

**AN ASSESSMENT OF CHALLENGES FACING INTELLECTUAL LEARNERS IN  
SCHOOLS IN MERU SOUTH EASTERN PROVINCE KENYA**

**BY**

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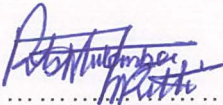
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## DECLARATION

I **ROBERT MUTEMBEI M'RITHI** do hereby declare that this is my original work and not a duplicate of a similar published work of any scholar for academic purposes as a requirement of any higher institution of learning. I further declare that all materials cited in this paper which are not my own have been highly appreciated.

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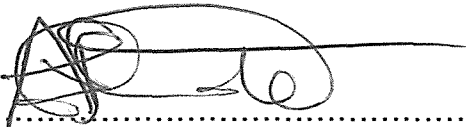
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## APPROVAL

This report has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university supervisor.

Signature ..... 

**SUNDAY ARTHUR**

SUPERVISOR

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this paper to my beloved wife Beatrice W Mutembei, my dear son Collins and my dear beloved daughter Faith for their patience and tolerance during my absence from home when attending face-to-face sessions while pursuing a Degree course education in Kampala International University.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all those who helped me in one way or the other in compiling this special study paper into what it is.

First I commend my lecturer in Kampala International University for helping me in various places. I sincerely thank my supervisor for helping me in choosing the topic and for useful guide and advice during my research.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## 1.0 Introduction

Since 1940s when special education was started in Kenya with the rehabilitation of victims of the Second World War, there has been a lot of changes in education policies. The initial concern was to provide health and social rehabilitation for those with physical disabilities. These facilities later changed their concern and became custodial care centers following models seen in Europe at that time. Programmes were also started for those with sensory and intellectual challenges.

Unfortunately, all the programmes worked within the idea of institutionalization. Individuals with particular handicaps were segregated and placed in the same school where services were provided purely on the basis of the challenges.

Special education for the intellectually challenged is relatively recent compared to that of other challenged individuals such as blind, physically challenged and deaf. Although the first school was opened in 1948, it was only available to a few individuals from well to-do families. Many schools for the intellectually challenged individuals have now been started in many urban centers, but in the recent years inclusion has become a central focus of concern.

Inclusion comes at placing the intellectually challenged individuals in regular schools to increase their participation in education and social life. It involves changing attitudes of the intellectually challenged and the society to equally participate according to individual ability.

Although many authorities have advocated for inclusion, regular school teachers feel that they lack the skills needed to educate these individuals. Non-challenged individuals have their own fears to interact with the intellectually challenged individuals.

In view of the above, this research paper explores what regular school teachers have been able to do and the challenges they are facing in handling these learners with intellectual challenges in their schools.

### **1.1 Background information**

As concerns intellectual challenge (mental retardation) generally there is an outcry of low number or even none of the intelligence challenged learners who complete primary level programmes. A close look in regular schools in Mwingi district has evidenced that very few of them enroll intellectually challenge learners and the few learner who are enrolled are not seen to complete their primary education like the non-challenged learners. Regular schools in Meru are not exceptional a factors which has led the researcher to investigate challenges faced by teachers handling learners with intellectual challenges in regular schools in Meru.

### **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Integration of children who are mentally challenged is characterized by poor academic achievement of such children in regular schools. This has raised a serious concern to teachers and other educators. This has made it necessary for the researcher to investigate the challenges involved.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the research is to investigate, analyze and examine the problems faced by teachers handling learners with intellectual challenges and recommend the possible solutions for implementation.

### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

The study intended to;

- (i) Establish whether there are learners with intellectual challenge in regular schools in Meru.

- (ii) To identify the challenges encountered by teachers handling learners with intellectual challenges in regular schools.
- (iii) To identify the appropriate resources available in regular schools in the zone.
- (iv) To investigate the teaching methods used to meet learners' needs in an inclusive setting.
- (v) To find out the possible solution to problems leading to poor academic achievement of learners with intellectual challenges.

### **1.5 Research questions**

- (i) Are there learners with intellectual challenges in regular schools in Meru?
- (ii) What challenges do teachers encounter when handling learners with intellectual challenges in regular schools?
- (iii) What are the available teaching / learning resources in regular schools?
- (iv) What are the teaching methods used to meet learners needs in an inclusive setting.
- (v) What are the possible solutions to problems leading to poor performance of learners with intellectual challenge?

### **1.6 Significance of the study**

The study will help teachers to modify their teaching methods and learning resources in teaching the learners with intellectual challenge.

The study will help learners with intellectual challenge together with others by providing the information towards support service by teachers, parents, educators.

The study findings will be used to sensitize teachers developing positive attitudes towards learners with intellectual challenge.

The study findings will be used by the government to evaluate the educational system for any necessary changes.

The administration will be sensitized to change from the mean score syndrome and focus their minds on individual capabilities.

The study will also create awareness to parents and the society on the rights and proper support to learners with intellectual challenges.

Kampala International University will be assisted to formulate more learning resources and modify the curriculum to accommodate learners with intellectual challenge.

### **1.7 Limitations**

These are factors which may hinder the collection of data during the study.

Finance – lack of food, stationeries and transport to different places.

Time frame – lack of enough time to carryout the research work and do school duties.

Attitude – negative attitudes from teachers and parents who may not be co-operative.

Distance – in order to reach all the targeted schools, the researcher has to travel far and wide especially where schools are distances apart.

Work load – the researcher will be required to carryout research activities while at the same time attend to her regular school duties.

## **1.8 Delimitations**

These are the factors that favour positively the researcher during the course of the study, such factors include;

Culture – the researcher is familiar with the culture of the community.

Language – the researcher is also familiar with the language of the people.

Security – the area is free from bandits and the people are not hostile.

## **1.9 Definition of terms or key concepts**

Intellectually challenged – This is a condition that may hinder leader to operate and accommodate learning activities and procedures appropriately in an inclusive setting.

Inclusive education – This refers to the philosophy of ensuring that schools, centers of learning and educational systems are open to all children.

Inclusive setting – This is a situation where all learners including those with special needs participate in all activities in a community that recognized and addresses the needs of each learner as much as possible.

Attitude – A person's set of predispositions fro responding in a particular way to a specified class of objects or people.

Assessment - A way of determining an individual's strengths and weaknesses by applying mental, social, psychological or educational tests.

Integration – Refers to providing exceptional children with patterns which are close to normal as much as possible within the education setting.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

According to Mwaura (2002) children with mental challenge are categorized into four major groups based on the severity of their problems, their behaviour, adaptive behavior and educational performance.

They are classified as

- Children with Mild developmental disability
- Those with severe developmental disability
- Those with severe developmental disability
- Those with profound developmental disability

Children with mild developmental disability can in many cases be educated in regular school system. They can learn academic skills to approximately standard six and seven but may not pass well in standard eight.

They have potentialities for development in social and vocational adjustment.

They are sometimes referred to as educate mentally retarded.

Children with moderate developmental disability there tend to be very slow in learning as they show extreme difficulties in academic subject. They can be taught self – help skills and social adjustment in the family and the neighborhood. They are referred to as trainable mentally retarded. Children with severe developmental disability. children in this category show marked deficits in adaptive behaviour.

Most these children have pronounce difficulties in the area of motor, social, speech and language going age can develop minimal communication skills and learn basic self- help skills.

Children with profound developmental disability the area identified at birth or within few days after birth.

The nature and degree of their handicaps are so great that with out various forms of intensive training and therapy they will exhibit virtually no adaptive behaviour. They need almost complete care and supervision throughout their lives.

Children from each group are all human being. They have human needs and demands. Parents to make sure these learners with different needs are taken care of and their needs are met.

## **2.2 Background information of the intellectually challenges**

Randiki (2002) points out that for many years persons with disabilities were considered unproductive and were rejected by the society. They were looked at as a curse or punishments from God, Some were even killed or thrown away, they were called derogatory and dehumanizing names like idiots, maroon, fools, and imbeciles.

In Kenya special needs education started during the Second World War to rehabilitate army officers who had returned from war in 1945 with injuries. Services were developed to rehabilitate those with physical visual impairments and brain damage and later others were included.

In Kenya the history of the mentally challenged can be traced back to time before independence when mission churches and charitable organizations came into assist special schools like St. Nicholas special school (Now Jacaranda) 1968, Primary Special Units and Race course special units were established later to cater for the needs of mentally challenged.

Early in 1960s the churches and non governmental organizations continued to support education for children with special needs. The societies and associations for and of disabled children in provision of services in education, social welfare and health care, Kenya society for the mentally (KSMH) handicapped (KSMH) was established in 1960 by Peter Njuguna. This is a non profit making organization devoted to advocate, Lobby for the rights and improve the welfare of the individuals with intellectual challenges.

After the introduction of free primary education 2003 and inclusive education many learners with intellectual challenges ranging from mild to profound have been placed in regular school teacher to have skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to support these learners with intellectual challenges.

### **2.3 Academic problems**

According to Ogutu (2002) many children with intellectual challenges have general language and speech developmental problems. They lag behind other learners in normal language development.

They have delayed development in cognitive motor skills, computational skills and in expressive and receptive language.

According to nation correspondent September 2003, some intellectual challenges are contributed by insufficient teaching and learning materials.

Expanding demands for children with disabilities due to free primary education who need basic, vocational technical education has also contributed to academic problems to children with intellectual challenges.

However, the government is committed to ensuring quality education to all at all levels for example The government is trying to train more special need education teachers through distance learning to cater for learners their special needs.

The government is also targeting to have at least a trained teacher in special needs education in every school by 2015.

### **2.4 Problems experienced in regular schools**

Although mainstreaming sound fine in principle to many educators, implementation of the principle may be complex.

According to Macmillan (1982) .This process requires cooperation and support by all teachers, educators, parents of both intellectually and non – intellectually challenged peers in regular school.



Some of the problems experienced in inclusion (regular schools) are as a result of attitude of teachers, peers in the regular classroom and parents of both intellectually and non-intellectually challenged individuals. Other problems may be due to lack of adequate planning for programme, lack of training, insufficient materials or in adequate support.

### **Teacher's attitude**

Teachers in the regular classes where the intellectually challenged are may pose some resistance to the programmes. Logically, these are the same people who referred the mentally challenged individual for assessment because they could not teach him successfully and the same individual is returned to the same class.

### **Peer attitudes towards the intellectually challenged**

The attitudes of peers are much dictated by the society. Non – challenged individuals may refuse to relate well with the intellectually challenged because the fear mental challenge is a disease and they may contract it as a result of inclusion.

### **Parental attitudes**

Parental acceptance and involvement are important elements in the success of regular school. Some parents of the intellectually challenged try to avoid stigmatization. They may refuse their children to be given attention during class time because the non intellectually learners may miss fun.

Educating learners with intellectual challenges may fail to succeed because of inappropriate curricular, intellectually challenged learners will have difficulty to follow a curriculum which is not adopted to meet their needs. Teachers usually find themselves in cross – road in some class situations like whether to place an individual in a class of his academic achievement level or to his age peers, the

intellectually challenged learners have generally low intelligence and will not have the same academic gain as their peers.

Attempts to improve public attitudes have accompanied inclusion process. One way of changing peoples attitudes has been that of exposing non intellectually challenges learners to the intellectually challenged learns so as to create more positive attitudes.

## **2.5 Causes of intellectual challenges**

Maura (2002) state that there are very many factors that may cause mental challenges the most common cause is damage to the child's brain. This can happen, before birth, during birth and after birth.

### **Before Birth**

A child may be born with intellectual challenge if during pregnancy, the Mother – does not eat nutritious food, suffers from venereal diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhea or has HIV/ AIDS, If the mother suffer from diseases such as Rebella, diabetes and those involved in very high fever. It can happen if exposed to x-ray especially during the first three months or if the mother has anemia during pregnancy. It also happens when the mother uses narcotic drugs, cigarettes and alcohol, blood incompatibility between her and the foetus also cause this or accidents an shock.

### **During Birth**

If the mother has prolonged delivery / Labour resulting to oxygen deficiency and head injuries. Umbilical cord strangulation of the foetus, law birth weight and breech birth also cause brain damages leading intellectual challenge to the child. Neo – natal jaundice, Misuse of delivery instruments and poor hygiene may also lead to head injuries.

## **After birth**

Intellectual challenge of the child after birth may be caused by the following factors: Poor nutrition such as unbalanced diet and deficiency of Iodine and vitamins in a child, if a child happens to have high fever with fits or accidents such as head injuries and brain damage may also get intellectual challenge. Other factors may include. Misuse of drugs (medicines) brain tumour, severe diarrhea and dehydration and diseases such as meningitis, measles and encephalitis.

Parents need to be made aware of these causes for prevention and early identification .This will help them reduce the cases of intellectual challenges .It also helps parents to take intervention measures incase a child happen to be intellectually challenged.

## **2.6 Identification of learners with intellectual challenges**

According to Mwaura and Wenyera (2007), a child with Mental challenge has certain early signs that can be identifies. Some of the possible indicators may include at birth a child with intellectual challenge may look floppy and generally look abnormal being slow at acquiring and developing such as speaking and walking.

- Not able to transfer the same activities into different situations.
- Not able to understand what is said or follow instructions.
- Failing to develop social and emotional relationships
- Having retarded motor development
- Having difficulty in remembering experiences or things learnt
- Having disorders of attention
- Having of concentration and paying attention

Parents and teachers fail to identify these problems early for early intervention .This is due to lack of knowledge and skills needed to identify these problems. Parents feel it hard accept that their children are victims of mental challenges. Parents, teachers and the community at large have to accept the reality and help

these children cope with these difficulties. They should also help these children acquire the necessary independent living skills.

## **2.7 Academic achievement**

Mwaura (2002) states that as concerns learners with intellectual challenges, academic achievement depend on many factors like time of intervention and stimulation, severity of the mental challenge, type and category of intellectual challenge.

The learning environment and degree of mental challenge and additional handicaps determine the academic achievement of the learner.

This makes them to have low language reception and expression. Therefore, testing and assessing should be more practical than lecture or oral.

Teachers have a major role of imparting knowledge regardless of academic subjects. The approaches of teaching should be child centred to enhance better learning, attaining of social skills and vocational skills.

## **2.8 Teaching methods in regular set ups**

According to Atigto (2002) teaching learners with intellectual challenge in regular set-ups involves various teaching methods these may include.

- **Holistic teaching** – This is looking at the child as a total human being and not just focusing on the area of special needs or the academics.
- **Thematic approach.** Whereby activities or subjects are not taught in isolation or discrete bits, instead they are integrated into a theme / topic or unifying factor that is then developed into a number of lessons.
- **Task analysis.** The process of breaking down task to be learnt into smaller steps to be presented to learners in sequence from simple to complex.
- **Individualized educational programme.** Away of meeting the individual needs of all learners in an inclusive classroom.

- **Diagnostic prescriptive** – This is providing appropriate instruction to an individual learner after carefully assessing the learners individual educational needs.
- **Direct instruction.** This is arranging teaching activities in a way that it provides systematic instruction to teach task
- **Team teaching approach.** Is co-operative teaching approach.
- Mediated learning experience refers to the teachers role as a mediator between the task to be taught and the learner

Whichever method a teacher chooses to use in an inclusive classroom, it will enable him/her achieve the following.

- Increase academic achievement of all learners.
- Get learners actively involved in the learning process.
- Address individual differences in the learners.

## 2.9 Resources and support services

According to Hiuhu (2002) support services include:

Human support and material support. Human support is parent support, peer support, community support.

Material support is the learning and teaching material and modification of these materials to meet learners' needs.

Atieno (2002) states that educational resources help make learning simple and realistic.

In most cases support services are part of educational provision. Children with mental challenge require adequate support services and specialist equipment for effective learning in regular school set – ups.

In Nuu – zone educational material are inadequate, most teachers are not trained to handle learners with intellectual challenges. Therefore, due to these problems learners fail to learn as expected.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, the researcher highlighted on the research design, sample, sampling procedure, research instruments, data collection procedure.

#### **3.1 Research approach**

The method to be used in data collection / analysis is quantitative: a method whereby data is collected by use of standardized tools like prepared questionnaire that will be sent to selected sample population then data will be analyzed and interpreted.

#### **3.2 Research design / strategy**

A survey strategy will be applied, whereby questions will be used to gather information from teachers. The researcher will prepare a questionnaire to be used in gathering information. The questionnaire will be sent to different schools to collect information from teachers.

#### **3.3 Population**

The target sample population are the teachers in regular schools in Meru.

#### **3.4 Sampling procedure**

The researcher will use simple random sampling procedure, out of 169 teachers in our zone, 20 teachers will answer the questionnaire. This is because every member of the group has an equal chance of being selected as a member of the sample.

#### **3.5 Instrument**

A questionnaire with closed type of questions which require yes or no answers will be used. Questionnaires will be used because the respondents are teachers.

It can be used for distant respondents and many respondents can be served at a time during meetings.

### **3.6 Procedure of the study**

The researcher wrote her proposal and took it to Kampala International University. The supervisor read and advised accordingly. The researcher made corrections and presented the questionnaire to fellow teachers for pre-testing. The researcher presented a letter of permission to the area education officer Meru. After that, the researcher photocopied twenty pieces of questionnaire and sent them to the sampled teachers in the zone. After two weeks the respondents had answered the questionnaires and sent them back to the researcher. The researcher made observations and analyzed the data. The researcher also made her discussion and recommendations.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

#### Question I

The question intended to find out whether there were learners with intellectual challenges in Meru.

Response was shown below.

**Table 1**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
Yes	12	60
No	8	40
Total	20	100

#### Observation (table 1)

Out of the 20 respondents, 12 said there were learners with intellectual challenges which represented 60% of the sampled population pointed out that, there were no learners with intellectual challenges in their school which represented 40% of the same.

#### Analysis of data

The information in table 1 indicated that majority of had learners with special needs while a few had no learners with intellectual challenges.



### Question 2

This question intended to find out how learners with intellectual challenges respond to academic work

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
Fairly	4	20
Poorly	16	80
Total	20	100

### Observation table 2

According to the observation of table 2 learners with intellectual challenge responded poorly to academic work whole 4 recommended fairly.

### Data analysis

The information in table 2 indicated that learners with intellectual challenge responded poorly because 80% of the total respondents pointed out they respond poorly while a few individual represented by 20% of the total sample teachers respond fairly.

### Question 3

This question was trying to find out whether there were enough teachers to support learners with intellectual challenges in Meru.

**Table 3**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
Fairly	4	20
Poorly	16	80
Total	20	100

### Observation table 3

The 20 respondents pointed out that there were no enough resources to support these learners. This represented 100% of the total number of respondents.

### **Analysis of data**

The information in table 3 gives a clear indication that, there is lack of enough resources in all schools to support learners with intellectual challenges. This shows that resources are some of the major causes of poor performance of these learners.

### **Question 4**

This question was trying to find out teachers and learners' attitudes towards these learners with intellectual challenge

Response as shown below.

**Table 4**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
Negative	12	60
Positive	8	40
Total	20	100

### **Observation table 4**

Out of the twenty respondents (20), 12 pointed out that it was negative while 8 pointed it was positive.

### **Data analysis**

The information above indicated that some teachers and learners in regular schools have negative attitudes to learners with intellectual while others have positive attitudes.

### **Question 5**

This question intended to find out whether learners with intellectual challenge always interact with their peers.

**Table 5**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
Not always	20	100
Always	0	0
Total	20	100

**Observation table**

All the respondents pointed out that learners with intellectual challenges always interact with other learners.

**Data analysis**

The above information indicated that learners with intellectual challenges do not interact well with other learners. This evidence is got from above table 5 that is 100% pointed not always.

**Question 6**

This question is trying to find out whether there are special needs education teachers in Meru.

**Table 6**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
No	15	75
Yes	5	25
Total	20	100

**Observation table 6**

Out of 20 respondents 15 pointed out that there were no trained special needs education teachers while 5 responded there were.

### **Analysis of data**

The above information indicated that majority of school had no special needs teachers. This was evidenced by 85% of the total participants. Few schools had special needs teachers which was represented by 25% of the total sample.

### **Question 7**

This question intended to find out if there were teaches interested in joining special needs education programme

**Table 7**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
Yes	14	70
No	6	30
Total	20	100

### **Observation table 7**

Out of the 20 respondents who responded to the question regarding whether teachers were interested in joining special needs education programme 14 said they were interested while 6 said they were not.

### **Analysis of data**

This information in table 7 indicated that teachers are interested in joining special needs education because 14 respondents said yes which represents 70% of the total number of the respondents while a few are not interested.

### **Question 8**

This question is trying to find out if teachers find difficulties in identifying learners with intellectual challenge. Response is shown below.

**Table 8**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
Yes	15	75
No	5	25
Total	20	100

**Observation table 8**

Out of 20 respondents 15 pointed out that they had difficulties in identifying learners with intellectual challenges while 5 responded they had no difficulties.

**Analysis of data**

The information in table 8 indicated that 15 respondents were from those schools where there were no special needs teachers while 5 respondents were from those schools which had teachers trained in special education. This was a clear indication that there is need to train more teachers in special needs education.

**Question 9**

This question wanted to find out if teaches in regular schools receive any professional support and advice an intellectually challenged learners.

The response was as shown below

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
Yes	17	85
No	3	15
Total	20	100

**Observation table 9**

The above table showed that 17 respondents said they received some advice and support from district assessment centers personnel while 3 there were no support and advice from professionals.

### Analysis of data

From the above information, 85% of the respondents which represented a bigger number pointed out that they were receiving support and advice while 3 pointed out that there were no support.

### Question 10

This question wanted to find out whether the intellectually challenged and non-intellectually challenged individuals have problems when communicating to one another.

**Table 10**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
Yes	20	100
No	0	0
Total	20	100

### Observation table 10

From the observation table 10, 20 respondents pointed out those individuals have problems when communicating to one another.

### Data analysis

The information in table 10 points out that learners had problems when communicating to one another and this was evidenced by 100% of the respondents said there was communication problems.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

The study aimed at finding out the problems faced when handling learners with intellectual challenges in regular schools in Meru. This chapter highlights the findings of this study, make the conclusions and also draw recommendations that can be adopted in order to improve the performance of learners' intellectual challenges.

#### 5.1 Summary

In chapter 1 the researcher tried to give a brief introduction of intellectual challenged education in Kenya. She tried to explore the challenges teachers are facing handling these learners. This was done through setting the objectives and research questions which were to guide her in finding the problems teachers face when handling learners with intellectual challenges in regular schools.

In chapter 2, the researcher had to read wide and thoroughly to gather information on the contribution made by other people in addressing problems related to intellectual challenges. In this chapter, the researcher dealt mostly with modules. Issues on background information of intellectual challenges, causes of intellectual, academic achievement, identification of learners with intellectual challenge, teaching methods in regular set-ups to meet the needs of intellectually challenged, academic problems and resources and support services were addressed.

In chapter 3, the researcher used quantitative approach to analyze and interpret her data. Survey strategy to collect data was used. The researcher used simple random sampling, where out of the teachers, twenty were selection. This was because the questionnaire was send to teachers and all had equal chance of being selected as members of the sample.

The researcher wrote a questionnaire with ten questions. To pre-test her questionnaire she used staff mates. Then she sent the questionnaire to other twenty teachers in the zone. The researcher was lucky to have all questionnaires back in good time. Before the researcher sent her questionnaire to various schools, she asked permission from area education officer and was permitted.

The researcher presented her data, and analyzed it following American psychological association format using table, frequency and percentage for observation and data analysis. Through the use of tables, it was easy to use the problems teachers are facing from the most to the least problems.

## **5.2 Discussion and conclusion**

After analyzing the data the researcher found that majority of regular school had learners with special needs (intellectually challenged). According to Mawa (2002) learners with mild and moderate developmental disability have potentialities for development in social and vocational adjustment. However, they tend to be very slow in learning as they show extreme difficulties in academic subjects.

She also found that there was lack of enough resources in all schools to support learners with intellectual challenges. Atieno (2002) states that educational resources help to make learning simple and realistic learners with intellectual challenges require adequate support services and specialist equipment for effective learning in regular school set-ups.

The researcher found that teachers and learners had negative attitude towards these learners only a few who had positive attitude. Therefore, learners with intellectual challenges really interact with learners without intellectual challenges.

The researcher as she was analyzing her data, she found that only a few schools which had special needs teachers. In order for teachers in regular schools teach



effectively they need skills, knowledge and attitudes required to handle the learners with intellectual challenge.

From the data analysis, teachers were interested in joining special needs education only a few were not interested.

According to Mwaura and Wenyera (2002) a child with intellectual challenges has certain early signs that can be identified. Teacher in most schools find difficulties in identifying learners with intellectual challenges only a few those which have teachers trained in special needs education. This is due to lack of knowledge and skills needed to identify this problem.

Due to a programme organized by our district coordinator and our fellow pioneer teachers in special needs education, teachers receive some advice and support through the seminars and workshops held every term. This has brought awareness not only on intellectual challenges but on other areas of disabilities learners with intellectual challenges have extreme difficulties when communicating with others this is evidenced by the respondents.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

After analyzing the data, the researcher found out the there was great need for training more teachers to have at least one special needs teacher in every school. The Ministry of Education should ensure that all teachers in regular schools have skills and knowledge through training them at Kenya institute of special education or in-service teachers and other special related programmes.

Special education should be introduced in school curriculum so that all the public can be made aware of it. The government should expand facilities for training qualified personnel to handle the needs of the mentally challenged. The government should also find ways and means of achieving effective educational programmes whatever the school setting. The regular school teachers should be

sensitize in developing positive attitudes towards the intellectually challenged so that they could benefit and this should be done by the Ministry of Education, through allocating enough funds to enable the assessment centers personnel go out and carry out the in servicing of regular teachers on the skills and techniques of handling the intellectually challenged learners in regular.

The Kenya institute of special education should reduce fees to be affordable to enable more teachers to join the programme.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire on the challenges facing teachers handling learners with intellectual challenges. It is intended to collect information from teachers within Meru.

**Note:** All information collected will be treated as confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this research.

Please tick the correct answer

1. Are there children with intellectual challenges (mental retardation) in your school?

Yes ☐

No ☐

2. If yes, how do those learners respond to academic work?

Poorly ☐

Fairly ☐

3. Does your school have enough resources to support these learners with intellectual challenges?

Yes ☐

No ☐

4. What are the attitudes of regular teachers and learners towards learners with intellectual challenges?

Negative ☐

Positive ☐

5. Learners with intellectual challenges have behavioural and emotional difficulties, how often do these learners interact with regular learners in an inclusive setting?

Always ☐

Not always ☐

6. Are there teachers in your school you are trained to handle learners with intellectual challenge?

Yes ☐

No ☐

7. Are there teachers interested in joining special needs education programme?

Yes

No

8. Learners with intellectual challenges are grouped into four categories mild, moderate, severe and profound. According to your experience and knowledge, do you find difficulties in identifying these learners?

Yes ☐

No ☐

9. Do you receive any professional support and advice on intellectually challenged learners?

Yes ☐

No ☐

10. Do the intellectually challenged and non intellectually challenged have problems when communicating to one another

Yes ☐

No ☐