

**LEARNING CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY CHILDREN WITH
VISUAL IMPAIRMENT IN AN INCLUSIVE SETTING IN KISANANA
DIVISION, MOGOTIO DISTRICT-KENYA**

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this work is a result of my own effort and has never been submitted for any award in any other University or Institution of higher learning

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APPROVAL

This work has been done under my supervision as a University supervisor

Signed: 

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Date: 17/12/11

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved husband Mr. Dixon Rono, loving children; Winnie, Catherine, Kevin, Juliet, Silvia, Faith.

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ABSTRACT

The main focus of this study to find out challenges faced by children with visual impairment in an inclusive setting. The researcher picked interest in finding out the mode of communication used by teachers instructional materials teachers use to instruct visually impaired learners, teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of children with visual impairment in regular schools and find ways of improving the education of these children.

To get the information needed an interview guide was designed for children with visual impairment and questionnaires prepared and distributed to headteachers and teachers in the selected schools. Random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select schools and the respondents.

The findings revealed that children with visual impairment in regular schools experienced some challenges which among others included; lack of specially trained teachers in special needs education to cater for their learning needs and interests, inadequacy of appropriate equipment and learning materials, inappropriate teaching materials and methods, negative attitudes of teachers towards the education of the handicapped children and high teacher-pupil ratio in class among others.

From the study, the following recommendations were made that; Special Needs Education should be co-opted into Primary Teachers' Colleges as a course, government, NGOs and other stakeholders should intensify community awareness programmes about the rights of persons with disabilities, refresher courses should be provided to teachers to equip them with knowledge and skills to assist learners with special learning needs and teachers be trained to make and use the available local materials, primary school teachers should be encouraged to go for up grading special needs education, parents of children with special needs should be encouraged to actively get involved in the learning of their children among others.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background

Formerly in Kenya, education for persons with children with disabilities was provided in a segregated setting (special schools/units) if not neglected in their homes.

Following the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003, every child has a right to free and compulsory education. This has seen so many children of school going age including those with hearing impairment enrolled in regular schools. This caused increase in children population in mainstream schools was a government strategy towards promotion of inclusion which enabled all children to learn and freely participate in mainstream schools despite differences in their age sex and ability.

In 1990, at Jomintien, Thailand, the World community pledged to ensure the right to education for all regardless of individual differences and abilities. This world declaration of education for all in article 1:1 states that; “Every child, youth and adult shall be able to benefit”. Following this world declaration, the Kenyan government declared universal primary education, adult education and education for persons with disabilities. The purpose of all these was to eliminate the high rate of illiteracy in the country. The marginalized persons like those with vision problems were also given opportunity to pursue education to the highest level depending on their ability and capability.

The major challenge facing Special Needs Education the world over and Kenya as well is the extent to which children with special learning needs should be included in regular classes. The Kenyan government and community at large have tried to encourage inclusive education to enable all children share similar opportunities in an attempt to attain education for all and

enhance socialization and co-existence between children with disabilities and other ordinary children. In primary schools, inclusive education has become an effective approach to address the learning needs of all learners. Many development partners have also advocated for inclusive education as a way of minimizing the social stratification between the children with special needs and the entire society.

However, findings by the Educational Assessment Research Services (EARS) revealed that a few of deaf children who managed to go to mainstream schools do not do as well as compared to their peers. This calls for an investigation so that special attention is given to the whole education system if there is to be improvement in the quality of education given to children with visual impairment.

Hagarly (1993) in the agreement with the above states that pupils with special needs in ordinary school do not always have to do with the successful mainstream curriculum and sometimes indeed are more restricted in their curriculum experiences than they would be in special schools. He added that ordinary schools have potential to offering a wide range of curriculum than special schools but in practice they often fail to do so. It can therefore be said that although children with visual impairment are being taught in regular/mainstream schools, teaching seems not to be done in the appropriate way. Many teachers have problems in teaching these children due to lack of communication approaches, methods and materials in inclusive schools.

Children with hearing impairment experience a number of challenges ranging from academic to social, characterised by labeling, rejection and despise due to poor performance among others.

The fact that all schools strive for higher grades, it is a challenge to teachers handling children with learning special learning needs and the children themselves due to the fact they seem not to perform to the level society expects them to perform.

Statement of the problem

It is a national policy that children regardless of their age, sex and ability should attain appropriate education in their nearest schools. However the performance of children with visual impairment in the mainstream schools has been noted to be poor in comparison with their sighted peers. Learners with visual impairment like all other children should benefit from the school learning environment but this seems to be far from reality at the moment. They have continued to perform poorly. It is for this reason that the researcher seeks to investigate the learning challenges experienced by hearing impaired children in mainstream schools.

The purpose of the study:

The overall purpose of the study was to find out the learning difficulties encountered by children with visual impairment in an inclusive setting.

Objectives:

The study was guided by the study objectives.

- (i) To find out challenges faced by children with visual impairment in a regular classroom.
- (ii) To find out teachers' attitudes towards teaching children with visual impairment in mainstream schools.
- (iii) To find out the modes of communication that teachers in mainstream schools use to communicate with visually impaired learners.

- (iv) To find out the methods teachers use in teaching when teaching children with visual impairment.
- (v) To suggest possible ways of improving the performance of children with visual impairment under inclusive education.

Research Questions.

- (i) What are the challenges faced by children with visual impairment in mainstream schools?
- (ii) What attitudes do teachers have towards children with visual impairment in mainstream schools?
- (iii) What mode of communication do teachers use to instruct visually impaired learners in mainstream schools?
- (iv) What methods do teachers use in teaching children with visual impairment?
- (v) What can be done to improve the performance of children with visual impairment under inclusive education?

The scope of study

The study was carried out in Kisanana Division, Mogotio District of Kenya, in the three elected schools i.e. Kisanana, Koisaram and Emining primary schools and focussed on factors affecting performance of children with hearing impairment in mainstream schools.

Significance of the study:

The researcher hoped the result of the study would:

- (i) help teachers to improve on their methods of teaching children with visual impairment in regular classroom setting.
- (ii) Learners may be helped to gain confidence for free interaction to uplift their social status and improve their self-esteem as their poor performance may partly be attributed to their inferiority feelings to the sighted peers.
- (iii) Create awareness and improve cooperation between the children with and without visual impairment for positive co-existence and readiness to help each other as members of the same society.
- (iv) Enable teachers to design appropriate instructional materials when teaching children with visual impairment.
- (v) Enable researcher to acquire skills and knowledge of teaching children with visual impairment. Teachers need to make special efforts to reach out for these children and involve them in all school activities like any other children.

Limitations:

- The study proved to be expensive as more funds were needed to meet expenses in designing and typing questionnaires, typing and binding final report, transport, lunch and others which was sometimes not available.
- Due to busy teaching schedule and other academic work, time was not enough for the study. This meant foregoing other study activities or working strain which may cause fatigue.

- Some methods used to collect data required meeting respondents and physical talking to them one by one. This took a long time and the respondent failed to give the information.

Delimitations:

- The study was carried out in familiar places where communication and interaction with respondents was easy.
- Some costs were minimised by short distances from researchers home to areas of the study. This therefore was no need of accommodation expenses as researcher to gather information.
- Transport was easy for the researcher when gathering information because most areas of the study were near the researcher's working station.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents the ideas of other writers who have discussed similar issues related to the education of children with hearing impairment. Their views have been found to be relevant to the study and may be of much help in understanding the challenges children with visual impairment face in the mainstream setting.

For clarity, literature was reviewed considering the following themes developed from study objectives.

Understanding a visually impaired child.

Visual impairment refers to one who has visual problems even after treatment and or standard correction (S.C) and has a visual acuity (V.A) of less than 6.8 to light perception or visual field (V.F) of less than 10 degrees from the point of fixation. Not all handicapped children are totally blind some are able to perceive. Difference in light and shades and others see images which are so distorted, blurred or fragmented, that it's difficult to extract meaning from a visual world. Visual impairment is one of the common disabilities present in our schools today.

Challenges facing learners with visual impairment.

Kimani (2003) quotes one of the challenges as teaching methods. The curriculum is rigid and does not favour the visually impaired learners.

It has not been modified and does not give additional time for teaching the specialized skills such as Braille, reading and writing, mathematical computation, typing orientation, mobility and

activities of daily living. The rigid teaching methods do not cater for the needs of the visually impaired learners. Real objects for learners to touch and manipulate are really used.

The curriculum does not plan learning activities with the understanding that the same activities may take longer time for learners with visual problems. Due to this learners feel neglected and rejected. According to Kimani (2003) another challenge is the environmental adaptation. Environmental adaptation or adjustments are very important for learners with visual problems to make them cope with learning in an inclusive setting.

Most of the classes are not arranged in an orderly manner. This hinders safety. The classroom arrangement is also changed without the learners' awareness. This may make learners with visual impairment disoriented in the environment. Teachers do not place learners with visual problems in a position that suits which becomes a barrier to learning.

Most of the classrooms in this area have very bright light which is a problem to learners who have light sensitivity. This is a challenge to learners and makes them not to learn effectively. Drawings and charts are not drawn in bold type. Most of them are not displayed at learners' eye level. Most of the schools lack large print books for easier reading. All these problems hinder the learners from coping with learning in an inclusive setting.

According to Kiburi (2005) poverty is also a big challenge to these learners lack of finance hinders learners with visual problems from having visual devices which enhance vision. These include spectacles binoculars, highlighters, Braille machines, brailled textbooks, embossed or tactile maps, typewriters.

Due to lack of money, such learners do not go for medical check ups whereby they are supposed to be treated, guided and counseled. They are not taken for assessment for early intervention and

in most cases learners' needs are not established. Hence the factors causing visual impairment are not defined, analyzed and strategies for solving the problems are not decided, this makes the learners to have more problems since the child is not assisted.

Kimani (2003) and Kiburi (2005) categorized the challenges affecting learners with low vision. I agree with them. I do so because findings of this study reveal that majority of the learners with visual problems have the same challenges. I support their point of view that such children have high potentials when given enough support and if any these challenges are solved.

This is why the researcher has engaged in researching these challenges so as to find possible solutions.

Causes of Visual Impairment

Kimani (2003) revealed that there are different causes of visual impairments

These include:-

- The anatomical or structural defects of the eye
- Defects resulting from heredity or genetic
- Pathologies or diseases
- Poor nutrition
- Toxin such as poisons, chemicals and drugs
- Refractive errors
- Trauma

The defect resulting from the genetic from the genetic or heredity are passed from the parent or grandparents to the offspring. Normally the defect is inborn and it is difficult to be cured. An anatomical or structural defect of the eye is a condition whereby the eye may not develop

physically and internally well and may have structural defects. It may have one or more parts missing. Majority of the learners may be seen as normal until they are assessed.

Pathologies or diseases that cause visual problems include cataract, trachoma, glaucoma, xerophthalmia or vitamin A deficiency, optic atrophy, retinal diseases. Trachoma, which is caused by an organism called *Chlamydia trachomatis* is highly contagious. It is common in dry areas with poor hygiene and inadequate water supply. This eye disease is common in this area since the area is very dry with very little water. Most schools in the zone have cases of learners suffering from trachoma. They have itchy red eyes, eye discharge, painful eyes, and sensation of foreign bodies and scarring of the conjunctiva which are the signs of the disease. Trachoma in severe cases causes total blindness. Cataract is one cause of eye problems which is the leading cause of blindness causing about 46% of visual impairment in this country. It is not exceptional; some learners in this area have visual due to cataract and if left untreated may cause total blindness. In this case the learner may use Braille as a medium of reading and writing. Lack of intervention may be caused by poor access to medical attention and treatment. When a child has this disease, he/she will not be able to explore his environment and this limits his/her learning.

Xerophthalmia or vitamin A deficiency is common among poor communities where malnutrition is rampant. This disease affects the sclera or conjunctiva. In this case the eye may look dry, sensitivity of light and night blindness. Children suffering from xerophthalmia in a classroom situation may have various eye problems. Such children spend most of their time in hospital for treatment.

Trachoma according to Oyugi (2000) is a sudden injury to the eye of a person especially which may have an effect on the head. A slap on the face may affect the eye. Some specific drugs have

side effects that may damage the visual system. Poisonous chemicals also can cause eye problems and may lead to total impairment Oyugi (2000) gives another cause of visual problems as parents ignorant. The mother is the first to notice eye problem of the child. Most of the parents have different taboos and instead of going for medical check up they give their children a traditional herb which in turn poisons the eyes.

Lack of awareness may also be a cause of this challenge which causes fibres of the optic nerve deteriorate gradually and die. The patient is not able to interpret visual images in the brain since their passage is locked. The eye looks normal but the patient could be blind. Optic, atrophy may be caused by malnutrition, toxins or poisons, infections trumuours or head injuries. These conditions affect learning since the person cannot see clearly. Retinal disease also is a cause of eye problems. This condition results from damage on the mocular of the retina.

Loss central vision may affect reading and the ability to see details. I agree with the two authors (Kimani 2003 and Oyugi 2000) in what many people explain as the causes of their visual impairment. Majority of these causes have been found with oa – learners in an inclusive setting in this area of study which become a major concern to the researcher.

Teachers attitudes towards children with visual impairment

Attitudes are feelings that develop from experiences with others and the environment. The attitudes influence the way people behave towards, feel about others.

Cecil et al (1987) noted that the handicapped generally encounter so many negative experiences that is difficult for them to develop positive attitudes. This is true because society does not value them and therefore doesn't accord them the right and needs full support.

Most of the teachers gave the notion that any child with a disability is of low ability and cannot perform as the normal child. This has an impact to teachers ignorance of learners with visual impairment. When a child is ignored, is lowered her/his self esteem, confidence and becomes withdrawn in the class.

Regular classes are congested thus teachers do not have time to give the visual impaired child maximum attention. Teachers may abuse children with visual problems and label them. Such names make the learner to feel rejected and neglected in the class, some head teachers do not admit learners with visual problems in their schools because they term them as low achievers and thus they will lower the school mean score.

Most teachers do not motivate these children even if they have shown an improvement in academics. Such children are not also given chance to participate in schools activities because they are seen as incapable. Teachers tease learners with visual impairment and segregate them which may further the handicap.

Sigot (2005) revealed that the speech development of such children may be slower than of those of sighted children for they acquire word with what they see. Teachers do not understand this and instead of giving them extra time when answering questions, they complete answers for them thinking that they are wasting their time since they are after finishing the syllabus. Teachers do not advise the visually challenged learners on how to handle and care for the low vision device. They may not be willing to teach learners on hygiene and diet. This makes their problems worse since the visually impaired should observe hygiene and also eat a diet which contains vitamin A to avoid and control low vision.

Kimani (2003) says that children with such problems should be placed closer to the chalkboard, most of the teachers ignore this and classroom. Teachers may be resistant to get extra time to teach specialized skills to these visually impaired children. Some regular teachers do not reinforce the low vision learners. They do not praise them not motivate them whenever they answer any question. Others think that it is a wastage of time asking them questions of assisting them to read comprehension. This makes such learners lag behind and perform poorly.

Sigoti (2005) and Kimani (2003) have vividly pointed out the attitude of the teachers towards learners with visual impairment. Not all the teachers have negative attitude towards disadvantage learners. Some of them have positive attitude and assist these learners. I concur with two authors that majority of teachers have negative attitudes towards these learners since I have observed such behavior with many teacher who are not willing to help and support the learners. Most of the teachers are after the mean score and to them low vision learners are a bother. The same has been happening at schools under study and this made the researcher to investigate on the teachers attitude towards learners who have visual impairment.

Crisci (1981) states that negative attitudes may rise from illustration of not having the necessary skills. This therefore is true in that most teachers have had relatively little or no formal preparation for working with special needs respond negatively to community with special needs.

Teaching methods used by teachers in teaching children with hearing impairment

Hengarly (1988) cited that joint participation in education activities is the full form of teaching children with special education needs. He further said that most of the schools have failed to teach children with special needs due to teachers who have not acquired knowledge and skills in modifying the materials methods to meet the needs of the children with disabilities fully.

Agganual (1995) explains that, teaching methods are strategies and tactics of showing how to do this so that they will be able to do it themselves the choice of what is to be taught and how to teach it. Danshan (1995) claims that people who teach children with visual impairment before training do not have enough experience about educational methods for teaching those children. However, after training they get correct ways of working with them. This is true because during teacher training one is taken through methods of handling the learners. In the absence of training one doesn't have skills. It is worse for learners with special needs.

Cornett (1992) stated that cued speech method is multisensory approach for teaching communication and language skills to children with visual challenges. Teachers use this method to emphasize the child's use of the visual and auditory sense. The goals of cued speech is for child to receive spoken language clearly both visually and audity.

Senders (1988) explains that an effective teacher will present many examples of new concepts and will provide several opportunities to practice new skills. The teacher will help the students participation in their learning when necessary. The researcher is in agreement with this observatin that the modelling of procedures can be acceptable and effective methods of instruction.

Sanders goes on and says that teachers who are sensitive to needs of learners should employ a variety of teaching/learnung aids to assist the comprehension of obstract concept by providing concrete support e.g. charts, models, books and pupils mode of materials are usually available or easy mode and should be at the age and level appropriate to the child. The researcher concurs with above taht manipulative approaches provide concrete aid in developing concepts through discovery methods of teaching.

Kilr and Wanyard (1993) observed that normally children learn a great deal from what goes on around them that is through playing and learning, immitating. This is true because different ways through which pupils learn and variety of facilities will ensure that all pupils fulfill their potentials and help to make teaching more effective and stimulating for them.

The researcher in agreement, further noted that a variety of teaching mothods should be used to kill boredom among pupils and more so children with the handicapped for instance guided discovery, child to child, discussion, question and and asnwer, group work, observation among others should be employed to make learning more interesting.

Strategies to overcome the learning challenges facing the visually impaired learners.

The most important strategies to help visually impaired learners is training teachers to equip them with skills on how to educate and deal with visual impaired learners. Demott (1982) recommended the practice to institute an itinerant teacher visits regular schools to provide tutorial and remedial assistance to the integrated child. This, of course, assumes that when the internet is not around, the child is given the necessary assistance by the school administration and teachers. The assistance should include tape lecture, Braille, and written notes for both the students and the itinerant teacher. The use of low vision devices will also help these learners by enhancing vision. The low vision devices include the optical low vision and non optical low vision devices. Optical low vision devices are lenses placed between the eye and the object to facilitate seeing. They are used for magnification and are not prescribed by the eye specialist. They also enhance vision.

According to Sigot (2005) the total blind children use Braille for reading. This is a system of touch reading which employs the use of embossed dots arranged in cells. By touching the arrangement of the dots, one is able to tell their meaning.

Kariuki (2002) says that visual efficiency training follows visual stimulation programmes. Visual stimulation involves the training of the organs of sight in order to see better. It is done through involving the person with impairment in activities that involve the use of vision. The visual activities involve visual discrimination eye-hand co-ordination, fixation, tracking, scanning, eccentric viewing and low vision movement or mobility.

A person with low vision may have restricted movement or mobility due to the efficiency of vision. The environment has to be modified to eliminate any barriers that are bound to restrict movement. The essential places to be modified are;- Classroom, school compound, toilets and dormitories. To allow efficiency movement, low vision skills should be taught. This skill includes the sighted guide, Narrow spaces, and cane skills, crossing the road and orientation to chair or table and independent living skills.

Ogonda (2002) says that teachers may make it possible for the learner with visual impairment to be accepted by the other learners by demonstrating positive and supportive attitude to the other teachers about the need of the learner and discuss what they can do together to minimize barriers to learning and development.

The teacher should be kind, tolerate with and support the learner all the time. The teacher should also give extra time. The teacher should also give extra time for tests to compensate for the time they lose in repeatedly trying to find their place and reading direction. Early intervention is essential to learners with visual impairment immediately a child is noticed to be having visual problems; she/he should be taken for assessment whereby visual acuity is tested. This will help one to know the category of vision and the type of device to use. Early intervention will help in

the placement of the learner. Guidance and counseling will be important to assist the learner accept his condition.

Waruguru and Oganda (2002) have given good remedies for the problems facing the visually impaired learners to fit in an inclusive setting since he/she will have minimal problems. Such children can be very useful in the schools through their participation in co-curricular activities for example they can be very good singers and poem recites. It should therefore be everyone's responsibility to help them reach their full potential in life instead of making them feel rejected or even rejecting or even rejecting them. Let us all give helping hand where we can and whenever we are called to.

In summary this chapter has covered who a visually impaired learner is, types of challenges facing learners with visuals impairment, the possible remedies to the problems facing learners with visual impairment. The next chapter is on methodology of the research.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the methods and ways that the researcher used in carrying out this study. It includes the research design, target population, sample technique and size, research procedure and data analysis techniques. It describes the nature and patterns the researcher followed while compiling data.

Research design

The study used descriptive research design as it involved qualitative methods of data collection. This study adopted a descriptive research design. This enabled the researcher to obtain a better understanding the learning difficulties encountered y hearing impaired children in mainstream schools not only in this area but elsewhere world over. The method chosen allowed a collection of comprehensive and intensive data and provided an in-depth understanding of the topic under study.

Area of study

The study was carried out Kisanana Division Mogotio District-Kenya. The area was chosen because the researcher teaches in this area and has identified learners with hearing impairment and their minimal performance. The sampled schools have large numbers of learners and teachers as well.

Target population and sample size

The study concentrated on teachers and management of the sampled schools from the area. The management and teachers helped in investigating challenges facing hearing impaired learners and suggesting possible intervention strategies. The population involved in the study comprised Head teachers, teachers and learners from the sampled schools in the division.

Sample procedure

Respondents were selected using convenient sampling but with regard to their individual ability to provide the required information through each instrument. Convenient sampling enables the researcher to choose the nearest and most convenient person to act as a respondent for the study. The process is continued until the required sample size has been reached. Both male and female teachers were given equal opportunities to participate in the study.

Research instruments

The researcher used questionnaire approach as it was considered ideal for collecting required data. It is the most commonly method used when respondents can be easily reached and are willing to cooperate. This method can reach a larger number of subjects who are able to read and write independently. The respondents have freedom to say whatever they want to say and what they know since their identity is not revealed

Data collection procedure

The researcher developed questionnaire from the set objectives of the study. With the introduction letter from Kampala International University, the researcher obtained permission from the Head teachers of the sampled schools to carry out the study. The researcher then designed a program on how to visit the schools at different times. The researcher distributed questionnaires to the sampled respondents and collected them later after they had been filled.

Documentary review

Secondary data used was obtained from the main library of Kampala International University, records from district Education Assessment and Research Services (EARS) centre, Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE), Kenya Methodist University, and records from the sampled schools

Data analysis

After the data had been collected, brief information was presented in frequency distribution. The data was analyzed in three columns; the first column showed category, the second showed frequency and the last showed percentages. The data collected was analyzed, presented and then discussed briefly concerning hearing impaired learners. The data in frequency columns was converted into percentages and recorded in percentage columns. It consisted of a number of tables, well analyzed and discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Introduction

In this chapter attempts are made to interpret the findings. Also key information enabled the researcher to relate the specific objectives and give a clear picture of the results. The researcher recorded the raw data collected and then analyzed, tabulated and interpreted the data using tables.

Table 1: No of teachers trained in special needs

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	4	40
No	6	60
Total	20	100

Table 1 presents the findings from Head teachers of the sampled schools. This reveals that few teachers have been trained in Special Needs Education as only 40% of them have received this special training to handle children with special learning needs. 60% of the teachers in the sampled schools have not had training in special needs education.

It is paramount that government, Non-government agencies and other stakeholders should sponsor more teachers for refresher courses and training in special needs education to acquire more skills in helping all children under inclusive learning.

Table 2: Performance of learners with visual impairment in regular schools

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Low	7	58.3
Poor	3	25
Fair	2	16.6
Total	12	100

The table above shows responses from nine teachers from the three selected schools. Majority of the respondents (58.3%) indicated that the performance of children with visual impairment was poor as compared to their ordinary peers. 25% of the respondents said that these children perform poorly while only 2 respondents (16.6%) reported fair performance by these children.

Table 3: Challenges faced by children with hearing impairment in learning in an inclusive setting

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Hard to get teachers' visual explanations	5	55.5
Poor use of teaching and learning aids	3	33.3
Fear to disturb others by seeking help	4	44.4
Sometimes teachers fail to guide us	3	33.3
Congested classroom environment	2	22.2
Absenteeism from school to attend medical care.	1	11.1
Unfriendly school environment such as toilets	1	11.1

The findings in table two are responses from the nine children with hearing impairment from the three selected schools. Five respondents (55.5%) revealed that they find it hard to follow the verbal explanations teachers use while teaching. Other four children said that in most cases they fear to ask for pardons from teachers or fellow hearing learner for fear of disturbing them. Three pupils also revealed that teachers use a lot of speech which are hard to understand without help from others. Some children also revealed that sometimes teachers get stack as they explain and ask them (deaf children) to find signs for themselves. Some children (22.2%) also complained of congested class environment perhaps due to large enrolments. Others expressed disappointment that they were being labeled and abused by their peers while others complained of teachers refusing to repeat for them in case they attempt to ask for pardons. It is evident from these responses that the teachers' attitude towards these learners was negative.

Table 4: Attitudes of the school administrators, teachers and parents towards the performance of children with visual impairment.

Responses	Respondents			Frequency	Percentage
	Head teachers	Teachers	Parents		
They are not interested in learning	2	4	4	10	34.4
Need a lot of materials and there had to maintain	1	3	3	7	24.1
They have poor concentration span	-	3	5	8	17
They need a lot of special care and are tiresome to maintain	-	2	1	3	10
Can only be taught by specially trained teachers	-	1	2	3	10
Lack independency. Their life heavily depends on others	-	-	1	1	3.4

Findings in table 3 indicate that majority of the respondents have negative attitude towards the learning of the visually impaired learners as most of the respondents overwhelmingly revealed that these children have negative attitude towards learning. This was most especially so with parents whose attitude towards education of children with low vision was completely negative. The parents perception is that visually challenged children cannot concentrate and study most especially in the mainstream setting compared to their sighted counterparts and that they need special care in terms of personnel, equipment and materials for them to acquire some learning which seems expensive to the parents. Equally majority parents believe that children with low vision lack independence and have to entirely depend on others throughout their life. It can therefore be concluded that the attitude of the majority stakeholders in the education of visually challenged children is still negative. It is this pre-determined misconception that may affect service delivery to these children and therefore poor performance.

Table 5: Causes of negative attitude in teachers towards inclusion of learners with hearing impairment.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Difficulty in instructing the children	3	100
Lack of instructional materials	3	100
Children are aggressive to fellow learners and teachers	2	66.6
They take long to understand instructions	2	66.6
They are hard to teach	1	33.3

These were responses from the three headteachers of the sampled schools and have concurred with the researcher's view that their teachers have negative attitude towards inclusion of learners in regular schools. The table above illustrates that all the sampled headteachers overwhelmingly revealed that of skills to instruct these children was the most threatening factor to teachers in teaching learners with special learning needs in the regular schools. This in turn makes both learners and teachers lose interest in each other and learning.

All the respondents also indicated that teaching visually impaired learners is hard without proper and enough instructional materials

Two respondents (66.6%) shared the view that children with visual impairment are aggressive to both peers and teachers. This creates resentment towards these children from their peers and teachers. This same number also shared the belief that visually impaired children do not easily follow instructions and are very slow to learn with other in addition to being hard to teach.

Table 6: Methods used by teachers to teach children in an inclusive setting.

METHODS	SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS RESPONSES			NUMBER OF TEACHERS	PERCENTAGE
	A	B	C		
Demonstration	03	03	03	09	100%
Teacher – Centred	03	03	03	09	100%
Talk and Chalk	03	03	03	09	100%
Total communication	03	03	02		88.8%
Individuals methods	01	02	01	04	44.4%
Group work	00	01	02	03	33.3%

The table above shows that 9 (100%) teachers use demonstration, teacher centred and talk and chalk methods while teaching. From the table above it was revealed that demonstration, Teacher centres and Talk and chalk were commonly used with respondents meeting them respectively.

One respondent also revealed that visually impaired children are hard to teach and disturb others thus causing unrest in class.

Table 7: Ways of improving the performance of children with visual impairment

Responses	Respondents			Frequency	Percentage
	Administrators	Teachers	Parents		
Sensitizing the public about the importance of education for low vision children	2	4	4	10	77
Guiding and counseling parents to play their role and children on how to overcome the effects of their condition.	-	1	5	6	46
Coordination of all stakeholders in the provision of children with special learning needs	1	-	4	5	38.4
Availability of learning resources for effective learning/teaching	2	4	-	6	46
Training of more teachers in special needs education to equip them with skills to manage all learners under inclusive setting.	2	5	4	11	84

Table 4 shows that the best way to improve the performance of children with visual impairment is to sensitize all the stakeholders on the importance of educating these children. This is aimed at creating positive attitude towards visually impaired children, readiness to assist them and eventually improve their performance. Findings further reveal that sensitizing parents about the importance of educating their children and also sensitizing children themselves to overcome the

challenges imposed on them by the handicap would help improve their academic performance. Parents, teachers and community as a whole need to create conducive environment for these children to learn.

Some other respondents suggested positive cooperation between all stakeholders to forge a way forward to provide quality education o all learners. Also positive relationship of the stakeholders would create fertile learning environment on which effective learning and performance will thrive.

Also responses on training of more teachers in special needs education to equip them with skills to manage all learners under inclusive setting were singled out. These are believed will be able to handle these learners with skills and confidence to enable them perform better.

It is importnt to note that a teacher is an important person in the growth and developent of a child. Therefore teachers need to be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to assist all children despite the handicapsy the child may have. Teachers should therefore be sent for further studies or on refresher courses for the benefit o all the children in their schools. For instance they need to acquire skills such as the use of varied teaching methods, means of assisting those with special learning needss in the mainstream not separately.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher discusses and concludes the findings of the study and suggests recommendations according to the set objectives of the study.

Discussion of results on objective one

Findings as noted in table 2 show that children with visual impairment performed poorly as compared to their hearing counterpart. Majority of the respondents (58.3%) indicated that the performance of children with visual impairment was poor as compared to their ordinary peers. 25% of the respondents said that these children perform poorly while only 2 respondents (16.6%) reported fair performance by these children. The fact that none of the respondents revealed good performance was enough to come to this conclusion. It may also be said that the 16% that reported fair performance needed to protect the image of their schools but in actual sense the performance may not be much different from the responses of the majority. The poor/fair performance may be attributed to teachers' negative attitude towards teaching and inability to instruct visually impaired and their sighted peers visually impaired learners, unfavorable classroom/school environment as noted in table 3 (chapter four) and unfriendly teaching methods among others. It is therefore important that teachers use concrete examples, real objects, events and situations in order to make clear explanations to all learners in an inclusive class.

Discussion of results on objective two.

This objective was meant to find out the challenges faced by children with visual impairment in regular schools. Responses of the children with visual impairment as illustrated in table 3 (chapter four) reveal that these children face a number of challenges in an inclusive class/school. The major challenge seems to stem from communication barriers between the learners and teachers. As revealed by the findings, most children with visual impairment fail to understand visual explanations. Moreover most of these children revealed that fear to seek help for fear of disturbing others perhaps this is from the past experience/responses they have suffered whenever they tried to seek assistance. This is made worse by the fact that teachers are reluctant to reach out for these children whenever they needed help. This elaborates how lack of communication techniques as a result of failure to use total communication to meet the needs of all children in class.. It should be noted that effective learning/teaching requires active participation of both the teacher and learners. Where this participation is dominated by one party, learning may not take place.

Ceaser (1996) stresses that teachers are faced with the task of delivering content to learners which require effective communication that involves sitting arrangement, class control and use of pupil-centered learning. Therefore for effective teaching and full participation of learners, teachers should always be equipped with methods, education materials, subject matter, teaching techniques and means of communication in handling children with special learning needs.

Kizito and Sakwa (1994) further argue that; "The most effective way of fulfilling those basic needs is the ability to communicate with people around us". A person's failure to make interactions with other people and the environment may result into social problems like stereotypic behavior patterns not good for society and the child itself. In order to avoid such

behaviors, teachers and parents as well should be committed to learning communication skills to be able to bridge the communication gaps between them and children

Discussion of findings on objective three.

Objective four was set to find out teachers' views and attitudes towards learners with visual impairment in.

The findings on this objective have indicated that most of respondents have negative attitudes towards disabled learners. According to responses from sampled teachers and headteachers it is evident that teachers prefer teaching sighted learners to visually impaired children and very few of them believe that these children can concentrate in class and study as their sighted peers under the mainstream arrangement.

Majority respondents prefer these children being taught in special schools where special care may be adequately provided in order for them to perform fairly. They have a feeling that these children are expensive to be maintained in regular schools as special learning materials are required to support their learning but which are costly most especially that most of these children come from humble families and parents are either unable or not ready to sacrifice and provide for children they perceive as wasted resources.

Horn (1995) observes that some parents and teachers show negative attitude at home and school towards children with visual impairment. Accordingly, attitudes of parents are characterized by denial of involvement and participation of these children in all home activities and teachers consider them to be slow in learning and much time consuming hence spend little time to engage them in class as learning progresses.

Seng (1992) in agreement with the above observation also stresses that most teachers and parents treat children with visual impairment as “second class” both schools at school and home. Most parents do not take these children to school and for the few who get chance to go to school have their school dues not paid in time or not paid at all in pretext that they have other children to cater for. Cases of late or defaulted payment of school dues have been sighted from the responses obtained from various head teachers

In addition children with visual impairment lack basic necessities to aid their learning process. It is the researcher’s view that the problem of parents’ inability to obtain basic needs for their visually challenged children and children’s feelings of hopelessness impact much on the learning and performance of these children both at school and home. Both school and home environment hold similar sentiments that seem to work against the learning needs of these children.

Discussion of Results on objective four.

The focus of objective four was to find out methods used by teachers in teaching children with visual impairment in regular schools.

In reference to table 6 in chapter four all respondents (100%) said that demonstration, teacher centred, talk and chalk methods are common methods used when teaching learners with visual impairment. This is followed by other respondent (88.8%) who revealed that total communication is second common method used.

The findings on this objective established that most teachers use methods of teaching that are not all appropriate to the level and understanding of learners. Teaching requires teachers to develop sensitivity and skills in teaching to assist learners in psychological and educational adjustments. Appropriate methods of teaching result into successful teaching and learning.

The frequency use of talk and chalk and teacher centred methods do not only demotivate learning but also makes visually impaired learners to lose a lot due to the fact that they do not have chance to follow teacher's writings on the chalk board.

Also some few respondents said they use group work during while teaching. Therefore there is inadequate use of group work in the teaching process. This deprives pupils of opportunities of learning by doing, discussing and experience leading to lack of motivation and denies deaf children chance to interact with their sighted peers.

Children with special needs should receive additional support (remedial teaching) in the contents of the regular curriculum. Different methods should therefore be used to get them understand and be understood. These include demonstration, child centred, experimentation, demonstration, child-to-child teaching.¹

Discussion of findings on objective five

Objective five sought to find out ways of improving the performance of children with visual impairment. Findings in table 7 reveal that the majority of the respondents agree that the best way to improve the performance of visually challenged learners is through sensitizing their fellow ordinary peers, parents, teachers, school administrators and the entire community about the importance and the need for these children to acquire education and what is expected of each of them to help these children feel free in school and community environment in order to develop into productive and self-reliant members of community.

Findings further indicate that there should be cooperation between all the stakeholders in educating all learners including those with special learning needs. Responses from some teachers show that they acknowledge the fact that there is no cooperation between them and parent to

work hand in hand to educate these children. It should however be noted that poor relationship between teachers and parents may negatively impact on the teacher-pupil relationship that may adversely affect the performance of the teacher and pupils in the teaching and learning process respectively. There is therefore need to develop positive and meaningful co-existence efforts for team work be made in order to boost the learning and performance of children with visual impairment.

It has also been noted from the respondents that there is no assurance in the protection of rights of children with visual impairment. However for effective learning to take place, children's rights and learning needs have to be adequately catered for in order for visually impaired children to feel secure, loved and accepted. Feelings of a secure environment may help these children settle and learn hence better performance. Denshan (1995) is in agreement with this view by noting that; "Due to traditional practices and beliefs parents and teachers may at times fail to adjust to the needs of learners with visual impairment".

Warnock (1989) emphasizes that success education of pupils with visual impairment is dependent on full involvement of their parents and teachers. The researcher is in agreement with this view as cooperation and active involvement of both teachers and parents in the learning process of their children is likely to motivate learners due to good learning environment created by the positive teacher-parent relationship.

Suzan (1998) similarly believes that children who find themselves excluded from associating with their peers have got unsatisfactory relationship with their teachers. Life in school becomes a punishing experience and a living torment to them. Children without friends are exceptionally vulnerable and are therefore exposed to a greater deal of woes such as poverty, poor health and at constant risks.

Conclusion

It should be noted that the trend no longer supports the special schools system, therefore children with special educational needs should be placed under inclusive school system. Three things therefore have to be put into consideration namely; Environment, Curriculum and Teaching approaches. Teachers handling children with mental retardation should have compassion and love for assisting these children to learn and accept them as they are, freely interact with them, coming down to their level, building good rapport and knowing their likes and dislikes. Teachers should endeavor to get more knowledge the learning needs of children with special needs by going for further studies, attending refresher courses and workshops on Special Needs Education.

Recommendations

According to the children statute, it is the right of every child to live and receive all basic needs of life including food, shelter, clothing, medical care, love respect and education. After gathering all the information herein, the researcher made recommendations which when implemented may improve on the education and performance of children with visual impairment. These include:

- a) There is need to co-opt special needs education into Primary Teacher Training Colleges.

The current system of training special needs at Diploma level minimally favors special needs education. A few teachers who receive training either at Diploma or Degree level do not go back to class. They are instead placed in leadership positions such as Headteachers, inspectors or hired by rich non-government organisations which have high demand for them. It is therefore important that primary teacher training colleges take up the responsibility of training special needs teachers so that teachers get a 'dose' to take to primary schools where they are needed most.

- b) Creation of resource room facilities within every mainstream school, with a variety of to cater for the learning needs of all children with special needs. There should also be trained teachers to be made responsible for special education in each regular school.
- c) Intensifying awareness programs. It should be noted that although Special Needs Education/EARS has carried out awareness sensitisation seminars in many districts country schools, many people in the community have not had enough information about inclusive learning. EARS therefore to intensify its awareness activities. The work of sensitisation should however not only be done by EARS/SNE staff but involve different categories of concerned professionals and stakeholders. While organizing seminars and other programs about persons with disabilities like education of the visually impaired children, their involvement is of great importance. The idea behind this involvement is to bridge the gap between persons with disabilities and the community
- d) Since it has been found out that the majority of teachers are untrained special teachers in main stream, many teachers should go for up grading in special needs education at Kampala International University and KISE.
- e) Seminars for teachers to learn to make and use educational materials from local materials should be organised locally by districts. Local manpower should be utilised to train and other people who are more experienced because there are areas where competence seems to be limited. This will increase the number of teachers with skills and eliminate the problem of teachers depending on the already made teaching/ learning materials which are expensive and scarce.

In a word, I suggest that there should be more research studies in future to find out more challenges found by teachers not only in teaching children with visual impairment especially in regular schools.

APPENDIX 1

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APPENDIX II
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CHILDREN

Class

Age

1. What subject do you learn in your class

.....

.....

2. What are your favorite subjects?

.....

.....

3. Do you find learning very interesting?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If not what makes in uninteresting

.....

4. Do you have friends in your class and the whole school

☐ ☐
Yes No

If Yes, of what category are your friends.

Visuallyimpaired ☐ Sighted ☐ ☐ All

5. Do your teachers love you like they love all children in your class?

.....

.....

6. What instructional materials do you use when learning in your class.

.....

7. What problems do you find in using these materials

.....

8. What do you prefer to do after your studies?

APPENDIX III

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

I am a student from Kampala International University carrying out research on the difficulties encountered by children with visual impairment in the mainstream schools. I request you to answer these questions willingly.

Name of school

1. What is the general enrolment of your class?

.....

2. Are you a specialist teacher in teaching children with visual impairment?

Yes

☐

No

☐

3. Have you ever attended any any special training/refresher course on teaching children with visual impairment?

.....

4. Do you teach children with hearing impairment?

.....

5. What challenges do you meet in visual the methods above?

.....

6. What methods do you use in teaching children with visual impairment?

.....

7. Which of the methods is (are) most effective

.....

8. What challenges do you meet in using the methods you have mentioned?

.....

9. What instructional materials do you use in teaching children with visual impairment.

.....

10. What suggestions would you give to improve on teaching children with visual
impairment?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX IV

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEADTEACHERS

I am carrying out research on the difficulties encountered by learners with visual impairment in an inclusive setting. This study is solely purposely for study purposes for the award of a degree in special needs education of Kampala International University. I request you to willingly answer these questions.

Thank you.

Name of school

1. What is the general school enrolment?

.....

Indicate those with visual impairment per class

Sex	ST 1	HI	ST 2	H.1	ST 3	H.1	ST 4	H.1	ST 5	H.1	ST 6	H.1	ST 7	H. 1	ST 8	HI
Girls																
Boys																
Total																

2. How many teachers do you have on your staff

Grade	Licenced	III	V	Graduate	Total
Number					

3. Do you have special trained teachers for children with visual impairment.

Tick Yes ☐ No ☐

4. What methods do your teachers use in teaching children with visual impairment?

.....

Comment on the performance of visually impaired children in relation to their sighted counterparts.

.....

.....

5. What facilities are used by your teachers in your school to teach children with visual impairment?

.....

What do you have in to promote the performance of visually impaired children in your school?

.....

.....

.....

Thank you.

