled, socially / emotionally disturbed and the educable mentally handicapped.

The results indicated that majority of the respondents preferred all the learners rather than the mentally retarded learners.

Ronald child's (perceptions of mainstreaming by teachers who teach mainstreamed educatable mentally retarded learners in public schools) came up with two general impressions from the study.

"That the mainstreaming of educable mentally retarded children is not yet a concept that has been accepted by the regular class teachers. The regular class teachers seem still un prepared and un supported. In addition, the regular class teacher appears to be taking an enormous amount of the responsibility for mainstreamed educable mentally retarded (68%) of the child's day.

The second general impression is that mainstreamed mentally handicapped learners are getting a curriculum that focuses on the programmatic goals of regular classroom.

These learners are exposed to text books and curriculum model they cannot cope up with. When a child is mainstreamed he / she is provided with educational and social facilities and some of traditional beliefs are eliminated. He / she study the regular class curriculum most of the time.

Runo, M.Teachers attitudes towards mainstreaming exception learners (notes), Jersey City Stage College 1981-1982) child, suggests that regular teachers should receive more supportive services in order to serve the mentally handicapped learners in their classes.

More in service education dealing with concepts of traditional beliefs on educational and social provision to the learners with mental handicaps must be offered to all teachers.

He says that research should be initiated in order to compare the efficiency of the regular class curriculum versus a life functional type of curriculum that accounts personal, social and vocational adequacy.

2.5 Learning characteristics of mentally handicapped

Generally learning paying attention, organizing the incoming stimuli, remembering and recalling from memory what is needed to solve a particular problem. Macmillian (1982) intelligence plays a vital role in learning besides adaptive behavior, social class and other variables. Zeaman and House (1963) together with other researchers have pointed out main learning characteristics among learners with mental handicaps.

These includes: attention, memory, language and imitation. There is also incidental learning, and learning transfer along with motivation.

Attention: A systematic study of discrimination learning in mentally handicapped learners led Zeaman et al (1963) to conclude that these learners have deficient in attention. They have great difficulty in attending to the relevant stimuli.

It is therefore essential that teachers concerned should use such strategies as sequencing tasks in an easy way to difficult progression, emphasizing the idea of children focusing on a stimulus but be encouraged to seek cues from environment rather than from task.

Memory: Learner (1976) described memory as the ability to store or retrieve upon demand previous experience, essential longer present. Ellies (1970) stated that the mentally handicapped have problems with storing information in the short-term memory rather than long-term memory. A similar experience even to the non-retarded. He attributes these deficits to the inability of these learners to employ rehearsal strategies as an aid to recall information.

Kelvin et al (1979) gave guidelines to combat these deficits such as training them in the use of rehearsal strategies, over learning, repetition, labeling verbal association and constant use of materials learned.

Language: Susan and Rizzo (1979) observed that the absence of linguistic competence among mentally handicapped, hinders interaction and is likely to interfere with the optimal cognitive development.

Roserriberg (1970) observed that differences in language of retarded learners and normal individuals appear to be more quantitative rather than qualitative.

Imitation: Sometimes children learn by watching other person's behavior in order to perform such similar task. Many researchers have come to a conclusion that mentally handicapped have difficulty in identifying the appropriate behavior to be imitated.

They do not discriminate between responsive and non responsive behavior. Teachers need to be more careful when using this approach with mentally handicapped learners.

Incidental learning: This refers to the learning taking place outside a formal structured learning environment. It is more effective in acquisition of skill and attitudes although it is not easily controlled. Kirk (1984) pointed out that the reliance of intellectually challenged learners upon other people for cues in incidental learning can be led to inadequate or improper acquisition of skills. The teachers should ensure that proper cues are given.

Learning set and learning transfer: According to Ingallas (1986) learning transfer is an individual's ability to apply learned responses and experiences from previous problems to new one with similar components. Learning set is the individual's ability to learn how to learn. Mentally handicapped learners have problems in developing learning set a pace similar to the non-retarded of similar age. However, the ability to transfer is not as significantly impaired for mild mentally handicapped as it is for a moderately to severely impaired.

2.6 Possible solutions / recommendations to mentally handicapped learners.

It would be true to say that special education has run a long way in its formation and today we can say that the concept of special education in Kenya continues to change with the changing ideas of education, just like a other countries. The first two schools for the mentally handicapped in Kenya were St. Nicholas and Aga Khan, both established in 1984.

According to the Ministry of Education (1976) the schools merged in 1968 and became the current Jacaranda special school in Nairobi. In the same year, the city primary unit for

the mentally handicapped and Race course Road unit for the mentally handicapped were established in Nairobi.

In 1968, the Kenya Society for the mentally handicapped was established with the primary aim of earning, for teaching, educating and rehabilitating the mentally handicapped (ministry of Education Annual Report 1981 page 127).

In 1970 Karatina and Meru special schools were established, followed by Mombasa Aga Khan special school in 1971. The number of programmes for the mentally handicapped grew slowly from 1968-1980. In 1968, there were two programmes with a total enrollment of forty children. In 1970, there were three programmes with an enrollment of sixty four children, 1981, fourteen programmes with an enrollment of 1,728, in 1986, 52 programmes including 17 schools, 30 units, 3 prevocational schools and shattered workshop. Currently, there are over 80 special schools and units in the country, educating over 3000 mentally handicapped children.

The Ominde Commission (1964,Pg.132) noted that, there are many children whose handicaps are severe and who are able to receive their education and training in normal institutions provides that some empathetic consideration is given to their problems by the educators concerned.

In support of the above, twelve years later the Gachathi commission (1976; pg 74) repeated the same appeal urging that the handicapped should be integrated into normal pattern of education as far as it can be achieved.

The government has shown great concern and commitment in the provision of services to "improve the Welfare" of its handicapped citizens. The government declared 1980, the "national year" for the disabled of Kenya. This gesture helped to raise funds and today, Kenya has a permanent fund established to help programmes for the handicapped (The National Fund for the Disabled). This includes integration programmes in the country.

Due to pressure from the donor countries, the government is encouraging the integration of the mildly handicapped, to reduce the cost of maintaining special education programmes.

In 1987, the Ministry of Education delegated more sponsors to district development committees to establish and expand special education programmes. The objective for

special education among other things (annual report 1987, pg.41-42-Ministry of Education were;-

“To. develop awareness and understanding of the handicapped child’s” immediate environment, attitude towards this country and also experience enjoyment in learning through exposure to meaningful experience.”

This objective, points to the fact that the handicapped should be exposed to his / her environment to learn and acquire knowledge, skills and attitude and enjoy like the rest of the society through participating in day to day activities in the society. Thus, the mentally handicapped child should be brought to a near normal life as much as possible.

The solution here would be integrating him so that he can associate with his non-handicapped peers in the ordinary school and in community.

Statistics from the Ministry of Education (1987) showed that in 1986, the number of those in the integrated programme for the mentally handicapped has not been known. A lot of emphasis is still needed to be a reality.

It should also be stressed that the Kenya Education Commission, right from the beginning of Kenya’s independence appeared to have had such a clear view of the needs of the exceptional programmes. It saw the need to introduce special education component in teacher training programmes. It started by conducting a two year special education course for teachers of the deaf at Siriba and later Kamwenja teachers college and for the teachers of the blind and mentally handicapped at Highridge teachers college.

The committee appointed by the government education and manpower development for a decade and beyond (1988), recommended the development of special institutional education in Kenya and training of manpower.

Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) came into being in 1985, to train Special Education teachers in four areas of handicap namely;-Mental, Visual, Physical, and hearing impairments.

Considering the training pace especially in the department of mental handicap, there is still a shortage of trained personnel in the area. The researcher has hope that the government still stands to implement the recommendations made by the commissions ‘report part 1, published on 12th December 1962, chaired by professor Simon H. Ominde and later endorsed with considerable interest in the report of the committee under Hon.

E.N. Musendwa, the then Minister for Labour and Social Services on the care and rehabilitation of the disabled and in three agreement that;

There was need for education and training for children with mild impairments as well as those with severe and profound impairments.

There was need special education and training for handicapped children.

Children with mild impairments are capable of receiving education and training in regular education programmes, provided special consideration is given to their needs by the teachers concerned.

CHAPTER: THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter logically outlines the sequence in which the study was carried out. The researcher explained this chapter under the following essential parts. First and foremost is the part of research design, research environment, selection and size, Research Instruments. There is also the part dealing with the research Instruments such questionnaires and the data collection.

Finally, there is the data analysis regarding this study on traditional beliefs on educational and social provision to the learners with mental handicaps in Laikipia District (Kenya)

3.1 Research design.

The researcher employed the qualitative method of data collection, she designed Questionnaires to particular targeted respondents and interviewed other respondents especially those who could not fill the Questionnaires.

3.2 Research environment

Geographically -Laikipia District is a vast District and this is the reason why the researcher chose random sampling to cover many parts of the District.

The target population consisted of parents to children with mental handicaps, government administrators, such as District officers, District Education officers chiefs, Clergymen and social workers. They were all chosen from within Laikipia District, Central Division Nanyuki (Kenya}.

3. 3 Sample selection and size.

The researcher analyzed the sample into to two categories.

Parents to children with mental handicaps, Government administrators, clergymen and social workers. In the first category (Parents) the researcher interviewed 10(ten) parents who have children with mental handicaps, 5 (five) parents from Nanyuki North Zone, 3 (three) parents from Nanyuki North Zone and 2 two from Daiga Zone.

In the second category, the following were interviewed;

One (1) Education officer, one (1) District officer, and three (3) chiefs. Other categories included five (5) medical practitioners, two (2) social workers.

3.4 Research Instruments.

The researcher used Questionnaires to literate respondents and those illiterate and semi-illiterate, face to face interviews by the researcher were conducted.

The questionnaires were designed to target two (2) different groups of respondents; these were parents, Government officers and social workers.

The Questionnaires. The researcher used the Questionnaires to get information she needed. One of the Questionnaires was misplaced by one of the respondents. given thus, could not be used in the final analysis. To guarantee confidentiality to the respondents, the researcher explained to the respondents that it was not necessary to indicate their names or the names of their work places. The respondents were required to give YES / NO answers to the Questions. This was to enable the researcher to analyze the information given within the limited time available. The researcher also explained to the respondents that they could write short comments just below the questions if found necessary. So that they could explain further their views on the Traditional beliefs on educational and social provision to the learners with mental handicaps with their peers. The advantage of this format of the Questionnaire is that it is quicker to answer the questions and also results could be easily and accurately summarized and interpreted. However, this method has a disadvantage in that it tends to influence the response Pattern of the respondents. The interviews involved direct verbal interactions with the respondents. The researcher had prepared her interview schedules and rehearsed them well before going to interviewee. She had to create a good relationship with the interviewees by first introducing herself and then explaining on her mission clearly to the respondents before starting the interview.

All the Questions were aimed at fulfilling the objectives of the research i.e. to investigate and analyze the views of the respondents and general public on the traditional beliefs on educational and Social Provision to the learners with mental handicaps in Laikipia District Central Division. The researcher collected the questionnaires from the

respondents July 16th 2008. Only one of the questionnaires had been misplaced and thus could not have been handed back to the researcher for analysis.

The interview schedules. This Implement was used to obtain views from a sample of parents with children who are mentally handicapped and Education officers. It was not possible to interview many education officers as most of them were out of on official duties. The parents were interviewed in their houses and some of the parents were difficult to get. Hence the researcher was not able to interview many of them. All the answers and views given by the parents and education officers were recorded for analysis.

3.5 Data collection procedures

The researcher dispatched Questionnaires by hand to respective respondents well in advance to allow them enough time to fill them. In cases where the respondents required assistance, the researcher elaborated on what was expected of the respondents before letting him/her to continue filling the questionnaire.

The researcher also carried out face to face interviews to particular parents who could not fill in the Questionnaires.

The researcher then recorded the responses from the respondents. During collection of the dispatched Questionnaires, the researcher asked the respondents a few questions from the Questionnaires orderly to ensure that answers given tallies with those put in written. After collection the Questionnaires were assembled together with the recorded information in readiness for analysis.

3.6. Data analysis.

The data collected were organized in the form of tables. The rest of the information was represented in prose writing to explain in detail the information summarized in the tables.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS.

4.0 Introduction.

This chapter aims at analyzing the responses from the research tools and organizes them in the best way possible in line with the Hypothesis of the study.

The chapter also deals with the analysis of interviews with education officers and interviews with parent of children with mental handicaps.

The interview sessions that the researcher had with views of the parents towards the traditional beliefs on educational and social provision to the learners with mental handicaps in Laikipia District. The parents were also required to tell their feelings about educating the mentally handicapped children together with their non-handicapped peers in the same classroom environments.

The researcher was also able to have interview sessions with some education officers in the District (Laikipia), which were aimed at the teaching of the handicapped pupils together with the non-handicapped pupils in the schools they supervise.

Finally, all the data was organized and presented the simple tables for the purpose of enabling the respondents (Parents), Government administrators, Clergymen and social workers) to read and understand the findings and recommendations with ease. The researcher employed the use of Questionnaires which she classified into two categories, Questionnaire "A" which was intended for parents with mentally handicapped children and Questionnaire "B" which was intended for government officers such as the District Education officers, clergymen and social workers.

The items in both Questionnaires included closed ended Questions where the correct response from the four choices given such questions aimed at guiding the respondent into one line of thought.

Closed Questions which required the respondent to state either yes or no. These were actual items which do not call for further discussion.

Open ended Questions, where the respondent was required to list briefly the responses as per the question.

This item where intended to give the respondent freedom of thought expression.

Finally in both questionnaires, some similar items were used. For example, item two and item ten in Questionnaire “A” and item five and nine in Questionnaire “B”. The researcher intended to compare responses from the different categories of responses to ensure validity of items. These items shall therefore be analyzed together Questionnaire “A”, consisted of nine items while Questionnaire “B” consisted of ten items both totaling to nineteen items. Questionnaire “A” targeted 15 parents, 12 of whom responded positively while three were non-respondents. Questionnaire “B” consisted of ten items and targeted fifteen respondents out of which ten positively responded and five were non-respondents.

4.1. Findings from research Question one: Education provision available to the mentally handicapped learners.

This was in line with question five which states; have you taken him / her to a special unit or school?

Table 1: students taken to special schools or not

RESPONSES	TALLY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	### ////	9	75%
NO	///	3	25%

Source field research

In spite the presence of a few schools and units for the mentally retarded. The researcher whether the respondents were are aware these facilities for the children.

Statistic showed that 75% of the respondents had taken their children to either special schools or units while the remaining 25% had not.

The majority of the respondents admitted that they had an idea about special education programmes.

Although one of the respondents had no knowledge of these programmes. The statistics were quite encouraging although these beings only a sample of the population, the result revealed that there were parents with mentally retarded children who still have no any of the slightest knowledge about special education programmes.

The researcher had the opinion that the good efforts had been put in programmes aimed at creating awareness about special education inspite the fact that in most families in

Laikipia District are pastoralists. However, with concerted efforts with vital information, shall reach all the stake holders.

Question three.

Have you helped in any way to establish a unit or school or programme for the mentally retarded individuals ? Yes / NO

Table II: Schools for mentally retarded students

RESPONSES	TALLY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	//	2	20%
NO	//// //	8	80%

Source: field research

In this item, the researcher wanted to find out the extend of assistance to mentally handicapped programmes by various respondents was the main aim. The limit number of special education facilities particularly for the mentally retarded is evident from the data collected, only two respondents represented by 20% claimed to have assisted to establish special education facilities for these children.

Laikipia District has only two special school, four special units and a limited number of integrated programmes for the mentally handicapped. Nanyuki Garrison primary school in Nanyuki central division is in the integration programme with six mentally handicapped children one with motor disability, several with learning disabilities and one with hearing impairment (hard of hearing).

The researcher felt that much more has to be done ranging from soliciting funds and materials to creating awareness for the people to change their attitudes towards educating mental handicapped learners.

Question six.

Can the education of the mentally handicapped help the Nation? YES / NO

If YES state how.

In this item the researcher expected that the respondent either gives a positive or negative response or qualifies his / her choice. All the respondents representing 100% incidentally admitted that education of mentally retarded children would help the nation in one way or another. They went a head to give reasons such as reducing poverty; reducing ignorance,

becoming self sufficient among handicapped and this would eventually increase the manpower. The researcher wholly supports their arguments.

Concerning the Question seven that states, what is the approximate number of families with mentally handicapped persons within your area of jurisdiction?

From the statistics collected, most of the respondents gave a figure which was not justified. This was evident after the researchers had interviewed in some cases more parents than the figure given. This act numbered the researchers effort to analyze the data effectively.

4.2. Findings from research Question 2: Traditional beliefs on educational and social provision of the mentally handicapped.

This correlates with question nine: Do you offer any services to the mentally retarded individuals and their parents? For those who said YES, indicated how?

Various ways of assistance were put forth by respondents such as guidance and counseling including monitoring progress within special schools and units and advising parents accordingly along with offering material help.

Initially, the researcher had established areas and thus assistance to them, ranging from initiating small projects to generate income would be quite appropriate to these families.

Question ten: Do you know any traditional beliefs associated with mental retardation ?

This was an item to serve to give some vital data as pertains the research statement which is to investigate the traditional beliefs on educational and social provision on education and social facilities to children with mental handicaps. The respondents cited various beliefs such as:-

Witchcraft, existence of curses from God, association with demonic practices.

Other beliefs such as lack of payment of dowry and in appropriate behaviors by parents were cited by the respondents.

Finally, the respondents concluded by association to bad Omen and inability to please their ancestors.

Inspite diversity of communities, in Laikipia District, the traditional beliefs cut across boundaries and all the respondents regardless of community identified a number of beliefs which they associated to mental retardation.



These beliefs to a certain degree have created a negative altitude towards families with retarded persons.

4.3. Findings from research Question three: The learning characteristics of the mentally handicapped.

Question one: Do you know anything about special education programme? YES / NO

Table III: Special education programmes

RESPONSES	TALLY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	/// /	11	92%
NO	/	1	8%

Source: Field research

The majority of the respondents admitted that they had ideas about special education programmes. Although one (1) of the respondents had knowledge of these programmes. The statistics are quite encouraging although these beings only a sample of the population, the result revealed that there are parents with mentally retarded children who still have no any of the slightest knowledge about special education programmes.

The researcher has opinion that the good efforts had been put in programme aimed at creating awareness about special education inspite the fact that in most families in Laikipia District are pastolists.

Question two: How did you come to know about them?

This was an open ended question where the researcher wished to find out the ways in which information about special education had reached the parents and which method had been quite effective.

From the data collected, some parents claimed to have been received this information from friends, parents, regular teachers, other members of the community social workers and yet others could not recall the particular source of the information.

This portrays the fact that many different parties had been disseminating information about special education either consciously or unconsciously.

The researchers' view is that very few persons or groups had clearly been identified with the task of creating awareness to parents. This trend should be have been long put in progress by such parties as teachers trained in special education, social workers, education officers or non-Governmental Organizations.

Question three: Do you know your child's problem?

YES / NO.

TableIV: Children's problems

RESPONSES	TALLY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	/// ///	10	83%
NO	//	2	17%

Source: field research

In this item, the researcher wanted to establish whether the parents were aware in their children's problem, and their feelings about these problems.

From the data collected the majority of the respondents representing 83% were very positive and that they knew their children's problems, however, the researcher found out that 17% of the respondent seemed to be an aware of their children conditions.

Although not all parents were aware that their children's condition cannot be treated or reversed, it is still worth for the parents to be enlightened on the fact that disability is not ability. This is according to researcher would help prepare the parents psychologically to lead a normal life with their handicapped children.

Question four: How did you come to know that your child is mentally handicapped?

This item was a follow up of item three. It was intended to find out whether the parents knew of their problem from a reliable source or from hear say from the people. The effectiveness of the assessment centre in the District could be seen through the parent's responses.

Some parents claimed to have been notified at the assessment center, from neighbors, and others only detected the problem by observing the deficits in the child's behavior as compared to their peers and siblings.

The researcher feels that the assessment centre has tried to reach a good number of parents although she wishes that more efforts could be able to reach the rest of the parents. Besides, there was likelihood that some parents are ignorant in the society and may end up making wrong judgments about their children.

4.4 Findings from research question Four: Solutions suggested.

Question eight: What are your future plans for this particular child?

This was yet another open ended item where the researcher wished to get various responses on what the parents intended to do with these children with handicapping conditions.

Some respondents suggested that they intended to take these children to school with special services, either, they intended to take for vocational training and yet others admitted that they did not know what to do with these children.

The responses were quite diversified although most respondents were for vocational training.

The responses were quite in the line with the researchers expectations. The respondents line of thought reflects the diversity of the services offered to the handicapped children with in the District. The researcher hopes that more services shall be availed to these children to enable parents have other opinions for their children

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.0 Introduction.

This chapter outlines summary, conclusion and recommendations of the principle findings of the most significant results. The researcher has highlighted the nature of the results and how they relate to other findings earlier put forth. She has also linked her experiences to the findings made from data collected. All these highlights were made in close consideration and basis of the objective and research questions. Recommendations performing pertaining to the researcher's opinions have been written down in this chapter.

5.1 Summary.

According to the data collected and the analysis made, it appeared that mental; retardation is widely understood by majority of parents and often members of the society. It was also evident that traditional beliefs still have a part to play in the causes or the existence of mentally handicapped individuals in the society. This has to certain extended greatly numbered the provision of education and social amenities to these children. Some are still hidden from the public due to fear of being associated with them. Quite a lot of sensitization campaign is required as is required as some parents and the general public seems not to understand the mentally handicapped learners and consequently do not view the provision of education to such learners as being vital.

Looking at the previous chapter, it is clear that most of the parents, teachers and education officers do find the educational and social provision to the learners with mental handicap as a drawback to their work. It should be understood here that the key reason leading to this negative attitude is that most teachers felt that the examination systems used in the schools are subjective and thus when it comes to the examinations, the mark for the handicapped child will lower the average mark and hence the teachers at the end will have to explain to the officers the reasons as why the class will have performed poorly.

From the Questionnaire, it is evident that most of the teachers are not aware of the levels of the levels of mental retardation and thus even the slows learners may sometimes be

labeled “retarded” it may be due to this unawareness that some of the teachers show a very negative attitude towards the mentally handicapped pupils.

This negative attitude towards the handicapped and hence the negative feelings towards the educational and social provision of learners with mental handicaps. The same is contributed to, by the community feeling that the children are “abnormal”, due to their (children) slow rate of learning and poor adjustment to the society.

In all, others showed clearly in the Questionnaire and the interview that they do feel that the needs of the mentally handicapped learners should be best met in special institutions as their intelligence is far much below that of the non-handicapped learners.

It is the researcher’s view that if the teachers could be well made aware of the needs of the handicapped and accept these pupils in the educational and social provision and give them the needed help.

The feeling of the parent’s teachers, and general society that the mentally handicapped learners educational and social provision deny the non-handicapped children time and that they require trained personal for the educational and social provision they need as evidenced in the questionnaire was a prove that the society traditional beliefs coupled with other a fears of the unknown in different communities shows that we are yet to accept the mentally handicapped persons. These reasons given by the different members of the society should be further researched on, so as to promote educational and social provision to the learners with mental handicaps. From the way the teachers showed their willingness to accept the mentally handicapped children in their classes very much depends on the size of the class. Some classes in the schools are too large that the regular teachers felt that an extra child and especially a mentally handicapped one would only be a “burden” unless enough educational and social facilities are provided. Hence, making it very difficult to attend to the individual needs of every other child in the class.

While other teachers felt it to be “burden” to them, some of the teachers felt that since the mentally handicapped learners are human beings, they have the “right” to education and hence should be integrated i.e. be taught together with their non-handicapped peers, other than being segregated. This was a quite a good feeling. From the interviews with the parents, it was clear that the parents would like the retarded children to go through the

activities of life like any other person. The parents suggested that in educational and social provision to these learners.

The mentally retarded children should be taught craft courses was a clear evidence that the parents do feel that these children can do well in life if educational and social facilities are provided adequately and traditional beliefs on mentally handicapped persons are discouraged in all communities.

Also, the feeling that the handicapped learners should be involved in all social affairs in the schools and in the community was a clear show that the parents support the idea of integrating these children in all areas including educational activities.

The feelings by the education officers that the mentally handicapped learners affect the performance of the District Zonal and classes should be considered as unfair.

This was because the officers need to understand that learning does not only involve paper work, but every part of human life. Thus, the officers should instead find ways of helping these disadvantaged learners other than blaming their poor performance in the examination.

With all the above, every person in the society should understand the needs of every other individual in the society and accept that person as he / she may be.

5.2 Conclusions.

In conclusion, as the researcher in the proceeding chapters, traditional beliefs have been a hindrance to the provision of educational and social facilities to the mentally handicapped learners. This was evidenced in the fact that these learners and their families have been discriminated against and therefore being considered as social rejects.

Finally, the researcher concludes that the curriculum in the schools should be adjusted to accommodate the society and in the regular classroom environment.

5.3 Recommendations.

The researcher wishes to make the following recommendation which in her view will enable to realize the set objectives in future.

The parents to children with and without mental handicaps should be enlightened on the importance of educating their children.

This may enable them become self reliant and thus relieve their parents of shouldering their burden.

Various parties such as teachers trained in special education, social workers, and non-Governmental organization should mount a strong campaign in creating awareness about the occurrence of mental disabilities so that the traditional beliefs cited before are discarded as having any association with mental retardation.

The District Education officers should be more vigilant in the soliciting funds from persons or organizations so as to be able to set up more educational facilities for children with such disabilities.

Involve the mentally handicapped children in a number of societal duties, depending on the abilities so that the society can understand that "disability is not inability". The ministry of education should expand training facilities for special education teachers so that after training, these teachers can offer the best possible services to the mentally handicapped learners together with the non-handicapped ones.

Public awareness of the needs of the handicapped children should be publicised through the mass media and also through other through other means of communication. Also, public barazas should be used in every society to create awareness to the public at large. This would improve to the society's acceptance of the life in future.

The teachers already in the teaching field and have not been trained on how to handle the handicapped pupils should be in serviced on the same, so that they can improve their attitudes for the better, towards these disadvantaged children.

Similarly parents and teachers should work together in order to give the best understanding to the handicapped learners.

This would help them to understand the likes and dislikes of the handicapped learners and hence be able to help them in the best way possible.

Other non-handicapped learners in the class should be introduced to the consequences of handicaps and be taught helpful techniques to improve the functioning abilities of the mentally handicapped learners among them.

Education officers should be educated to the effect that examinations are not the key indicators of success and thus should always be interested in examinations results, but

should understand that a child may fail in academics but succeed in other fields in life such as craftwork and business.

All teachers training institutions in the country should start special education components. This would help the teacher trainees to go out to the schools after training with the schools after training with ample knowledge of how to handle the handicapped learners to the regular classes.

Finally, I recommend that every person involved in the education system should be made aware of the needs of the mentally handicapped child as a human being.

This will help the community to accept these children as they are and without prejudice and more researchers should come up to investigate into this more limelight is put fourth to explain the occurrence of most disabilities.

5.4 Area for further research.

More research should be carried out in the following Divisions in Laikipia Districts, Lamuria division, Mukogondo Division in order to establish other shortcomings within the education system and social provision that can help to adjust Instructions to suit all the learners in at integrated society environment.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaires:

Part I: Questionnaire for parents

Please fill in the blank spaces by ticking and writing precise answer

1. Do you know anything about special education programmes? YES / NO.
2. How did you come to know about item ?
3. Do you know your child's problem? YES? NO.
4. If yes, how did you come to know that she / he is mentally handicapped.
5. What do you think is the course of this problem?
 - (a) Witchcraft
 - (b) Curse from God
 - (c) Scientific courses
 - (d) Unknown.
6. Have you taken Him / her to a special school / unit?
7. Do you have another child with similar problem?
8. What are your future plans for this particular child?
9. Do you know some traditional beliefs associated with mental retardation? YES / NO.
If YES, name some.

Part II: Questionnaire for clergymen, Government Administrators and social workers.

Please fill in the spaces by ticking and writing precise answers.

1. What do you understand by mental retardation?
2. What in your opinion is the cause of this condition?
 - Curse from God
 - Witchcraft
 - Scientific causes.

3. Have you helped: in any way to establish a unit, school programme for the mentally retarded Individuals?

4. Do you feel it is justified to have retarded learners learn in the same classroom setting with normal learners? YES? NO.

If NO. Why?

5. Would you advocate for or against educating retarded Individuals? FOR
AGAINST

6. Can the education of mentally retarded persons help the Nation? YES / NO
If YES, state how.

7. What is the approximate number of families with mentally retarded persons within your area of Jurisdiction?

8. Do the mentally retarded persons participate fully in social duties? YES / NO
Give reasons for your answer.

9. Do you offer any services to the mentally retarded individual or their parents?
YES / NO.

If yes, indicate.

10. Do you know of nay traditional beliefs associated with mental retardation?
YES / NO

If YES please list some;

Appendix B: Interview guide

Part I: Interview guide for Education officer.

1. Are you of the term “mental retardation?”

Do you have pupils who are mentally handicapped learners in the school?

2. Do you have facilities to cater for the mentally handicapped learners in the schools?

3. Do you have trained personnel to cater for the needs of the mentally handicapped in your school?

4. How do you like the teaching of the mentally handicapped children together with the normal on in the same classes?

5. Do you think from learning in the normal classes?

6. Do you have any special institutions for the mentally handicapped children in the District?

7. Do the mentally handicapped learners effect the educational standards in the schools in any way?

Part II: Interview guide for parents.

1. Do you have a mentally retarded child?
2. Do you think a mentally handicapped child can benefit from attending School?
3. Would you like your normal child to learn in the same classroom with the mentally handicapped child
4. According to your own views, do you think a mentally retarded child can succeed in life after going through school life?
5. What support services (educational) can you recommend for the mentally handicapped children?

