

**CHALLENGES FACING THE PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS WITH
MENTAL RETARDATION IN SPECIAL PROGRAMMES IN
MWINGI DISTRICT**

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**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO INSTITUTE OF OPEN AND
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DECLARATION

I Patrick Musili Mutemi do hereby declare that this is my own original production and that it has never been submitted to any institution for the award of a degree or any other award.

Signature.......... Date.....10/08/2009.....

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APPROVAL

This report is resulting from the researcher's efforts on **challenges facing the performance of learners with mental retardation in special programmes in Mwingi districts**. It was conducted under my supervision with my approval; it is now ready for submission to the academic board for the award of a bachelor's degree in education of Kampala International University.

Signature  Date 13/08/09

Mrs. TALIGOOOLA DEBORAH NABUSETA

DEDICATION

This report is dedicated to almighty God who gave me physical, spiritual and mental strength to accomplish the study

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The researcher wish to acknowledge the contribution of different people and institutions, the first gratitude goes to my research supervisor Mrs. Taligoola N Deborah who has been so caring and patient.

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ABSTRACT

Learners who are mentally retarded like any other handicapped learners are faced by so many challenges. These challenges affect their performance in self help skills and other cognitive abilities. The researcher wanted to carryout a research to find out the challenges facing these particular learners in special schools and units in the whole Mwingi district. The researcher prepared and used questionnaires for teachers and interview guides for the parents to collect data. He applied survey method in collecting the data and used quantitative approach in his study. Although there are above seven programmes in the district offering special needs education, the mentally retarded children takes the largest share. The researcher collected the data from one school for the mentally handicapped and three special units for the mentally challenged learners. The data was collected from parents and teachers who are the key mentors of these learners. After presenting and analyzing the data the researcher found that the mentally retarded learners are faced by so many challenges ranging from negative attitude from both parents and teachers, lack of adequate funds and learning materials to unpredictable food supply. In order to alleviate these challenges, the following conclusions were made. There should be awareness meetings to alleviate negative attitude among teachers and parents. Provision of enough funds to run institutions smoothly. Training of enough qualified personnel to handle the mentally challenged learners.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

EARC	Educational Assessment and resource centre
EFA	Education for all
FPE	Free primary education
GOK	Government of Kenya
HI	Hearing impairment
KESSP	Kenya education sector support programme
MH	Mentally handicapped
MOEST	Ministry of education science and technology, special programme
	It is either a school or a unit that handles learners with special needs in education
	Special school is a school of learners with a common disability which runs on its own
	Special unit is a class (es) of ^{Learners} teachers with a similar disability but runs under the mainstream
UNESCO	United Nations Educational scientific and cultural organisation

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

After the researcher identified that the performance of the mentally retarded learners was not good, he planned to carryout a study to find out what might be causing this poor performance. He came out with a title "challenges facing the performance of the mentally retarded learners in the special programmes in Mwingi district". In this chapter, the researcher gave the background information about the title of the study. He gave the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, stated the objectives, the research questions, the scope and the significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

Long time ago children with disabilities were regarded as lesser human beings. Some communities had beliefs that these children were punishment or curse from God. In the past several decades people and countries world wide started thinking seriously about these disadvantaged children.

According to Kirk S.A (2000) one of the ways we express society's needs and intentions in a democracy is through legislation. There is need for all countries to constitute or legislate laws and policies governing their children and persons with

disabilities. It is in this view that in 1975, American congress passed a law (PL 94-142) called the education for all handicapped children act. In Kenya the Kamunge Report (1988) of the Presidential working party on education and manpower training for the next decade and beyond, advocated that there was need to provide appropriate skills and attitudes to enable habilitation, rehabilitation and adjustment of persons with disabilities. One of the millennium Development goals passed by international conference in Ghana (2000) is education for all (EFA) by the year 2015. this shows that international community is making efforts to legislate policies concerning children and persons with disabilities, Kenya being a member of United Nations is a signatory to these resolutions.

In 2003, the government of Kenya introduced free primary education (FPE) programme with a view of assisting children including those with special needs to access education. In the same year the Parliament passed a disability act. The act stated that learners with disabilities have a right to access education like any other children.

Kirk (2000) states that the greater the degree of disability the more likely a child is to need a special learning environment to learn distinctively different materials. In a special class a trained teacher provides a distinctive curriculum for a small group of children typically no more than fifteen. Learners with mental

retardation have limitations which prevent them from learning with the average counter parts. The government has tried to put special centers for these children. The centers include special schools and special units. However children with mental retardation are faced with so many challenges despite their placement to these special programmes. The challenges hinder them from performing as they are expected.

In the case of Mwingi district, there are three special units for the mentally handicapped learners, one special school for the same category of learners and one special unit for the hearing impaired learners. Although these institutions were established there has been little production of skilled graduands from the centers.

According to UNESCO (2005) parents in Mwingi district no longer show interest in their children's learning. This is because when they are called to discuss their children's performance they say "masomo ni yabure" (education is free) showing that they are less concerned with their children's performance. Therefore this is the essence of carrying out this research.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Education of children is very essential because it determines their future status in life. Children with mental retardation should be assisted to live an independent

and prosperous life. Challenges faced by the mentally challenged learners should be addressed. This study therefore seeks to investigate what these challenges are.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to examine the challenges faced by the mentally retarded children in the special programmes in Mwingi district.

1.4 Objectives of the study

By the end of the research, the researcher should be able to;

- To find out if there are challenges facing the mentally challenged learners in special programmes in Mwingi district
- To find out teachers and parents attitude towards the mentally challenged learners
- Find out if the facilities and resources used by the mentally challenged learners in the special programmes in Mwingi district are enough.
- To establish some possible ways of alleviating the challenges facing the mentally challenged learners in special programmes, Mwingi district.

1.5 Research questions

Are there challenges facing the mentally challenged learners in special programmes in Mwingi district:

What is the teachers and parents attitude towards the children who are mentally retarded?

Are the facilities and resources used by the mentally challenged learners in the special programmes in Mwingi district enough?

What are some of the possible ways in which the challenges facing the mentally challenged learners in special programmes in Mwingi district could be alleviated?

1.6 Scope

The study was carried in Mwingi district in Eastern Province of Kenya. The researcher targeted the special units/schools for the mentally retarded learners. Although the district is vast the special programmes are not very far from one another. By using a motorbike the researcher could reach all the targeted centers conveniently. The researcher is also conversant with the area. He also know the local language of the people. The weather was fairly good because there was no heavy rains during research period. However the researcher had a hard time because he was carrying the research while still on teaching practice so he had no enough time. He also required a big amount of money. This was strainous because he had two crucial exercises to perform at once. The researcher also faced a problem of ignorance and negative attitude by the

respondents. Many parents were suspicious why such questions were being asked and so they withheld some important information. The study was carried out in the of July 2009.

1.7 Significance of the study

The mentally retarded children in the special units and special schools are faced with so many challenges. These challenges ultimately affect their performance. The special programs of mentally retarded children in Mwingi district are either affected by the feelings of the key stakeholders which include parents and teachers. Some parents think that educating mentally retarded children is a waste of time since they may not see the difference in performance compared to the average children in school.

Almost all the special units in the districts do not have definite sources of income hence poor physical facilities and lack of appropriate learning resources.

There is need therefore to carryout the study to establish the major challenges and their impact on learner's performance in these schools and units.

After the research the results can be used to benefit a number of people;

Pupils

Pupils are directly affected by these challenges so after the research pupils will benefit in improved delivery of services which consequently will improve their performance. The learners learning environment may also be modified.

Teachers

Regular teachers may benefit from the study in the sense that their attitude towards the learners with mental retardation may improve or change. These teachers may also improve their teaching approaches in addressing the learners with mental retardation.

Ministry of education

The ministry of education will benefit from the study in the following ways;

The government will be able to formulate better educational policies and guidelines for the mentally retarded learners. The government under the ministry of education will prepare better teaching and learning materials for the mentally retarded children in the special units and schools.

The ministry of education will think of training more teachers in special needs education and improve their terms and conditions of service which should go hand in hand with the changes.

Parents

Through the results of the study, parent's attitude towards the children with mental retardation should be changed. The study will also help the parents to collaborate with teachers to support mentally retarded children in their local environment.

Researchers

The study findings can be used as basis for future research on the same topic by other researchers. Compare his study with what other researchers have said concerning his topic of study. Many researchers have been tried to find out the problems or challenges faced by learners with mental retardation.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

The researcher in this chapter cited published work by other scholars. He compared it and put comments to justify his study. Mental retardation also referred to as mentally challenged has been defined differently by different scholars.

According to Sarason and Dorris (1962), mental retardation refers to individuals who for temporary or long standing reasons function intellectually below the average of their peer groups but whose social average of their peer groups but whose social adequacy is not in question or if it is in question there is little likelihood that the individual can learn to function independently and adequately in the community.

The England mental deficiency Act (1921) defines it as a condition of arrested or incomplete development of mind existing before the age of eighteen years, whether arising from inherent causes or induced by disease or injury. Learners who are mentally challenged range from educable, trainable and custodial mentally retarded. Unlike other disabilities the mentally challenged are more complicated because they depend on one's individual level of functioning and

therefore this makes them difficult to learn together with others who are intellectually average.

According to Mohapatra D (1995), it is usually difficult to recognize them at the pre-school level. They may have problems in daily living skills. A policy is a statement of commitment or official guidelines given by the government to undertake specific programmes directed at achieving some goals.

Kirk (2000) cites that "one of the ways we express society's needs and intentions in a democracy is through legislation. Every country therefore has an obligation to make clear policies for its people including those with special needs".

In 1948 United Nations General Assembly adopted and proclaimed a resolution called Universal Declaration of Human rights, it focused on all spheres of human dignity and equal rights for all men and women. Article 26 of the Universal declaration of human rights states that everyone has the right to education which shall be free and compulsory. All are entitled to all the rights without discrimination of any kind such as race, colour, sex, birth or any other status. This forms an important basis for education of all children in the world regardless of disability.

The Salamanca world conference on special needs education held on June 1994 in Spain was the backbone of special needs education. This world conference with more than 300 participants stressed the right of every child to education that considers the children's unique abilities and learning needs. Special schools are the least restrictive environment for a small number of children who require intensive instruction and support that can not be provided in a general education school or classroom. Special schools provide for greater homogeneity in grouping and programming, Hardman (1999).

Following these international policies and conventions on special need education, Kenya has tried to put in place policies and legal framework on special needs education. The UNESCO press (1974) shows that although the problem of the mentally handicapped children has existed for a long time in Kenya, the first schools for the mentally handicapped children were established in 1948. these schools are St. Nicholas Jacaranda and Aga Khan. These schools were established to cater for European and Asian children who were mentally challenged.

In 1968 another special school for the mentally handicapped was started at city primary school in Nairobi. In the same year the Kenya society of the mentally handicapped was established with the aim of caring for the mentally handicapped their treatment, education and rehabilitation. From that time many other schools for the mentally challenged children opened up.

The year 1980 the former President of Kenya Daniel Arap Moi declared that year as a year for the disabled person which included the mentally handicapped. This was a good political will for the persons with special needs because it helped to raise funds for the disadvantaged groups of people.

The government of Kenya enacted a disability bill in 1997. the bill pointed that learning institutions shall take into account the special needs of persons with disabilities with respect to the use of school facilities, class schedules, physical education requirements and other pertinent considerations.

2.1 Institutional legislation framework for the mentally handicapped

Institutionalization period was common in Europe and USA in the 19th century. At first children with different disabilities were put in houses to protect them from neglect. However in the early 20th century it was realized that children with special needs in education could not learn alongside the non disabled children due to their special educational needs. As a result they were segregated and placed in special programmes (Randiki, 2000).

In the year 1975, the famous public law 94-142 by USA congress accelerated the public views towards the basic rights of special services like the right to full services. The same law even demanded for the least "restrictive environment"

for the mentally handicapped children. This marked the beginning of placing demands for educational programme for mentally handicapped.

The ministry of education, science and technology Kenya established a section of special needs education in 1975. it also established educational assessment and Resources Centers (EARC) in every district. With the support of the Royal Danish Government through DANIDA in the year 1984. The main function of EARC was to carryout educational assessment for children with special needs in education aging from 0-26years. The assessed children are consequently placed in the appropriate special institutions. Between 1984-2000 about 80,000 children were assessed through this programme out of the 80,000 children about 25% were placed in special schools and integrated programmes while a good number was at home receiving no technical services.

In Mwingi district, there are only five special units and one special school for the mentally handicapped. This implies that the schools are unable to cater for the big number of mentally challenged children in the whole district.

2.2 Some of the cited challenges facing the mentally retarded learners

The mentally challenged learners face so many challenges that ultimately affect their performance. According to Kanne (1964), the mentally handicapped

persons continued to be exploited and treated in away which was inhuman even though the alright killing stopped. Exploitation of mentally challenged children and especially girl child is relatively high.

Superstitions are another known challenge that places the persons with disabilities at risk. People regarded disability to be caused by witchcraft, curses or as a punishment from god for wrongs done, Randiki (2002).

According to UNESCO (2005) it was also identified that unspecified learners age may bring about bullying of the younger ones.

Sessional Paper No.1 of (2005) from the ministry of education science and technology Kenya the main challenges relating to access and equity in the provision of education and training to children with special needs include;

- Lack of clear guidelines to the implementation of special needs education
- Lack of data on children with mental retardation and other disabilities
- Inappropriate infrastructure in our institutions
- Lack of coordination among service providers

Deborah (1992), states that our society places a high value on intelligence. Its not surprising that people whose intelligence is impaired often suffer severe criticism. They may become victims of prejudice and discrimination. The stigma that often accompanies mental retardation is thus an additional layer of

disability. The general trend in performance in our learning institutions is mean score ranking. This practice does not favor the mentally challenged learners hence causing stigmatization.

2.3 Teachers and parents attitude towards the mentally challenged learners

As attitude may be a negative or positive way one thinks about or behaves towards other persons. The way people think or behave towards persons with disabilities may be influenced by a number of factors including physical nature, communication barrier and even cultural beliefs.

Bonjo (2003) states that negative relative behavior may make parents to feel that by giving birth to a child with a disability their former social status is lost. The reactions of the relatives and friends may greatly disturb parents who have a child with a disability. This often makes it difficult for parents to accept their child. It also delays the adjustment processes and may interfere with the support the child is supposed to get from the parents.

Cultural practices the world over have been unkind to persons with disabilities were viewed as objects of bad omen and were either killed, abandoned or offered as sacrifice to appease the gods. Its thus our attitude that makes us believe that learners with special needs can not learn comfortably like others

(Randiki, 2000). Disability is a universal phenomenon and it cuts across all nations and all races. It may therefore occur in any family or community hence there is need to change our attitudes towards the learners with mental handicapped.

2.4 Inadequacy of facilities and resources for learners with mental disabilities

Ben (2002) states that resources is broad term that focuses at all factors outside and within the classroom that makes teaching and learning experiences more effective. These may include human resources, teaching and learning materials, compensatory devices, adaptation, communication resources and general educational resources. In teaching learners with mental retardation, the use of teaching and learning resources makes teaching simpler and more realistic.

According to Kenya Education sector support programme 2005-2010 (2005), facilities like latrines are inadequate for learners. This may cause transmission of communicable diseases. This could be more for the mentally retarded learners who have not acquired toileting skills.

2.5 Ways of alleviating the challenges facing the mentally retarded learners in special programmes

Ngugi (2002) states that promoting cultural activities such as drama, poems and songs to teach the community about the issues of special needs education. By creating awareness in such a way the well wishers and non governmental organizations may chip in and fund the special units for the mentally challenged and other learners.

Sessional paper No.1 (2005) alludes that there is a need therefore to strengthen mobilization and awareness programmes to eradicate taboos and beliefs associated with disability as well as develop and implement a flexible curriculum that is child centered and friendly to this category of learners.

Each special education unit has been given a grant to facilitate procurement of the necessary teaching/learning materials and equipment. In addition, the government continues to train primary school teachers in special education as well as training teachers at university level in order to improve the necessary national capacity to handle special needs education (KESSP 2005-2010), 2005.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This being the third chapter in research discusses the operational frame work within which the facts of the study are gathered. It covers sections on study design, study environment, the population and nature of respondents. It also captures the instruments of data collection, sampling design, data collection procedures and statistical treatment of data after the research.

3.1 Research approach

There are different methods or approaches of carrying out research. The researcher used qualitative method in carrying out the study. This study was a descriptive in nature. The objective of descriptive research is to accurately portray a profile of persons, situations or events.

3.2 Research design

The researcher used survey method in collecting data from the respondents. The researcher investigated the opinions and ideas of people by asking them questions using designed tools that are questionnaire and interview guide.

3.3 Target population

There is a need for a researcher to say who his respondents were in Mwingi district; there are about 10 different special schools and units. These schools/units cater for the learners with different handicaps. Among these special units, mentally retarded takes the largest share. The researcher targeted three special units to collect his data.

3.4 Sample population

This is a small group of people chosen to represent the entire population in a given area. The researcher collected data from the mentally retarded schools and units to represent all the special schools and units in Mwingi district. The data was collected from pupils, parents and teachers. These respondents were chosen because they are the key players in the special programmes.

3.5 Sampling procedure

The researcher used different sampling procedure for different groups of people. For pupils and parents the researcher used purposive sampling procedure. This enabled the researcher to judge who is respondents would be. With teachers the researcher used stratified random sampling. This is because the population strata in the teaching profession almost share the same experience in the mainstream or in the special units.

3.6 Instruments/tools

An instrument or tool is the method used for collecting data in research. There are different research tools that can be used to collect data. The researcher used questionnaires and interview guides. The questionnaires were suitable tools for teachers because they can read and answer for themselves. The interview guides were the best option for pupils and parents due their levels of education and understanding. The questionnaires were well structured computer typed with 3 sections. The interview guides were simple, clear and having three sections.

3.7 Data collection procedure

After the research proposal was approved by the supervisor, the researcher obtained a letter of introduction from the faculty of education Kampala International University so as to facilitate in the data collection exercise. The letter was presented to schools where the study was to be carried. The researcher prepared the tools for collecting data which included questionnaires and interview guides. The tools were pre-tested before the actual data collection took place. After that the researcher asked for permission in writing to go out and collect data. That having been done the researcher used a motorbike to go from one school to the other collecting data. The data was sorted categorized analyses and interpreted. Finally the researcher wrote the report according to the findings of the study, conclusions and recommendations were made.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter is a presentation of the analysis of raw data collected from the field. The data was collected through the questionnaires and interview guides. The findings were interpreted and tabulated using tables. The results of the findings were interpreted centered on the set objectives of the study.

4.1 Profile of respondents

Table 1: Showing profile of the respondents

Respondents	Number expected	Number responded	Percentage
Teachers	20	20	100
Parents	10	5	50
Total	30	25	83.3

Source: Field work data 2009

The sampled population comprised of thirty randomly selected respondents. Those who participated in the study were twenty five. This was 83.3% participation in the study. The respondents were divided into two groups; teachers and parents.

4.2 Challenges faced by the mentally retarded learners in special programs

Table 2: Showing challenges faced by the mentally retarded learners

Responses	Teachers	parents	Total
Inadequate facilities and learning resources	17	4	21
Lack of enough skilled personnel	13	2	15
Negative attitude from parents and teachers	11	3	14
Lack of adequate funds	08	04	12
Poor food supply	07	03	10
Lack of autonomy and poor networking in special units			-
Low self esteem in learners			-

Source: field data 2009

The table above shows that majority of the respondents 21/25(84%) had a feeling that our special programmes lack enough facilities and resources.

Another group of respondents 15/25 said that lack of enough skilled personnel is another major challenge facing the learners in these programmes. Negative attitude 14/25 lack of adequate funds 12, poor food supply 10, poor networking units and low self esteem among the learners themselves are the other challenges faced by the mentally retarded learners.

4.3 Teachers and parents attitude towards the mentally retarded learners

Table 3: Showing teachers and parents attitude towards the mentally retarded learners

Responses	Teachers	Parents	Total
Have negative attitude	12	3	15
Have positive attitude	8	0	8
Do not know	0	2	2
Total	20	5	25

Source: Field data 2009

From the above table, 15 respondents (60%) said that both teachers and parents have negative attitude towards the mentally retarded learners. 8(32%) respondents on the other hand said that teachers and parents have positive attitude towards the mentally challenged learners while 2(8%) of the respondents said they do not clearly know whether both parties have negative or positive attitude towards the learners.

4.4 Opinion whether the facilities and resources used by mentally retarded learners in the special programs are enough

Table 4: showing whether the facilities and resources are enough for mentally retarded learners.

Response	Teachers	Parents	Total
Enough	0	0	0
Not enough	20	4	24
Not sure	0	1	1
Total	20	5	25

Source: Field data 2009

As shown in the table above, one of the respondents who said that the facilities/resources in special schools are enough for mentally retarded learners. Majority of the respondents 24(96%) said that the facilities and resources used by mentally retarded learners in the special programmes are not enough. Only one parent respondent who was not sure whether they are enough or not enough for the learners.

4.5 Ways of alleviating the challenges facing the mentally retarded learners in the special programmes

Table 5: Showing ways of alleviating the challenges facing the mentally retarded learners.

Response	Teachers	Parents	Total
Create awareness on the learners with special needs	11	3	14
Government to train more teachers in special needs education	10	2	12
Provide adequate facilities and resources to all special schools	7	1	8
Government to fund special units fully	6	0	6
NGOs and well-wishers to give material or financial support to special programs	3	1	4
Leaders in these programs to improve collaboration and networking	2	0	2
Provide sustainable feeding program	1	1	2

Source: Field data 2009

Table 5 indicates that 14 of the respondents were of the opinion that creating awareness by all concerned stakeholders may help in alleviating the challenges

such as a negative attitude. A similar number of respondents said that the government should train more teachers in special needs education who will have skills to handle the mentally retarded learners better. 8 respondents suggested that provision of adequate facilities like classrooms, dormitories and other necessary resources could mitigate the challenges facing these learners in the special programmes. Six respondents had opinion that the government should fund the special units fully. The funding may help in guaranteeing the sustainability of the programs and assuring the learners up-keep.

Another group of respondents was of the view that Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and well-wishers could come up and support the special programmes financially and materially. These organizations like churches, community based organizations, banks and other service providers can very much assist in alleviating the challenges.

Another suggestion was that since special programs need to collaborate and network together. The researcher thinks that this opinion is worthy because it may open door for these programmes to get appropriate advice and support.

Some respondents had an opinion that if there could be a sustainable feeding program in these special programs, the learners health would be better hence elimination of some diseases emanating from malnutrition. The researcher feels that this view is valid especially to learners in boarding programs.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher presents summary and discussion of the research findings of the previous chapters. They are discussed in relation to the research carried out using structured questionnaires, interview guides, observation and library research. It also presents conclusions and finally recommendations by the researcher based on the study.

5.1 Summary of findings

This is summary of the four chapters of the research. From the very beginning the researcher learnt that there were problems within the special schools and special units in Mwingi as a district. The research aimed at finding the challenges facing learners with mental retardation in Mwingi district that ultimately affect their performance. In chapter one the researcher gave background information which spelt out the need to research on the challenges. Chapter two contains the related literature from other scholars to support the study.

It was discussed under policy framework for the mentally handicapped, cited challenges teachers and parents attitude towards mentally retarded learners, adequacy of learning facilities and resources. Chapter three contained methodology of carrying out the research. The researcher employed survey

approach and analyzed data qualitatively and quantitatively. In chapter four, the respondents give their opinions on the challenges facing the mentally retarded, the attitude of teachers and parents towards these learners, the availability of learning facilities and resources in the special programs and ways of mitigating the challenges. The researcher presented the data using tables. The responses of the participants were recorded in accordance with the research questions. The researcher analyzed the results from the tables by explaining what he thinks about the results.

5.2 Discussion

The research was conducted to find out challenges facing the performance of learners with mental retardation in special programmes in Mwingi district. The data that was collected and analysed in Chapter 4 supported the research questions. The following findings are discussed;

5.2.1 Institutional legislation framework for mentally retarded learners

According to Randiki (2000) argues that in the early 20th century it was realized that children with disabilities in education could not learn alongside the non-disabled children due to their special educational needs. And as a result they were segregated and placed in special programs. The researcher has basic to say that the special programmes were legalized long time ago.

In 1984, the government of Kenya with the support from Royal Danish government established educational assessment and resource centers in every district. These centers were to provide the educational assessment for the children with special needs and advice for proper placement. The researcher is of the opinion that these special institutions are very important.

5.2.2 Challenges facing the mentally retarded learners

The researcher findings showed that 80% of the respondents agreed that there are challenges faced by the mentally retarded children in the special programs within Mwingi district. Some of the challenges include lack of adequate facilities and learning resources, lack of enough trained personnel, negative attitude and lack of enough funds among others. The researcher strongly feels that these are some of the most striking challenges facing the mentally retarded learners performance.

Kanne (1964) alludes that the mentally handicapped persons continued to be exploited and treated in a way which was inhuman even though the Albritton killing stopped. This proves that many people have negative attitude towards the mentally handicapped persons.

5.2.3 Teachers and parents attitude towards the mentally retarded learners

It was revealed by 60% of the respondents that both teachers and parents have negative attitude towards the mentally challenged learners. Deborah (1992) argues that its not surprising that people whose intelligence is impaired often suffer severe criticism. They may become victims of prejudice and discrimination. Findings show that many people have not accepted the mentally challenged learners to be part of them hence leading to negative attitude either by parents or teachers especially the ones who are not trained in special needs education.

5.2.4 Availability of learning facilities and resources

96% of the respondents point out that the facilities and the resources used by the mentally retarded learners in the special programs are not enough. These learners may not perform well due to this reason. Resource is a broad term that focuses at all factors outside and within the classroom that makes teaching and learning experiences more effective argued by Been (2002). Lack of adequate facilities and resources hinder learners from achieving their goals.

5.2.5 Ways to alleviate the challenges in special programs

From the research report 56% of the respondents who participated in the study said that creation of awareness to all stakeholders is a key way of mitigating the challenges facing the mentally retarded learners in the special programs.

According to Sessional paper No.1 OF (2005) states that there is a need therefore to strengthen mobilization and awareness programmes to eradicate taboos and beliefs associated with disability. The researcher can confidently say in order to alleviate a number of challenges sensitization and awareness meetings are very necessary. Other major findings include training more teachers in special needs education, provision of adequate funds and other resources among others.

5.3 Conclusion

Basing on the research findings, its evident that there are challenges facing the performance of the mentally retarded learners in the special schools and units in Mwingi district. The study revealed that majority of the people in our society have negative attitude towards the mentally challenged learners or children. It was established that the already available facilities and learning resources are not adequate for the mentally retarded learners who are in the special schools and special units. The study also revealed that the mentally retarded learners can be minimized in a number of ways. Some of these are creating awareness, training more qualified personnel, providing enough learning resources, provision of funds by the government and providing a sustainable feeding program in these special institutions.

5.4 Recommendations

Going by the research results, the following are the either prevent or alleviate the challenges the mentally retarded learners in the special programs.

The school leaders and any other stakeholders should organize for awareness meeting and workshops. These will help in changing attitude of some members in our society.

The government to train enough skilled personnel to handle the mentally challenged learners

The government and other well-wishers to provide the special schools and special units with enough learning facilities and learning resources. These resources will help the mentally retarded learners acquire vocational skills.

Government to fund special units fully. The funds will cater for the upkeep of these neglected children.

Non-Governmental organizations to support the institutions financially and materially

Special units to be given autonomy to run their affairs without necessarily passing through the mainstream.

The government to have to clear policies about the special programs

The community to establish sustainable feeding program in all the special units,

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire for teachers

Dear Respondents,

I am a study from Kampala International University, am currently carrying out a research on "**challenges facing performance of learners with mental retardation in special programmes in Mwingi district**". You have been randomly selected to participate in the study. Kindly answer the question provided in the sheet. Do not write your name. your answers will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Please tick the correct option

Gender

Male ☐

Female ☐

Are you trained in special needs institutions?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If yes, what level?

Certificate ☐

Diploma ☐

Degree ☐

Is there special school or special unit within your division?

.....

Are there challenges facing mentally retarded learners in special programs in Mwingi district?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If yes, what are some of the challenges?

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

Generally what is the teacher's attitude towards the mentally challenged learners?

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

What facilities and resources are used by the mentally retarded learners in the special programs in Mwingi district?

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

Are the facilities and resources used by mentally retarded learners in the special programs enough?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If no, what other facilities and resources are necessary for these learners?

.....

.....

Kindly suggest ways of alleviating the challenges facing the mentally retarded learners in the special programmers in Mwingi district.

.....

.....

.....

.....

Any other comment?

.....

.....

Thank you very much

Appendix B: Interview guide

Are there children with mental retardation in your community?

Are there special schools for the mentally retarded learners in Mwingi district?

What challenges are faced by the mentally challenged learners in special schools and units in Mwingi district?

What is the parent's attitude towards the mentally retarded children?

Are the facilities and resources used by the mentally retarded learners in these special schools enough?

What are some of the ways which can be used to alleviate the challenges facing the mentally retarded learners in the special schools and units in Mwingi district?



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256 41 373 498/ 256 41 373 889 (Ug) 254 20246275 (Ke)
e-mail: efagbamiye@yahoo.com Tel: 0753142725

Office of the Director

25.04.09

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR MS/MRS/MR. PATRICK NUTEMI

REG. #. BED/18297/71/DF

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

s/he wishes to carry out a research in your Organization on:

Challenges facing the performance of the mentally
retarded children in the Special Programmes
In Mwingi district.

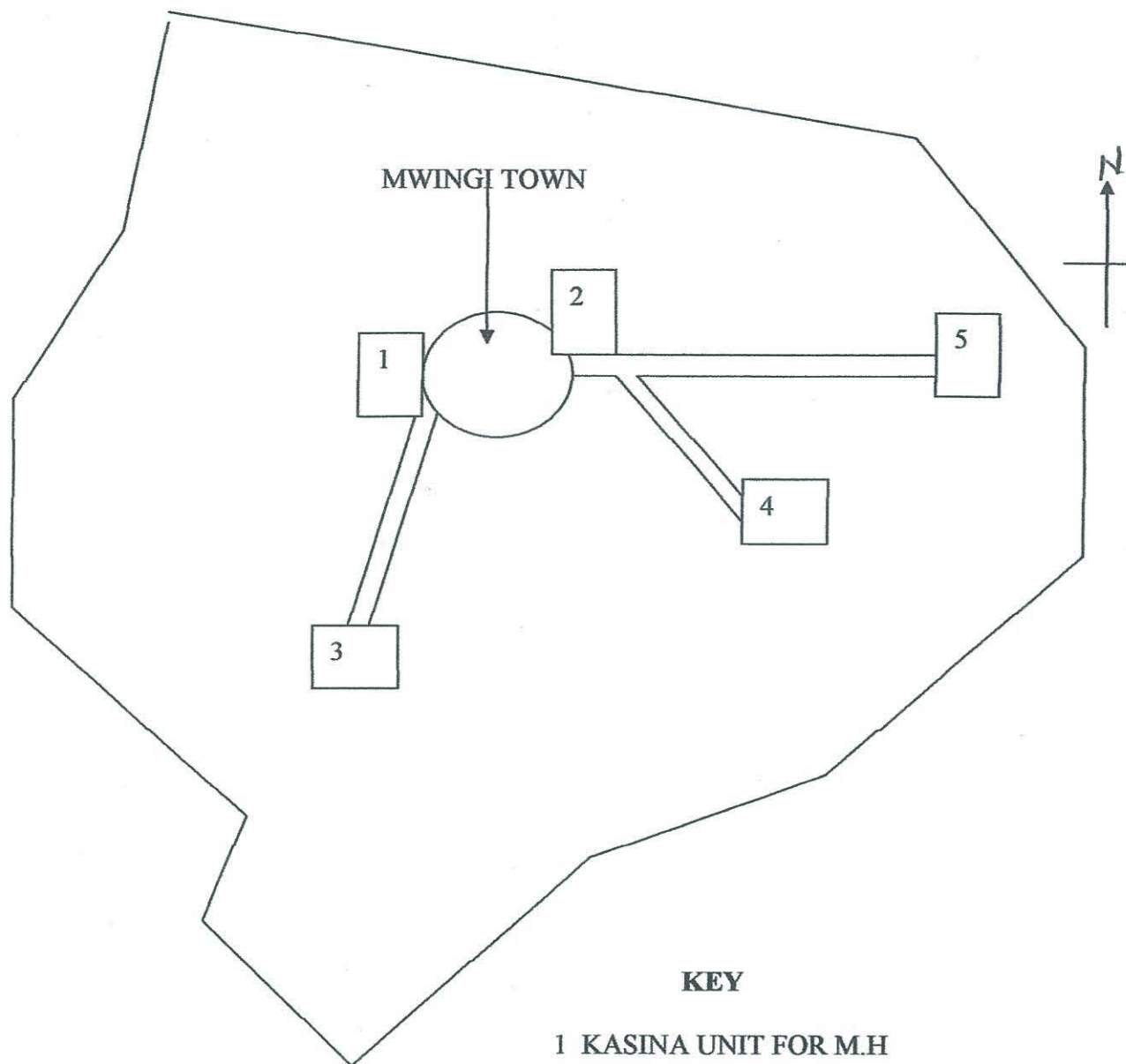
The research is a requirement for the Award of a Diploma/Bachelors degree in Education.

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

Yours Faithfully,

JHWEZI JOSEPH
AD, IN-SERVICE

**A MAP OF MWINGI DISTRICT, EASTERN MPOVINCE, KENYA, SHOWING
THE RESEARCHER'S AREA OF STUDY.**



KEY

- 1 KASINA UNIT FOR M.H
- 2 MWINGI UNIT FOR H.I
- 3 MIGWANI AIC UNIT FOR M.H
- 4 MUSUKINI UNIT FOR M.H
- 5 NUU SCHOOL FOR M.H

MIGWANI AIC SPECIAL UNIT
c/o P.O. BOX 88,
MIGWANI.

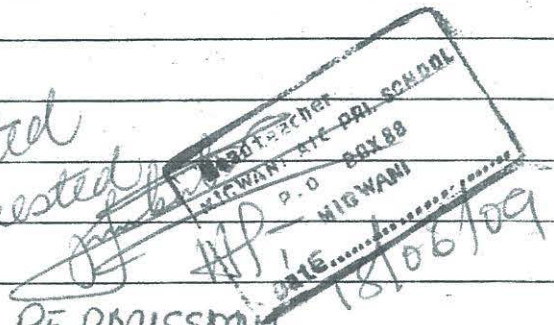
18 June 2009.

THE HEADTEACHER,
MIGWANI P. SCHOOL,
P.O. BOX 88,
MIGWANI.

Dear Sir,

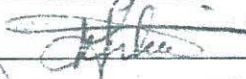
RE APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION

Permission granted
as requested



I do hereby request for one day permission
on 19-6-2009. I would like to go to Mwingi
to look for some research materials from the
Library. Thank you in advance

Yours faithfully


PATRICK M. MUTEMI
TSC No. 209565

MIGWANI AIC UNIT FOR THE
MENTALLY HANDICAPPED,
P.O. BOX 88 - 90402,
MIGWANI.

13 JULY 2009.

THE HEADTEACHER,

MIGWANI PRY SCHOOL,
BOX 88, MIGWANI

Permission granted as requested
For 14th and 15th of July 2009.

Dear Sir,

RE: TWO DAYS OFF DUTY

13.07.09

Headteacher
MIGWANI AIC PRY SCHOOL

P.O. BOX 88

MIGWANI

I request to be given two days ~~date~~ permission
to go and collect data for my research work.
I'm collecting data from the Special Institution
for the Mentally retarded within Mwingi district.
Your positive consideration will be highly
appreciated. Thank you.

Yours faithfully

Patrick M. Mutemi

PATRICK M. MUTEMI

TSC NO. 209565