

**IMPACT OF SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION ON MENTALLY
HANDICAPPED LEARNERS IN MALINDI DISTRICT
KENYA.**

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**A RESEARCH REPORT PRESENTED TO THE INSTITUTE OF OPEN AND
DISTANT LEARNING IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENT FOR
THE AWARD OF A DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF EDUCATION IN SPECIAL
NEEDS OF KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY.**

DECEMBER 2008

DECLARATION

I Janet Mbeyu hereby declare that this is entirely my own work and that it has not been submitted before to any other University or Institution of Higher Learning for the award of Degree or Diploma.

Signed by.....*Chihanga*.....

Janet Mbeyu Chihanga

Date 20/12/2008

APPROVAL

This report was carried out under my supervision. And with my approval, it is now ready for submission to the Academic Board of Kampala International University.

Signed  _____

Derick Ssekajugo

Date: 19/12/2008

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to acknowledge the following people whom without their contribution this report would not have been possible; my dear husband Anthony Nyiro Chibudu and my son Samson Chibudu Nyiro.

My supervisor Mr. Ssekajugo Derick, who guided me throughout all the stages and gave me confidence through out the process.

DEDICATION

This entire study is dedicated to my husband, Anthony Nyiro Chibudu and my son, Samson Chibudu Nyiro for allowing me to peruse this course and enduring the loneliness during the whole period of my study.

ABSTRACT

Mentally handicapped learners in particular have benefited a lot with this educational programme. This research has been initiated to investigate the impact special needs education has made in this area of disability.

The researcher used survey method and employed questionnaire as a technique to ask relevant questions. The answers provided were in quantitative form. Investigation was mainly centered on finding the difficulties of mentally handicapped learners understanding the approaches used by teachers to address difficulties identified, and assessing the learning outcomes on this educational programme.

Teachers of the involved special units were the main respondents and were able to provide the much needed information. There were a total of 10 teachers in the five schools.

In conclusion the researcher hails the good work done by the unit teachers and the teacher aides in supporting mentally handicapped learners.

However the researcher recommends that more teachers be sent to the units to correct the teacher – pupil ratio imbalance. Also there is need to put more effort on occupational training and a follow up programmes be set up to ensure those learners who drop out or get integrated into society are well placed.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Before the Sixteenth Century people with disability all over the world were considered socially and physically less human. They were not accepted as part and parcel of their families and communities.

As a matter of fact, the impaired were neglected and rejected as a result of the beliefs held by the masses. Some beliefs were that, deafness was a result of witchcraft or a curse or even a punishment from God for being disobedient. Families having -impaired persons were discriminated against; it was hard even to marry from such families.

In some communities children with disabilities were not given a chance to live because they were considered to be a burden. They were thrown away, left in the bush to die or killed. Some great philosophers like Plato and Socrates condemned people with disability as not being capable of reasoning

Thomas Hopkins in the United States established the first school for the deaf student in 1817. The institution was called Asylum for the education and instruction of the deaf and dumb.

In 1857, the Columbian Institution for the deaf and dumb was established in Washington DC. This school eventually developed and latter became university unit, which is known as Gallaudet University. It's the only Liberal Arts University in the world for the deaf.

Today people with hearing impairments lead productive lives and are successful in general education. They believe that the barriers to full access and acceptance by society are those directed by the attitudes of the people without disabilities, partnership and collaboration between hearing impairment are on the way towards overcoming those attitudinal obstacles.

In 1579-1620, a German – Juan Martin Pablo Bonet developed a hand manual alphabet and this proved that through teaching activates, a possibly of educating children with hearing impairment could realized. In the 20th and 21st century, children with such disabilities like hearing impairment have been placed in special preprograms such as special schools and in non governmental institutions like Kenya Red Cross.

The main aim of providing special needs education in Kenya is to help learners with special needs to develop skills, acquire knowledge and attitudes as well as other competencies necessary for them to realize their full human potential.

Realization of full human potential means that the individual will be able to live independently, competitively and usefully as a member of the society.

Special needs education is therefore geared towards removing the barriers that hinder learners with special needs from progressing and achieving their goals in life.

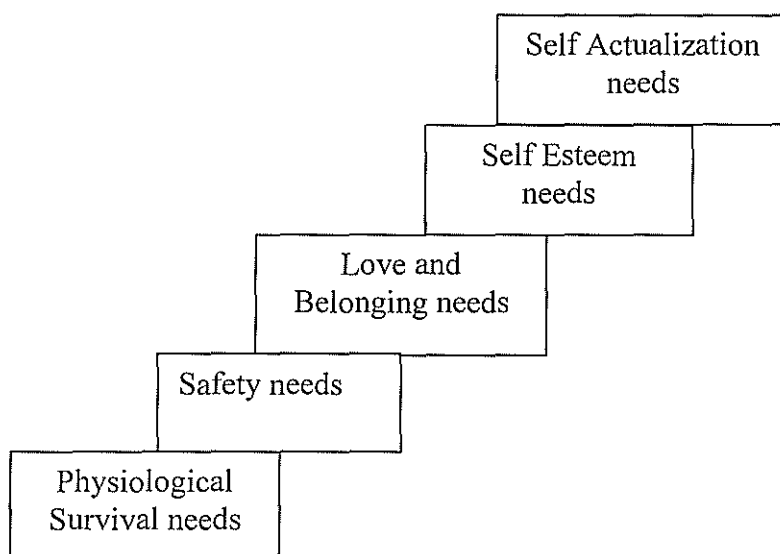
Learners with special needs are categorized according to the body part or sensory areas affected: these include physically handicapped, mentally handicapped, visually handicapped, hearing impaired and multiple handicapped. However, children living under

difficult circumstances, abused and neglected children are also regarded as children with special needs.

Due to their difference with the other learners in regular classes, learners with special needs need special approach in learning. Special education therefore provides an educational approach that is suitable for each category of learners aimed at helping the learner achieve as much as the learners in regular classes.

Guiding Theory

This research was based on Abraham Maslow's theory of motivation. This theory states that an individual strives to be the best of what they can become when lower needs are satisfied before the individual seeks to satisfy higher needs. Abraham Maslow developed a structure for hierarchy of needs. It has five levels starting with the lowest and progressing towards the highest.



Physiological needs are basic needs such as food, water, sleep, and others that support life. A child cannot attend school before such needs are met.

Safety needs includes security, protection shelter and others that help the child feel secure. Children without shelter, or living in hostile environment have a problem in concentrating in their studies. Children with special needs need an assurance of security in order to learn.

Love and belonging level of needs advocates for the child's need for love acceptance and identity. In order for a child to learn he or she need to identify himself / herself with a group of fellow learners or peers has to feel accepted and loved by others. This helps him / her build a sense of belonging to the group or class.

The fourth level – of self esteem needs - state that when a child has been accepted and belongs to a group he / she develop a sense of self-worth. Self esteem enables the child to strive to achieve the other goals and excel in life pursuits.

After self esteem needs are met, the best in the hierarchy are self actualization needs. This is the ultimate goal or purpose of human behaviour. At this level the child or the person will want to realize their full human potential.

A self realized person will have a set of value systems such as trustfulness, honesty, beauty, goodness, morality etc.

This theory stresses the importance of meeting the learner's basic needs first before moving to other needs.

Special needs education is based on systematic development of an individual learner through provision of basic requirements, education and training that leads to the learners' full independence and competence.

Statement of the Problem

This study was intended to impact of special needs education on mentally handicapped learners in Malindi district Kenya. Ndurumo M.M. (1993)

The Commission addressed itself to needs of special children. Among its recommendations was that there was need for special education and training for handicapped children.

This recommendation was then taken up by the government and policies were enacted to implement the recommendation.

However, there has not been any follow up or review on the implementation of these policies to establish the success or failure of special education among the learners with special needs.

The researcher therefore, sought to assess the impact of special needs education on the learners with mental handicaps.

This category of learners, are seen to have a bigger challenge as their brains are affected. And as such, anybody would be interested to find out how this special group of learners acquires knowledge, skills and attitudes and how this education has impacted on them.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assess the impact of special needs education on mentally handicapped learners in special units in Malindi District in Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the main challenges of mentally handicapped learners.
2. To investigate how special needs education addresses the challenges identified.
3. To assess the learning outcomes of special needs education.

Research Questions

1. What are the main challenges facing mentally handicapped learners?
2. How special does needs education endeavor to address these particular challenges?
3. What are the learning outcomes of special needs education on mentally handicapped learners?

Scope.

The study area is limited to schools with mentally handicapped special units within Malindi district in Kenya.

The study confines itself to teaching approaches and learning outcomes for mentally handicapped learners.

The study mainly examines the challenges facing learners with mental handicaps, basic approaches used to tackle the challenges and the results realized on application of the approaches used.

Significance of the Study

The study therefore sought to expose the benefits of special needs education to society. It also aims to create awareness to parents who still haven't seen the need to enlist their mentally handicapped children in special schools or units.

The study will also help special needs teachers to re-examine the approaches they use in handling challenges of these group of learners with a view of improving them.

The Ministry of education will get a valued assessment of its input towards education of mentally handicapped children.

The review of the teaching and training approaches and assessment of the learning outcomes will benefit mentally handicapped learners through improved services from the teachers.

Definition of Terms

Attitude	The inward feeling of a person towards something
Barrier free environment	social and physical environment that is conducive for the development of the child with disability
Handicap	Handicap is a disadvantage caused by disability that prevent or limits an individual fulfillment of a role that is normal
Hearing impairment	These include all degree of hearing loss person who can utilize their residual hearing with or without hearing aid are Considered hard of hearing while those who do not have any tests are considered deaf.

Inclusive
mainstreaming.

This concept is parallel with integration and

Impairment

Refers to any loss or abnormality of physical or anatomical
function.

ACRONYMS

AAMD – American Association on Mental Deficiency.

ADL – Activities of Daily Living.

IEP – Individualised Educational Programme.

ITP – Individualised Training Programme.

KIE – Kenya Institute of Education.

KISE – Kenya Institute of Special Education.

EARC – Educational Assessment Resource Centre.

MH – Mentally Handicapped.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter sought to review mainly what other researchers and writers have written about mentally retarded learners and special needs education in particular. The review touched on the areas of concern to the research problem. The challenges facing the teachers handling these learners, teaching strategies employed to make special education a reality and the tangible benefits of special needs education.

Definitive Review of Mental Retardation

Mental retardation means significantly sub average general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behaviour and manifested during the developmental period that adversely affect a child's educational performance. **Auxter D. Etal (1999) pg. 431**

Classification of Mentally Retarded Children

Mentally retarded learners are classified into two categories:

- a) Intellectual Functioning
- b) Educational Functioning

The following table based on American Association on Mental Deficiency summarizes this classification.

Table 1: AAMD Levels of Mental Retardation

DEGREE OF MENTAL RETARDATION	STANFORD BINET SCALE (SD 16)	WECHLER 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	24 and Below	Severe / Profound

Ndurumo M.M. (1993) Pg. 222

Causes Of Mental Retardation

- 1). Infections and Intoxications
- 2). Trauma or Physical Agent
- 3). Gross Brain Disease
- 4). Unknown Parental Influences
- 5). Metabolism or Nutrition
- 6). Following Psychiatric Disorders
- 7). Chromosomal Abnormality
- 8). Environmental Influences

Identification Of Mentally Retarded Children

Warren (1968) Citing Payne and Mercer (19785, pg. 53 - 54) in Ndurumo M.M. (1993)

listed the following signs as possible indicators of mental retardation in early childhood.

- (a) Delayed speech

- (b) Delayed motor development
- (c) Delayed psychomotor development
- (d) Delayed development of common sense
- (e) Delayed academic development
- (f) Unique physical features among those with down Syndrome
- (g) Unique behavioral traits among those with autism

Assessment.

Educational assessment is done to children suspected to have mental problems at District Educational Centres known as (EARCS) Educational Assessment Resource Centres

Purpose of Assessment.

- (a) Detection of deficits
- (b) Referral
- (c) Education Placement
- (d) Instructional Programming
- (e) Evaluation of the child progress

Educational Challenges Faced By Children with Mental Retardation

The challenges faced by learners with mental handicaps can best be understood by understanding their learning characteristics.

Robinson and Robinson (1976) in Ndurumo M.M. (1993) pg 237 identified these characteristics as:-

- i). These children are not alert to cues necessary for solving problems.
- ii). They fail to differentiate relevant materials from irrelevant ones in order to develop discriminatory skills.

- iii). They don't ask strategic questions to find specific answers or information needed.
- iv). They fail to take into account past experiences and their outcome.
- v). They are easily distracted by environmental stimuli.
- vi). They are often passive in utilizing their mental capacities to explore and solve problems.

Mwaura S. (2002) pg 34 - 38.

Other Challenges

- 1). Most of these learners have speech problems – e.g. Stuttering
- 2). Some have other unrelated problems like epilepsy.
- 3). Drooling (Salivating) is very common among these learners.
- 4). Those who have cerebral palsy have poor gait and movement problems.
- 5). Most of these learners have motor and co-ordination difficulties.
- 6). Many of the learners also exhibit behavioural problems e.g. aggressiveness, brutality or extreme opposite of these.
- 7). Chronological age differs a lot with their mental age.

Challenges Faced By Teachers Who Teach Mentally Handicapped Children

- i). **Training:** Teachers of mentally handicapped children need to be specially trained to handle the challenges.

Today many teachers have enlisted to get such training in Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE), Kenyatta University and other Universities offering degrees in special education.

ii). Teacher Pupil Ratio

The enrollment of children in special units and schools exceeds the recommended number given by the Ministry.

iii) Resources

The mode of learning of this group of learners requires a lot of materials. Most schools and units lack the necessary resources for teaching these learners.

iv) Workload

Due to inadequate number of teachers the special unit teachers are given subjects in mainstream classes. They then lack enough time to handle the special units.

v) Administration Difficulties

Special units' teachers work with head teachers who don't understand the needs of these learners.

vi) Difficult Parents

Some parents who do not understand the condition of their children demand a lot from the teachers. They expect quick reformation of their children. Others do not provide for their children's basic needs.

vii) Poor Attitude

The community, fellow pupils in regular classes and other teachers still have a negative attitude towards these learners. *Mercer, C.D. and Mercer, A.R (1989)*

Teaching Strategies For Mentally Handicapped Learners

Some of the recommended teaching strategies for these learners include:-

1. Memory Training
 2. Attention Training
 3. Behaviour Modification
 4. Contingency Contracting
 5. Token Economics
 6. Programme Instruction
 7. Premack Principle
 8. Paired Association
 9. Individualized Education Programme
 10. Individualized Training Programme
 11. Task Analysis
12. Teaching from known to unknown, using concrete materials and use of repetition are additional strategies the teachers should employ.

Otiato A.B (2002) pg 78 – 98. / Ndurumo M.M. (1993)

The above strategies when employed will help the teacher to address most of the difficulties these learners have.

The teacher must display a high degree of patience and tolerance in order to handle these learners successfully.

Success Indices

Evaluation of Special Education Programme and evaluation of individual learners is not pegged on academic parameter only.

The degree of independence and duration of training as well as other factors are considered.

Many learners join the programme as slow learners or having specific learning difficulties. These learners outgrow the difficulties and are integrated to regular classes.

Many other learners come in devoid of basic self-help skills such as toileting and dressing, when they manage to do these activities later, that is used as a success index.

Some learners who leave the programme due to age may be able to be integrated in the society. Having learnt occupational skills they are able to fend for themselves.

Conclusion

Special Needs Education has served the mentally handicapped learners well. However, an in-depth evaluation will show areas of improvement that need be looked into to make the programme even more successful.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology which was used in the study: It includes sample size, data collection technique and data analysis procedure.

Research Design

The researcher used the descriptive design in the study to investigate the impact of special needs education on mentally handicapped learners in five special units in Malindi District Kenya.

Type of Data Collected

Data was collected in numerical form. The data was sourced from five special units. The questionnaire was meant for special unit teachers in the five special units. The questionnaire was divided into three sections as per the research questions.

Data Collection

The researcher presented the questionnaire to the teachers in special units and explained how to fill the information needed. Once completed he used the raw data for analysis.

Research Instrument

The questionnaire served as a reliable data collection tool as very specific questions were asked and very specific answers were supplied in numerical form. Filling in numbers in questionnaire boxes was easy and time saving for research respondents.

Sample Size

Out of about twelve special units in the district, only **five** special units were selected for the study. These were units 1,2,3,4, and 5. There were ten teachers and five teacher aides in the five schools. In the five schools there was a total of 169 pupils.

Target Population

The target population was 169 mentally handicapped learners. Ten teachers in the five schools were the research respondents.

Sampling technique

The researcher used purposeful sampling technique which is direct, deliberate and specific.

This was because the information sought could not be got anywhere else other than the special units and the selected units for proximity purposes.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed in form of tables, charts and graphs. These were easy to interpret and make conclusions.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter endeavors to present data collected from the five special units in numerical form. The data has been presented in tables, pie charts and a pictograph. After each presentation, interpretation and analysis of the information has been made. This has been done in three sections as the questionnaires were in three sections, namely;

Part 4.1 – Answering research question 1 - on challenges facing mentally handicapped learners.

Part 4.2 – Answering research question 2 - approaches used to address the challenges identified.

Part 4.3– Answering research question 3- on learning outcomes of Special Needs Education on mentally handicapped learners.

Challenges facing mentally Handicapped Learners.

Table 1 Category of MH Learners

Category/ Schools	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	TOTAL
Autistic	0	6	1	1	2	10
Down Syndrome	0	7	2	0	1	10
Cerebral Palsy	0	4	2	1	10	17
Epileptic	1	8	1	2	4	16
Speech Disorders	3	3	4	2	4	16
Behavioural Disorders	3	2	2	1	3	11
Emotional Disorders	2	1	1	1	3	8
Motor Difficulties	1	1	2	1	6	11
SLDS	4	6	4	3	6	23
Slow Learners	6	10	5	5	5	31
Combination of any two	2	4	4	3	3	16
TOTAL	22	52	28	20	47	169

Source: Primary data

Table 1 shows different categories of learners with mental handicaps in the five schools in Malindi district. It also combines the categories for all the five schools. The last column (Total) shows the prevalence of each category in the five schools.

According to Table 1, the most prominent category in terms of number is slow learners which has 31 learners. SLD category of learners has a problem with one subject area especially Maths and Languages. Children in this category can outgrow their specific difficulties and join the mainstream. Slow learners can also improve and be integrated to the mainstream classes.

However, the other categories are more challenging and have to be redressed through individualized educational and training programmes. Autism, Cerebral Palsy and Motor coordination in particular require a lot of professionalism to handle.

According to Ndurumo M M (1993) these categories of Mentally Handicapped Learners present unique challenges to the individual and as such the learners need individualized professional attention

Besides the categories identified in table 1, the learners with mental challenges were also found to have difficulties in self help skills, health care skills, social skills, mobility difficulties and other areas that make them appear different from the rest of the population. Some of these difficulties have direct relationship to effects of the category areas; for instance a learner, who is cerebral palsy, has difficulties in movement, coordination and speech.

The 36 learners with the difficulties in self care and independent living skills make up 25% of all mentally handicapped learners. This group requires personal regular attendance of the teacher. A child with toileting difficulties is quite vulnerable to social rejection by peers which may complicate his / her training and educational training and social adjustment.

This group requires extra services other than those of a teacher. Teacher aide or house mothers / fathers assist the teacher to take care of these learners while they are at school.

According to Abraham Maslow's theory of motivation (the researcher's guiding theory). The child requires basic provisions like food, shelter and healthcare from stakeholders before other "needs" in Maslow's hierarchy pyramid of needs are met. A good understanding of this theory by stakeholders will lead to proper attention to the MH learners.

Teaching/ Training Strategies used to address identified difficulties

This section presents, interprets and analyses data based on the approaches / strategies employed to address the difficulties of mentally handicapped learners identified in part

Table 2 Teacher / Teacher aide distribution

Unit	Trained Teachers	Teacher aide	TOTAL
Unit 1	1	0	1
Unit 2	1	0	1
Unit 3	2	2	4
Unit 4	3	1	4
Unit 5	3	2	5
TOTAL	10	5	15

The above data shows that the 169 learners in the five units are attended by 15 personnel, 10 teachers and 5 teacher aides. Unit 1 and 2 have one teacher each and no teacher aide. This is because they are day units. However, the other three units have at least two teacher aides who assist the teacher in caring for the mentally handicapped learners. The three units are boarding units.

The Personnel factor is very important in addressing the learners' difficulties. According to table, all the ten teachers manning the five units are trained at the level of either certificate or diploma. This is quite encouraging as the teachers understand the complexities of the learners' difficulties.

However, the number of teachers and the nature of difficulties the learners have does not commensurate. i.e. each teacher handles at least 21 learners. This is a big number.

In two units which are day units, there are no teacher aides. Teacher aides assist the teachers in handling some of the difficulties the mentally handicapped learners have in order for the teachers to focus their attention to most learners. Teacher aide services are mostly needed in boarding units to help in self care duties of the MH learners. The personnel factor is almost adequately addressed in the units.

4.2.1 Mode of Instruction

Table 3. Subject Lesson Distribution

Subject	No.Of Lessons Per Week	No.Of Lessons Per Day	Total
Maths	5	1	5
Communication skills	10	2	10
Perceptual Training Skills	4	1	4
Activities of daily living (ADL)	4	1	4
Occupational Training	4	1	4
Physical Education	5	1	5
Home visits	4	1	4
TOTAL	36	8	36

The above data shows the main subjects taught in the special units. There are six subjects and one home visit. There are 36 lessons in a week. Communication skills have the highest number of lessons, thus 10. This is because mentally handicapped learners have a lot of communication and speech problems. Speech plays a big part in self expression and personal survival. Home visits provide time for teachers to advice and offer guidance and counseling to parents of mentally handicapped learners. Activities of Daily Living skills help learners acquire self help Skills such as bathing, dressing, general grooming etc. Maths lesson provide part of functional academic skills. Perceptual Training helps learners to improve their perceptual skills e.g. eye-hand co-ordination. The subject helps to enhance memory and development of mental faculties.

Physical education help mentally handicapped learners to strengthen their bodies and improve their mobility and body co-ordination.

Table 3 also shows the subject taught in the academic curriculum area of mentally handicapped children. These subjects have been developed to address some of the key needs of the MH learners. Subsequent results will show how these subjects have impacted on the mentally handicapped learners.

Besides addressing learners' difficulties Special Needs Education aims at promoting learners' academic levels. This specifically is realized with slow learners and learners with SLD who are integrated in regular classes and compete effectively with other

learners after outgrowing their initial difficulties. Some have been observed to take national exams after going through special education programme.

IEP Programme is an educational programme that fits within the curriculum area that facilitates individualized academic training of each learner. It establishes each learner's level of initial performances and evaluates his / her progression in line with the set objectives.

ITP comes in handy to correct physical, social, self help, concentration and other aspects that require independent living like toileting habits. It is a corrective programme that leads to learner's independence.

IEP and ITP cover majority of learners as both combined range to 70% of all learners in the four programmes.

OTP covers training in occupational skills in farming, carpentry, craft and trade. This goes with individual learners' abilities and interest. The small percentage in the programme may be explained by the fact that those learners engaged are those who are old and are being prepared to exit from the unit. It is aimed at equipping the mentally

handicapped learners to fend for themselves economically after school. There is however a general class occupational programme where all learners participate.

BTP – refers to behavioural training programme. Some of the mentally handicapped learners have queer behaviour that has to be corrected in order for them to adjust well socially. Bullying, aggressive behaviour, fighting etc. are some of such behaviors corrected through this programme.

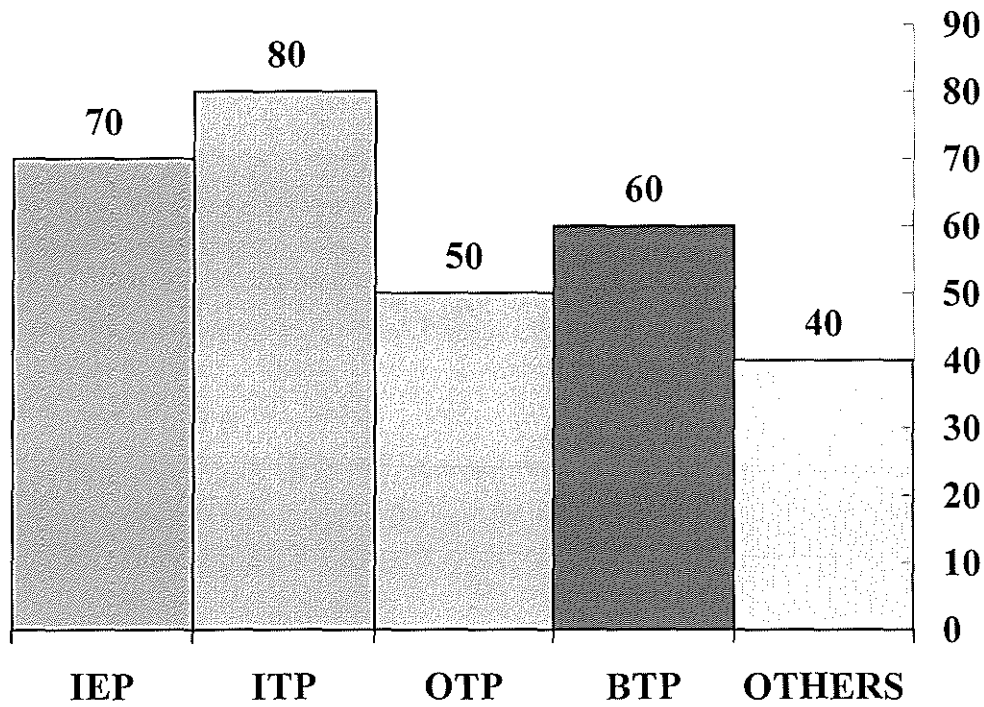
In a nutshell, the four programmes go along way in shaping mentally handicapped learners to acquire functional academic skills, self help and independence skills, occupational training and socially acceptable behaviour. This is an important aspect on helping MH learners attain their full human potential.

Learning Outcomes

This section presents the learning outcomes observed for sometime during and after Special Needs Education has been employed on mentally handicapped learners in the five special units in Malindi district.

The research has, for convenience purposes consolidated all academic gains under IEP, all training gains under ITP, occupational gains under OTP, Behavioural gains under BTP and other gains as ‘others’. These gains have been consolidated and presented in percentage in a Pictograph.

Figure 3: Learning Outcomes



The pictograph shows the success indices of gains made by Special Needs Education on learners with mental handicaps in the five units.

The IEP bar shows a consolidated gain of 70% of all academic areas put together for all the 5 units.

The ITP bar shows the best gain at 80% on training areas such as perceptual training, social skills, communication, activities of daily living, concentration and other areas.

OTP bars at 50% gain stand for occupation training mostly the older learners who have stayed at the unit for quite some time. Others have dropped out or integrated into society.

BTP at 60% indicates the success of behavioural training. Mostly, mentally handicapped learners have queer behaviour that requires correction, so that they can be socially accepted.

The bar on 'Others' indicates gains made on areas other than the former four areas. On questions like how many are married, how many have sat for national exams.

The pictograph shows positive gains made by mentally handicapped learners. The best gains are in the area of training of skills at 80%. Functional academics comes second at 70%, whereas behavioural Training comes third at 60%. Occupational Training is fourth with 50% while other aspects of special education have yielded 40% success.

This is an indicator that special education has positive effects on mentally handicapped learners.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The Research sought to identify the difficulties mentally handicapped learners experience, the teaching and training strategies employed by the teachers and other stakeholders in order to address the difficulties identified and to make a comprehensive assessment of the learning outcomes for special needs educational programmes in Malindi District.

Discussions

The first section of the investigation found a detailed description of mentally handicapped learners difficulties. The literature review section also helps to analyze the mentally handicapped learner characteristics. Some of the difficulties identified required long term approach to re-ddress.

The second part in relation to research question two, sought to find out the strategies or approaches the teachers of mentally handicapped learners used in order to address the difficulties identified. Many approaches were identified for each category of difficulty. These included the subjects taught in class and allocated in class time table such as Maths, perceptual training, physical education, Communication Skills, Activities of Daily Living, Occupational Training, home visits, guidance and counseling.

The next part was in line with research question three sought to examine the learning outcomes realized in the course of Educational Programme. Results realized have consequently shown positive results. It has clearly shown that there was 70% functional academic realized, 80% training skills learnt, 60% behavioural adjustment observed and 50% Occupational training skills gained and 40% in other areas.

However, there were serious constraints observed. The pupil teacher ratio was not right. Children of this nature need to learn in smaller numbers. Infact, previously the Ministry of Education had a requirement of ratio of 1:7 teacher pupil ratio. It has been observed that the teacher pupil ratio was 1:20 on average.

Conclusions

Special Needs education has made significant impact on the mentally handicapped learners. The success observed can be improved if more teachers were injected in the programme.

If teacher aides were employed in the day units, they would make the work of the teacher easier. One of the success indices has been the number of learners who have been integrated into the mainstream classes.

Government policy outlined in the introduction part of the research has impacted positively into special educational programmes. However, more government effort is needed in terms of personnel and material provisions for the learners. By understanding the guiding theory of this research. The stakeholders may go a long way in improving

service delivery to the MH learners, thus helping them realize their ultimate goal of self independence and acquiring competencies for self esteem and self actualization necessary for the realization of full human potential.

Recommendations

The Researcher recommends that the teacher pupil ratio be improved through staffing of the units by the Ministry of Education. It was also realized that teacher aides are required in the day units.

The researcher also recommends that the government improve on funding the units to help them acquire more equipment for occupational training and other material provision.

The researcher also recommends that stakeholders-teachers, parents, and the community need a lot of sensitization on understanding the needs of MH learners so that they can help them build self esteem and self actualization in order to help them compete effectively in the society. The learners who graduate from the units need a follow-up programme in order to assist them settle down properly in the society. The government should initiate such a programme.

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