

**CHALLENGES OF TEACHING THE MENTALLY
RETARDED LEARNERS IN GITHAMBIA PRIMARY
SCHOOL, THIKA DICTRICT, KENYA.**

BY

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DECLARATION:

I, Mungai Joyce Waithira, Registration number: BED/13334/61/DF hereby declare that this Research Report is my own original work and not a duplication of similarly Published work of any scholar.


It has never been submitted to any college or anywhere else. I further sincerely declare that all the materials in this paper is original.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate my heart felt gratitude to my dear and beloved husband Mr. Geoffrey Ngugi Ng'ang'a who has given me all the encouragement and support in doing this research materially, financially and spiritually.

I also dedicate my three dear children namely Patrick Ng'ang'a, Rose Wambui and Erick Mungai for helping me in doing a lot of work at home and encouraging me as their mother in the tasking assignment.

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May you live to be remembered.

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However, it was noted that some have very good hand writing even if they may not comprehend what they write.

The government of Kenya has a lot of support to schools and all the needs can be provided for. The materials are available but the manpower is lacking in the field of attending the mentally retarded learners to the maximum. If the policy was maintained that each SNE teacher handle only seven learners then the mental retarded learners could benefit the more but now since there is scarcity of teacher, an SNE teacher is handling even twice the number and this not effective at all.

If these learners are well taken care off, they would be of much use to the society and will feel worth.

The researcher has left room for further research by future researchers to come up with ideas and opinions relevant to the support and care of the mentally retarded.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Education is a very crucial tool to every human being. Education is power and source of knowledge.

In the year 2003, free primary education was introduced in Kenya. This enhanced the Jomtein Conference, 1990 in Thailand and Dakar Conference in the year 2000 which advocated for free education for all. (EFA). In this regard, every child irrespective of nature, religion race, color or creed has a right to education.

In reference to the under privileged in the world, even people with disabilities of which ever nature, should have access to education. It is now upon the teachers handling all children to identify each and every need of an individual child and handle him with care and respect he or she deserves as far as education is concerned.

There are many challenges affecting children in regular schools in Kenya. The challenges include visual, hearing, mental, physical, behavior and emotion not forgetting the gifted and talented. All these children need support in all aspects ranging from social, economic, spiritual, physical as well as educational in order to make them all round people. Some learners have severe challenges that make their academic work impossible but there are other alternatives, modes of education. Such learners can be equipped with daily living skill that may make them self reliant both in school and life after school. They can also be taught vocational skills that may make them self reliant as well as source of income to support them selves and their families in future.

From different school of thought, a mental challenge is not an inability. Robert Ingals, a scholar in New York states that mentally retarded people can lead independent and productive lives while many 'normal' people are completely unable to hold a job.

Even today, there are many people who have excelled in life. Such people are Henry Wanyoike, the Visually impaired who is an international athlete, has earned Kenya many gold medals, Helen Keller, the deaf blind has a history of excellence despite her disability, She is known to be a writer of many books.

The Kenyan former vice president Hon Moody Awori has a great input to the development and support of the needy persons in the society. He is frequently cited in several occasions saying that there is urgent need to support learners with impairments in order to make them feel worth in the society.

More so, the government of Kenya is giving grants to schools to cater for special needs in a bid to help them cope with their academic life. It has also introduced inclusive education where by every child, irrespective of need shall be addressed in that class The government has also opened distance learning programs for teachers to learn as they teach on special needs education. On their completion of their course, these teachers will have ample knowledge and skills to deal with learners with special needs in regular classrooms.

In this regard, the researcher carried out a study to find out the performance of the mentally retarded in academics. The research will help in getting different methods and ways of teaching this category of disability.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In Kenya, different stakeholders have found a way of helping the mentally challenged learners including establishing special units for them in regular schools. Despite these efforts, many challenges do exist in teaching them , so the researcher decided to study that.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to investigate the challenges faced by teachers of the mentally retarded learners in Githamba Primary School. From the study, the researcher intended to get the best methods of teaching the mentally retarded so that they benefit like other learners.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study was to determine the challenges of teaching the mentally retarded learners in Githambia Primary school, Thika District Kenya. The study sought to:

- Determine the characteristics of mentally retarded children
- Identify the methods used in teaching the mentally retarded children in their special unit.
- Determine if there is a significant relationship between mental retardation and performance.
- Determine the challenges faced by the teachers of Githambia primary school in teaching the mentally retarded in their special unit.
- Identify how the mentally retarded can be helped to suit in the society better.

1.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant relationship between mental retardation and learning.

There is no significant difference in the teaching of mentally retarded children and 'normal' learners.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study was carried out in Gathaimbia Primary school in Kihumbuini, Gatanga Division Thika District. The school has a population of nine hundred eighty three pupils in regular classes and twenty five pupils in the special unit, making a total of 1008 pupils. There are nineteen teachers in the regular classes and one special unit teacher.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will benefit the following disciplines:

The Ministry of education will benefit from the recommendations given so that it is able to come up with a differentiated curriculum. The ministry will also realise the need to train more personnel to handle learners with intellectual challenges. The ministry will also create awareness campaigns to parents of mentally retarded children. It will also get to know ways and means of providing support to learners with mental retardation.

The district supervisors will be able to monitor and support schools with special needs classes and offer all the necessary support in material and human resources.

The teachers will gain more knowledge and skills in handling mentally retarded learners. They will get interest in training in order to be better managers of these children. Teachers' attitudes towards the learners may change from negative to positive once they understand them.

The parents will be able to appreciate and support their children. They will now be able to take care of them instead of hiding them in their houses to avoid shame from other members of the society. The parents will also be able to cooperate with teachers in the learning of their children.

The student in the school will be able to appreciate and accommodate mentally retarded learners. They will also be able to assist them where necessary. The students will also be in a position to understand causes of mental retardation and refrain from labeling them.

The future researchers will base their research of this already done and improve where necessary. They will also be able to come up with yet better solutions.

1.8.0 DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined operationally

1.8.1 ADAPTIVE BEHAVIOUR

This refers to the measure of the degree to which an individual meets the standards

1.8.2 ATTITUDES

These are learned behavior and are responses to a specific social reference. They may be positive or negative.

1.8.3 CHALLENGES

These are problems or barriers that hinder smooth learning and development of teacher or learner.

1.8.4 DAILY LIVING SKILLS.

These are skills taught to an individual to make him or her live independently. These skills include toileting, feeding, washing, dressing and other.

1.8.5 DEVELOPMENTAL PERIOD

This is the period between the birth of a child until the eighteenth year. This helps in the way a person develops.

1.8.6 DISABILITY

This refers to loss or restriction of functional ability of a part of the body due to impairment resulting in limiting the person's participation in the community.

1.8.7 EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN.

These are children whose needs require special services and resources beyond those required by other children.

1.8.8 HANDICAP

This refers to a disadvantage or restriction of activity which has come as a result of society's attitudes towards the disability

1.8.9. IMPAIRMENT

This is damage caused to a part of the body either through accident, disease, genetic factors or other causes. It leads to a loss or weakening of the part affected.

1.8.10 INCLUSION

This refers to and focuses on adjusting the home the school and the society at large, so that all individuals can have opportunity to interact, play, learn, experience the feeling of belonging and develop in accordance with their potential and difficulties.

1.8.11 INTERGRATION

This is the provision of educational services to children with disabilities who have been segregated into special schools or classes and are brought back partially or fully into a regular class.

1.8.12 INTELLECTUALLY CHALLENGED

This is a person whose intellectual functioning is sub average and he or she has deficit in adaptive behavior as compared to his or her peer of the same age, sex, cultural and environmental background.

1.8.13 MENTAL RETARDATION

This is interference in intellectual functioning which occurs during developmental stages to such extent that an individual experiences difficulties in transferring experience from one situation to another.

1.8.14 REHABILITATION

This refers to a process aimed at enabling persons with disabilities to reach and maintain their physical, sensory, intellectual, psychiatric and social functioning levels.

1.8.15 SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION (SNE)

This is the education which provides appropriate modifications in the curricular, teaching methods, teaching / learning resources, medium of communication or the environment in order to meet the individual special education needs. It is learner centered, flexible and adjustable to individual needs and potentials.

1.8.16 SUPPORT SERVICES

This is extra assistance provided to parents and schools in helping children with special needs in education to adjust to the environment and activities in order to overcome barriers to learning and development.

1.9.0 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1.9.1 LIMITATIONS

The researcher encountered some problems in her research. The research was carried out during the second term which has so many activities taking place in the school and more so limited time when competing with completion of the syllabus. In this case the researcher had to sacrifice a lot in order to make the research a success.

Time factor was not only a problem to the researcher but also the persons who were served within the questionnaires. They had also to sacrifice a lot so that they carry out their normal teaching as well as answer the questionnaires and hand them back in time.

The other problem was finances. This was in form of writing material like paper as a lot of paper was required. The work also needed photocopying so that the research could get a duplicate of the work to be handed in for marking. The researcher also needed to travel from school to KISE (Kenya Institute of Special Education) for library services.

There was also the problem of negative attitudes among the teachers who felt bothered when served with questionnaires. Some teachers are not fans of self advancement and those undergoing studies and were therefore not willing to respond in time. This made compiling of the research to be delayed than the researcher had planned. This made the researcher to work too late in the night in order to make her work successful irrespective of the barriers encountered.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

2.1.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT EDUCATION IN KENYA

2.1.2 EDUCATION PROVISION.

According to Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, (1965), before the coming of the Europeans, education in Kenya was informal. It was community based where morals were taught by every member of the individual community. This kind of Education was geared towards production of highly moralized citizens. Every parent had a duty to perform.

The boys were taught how to behave responsibly by their fathers. They were trained to behave and be responsible while young since they were to develop as future heads of their families.

Girls were taught on household chores like cooking, cleaning and taking care of the home in order to prepare them for future mothers and house keepers.

Later on, the missionaries came to Kenya under the Church. Their aim was to spread Christianity. They then started schools where by the Kenyans were taught reading, writing and arithmetic. There were no schools by then and children used to learn under trees and wrote on slates and earthed floors. It was later that schools were established and formal education took root.

Education was segregative as girls were not allowed to go to school by their parents. It was believed that learned girls would develop loose morals. They were therefore subjected to tending animals and doing household chores.

Boys on the other hand were taken to school. They were given preference to education so that they could later hold jobs and support their families.

Today, education is for both boys and girls. When they attain school going age at five years, children are supposed to be taken to nursery school for one year and later to join class one at the age of six years. Education system in Kenya is 8-4-4 whereby learner stays in primary school for eight years, four years in secondary school and four years in the University.

Education before 2003 was cost sharing based in primary school, a little fee in nursery to cater for their expenses and secondary school is now free from January 2008

2.1.3 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

According to Ndurumo, (1993) Kenya's Ministry of Basic education in a policy Paper in 1981 stated that the educable Mentally retarded should be educated in regular classes with some special Education Provisions. On the other hand , the Moderately retarded were to be educated in special classes or units , while the severely and profoundly Mentally retarded were to be educated in special schools.

The ministry further emphasized that social contracts both at home and in the community were to be arranged for the severely and profoundly retarded ; the profoundly retarded were seen also as needing instructions in hospitals on a short term or long term basis.

Depending on the learning ability of the children, the ministry of basic Education ,(1981) recommended these as the age groups of the children.

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. Home | 0-2 years. |
| 2. Nursery | 2-6 years |
| 3. Pre- Primary | 6-9 years |
| 4. Primary | 9-13 years |
| 5. Intermediate | 13 – 16 years |
| 6. Vocational | over 16 years |

The ministry recommended that nursery and pre – primary classes should have not more than four children in a class for the mildly retarded. The primary and intermediate classes

on the other hand, were to have a maximum of six children in a class for the severely retarded , ten for the mildly retarded.

2.3.0 SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION IN NURSERY AND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mwangi, (2004) explains this as a type of education which provides modification in curricula, teaching methods teaching and learning materials, medium in order to meet individual social educational needs. It is learner centered, flexible and adjustable to individual needs and potential.

In Kenya, a special need Education is highly emphasized. There are early childhood programs to cater for learners with special needs. Some of these programs include home care, kindergarten, baby care, nursery and pre-units whereby learners are taught pre school readiness skills to prepare them for primary school education. They are taught basic skills such as interaction through play, language through songs and dances and a little arithmetic through the use of songs and nemonics. Learners with special needs which are severe are taught daily living skills such as toileting, dressing and self care.

In primary schools more advanced skills are taught. There are some learners who are mentally educable and can learn more advanced skills such as carpentry, tailoring, animal husbandry thus are trained on these vocational skills to enable them live independent lives after school. They are also introduced to play activities to help them interact freely with the rest of the school community which is an additional benefit since they are able to develop language.

2.3.1 DEFINITION OF SPECIAL NEEDS (SNE) EDUCATION

2.3.2 DEFINITION OF MENTAL RETARDATION BY DIFFERENT WRITERS

Different writers define mental retardation differently. According to Stevens and Heber, pg 3, mental retardation is sub-average general intellectual functioning which originates during developmental period and associated with impairment in adaptive behavior.

Porteus, (1941), defines a mentally retarded person as an individual who has been diagnosed as mentally retarded on the basis of poor test performance and who finally functions at a normal level proves thereby that he was never feeble minded.

According to Grossman, (1973), mental retardation is a significantly sub average general intellectual functioning existing con-currently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period.

Goltward, (1970), defines mentally retarded person as a child, a male, inferior to the normal on desirable traits, economically independent and should be put away some place.

However , Children Act 2001, Chapter 12 quotes a disabled child shall have the right to be treated with dignity and to be accorded appropriate medical treatment , special care, education and training free of charge or at a reduced cost whenever possible.

2.3.3 CATEGORIES OF MENTALLY RETARDED LEARNERS.

According to American Association on Mental deficiency (AAMD), Michael M. Ndurumo, page 222, Exceptional children, mentally challenged persons are classified according to the degree or level of severity as measured by an IQ test. The levels are as in the table which follows:-

LEVEL	STANFORD – BINET SCALE (SD 16)	WECHSLER SCALE (SD 15)	EDUCATIONAL TERMS
Mild	67-52	69-55	Educable
Moderate	51-36	54-40	Trainable
Severe	35-20	39-25	Trainable
Profound	19 and below	25 and below	Severe/ profound.

From the table above, educationally mentally retarded individuals are in three categories namely:-

- Educable mentally retarded with an IQ of 75-70
- Trainable mentally retarded with an IQ of 50-25
- Severe /profound mentally of an IQ of below 25

2.3.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF MENTALLY RETARDED LEARNERS

According to Mwaura (2002), children with developmental disabilities can be identified through the following characteristics:

a) Academic Problems.

In academics, mentally retarded children have a general poor speech and language development. They lag behind other peers in normal language development. They show delayed development in comprehension, receptive language, expressive language and vocabulary. They generally do not do well in school.

b) Social Skills

Due to limitations in communication due to lack of receptive and expressive language, they are withdrawn. They do not interact freely with peers especially those without disabilities

c) Daily Problems

Mentally retarded children may have problems in developing daily living skills. Some may not have the concept of:

- Moving from one place to another e.g. running away from rain or sun
- Keeping themselves clean
- Dressing
- Using the toilet
- Communicating with other people.

In this case, these children require guidance in their day to day life.

2.3.5 CAUSES OF MENTAL RETARDATION

According to Ndurumo, (1993), in his book Exceptional children, mental retardation can result form the following:

a) Infections and Intoxications

This can result prenatally or postnatally, can be as a result of German measles or Rubella, sexually transmitted diseases, viral, bacterial and parasitic infections. Meningitis is one of the most prevalent cause of mental retardation. Pregnant mothers who drink alcohol or smoke have a high risk of giving birth to mentally retarded children. Lead poisoning is another kind of intoxication leading to mental retardation.

b) Trauma or Physical agents

Trauma means accident, fall or injury. This can cause mental retardation. Complications during delivery such as breech delivery, use of forceps or wrapping of the umbilical cord around the child's neck are also causes of mental retardation. This is due to limited fresh oxygen supply to the brain.

c) Gross Brain Disease;

According to Suran and Rizzo (1979 pg 217), this category includes hereditary disorders that are not yet understood. These diseases include Huntington's and tuberous Sclerosis. The former is characterized by seizures, spasmodic movements (or rigidity without such involuntary movements). Progressive retardation and then death. This condition seldom occurs before the age of four. Tuberous Sclerosis is characterized by tumor and may cause mild to severe retardation. The term (Gross Brain Disease) is a complex one and indicates that the complexities, the relationship between intellectual functioning and brain damage and between brain damage and retardation are not yet clear and require further research.

d) Unknown Prenatal influences

These refer to abnormalities which occur prior to birth and during pregnancy. They may include cerebral malfunction of the head structure and cranial facial abnormalities according to Suran and Rizzo, (1979, pg 217), Microcephaly and macrocephaly and craniofacial anomalies are examples of these abnormalities.

e) Metabolism or Nutrition

This is as a result of metabolic actions in the body, nutrition, and endocrine or growth dysfunction. Specially, they include Neuro Lipido storage diseases such as tay-sachs disease, carbohydrates disorder which interfere with the brain metabolism, amino acid disorders such as phynylketonuria (PK) and mineral disorders

Suran and Rizzo (1979 pg 216) state that metabolic problems resulting from hereditary factors account only a small number of mental retardation cases. However, tri pheny larsine, acongenital deficiency in which natural control for the excess build up of phagylamine and amino acids, are lacking has received much attention. These excess production of amino acids leads to brain damage which results among other things, in severe mental retardation

f) Chromosomal Abnormality

Some causes of chromosomal aberrations, are mutations, radiation, drugs and other chemicals, viruses, autoimmune mechanisms aged gametes, existing aberration and a group of conditions involving thermal temporal, geographic and perhaps economic factors. This is according t Grossman, (1973, pg 64)

g) Gestational Disorders

This is during the period of pregnancy. These may include prematurity, low birth weight and post maturity.

h) Following Psychiatric

According to the AAMD 1973, manual pg 67, their category includes retardation resulting from psychosis or other psychiatric disorder when there is no evidence of cerebral pathology. Suran and Rizzo, (1979) state that the relationship between severe childhood psychiatric disorder such as Schizophrenia and early infantile autism and mental retardation remains vague.

i) Environment

If there is no evidence of organic or biological disorder in the child, then adverse environmental influences may be the cause of mental retardation. Environmental influences can be classified as psychosocial disadvantages and sensory deprivation. The psychosocial disadvantages was previously described as cultural disadvantages was previously described as cultural familial mental retardation” Heber 1959, familiar mental deficiency” (Allen 1958) “exogenous mental deficiency” Starnuss and litinent (Lewis 1933)

Grossman, (1973), states that in order for a child’s retardation to fit in the environment category, one of the parents should have sub normal intellectual functioning. Another environmental influence is sensory deprivation where children are deprived of stimulation by their parents especially maternal. they lack the opportunity to interact, play, talk, or laugh with their mothers. Even worse is prolonged separation from other human during the critical years.

2.3.6 EDUCATION OF MENTALLY RETARDED LEARNERS

Mentally retarded learners have a right to education like any other child. However, there are variations in teaching as opposed to teaching ‘normal’ children. According to Guerin and Szathocky, (1974), there are four variations of resources rooms available for mentally retarded learners’ rooms available for mentally retarded learners. These include;

i) Prolonged Partial Integration

Here the learners are assigned a special class and are programmed.

ii) Combined class

This involves placing mentally retarded children and average learners in the same class. Teachers and materials are provided with the regular class to make teaching effective.

iii) Learning Resource centre

This is developing a centre within the classroom. The teacher performs evaluations. Prescribes and plans special tutorial sessions to the learners.

iv) Itinerant specialist.

This involves a mobile specially trained teacher working with a small group of mentally retarded children for a specific time each day. These learners are supposed to be in the same regular class as others. Their regular teacher should also be present.

2.3.7 EDUCATION PROVISION OF MENTALLY RETARDED LEARNERS

Before the 18th century, nothing much was known about the history of the mentally retarded children but in the 18th century, the concept of education was introduced by monks.

According to Laylansky, (1954), the Greek and the Romans were the first persons to identify mentally retarded people in 449 BC respectively.

In 1778, a physician, Jean Itard, decided to educate a mentally retarded boy named Victor, who was found by hunters in the Aveyron forest in France on Social Skills. Later on, Victor made it in simple words which were a way forward to his academic learning. Itard's student, Edwin Seguin, In 1836 continued with Itard's attempt on Victor and trained him further. After sometime, the boy would use his senses, remember and compare, speak, write and count.

Enactment of public law 94-142 in United States of America, 1975 changed people's attitude on the mentally retarded children. The law stated that all children regardless of the severity of their handicap became the educational responsibility of the public schools.

Michael M Ndurumo, (1973), states that the first two schools for the mentally retarded in Kenya were St Niculus and Aga Khan, which were established in 1948. Ndurumo further explains that in 1968, the Kenya society for the mentally handicapped (KSMH) was

established with a primary aim of treating, educating and rehabilitating the mentally handicapped (ministry of basic education 1981 pg 27)

According to the ministry of education (MOE), 1976. St Niculus and Agakhan merged and became Jacaranda special school situated in Kheleleshwa in Nairobi. In 1968, city Primary unit for the mentally retarded and race course unit were established in Nairobi. In 1970, Karatina and Meru schools were established followed by Mombassa Aga khan special school in 1971.

The number of programs for the mentally retarded grew slowly from 1968-1980. There were two with a total of forty children.

The Ominde commission, (1964, pg 132) noted that there were many children whose handicapping conditions were less severe and were training in normal situations provided that some sympathetic considerations were given to their problem by the teacher concerned .

'Gachathi' report,(1976, pg. 74), repeated the same appeal urging that the mentally learners should be integrated in the regular classrooms . The Kenya Government has shown support, concern and commitment in the provision of services to improve the welfare of her challenged children. In 1980, there was a great upsurge in the education of the less privileged when the former President His Excellency Daniel Arap Moi declared 1980 as a national year for the disabled .He helped in raising over 21 million Kenyan shillings in a fund drive to support the disabled in the country. A national fund for the disabled was set up and has led to invaluable help in our national development program for the disabled.

In 1984, the government established educational assessment Resource Centers (EARCS) to create light and awareness on the education of the handicapped, mentally retarded included. These centers have specially trained assessment teachers who work in collaboration with a multidisciplinary team like doctors, social workers and offers to access and place the impaired children appropriately in the existing placement.

In 1986, Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) was established and it offers training and seminars to teachers handling various kinds of handicapping conditions. Diplomas and certificates in special Needs Education are awarded to teachers on successful completion of the course. Kenya is following the emerging trends on proper placement for the mentally retarded. Those with profound and severe conditions have been placed in special schools such as Munyu school for the mentally retarded and Jacaranda.

The government has continued to support the education of the mentally retarded learners by giving grants to schools with special units as well as those in inclusive settings. This support boosts the teachers and learners and learning is likely to be more meaningful hence proper resources are used and by the right persons.

2.3.8 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY MENTALLY RETARDED LEARNERS IN LEARNING.

Mentally retarded learners face a lot of problems. This could be from their physical and behavior point of view. Such problems may include:

(i) Labelling

Some people refer to these persons as idiots, imbeciles, marons, fools just to mention but a few. These labels are dehumanizing and tend to worsen their conditions, when they view themselves as being worthless.

(ii) Low academic ability.

Because of their sub average development, mentally retarded learners perform below average. They take time to get concepts thus lag behind their peers in academic work. Some at class six could be taking tasks of class two levels. They do not fit in the mean standard score of the class they may be in.

(iii) Withdrawal

Some mentally retarded children are physically repulsive. Children of their age may not accept them in play and other social activities.

They tend to reason and act below their age appropriate group thus are neglected. This makes them, to keep off others and therefore live lonely lives of their own.

iv) Negative perception by the community

The school community - teachers and learners do not accept the mentally retarded. They usually suspect and associate them with evil. They fear associating with them and even attending to them is seen as a bother. Teachers concentrate more on the average learners who yield good results at the expense of one or two mentally retarded who are taken to be there to grow and never benefit academically.

Parents of the average learners feel offended when a mentally retarded child is placed together with the average. Some even claim that the mentally retarded will influence the average and behave differently.

Having encountered these problems, the mentally retarded view themselves as worthless objects. However, they tend to defend themselves by being aggressive to others, rude to authority or even seeking attentions of every one in order to be recognized.

2.3.9 INTERVENTION MEASURES IN THE EDUCATION OF THE MENTALLY RETARDED LEARNERS.

In order to make the education of the mentally retarded real and practical, the following can be done:

- (i) Creation of awareness on the general public on the cause and safety measures on mental problems.
- (ii) Peripatetic services can be done in order to assist the regular teacher.

(iii) Enough and relevant teaching aids to be provided.

(iv) A source of funds to be set aside to purchase basic necessities because most of the parents are too poor to provide for their children.

(v) Incentives to be provided to make the mentally retarded become regular in school attendance.

If the above points are considered education of the mentally retarded will improve and even the community will develop a positive attitude towards them.

CHAPTER THREE.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methods and techniques used in obtaining the data pertaining the study carried out in determining challenges of teaching the mentally retarded learners in Githambia Primary school, Thika District, Kenya.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN.

The researcher used the survey approach. In this approach, the information was obtained from the population, attitudes and behaviour. In this method, questions were asked through interviews or questionnaires about many things which could not be easily observed. The survey also helped the researchers to collect information from people to determine the challenges of teaching the mentally retarded learners in Githambia Primary School.

3.2 AREA AND POPULATION OF STUDY.

The population of the study comprised of the head teacher, special unit teacher and regular teachers in Githambia primary school. This population was considered because they could give very relevant information required by the researcher.

3.3 SAMPLE SELECTION.

The researcher sampled twenty five pupils in the special unit and three others integrated in the main stream, the school head teacher, the special teacher and teachers in the main stream handling the classes where the integrated learners learn. The researcher held face to face sessions, questionnaires and direct observation since the unit is within the school thus used convenience sampling. The teacher collected the information she required directly and also the responses from the questionnaires.

3.4.0 DATA COLLECTION.

A letter was sent to the head teacher asking for permission to allow the researcher to carry out a research in the school. After collecting the data the researcher analysed it for presentation.

3.4.1 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS.

The researcher used the questionnaire technique in collecting data for research

The idea behind this was the respondents had freedom to say what they wished. she also used direct interviews and observation.

Due to convenience, the researcher also had a chance to see true records of performance of the mentally retarded learners in the school.

3.4.2 PROCEDURE.

The questionnaires were distributed to the head teacher, special unit teacher and teachers in the school. The researcher also visited the special unit class and observed the performance records and also observed their behaviour as they learnt. The questionnaires were responded to positively which was quite encouraging.

3.5 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS.

The research instruments employed by the researcher were valid and reliable in the sense that the researcher obtained the she required. However, due to other activities taking place in the school, the researcher had to apply patience since the data took some time to come in full but eventually every one responded and positively.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

After the data was collected, frequency and percentage was used to determine the data. pie charts and bar graphs were used in data presentation.

CHAPTER FOUR.

4.0 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS.

This chapter deals with presentation of the findings of the study. The questionnaires were three. One to the head teacher, one to the special unit teacher and the third one to the regular teachers in the main stream.

Each questionnaire had some questions. The researcher met with the respondents and talked to them before giving them the questionnaires.

The researcher then gave them her wish on when to expect the responses for convenience purposes and left them to respond as requested.

4.1 DATA ANALYSIS.

TABLE 1: CHARACTERISED OF MENTALLY RETARDED LEARNERS.

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Are playful and mobile	12	48
Are destructive	3	12
Are quite and withdraw	3	12
Are interactive	7	28
TOTAL	25	100

The table portrays the characteristics of mentally retarded learners. 40% are playful and mobile, 12% are destructive, 12% are quiet and withdrawn and 28% are interactive. From this data, it is well observed that mentally retarded learners derive much joy in play and interacting with others.

The same information can be illustrated on a pie – chart as follows:

FIGURE 1: A PIECHART REPRESENTING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MENTALLY RETERDED LEARNERS.

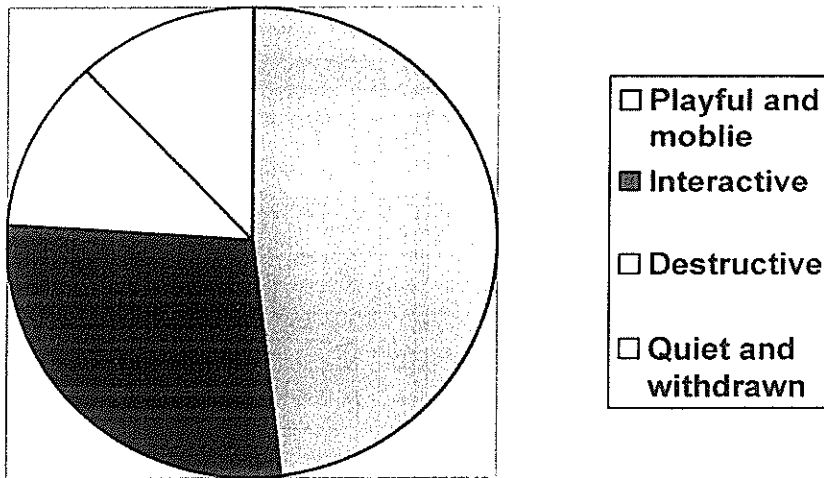


TABLE 2: METHODS OF TECAHING MENTARY RETARDED CHILDREN IN THE SPECIAL UNIT

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Play and games	4	20
Formal lessons	2	10
Practical work	4	20
Both formal and practical work.	10	50
TOTAL	20	100

The table shows the methods of teaching the mentally retarded learners in the special units. Majority of teachers suggested that learners can learn better if they are engaged in formal and practical work. 20% supported play and games and practical work respectively. Only 10% of the teachers' recommended formal lessons.

The same information can be illustrated on a bar graph as follows:

FIGURE 2: A BAR GRAPH TO REPRESENT METHODS OF TECAHING THE MENTALLY RETARDED CHIOLDREN IN THE SPECIAL UNITS.

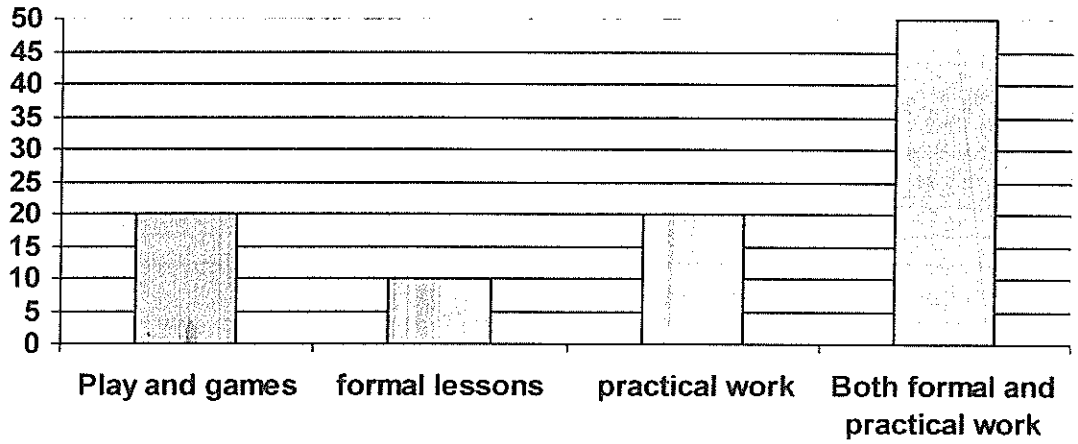


TABLE 3: SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MENTAL RETARDATION AND PERFORMANCE

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	20	100
NO	-	-
TOTAL	20	100

The table shows that there is significant relationship between mental retardation and performance.

TABLE4: CHALLENGES FACED BY THE TECAHERS OF GITHAMBIA PRIMARY SCHOOL IN TECAHING THE MENTALLY RETARDED IN THEIR UNIT.

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Parental ignorance	5	20
Negative attitudes towards the mentally retarded learners.	6	24
Truancy	4	16
Poor facilities	2	8
Language barrier	8	32
Total	25	100

The table shows the challenges faced by the teachers of Githambia primary school in teaching the mentally retarded in their special class.

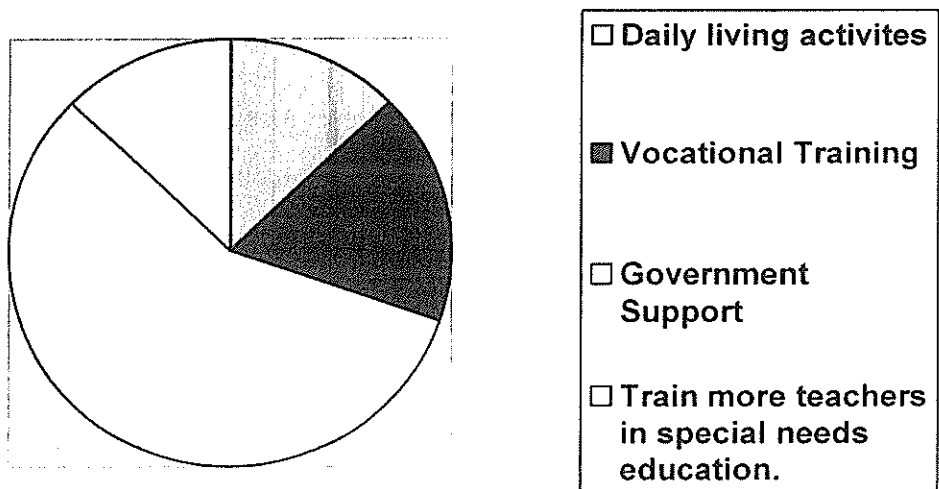
The highest percentage is taken by language barrier, followed by negative attitudes.. Parental ignorance, truancy and poor facilities respectively, where by truancy means inconsistency in attending school. The child keeps in and off school.

TABLE 5: HOW THE MENTALLY RETARDED CAN BE HELPED TO SUIT IN THE SOCIETY BETTER.

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
To be taught activities of daily living	5	25
Vocational training	6	30
Government to provide facilities to cater for their needs.	6	30
Train more teachers in SNE	3	15
TOTAL	220	100

The table shows how the mentally retarded can be helped to suit in the society 30% recommended vocational training and government to provide facilities, 25% recommended teaching of daily living skills and 15% to train more teachers in special needs education. The same information can be illustrated in a pie chart as below.

FIGURE 3: A PIE CHART SHOWING HOW THE MENTALLY RETARDED CAN BE HELPED TO SUIT IN THE SOCIETY BETTER.



CHAPTER FIVE.

5.0 SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 SUMMARY.

From the research, it has been found out that mental retardation is not a specific disease but can result from deficiency of nutrients in the body , external factors from the environment a child is living in and can be accelerated by lack of acceptance from the community which results to the affected person having low esteem and a feeling of less worth.

Negative attitudes from the surroundings have a great impact on one's life and can aggravate the situation. However, acceptance, support and being wanted can make a mentally retarded learner live a very independent life.

As far as education is concerned, mentally retarded learners have a right to education like any other learner. All they need is to be given special attention by the teacher and be given special attentions that befit them.

From the research, mentally retarded learners in Githambia are mild and moderate - two categories that can be handled and maintained.

Having learnt the causes, characteristics and academic performance, it is now possible to device proper methods of teaching these learners to benefit like the rest of the learners.

There is emphasis on training more teachers in special needs education (S.N.E) so that they can rightfully handle the mentally retarded learners. Negative attitudes are going down according to the findings as most of the reponses were towards the positive support of these learners.

More efforts if put in place to create awareness on the prevalence of the mentally retarded and the way they should be handled will eventually eradicate these negative attitudes and with time, their learning will be smooth and beneficial.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS.

The researcher revealed the picture of there being several cases of mentally retarded learners in Githambia primary school. There are only three teachers who are specially trained. The researcher would therefore recommend the following to be done in order to make learning of the mentally retarded a success.

To start with, there should be frequent inductions of the regular teachers by the three already specially trained in order to advise them on the best methods to use when teaching.

Secondly, there is need to train more teachers in special needs education, use of relevant and adequate teaching resources should be availed in school.

Moreover, awareness campaigns are essential to the local communities to sensitize them on special needs in order to improve or change their attitudes towards this category of learners.

Further still, the government should continue giving grants to schools to support learning of the mentally retarded learners. Resource rooms should also be developed in the school. Last but not least, there should be a differentiated curriculum for the mentally retarded learners not to mention vocational training to be done as this category has been noted to be good in manual work.

CONCLUSION.

Education of the mentally retarded is a necessity irrespective of the challenges that may be faced by teachers. Free education for all can be a reality only when all irrespective of any challenges are able to receive quality education.

Thanks to the government of Kenya for its great efforts and campaigns towards the education of the mentally retarded learners. The grants given to schools will act as a strong support to their learning and this will remove them from their caliber of being objects of pity and be made into responsible human beings who are capable of handling themselves in life.

The researcher's goal was to present the challenges faced by teachers teaching the mentally retarded in a very impartial way and as clearly as possible. Future readers and researchers may pursue further to any necessary depth and develop their own personal and relevant professional opinions.

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Office of the Director

24th April 2008

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR MS/MRS/MR... MUNGA Jeyce

SAATCHI REG. # BED/13334/01/AF

The above named is our student in the Institute of Open and Distance Learning (IODL), pursuing a Diploma/Bachelors degree in Education.

He/she wishes to carry out a research in your Organization on:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND PERFORMANCE
BY MENTALLY RETARDED LEARNERS

The research is a requirement for the Award of a Diploma/Bachelors degree in Education.

Any assistance accorded to him/her regarding research will be highly appreciated.

Yours Faithfully,

MUHWEZI JOSEPH
HEAD, IN-SERVICE

B. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS. QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX

C QUESTIONNAIRE Q1: TO THE HEAD TECAHER

Q1 Please Indicate whether male or female.

Male Female

Q2. Are there mentally retarded learners in your school?

Yes No

Q3. How are these learners identified

- a) Observation.
- b) Assessment

Tick where appropriate

Q4. How often are these learners assessed?

Tick where appropriate.

- a) Once a year
- b) Monthly
- c) When need arises.

Q5. How many mentally retarded learners are there in your school? Please fill the table.

Boys	
Girls	
Total	

Q5. How many teachers do you have in school? Please indicate.

- a) specially Trained
- b) Regular teachers

Total

Q6. What is the total enrolment of the school? Please fill in the table below.

BOYS	
GIRLS	
SPECIAL NEEDS	
TOTAL	

QUESTIONNAIRE II: TO THE SPECIAL NEEDS TEACHER.

Q1. Please indicate your gender. Tick appropriately

Male Female

Q2 Please indicate the ability of your learners as below.

- a) Reading
- b) Writing
- c) Arithmetic

Q3. How do the mentally retarded learners perform in different subjects. Please fill in as shown below.

Mathematics	
English	
Kiswahili	
Science	
Social studies	
C.R.E	
Total	

Q4. Please indicate the behaviour of the mentally retarded learners in the manner specified below. Indicate the number for each

- a) Are playful and mobile
- b) Are destructive
- c) Are quiet and withdrawn
- d) Are interactive

QUESTIONNAIRE III.: TO REGULAR TEACHERS

I Mungai Joyce Waithira humbly request you to provide me with the information below to enable me accomplish my degree course in special needs education. Respond as per instruction given in each question.

Thanks in advance.

Q1. Please indicate whether male or female

Male

Female: Tick appropriately

Q2. From your observation of the school special unit, what do you think is the best placement for these learners?

- a) Train move teachers in SNE
- b) To be placed in special schools.
- c) To be given practical work
- d) To be integrated in the main stream.

Q3. Do you think these learners benefit in school work?

YES

NO Tick where appropriate.

Q4. What in your opinion should be done to these learners?

- a) To be given more support
- b) Government to provide more facilities
- c) All teachers to be provided with special needs lessons to be able to handle mentally retarded learners.
- d) Parents to be sensitized on how to handle their mentally retarded learners.

C. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL BACK GROUND.

NAME: MUNGAI JOYCE WAITHIRA

REGISTRATION NUMBER: BED/1334/61/DF

AGE: 43 YEARS

GENDER: FEMALE

CIVIL STATUS: DEPUTY HEAD TECAHER.

ADDRESS: GITHAMBIA PRIMARY SCHOOL, P.O.BOX 340, THIKA

DATE OF BIRTH: 04.12.1964

CONTACT: 07231218348

EDUCATIONAL BACK GROUND

COLLEGES

THOGOTO TECAHERS TRAINING COLLEGE

KENYA INSTITUTE OF SPECIAL EDUACTION

SECONDARY

KAHUHIA GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL ("O" LEVEL)

MULANGO GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL ('A' LEVEL)

ELEMENTARY

KIGETHO NURSERY SCHOOL

GATIIGURU PRIMARY SCHOOL

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

COURSE: DIPLOMA

RESEARCH TITLE: TECAHING AND LEARNING OF MENTALLY RETARDED LEARNERS IN INCLUSIVE SETTINGS IN KIHUMBUINI ZONE. GATANGA. KENYA.