

**ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS TOWARDS INCLUSION
OF LEARNERS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT INTO REGULAR
SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF KIBWEZI DIVISION,
KIBWEZI DISTRICT, EASTERN
PROVINCE, KENYA.**

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**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE OF OPEN AND
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THE AWARD OF A DEGREE OF EDUCATION IN
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DECLARATION

I hereby do declare that this work is a result of my own effort and has never been submitted for any award in any university or institution of higher learning whatsoever.

Sign 

MUSILA STEPHEN

Date: 16TH DEC 2008

DEDICATION

This entire work is dedicated to my Josephine Mutuku whose efforts, support and prayers got me through my studies.

I also dedicate it to my children; Eunice Syokau, Jackline Mwenue and Ruth Mbinya who have supported and encouraged me to climb higher in the education ladder.

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Utmost appreciation goes to the Almighty God who has enabled me to reach this far in the field of academia.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

KISE	KENYA INSTITUTE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
LVDs	LOW VISION DEVICES
LVPK	LOW VISION PROJECT IN KENYA
NLP	NO LIGHT PERCEPTION
TSC	TEACHER'S SERVICE COMMISSION
VI	VISUALLY IMPAIRED

ABSTRACT

The study carried out an analysis and investigation on the attitude held by teachers towards the inclusion of the visually impaired learners into regular school programmes. The study took Kibwezi Division, located in Kibwezi District as a case study. Previous studies indicate that a number of factors ranging from the lack of learning/teaching equipment, negative attitude of teachers towards the visually impaired learners are among the many forces behind their poor academic performance of such a special category of learners who deserve a lot of assistive devices if they are to appreciate and recognize their learning environment as real and therefore responding to their learning needs

The researcher applied a purely quantitative research design in presenting and interpreting the research findings. The technique of data collection used was mainly the use of questionnaires. Selection of the samples was based on a simple Random sampling procedure so as to give all the respondents equal chances of participating in the study.

Research findings revealed that the challenges that affect learners with visual impairment in an attempt to get themselves acquainted with school environment given their specific needs are diverse and complex in nature. Most importantly, the failure of the ministry of education to address their learning needs given the fact that they need adequate learning support as well as other learning equipments to facilitate their learning is among the most burning issues.

A number of measures have been drawn up basing on the researchers observation and conclusions of the research findings. These include among others: government's drive towards providing for their learning equipments such as eye lenses, book readers, wheel chairs, and other learning equipments, change of teacher's attitude in a positive direction and the need for the community to dedicate efforts towards supporting learners with visual impairments so that they can explore their potential.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

According to Randiki (2002), before the 17th century, people with disabilities all over the world were considered socially and physically less capable. Hence, they were not easily accepted and regarded as part and parcel of the family and the large community. For instance, many people with disabilities suffered neglect and rejection. This was because families and communities had negative attitude towards disability.

Disability was regarded to be caused by witch craft, curse or a punishment from God for wrongs done by the ancestors. Disability was therefore considered contagious and persons with disabilities were isolated and their needs were not adequately provided for by their respective families notwithstanding the neglect and rejection from the wide communities where they reside.

Some African communities used to throw such children in the bush because women were expected to give birth to healthy babies. Any weakling therefore was not to be given any chance to live for they were considered a burden to the immediate communities. For example; the people of Sparta in Greece used to kill babies with distinct disability features. Some great philosophers such as Plato and Socrates condemned people with disability as not capable of reasoning and therefore, could not learn.

The negative attitudes of the society towards persons with disabilities have persisted throughout history of special needs education. It is this negative attitude which has made children with special cases in education and their families to be segregated. Until recently, people still used abusive and dehumanizing names like blind, Moran, deaf, dump, and cripple among others towards persons with disability. These societal attitudes have negative bearings on services for children with special needs.

In the 18th century, some personalities saw the potential in children with disabilities and started teaching such children with special needs at family levels. Around 685A.D, Didymus was reported to have been the first person to device a torch reading equipment for the visually impaired learners in Alexandria. Juan Martin and Pablo Bonnet of Germany who lived between 1579-1620 developed for the visually impaired a one hand manual alphabet.

In the 19th century, Europe and USA, a practice known as institutionalization was taking place. This was a service provision whereby a residential facility was put up in place to house children with varies special needs to protect them from neglect. The earliest education to children with disabilities was purely rehabilitative and provision of medical care. In Kenya therefore like in other parts of the world, the first institutions were meant for rehabilitation as well. This started after the 2nd World War to rehabilitate army officers who returned with injuries from the war in 1945. Most of the schools were started in the late 1940's and early 1960's by churches and Non Governmental Organizations.

The churches and the Non Governmental Organizations supported education for children with special needs, and then came the societies and associations for and of persons with disabilities. The first school for the impaired persons was started in 1945 and was called Thika School for the Blind. It was started by the Salvation Army meant for rehabilitation.

The sessional paper No. 5 of 1968 focused its attention on the care and rehabilitation of children with special needs. Later institutionalization was phased out and children with special needs were segregated and placed in special programmes. Voluntary and Non Governmental Organizations such as Rotary Club, Kenya Red Cross and other individuals played a major role in the starting of special needs education. Churches also played their role as they provided medical care, food, recreation and other facilities within the rehabilitation centre. These churches were involved right from the start with activities of praying, counseling and rehabilitating war victims.

Table 1.1: School for children with visual impairment

Name of the school	Sponsors	Year started
Thika school for the blind	Salvation Army	1945
Egoli school for the blind (Now called St. Lucy)	Catholic Church	1958
ST. Oda, Siaya	Catholic Church	1961
Kibos school for the blind, Kisumu	Salvation Army	1963
Likoni school for the blind, Mombasa	Salvation Army	1968
Thika High School for the blind	Salvation Army	1967

(Source: Kenya Ministry of Education).

The training of teachers for the visually impaired started in 1980 at High Ridge Teachers College. It was for the S1 teachers. The training then moved to Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) in 1986 and was upgraded to Diploma level in 1987 to date.

In Kenya today, there is an adapted systematic approach in implementing inclusive education. The ministry of Education, Science and Technology is now developing an inclusive education policy.

In Kibwezi district, inclusive education has not yet been fully implemented due to lack of qualified and competent personnel. The number of teachers who can handle children with special needs is very small, but there is hope in the nearby future since quite a number of teachers are now pursuing special education courses at different levels from within Kenya and outside the country. These include institutions like Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE), Kenyatta University and Kampala International University (KIU) in Uganda.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Learners with visual impairment have of recent been included in regular schools in the presence of their counterparts whose sight and vision is absolutely okay. In Kibwezi Division, there is a tendency for teachers to ignore and perhaps have a negative attitude towards such learners with special needs.

There ought to be put in place an enabling environment where both teachers and such learners with special needs have mutual respect, faith, trust and development of cooperation with each other in a positive way so that both parties can understand, recognize and appreciate the position, interests and needs of the different parties.

The purpose of this research study/investigation was to explore the general attitude of learners towards the visually impaired learners so as to help put in place measures and mechanisms that gives both parties avenues of good cooperation so as to help such learners with special needs to benefit equally in academic circles-am situation that shall shape their future career and welfare.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this research study was to investigate the general attitude of primary school teachers towards the inclusion of learners who are visually impaired into regular school settings. The researcher also tried to find out the performance of these learners as compared with other 'normal learners' (those without visual impairment).

1.4 Research Study Objectives

The general objective of this research study was to establish and examine the general attitude of teachers towards the inclusion of learners with visual impairment into regular school settings/environment.

1.5 Specific Objectives

This research study was guided by the following specific objectives;

- To identify the problems that teachers encounter while teaching the visually impaired learners in an inclusive school setting.
- To examine the experience of teachers in understanding and managing handling the education learners with special needs (those who are visually impaired)
- To investigate the attitude of teachers towards the inclusion of the visually impaired learners in an inclusive school setting
- To establish measures and mechanisms that can help improve the relationship between teachers and the visually impaired learners so as to improve academic performance of the disabled pupils in regular school settings.

1.6 Research Study Questions

The research study was guided by the following set research questions;

- What problems do teachers encounter while teaching the visually impaired learners in an inclusive school setting?
- What experience do teachers have in understanding and managing the teaching of learners with special needs (the visually impaired learners)?

- What is the attitude of teachers towards the inclusion of learners with visual impairment in regular school settings?
- Are there measures and mechanisms that can be employed to improve the relationship between teachers and learners with special needs?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study is very important since it draws the attention of the researcher towards understanding the problems faced by the teachers who teach the visually impaired learners in an inclusive school setting.

Since the results of the study show somewhat a negative attitude of the teachers towards the inclusion of the visually impaired learners in regular schools, the researcher henceforth, puts forward a number of recommendations and appropriate alternatives that are capable of helping in changing their attitudes in a positive way.

The ministry of education, the teacher's service commission (TSC) as well as other education planners are hereby put to a task of providing the required incentives that shall help improve the learning environment of the visually impaired learners in an inclusive school setting

Research findings draw the attention of the ministry of education on the need of allocating their budgets towards the training and development of teachers who can handle and manage the education needs of the visually impaired learners in regular school settings.

Basing on the findings of the study, the Kenya Institute of Special Education is hereby too being put to a task of improving their academic qualification to a degree level so as to equip their training beneficiaries with the required skills necessary to handle the education needs of the visually impaired learners.

1.8 Scope of the Study

This research investigation was carried out from Kibwezi zone located in Kibwezi District. Out of the twenty four (24) schools located in the zone, emphasis was drawn on at least three schools where the researcher intended to get the needed information or data. These schools included among others; Dwa primary school, Kibwezi primary school and Mikuyuni primary school.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the literature that is relevant to the study as well as the definition of the key concepts embedded in the study topic i.e. visual impairment with its associated technicalities.

2.1 Visual Impairment:

This is an impairment which affects the sight of the learners. Children with visual impairment require specialized techniques, special equipment and materials in order to enable them follow instructions (Ndurumo, 1993). The term visual impairment includes both partially seeing and the blind. Children with visual impairments tend to develop at a lower pace than children without disabilities.

Visual impairment are classified into medical/legal and educational definitions. The medical/legal definition with its classification of visual impairment is quite inadequate for educational purposes because it does not differentiate between the total blind and the partially blind.

According to Kirk et al (2000), educational explanations of visual impairments are moderate, severe and profound and that they are not only based on tests of visual acuity but also on the special educational adaptations that are necessary to help these children learn.

According to the Low Vision Project in Kenya (LVPK) located at the Kikuyu eye clinic, visual impairment is categorized into five categories as follows;

Category 1- These are people with no light perception (NLP). They use Braille machine for writing or for any form of communication taking place with their academic and social life.

Category 2- These are people with visual Acuity worse than 6/18. These people use low vision devices (LVDs) in addition to the use of Braille machines.

Category 3- These are people with visual Acuity worse than 6/18. These people use low vision devices (LVDs) e.g. Telescope and print.

Category 4- These are people whose visual Acuity is less than 6/18. These people use print to read with or without magnification.

Category 5- These are people who have gone to the hospital, have been treated and corrected and their visual Acuity is better than 6/18.

There is need for teachers to have knowledge, understanding and experience of handling the phenomenon of visual impairment. This will enable the teachers to identify children with visual impairment at an early age for early intervention as well. Children with visual impairment should be identified right from pre-school by per-school teachers, parents as

well as care givers. This would help eliminate the several cases identified in children at a later age in schools.

2.2 Causes of Visual Impairment

According to Basavanthappa (2005), visual impairment has numerous causes and preventable blindness is a major health problem. These include among others;

- ❖ Refractive errors (myopia, hyperopia, presbyopia and astigmatism) are the most common visual impairment problems.
- ❖ Nutritional deficiencies. A lack of vitamin A and B complex can cause changes within the retina, cornea and conjunctiva. Night blindness is caused by vitamin A deficiency. Optic neuritis can result in vitamin B deficiency especially in alcoholics.
- ❖ Infection of trachoma is a common cause of visual impairment
- ❖ Muscular degeneration is a disease of the aging retina that eventually causes visual impairment among the elderly persons.

According to Ndurumo (1993), causes of visual impairment in Kenya are diverse. Calcott (1956) who conducted a research to find out the causes of visual impairment in Kenya between 1953 and 1956 using a population of 1093 blind people. His findings are as follows in the table below;

Table 2.2: Causes of blindness in Kenya

Causes	Frequency	Percentage
Senile cataract	477	43.6
Panophtalmitis	183	16.7
Ulceration of the cornea	182	16.6
Optic atrophy	62	5.7
Glaucoma	50	4.6
Trachomatous scarring	40	3.7
None-senile cataract	25	2.3
Irido-cyclitis	23	2.1
Injury	17	1.6
Onchecerciasis	15	1.4
Retinopathies	13	1.2
Degenerative conditions	6	0.5
Total	1093	100.00

(Source: Ndurumo, 1993).

2.3 Effects of Visual Impairment

“Normal” learners learn social skills naturally, incidentally and effortlessly. However, for children with special needs, skills need to be taught to them (Mburu, 2002). Observation and imitation by children with visual impairment is limited to the use of remaining senses. So, to them acquisition of appropriate greeting skills will be seriously affected during their growth and development. Therefore, children with special needs need to be

trained on positive and social skills and be discouraged on the undesirable anti-social behaviours- such behaviour problems are termed as blindlism.

The visually impaired persons who are totally blind are restricted in the control of the environment until the individual is taught orientation and mobility skills. Their low vision needs devices which will enable them to move about e.g. the optical objects like; spectacles, mounted magnifiers are necessary for the low vision to substitute sight while reading.

Visually impaired learners whom engage in motor related activities such as climbing and wrestling with sighted children are more self confident. They have better developed motor-coordination. On the other hand, those who do not engage in such activities are some how deficient in motor-related activities (Randiki, 2002).

Children who are blind may have a restricted concept development because of lack of vision. This is because vision plays a vital role in environmental input. Children assimilate in their brain what they see in the environment. The range of types of experiences for a totally blind child is restricted to a much smaller segment of his/her environment than the range for a normally seeing child (Randiki, 2002).

Among the behaviour problem reported in the visually handicapped children is called blindlism. This is a stereotype behaviour in which the visually impaired children manifest certain behaviour patterns and mannerisms (Njuki, 2002).

According to Field (1991), the effects of visual impairments are that the blindness restricts the individual in three basic ways;

- ❖ In his/her range and variety of experiences
- ❖ Inability to get about
- ❖ In his control of the environment and him/herself in relation to the environment

The range and variety of experiences of the person born totally blind is restricted because he/she must build their conception of the world. This is by the use of the remaining senses.

2.4 Educational policies in Kenya for the disabled

In Kenya, some policies that govern special needs education have been adapted from presidential directives, cabinet papers, educational commissions and legal notices from the ministry of education. Many education commissions after independence have given some directions touching on special needs education.

The first attempt towards drawing up a policy document addressing the details of special education was in 1976. The details were in a commission headed by Gachathi. According to the commission, there was need for a coordinated assessment of lectures with special need education.

The commission highlighted key factors in making inclusion a reality. If recommendations of this commission were put into action, inclusive education would

have taken root in Kenya. In the year 2001, the ministry of Education, Science and Technology again made attempts to revive the writing up a policy document on special education.

Though Kenya has consistently signed every document committing the country to the provision of education for all, at the implementation level, very little has been achieved. It is hoped that the free primary education will cater for children with special needs and then, the inclusive education shall out rightly be implemented.

2.5 Barriers to Inclusive Education

Despite many advantages of inclusive education, there are barriers to making it a success.

These barriers include:

- ❖ Physical access
- ❖ Class size
- ❖ Dependency
- ❖ Negative attitudes toward disability
- ❖ Lack of community involvement

Once children reach to school, there are other physical access facilities/issues to consider like entering school buildings and movements within the school. The school buildings need to be made accessible to learners with special needs. There should be ease of movement around the teaching and the recreation areas.

Class sizes

Large classes are a barrier to inclusive education and the inclusion of learners with special needs in all the regular schools. With the free education introduced in Kenya now, the classes are large with inadequate facilities. The teachers need to be taken for in-service courses so as to equip them with the knowledge and skills of handling such large classes in inclusive settings.

Dependency

High-level dependency of some disabled people on their peers can be a barrier to inclusive education. The more dependant children are, the more vulnerable they are to neglect, mistreatment and abuse. Transparency in care relationship is important for enabling children ask for confidentiality or assistance in preventing or dealing with mistreatment.

Negative attitudes towards disability

Negative attitudes to disability are the worst barrier to the disabled in an inclusive setting. Traditional beliefs, fear, taboos, shame, economic values about human life, results and dignity all encourage negative attitudes. There is need to create awareness of the fact that disabled children have some rights and needs just as other children. Overcoming negative attitudes presents an enormous challenge though it is the key to providing inclusive education.

Lack of community involvement

There should be community involvement in education if inclusive education is to be successful. Parent's participation is very essential, whereby parents form organizations or form support groups for the sake of helping children with special needs given the fact that it is the responsibility of the community to look after the welfare of children with special needs.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter dealt with data collection techniques and procedures, study area, research design, sample size and methods of data analysis and presentation. The focus of the research was based on people's views, opinions and beliefs held about the attitude of teachers towards the inclusion of learners with visual impairment in regular schools.

3.1. Area and Population of the Study

The study was conducted/carried out in Kibwezi zone which is located in Kibwezi District. This area was being chosen because the researcher hails and works in Kibwezi district at a neighbouring primary school-thus, aware of the fact that learners with visual impairment do face some challenges while interacting with both their teachers and fellow peer groups whose sights are normal.

3.2. Sample Selection

The study population consisted mainly of school-going children and teachers. There were two questionnaires specifically designed for the pupils with visual impairment and their teachers who teach them.

The pupils who were approached for answers were mainly drawn from std 6 to std 8 and selection was based on their sex and given the questionnaires to fill in.

A total of twenty (20) teachers were given questionnaires, and close to thirty (30) pupils also being administered with questionnaire forms.

3.3. Data Collection Techniques

This study mainly employed the quantitative method/technique of data collection, analysis and presentation of the research findings obtained from the raw data gathered from the field by the researcher.

3.4. Questionnaire Forms

This was used to collect views and data that were presented quantitatively. A total of thirty (30) pupils and twenty (20) teachers were identified and required to fill the forms within a period of two weeks in order to give them ample time to give adequate information.

3.5. Observation Method

This method too of data collection was employed to enable the researcher to critically see the difficulties and challenges that children with visual impairment go through in inclusive school settings. Checking on the relationship with their fellow peers who are physically able-bodied as well as the way teachers handle and manage their concerns and complaints facilitated this method of data collection.

3.6. Secondary Data

Documentary sources were as well made use of and these were obtained from Kampala International University main library, Moi University main library, Kenyatta University main library, Internet, Journals Magazines, Newspapers and other periodicals. This

actually gave a general background of the challenges and attitudes that teachers hold about the inclusion of learners with special needs in an inclusive school environment.

3.7. Data Analysis

The researcher used questionnaire forms to both the teachers as the key informants and pupils who were interviewed as well compiled a purely quantitative data in the presentation and analysis of the findings.

Analysis of the findings was based on the content of the survey and since the method/technique applied is a quantitative one, the use of tables using frequencies and percentages were very instrumental.

3.8. Encountered Limitations of the Study

- ❖ The most limiting factor to this research study was the inadequate fund and limited time in which to conduct the research.
- ❖ The respondents somewhat expected to be paid for their time spent when being interviewed and filling in the questionnaire thus, some respondents therefore, deliberately refuse to deliver the information relevant to the study.
- ❖ The research was very time consuming and very tiresome since it required the making of lots of movements from place to place to obtain relevant information to the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents the findings of the study following the study objectives as well as the set research questions. The findings of the research study were presented in tables with the aid of frequencies and percentages and later interpreted and analyzed.

4.1 Personal Information on the Respondents

Table 4.1 Gender of the respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	17	34
Male	33	66
Total	50	100

Source: Primary Data

As indicated in table 4.1 above, 34% of the respondents who participated in the study were female teachers from the selected study schools in Kibwezi division located in Kibwezi District. The male respondents dominated the study investigation with a total of 66% of the total percentage of respondents.

Table 4.2: Age of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18 Yrs and below	0	0
19-25yrs	5	10
26-35 yrs	20	40
36-45yrs	15	30
46-64 Yrs	10	20
66 and above	0	0
Total	50	100

Source: Primary Data.

Study findings as indicated by table 4.2 above, reveals that the age group of 26-35 years constituted the highest percentage totaling up to 40%. This is the most critical and energetic age group who mainly run the school affairs ranging from teaching to middle level school administration. 30% of the respondents were in the age bracket of 36-45 years engaged in various activities of teaching as well as general pot management of the studied schools. Those within the age bracket of 46-64 years constituted 20% whereas the lowest percentage of the respondents was those within 19-25 years who only measured up to 10% of the respondents interviewed.

Table 4.3 Professional Qualifications

Level	Frequency	Percentage
'O' Level	0	0
'A' Level	0	0
Certificate	16	32
Diploma	23	46
Degree	11	22
others	0	0
Total	50	100

Source: Primary Data

Study findings as indicated in table 4.3 above gives an account of the academic qualifications possessed by the respondents. Accordingly, available data indicate that 46% of the respondents hold Diplomas in the various fields of education ranging from Arts, Early Childhood Education to Special needs and Sciences. 32% hold certificates whereas 22% are the only Bachelor Degree holders also within the field of education and falling within the above mentioned disciplines.

Table 4.4 Working experience of the Respondents

Work experience	Frequency	Percentage
1-3 years	10	20
4-6 years	16	32
7-10 years	15	30
11-+ years	9	18
Total	50	100

Source: Primary Data

Study findings as indicated by table 4.4 above reveal that 20% of the respondents who participated in the study had a working experience of less than five years in the teaching profession. Respondents above five years (4-6) years constituted 32% of the respondents. These were the most critical respondents handling different administrative and managerial roles in the schools selected for sampling.

In addition, respondents having a work experience of 7-10 years constituted 30% of the respondents whereas those having a work experience of more than 11 years and above

made up 18% of the total number of respondents. These according to the study findings carried out were the age group having different roles within the running of the schools in as far as managing the school affairs were concerned ranging from administrative to financial matters of the school.

4.2 Challenges encountered by teachers

Table 4.5 Problems encountered by teaching of the visually impaired learners

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of visual learning aid/equipment	21	42
Limited parental support	7	14
Inability to recognize and appreciate school/learning environment	9	18
Slow learners/under achievers	7	14
Poor teacher motivation	6	12
Total	50	100

Source: Primary Data

The results of problems/challenges encountered by teachers of learners with visual impairment as illustrated in table 4.5 above are diverse and complex. 42% of the respondents revealed that the lack of visual learning aid/equipments are among the most critical challenges faced their teachers. This implies that the learning environment of these learners are cannot match up with their disabilities and as a result, they fail to comprehend what they would have entered in the presence of such study facilitators.

18% of the respondents stressed out that the inability of these learners to recognize and appreciate the learning environment both in class and outside class is another short-coming that makes it hard for teachers to fully work with them. In addition, equal percentages of respondents who were 14% each identified that the challenge that these face are connected with the inability of parents to support their efforts while these learners are at school as well as outside the school environment and the inability of these learners since they are slow learners/achievers who cannot move at the same pace with the other learners without visual impairment

Study findings also revealed that the other challenge that befalls these learners are the lack of motivational support/incentives from the government to the teachers as a mechanism of buying their commitment towards a positive attitude to learners with specific learning difficulties as revealed by 12% of the respondents. This factor or challenge is one that may be neglected but it has an important bearing in determining the course of action to put forward by teachers on learners with specific learning disabilities.

Table 4.6: Experience of Teachers in handling learners with Special needs

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Teachers of learners with special needs are well trained and have enough experience:		
Agree	12	24
Strongly agree	9	18
Disagree	18	36
Strongly disagree	11	22
Total	50	100

Source: Primary Data

The findings of the study as to the training and experience of teachers who handle learners with special needs revealed by table 4.6 above indicate that though some of the teachers are trained and experienced, some of them are not to be accurate. 36% of the interviewed respondents indicated that they disagree on the part of these teachers's training and experience as compared to 22% of the respondents who strongly disagreed on the same issue.

However, 24% of the respondents agreed that the teachers are well trained and experienced as compared to 18% who also strongly agreed on the same variable under analysis. This findings bring to our attention the fact that although some teachers handling learners with special needs are trained and experienced in the field of special needs, some are not and only use their mental abilities to render assistance and in the process, their performance towards such learners cab be questioned.

Table 4.7: Attitude of Teachers towards inclusion of visually impaired learners

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Inclusion of learners with visual impairment in regular schools facilitates their learning needs and disabilities		
Agree	9	18
Strongly agree	7	14
Disagree	14	28
Strongly disagree	20	40
Total	50	100

Source: Primary Data

Study findings on the attitude of teachers towards the inclusion of learners in special schools show a significantly strong resistance on their inclusion on the part of the teachers as indicated by table 4.7 above. 40% of the teachers interviewed with regard to their attitude show that they would not strongly support the programme if consulted before implementation just as another 28% of the teachers also disagreed significantly.

Only 18% of the respondents agreed with the inclusion of such learners in regular primary schools as compared to another 14% who strongly supported the programme. However, given the high percentages of the respondents who refuted the inclusion of these learners in regular schools shows us that there is some thing wrong with the programme especially with regard to the manner in which it is being implemented.

Hence, there is need for a thorough analysis to cross examine the importance of inclusion of special needs learners in regular schools with regard to the drawbacks to be able to make an informed decision on the way forward.

Table 4.8: Alternative measures that can improve the learning needs of the visually impaired learners

Measures	Frequency	Percentage
Supply of adequate visual learning aid	20	40
Curriculum modification	9	18
General parental support	5	10
Positive community attitude towards persons with disabilities	6	12
Developing projects that suits the learning needs of the visually impaired learners	10	20
Total	50	100

Source: Primary Data

Research findings on the way forward or alternative solutions that can help improve the learning environment of persons with disabilities as indicated in table 4.8 above, show a number of measures and efforts from different stakeholders in the schooling environment of persons/learners with special needs across the country.

Accordingly, 40% of the interviewed respondents indicated that there is an urgent need for the supply of visual learning aid/equipments to facilitate the learning of such children with visual (special needs) difficulties. This calls for the attention of the different government players in the system of education to allocate sufficient funds towards the purchase of learning facilities needed to support the acquisition of knowledge by learners with specific learning difficulties.

Study findings also indicate that 18% of the respondents called for the need to modify the current regular curriculum to one that caters for the learning needs and interest of learners with specific learning difficulties if they are to achieve the best in their academic endeavors since the modified curriculum shall be in position to respond to their learning disabilities.

Besides the above solutions as indicated by research findings in table 4.8 above, there is the need for parental support to these learners to supplement on the efforts of teachers as indicated by 10% of the respondents and the change in community attitude in a positive manner towards persons with disabilities as revealed by 12% of the interviewed respondents. All these communal efforts have an important bearing towards facilitating

the learning environment of such learners since they can afford the support they need from both the home as well as the outside environment that interface with the community.

Lastly but not least, the respondents mentioned the need for the concerned authorities together with parents to introduce these learners in developmental projects/technical education that caters for their abilities/disabilities. This will ensure that they are not forced to attain the formal education that requires a lot of reading that may not be possible on the part of learners with special needs.

Thus, such developmental, projects shall provide such special needs children with specific talents and skills capable of enabling them to cope up with the ever changing needs of the environment as far as survival on planet earth is concerned while at the same time, relieving others community members from the support they used to offer specifically from a financial point of view.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher gives his final observation while discussing the main items dealt with in the study by giving his final conclusions as well as recommendations that are applicable towards solving the problem under study if properly implemented.

5.1 Discussions

As revealed by the findings of the study, there are no doubt to note that there are a number of challenges faced by the visually impaired learners in regular schools and these challenges encountered in turn adversely possess a threat to their academic performance most especially in situations where it lowers their average performance when compared with those of the other learners without any visually impaired at all. Research findings indicated that such challenges do come from a number of forces/factors that operate in their schooling as well as those outside the school environment (the general environment where they are brought up in).

Research findings indicate that among the most critical challenge faced by the visually impaired learners are the inadequate supplies of learning aids/equipment, unsupportive relationship between their teachers as well as fellow peers among other factors. Thus need of providing them with enough learning aids that can be used to purchase for these learners the necessary learning aids to facilitate their acquisition of the taught/instructed knowledge and skills from their teachers. This shows the failure of the government

together with the Education ministry and most especially the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) to work in consultation with each other in addressing the needs of these learners.

Teacher's attitudes have a bearing towards determining the quality of education and other support services that learners with special needs shall be accorded by the school environment. In cases where the attitudes towards such learners are negative, then it is right to argue out that the academic needs as well as performance of such learners stands to be questioned since they cannot achieve much in the absence of an active and cooperated role of teachers.

The home environment too plays a significant role towards the education and academic performance of the learners with special needs (visual impairment). Thus, if the home supplement or support on the efforts put on by the teachers on the physically handicapped children, it becomes impossible to give them the support they need from a single direction from teachers alone given the fact that it is the parents who stay with these learners for the greater part of their school life.

This brings to our attention the desire to provide a conducive home environment that is capable of availing learning opportunities to such a special group of learners if they are to achieve the best in their academic/education endeavors.

The challenges encountered by the visually impaired learners in regular school settings with no doubt have a negative effect in as far as their education needs and interests are concerned. This is because such challenges do limit the abilities and capacities of these learners to fully comprehend and understand specific skills and knowledge passed on to them by their teachers/instructors. As a result, such learners are left behind the normal learners without learning disabilities.

The challenges encountered by these learners cannot be fully eliminated or minimized given the fact that much as the school and the home environment can appropriately develop and design programmes in the best interest of these learners, little can be achieved by the nature of their specific learning disability. Despite of this argument, the schools and the general community should not give up on the needs of these learners since they need support to explore their potentials and talents given the fact that disability is not inability.

In addition, the teaching method used on such learners while following the current school curriculum does not address and respond to the needs of the disabled since it does not cater for their different disabilities. Therefore, the regular curriculum forces these learners to perform tasks that do not at all match up with their abilities/disabilities. Besides, teachers expect such learners to finish the syllabus at the same time the other learners without physical disabilities finish theirs as well-making it very hard for such learners with special needs to adjust accordingly.

5.2 Conclusion

Basing on the research findings, the researcher's general overview of the study is that the visually impaired learners do undergo quite a number of challenges while trying to adjust themselves to the school environment that requires or demands a lot on the part of the learner. However, given the fact that these learner's abilities to acquire information passed on to them needs support from the different players in the process, it remains up to these players to play their part in as far as the challenges encountered by these learners together with their teachers can be minimized as far as possible.

It is also important to note the fact that learners with special learning difficulties have always been segregated by both their homes and peers from participating in the day to day activities within the mainstream community that would actually enable them to cope up with the changing environment that determines their fate in as far as their education needs and interests are concerned. Thus, there is an important need towards availing and involving these learners in our every day activities so as to enable them take up the right full directions that corresponds with their physical abilities.

5.3 Recommendation to the Research Study

Basing on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

First and foremost, there is an urgent need on the part of the government to allocate budgetary provisions towards catering for the needs of the visually impaired learners such as buying for them wheel chairs, arm supporters, eye lenses and other supportive

equipment to facilitate their learning environment given their specific learning disabilities. Further, these financial resources should give recognition to the purchase of other learning aid that does facilitate class work for the physically handicapped learners in regular schools.

It is quite important for the Ministry of Education with consultation from the Kenya Institute of Special Needs Education to think of the development or designing of a school curriculum that address and respond to the needs of the visually impaired learners if they are to appreciate and cope up with the learning environment as compared to the present trend whereby they follow the regular school programme that best suites the needs and interests of learners with specific learning disabilities.

Besides the above mentioned, there ought to be instituted in place regular community awareness programmes through sensitization of the community about the importance of according to the visually impaired persons the support that they need given the fact that they have talents and skills that are instrumental towards their daily living as well as to the general community a whole. This will enable the members of the community to have a positive attitude towards these learners and in the process, be committed to assisting them in all respects /aspects of their daily living conditions.

There is urgent need of training more committed teachers in special needs management and handling so as to equip the teachers with basic skills and talents that are quite instrumental in helping learners with special needs appreciate and like their schooling

environment. Besides the training alone, government need to think hard on the way forward about keeping these teachers motivated so as not to hold a negative bias against learners with special needs.

Lastly but not least, communities should emphasize programmes where both the visually impaired children do interact with their counterparts without physical disabilities as a way of involving them in similar community activities so that they do not segregate themselves as persons who cannot match up with the general community. Henceforth, the confidence that shall be attained by these learners will help improve on the self-esteem of the handicapped children and in the process, see themselves as achievers as well as being capable of exploring more potential in themselves. This will help provide an environment that is conducive enough to boost the social and economic well-being of the visually (special needs learners) impaired persons within the community setting.

5.4 Areas for further Research

Having explored the challenges faced by the teachers teaching the visually impaired learners as well as the attitude of teachers towards the inclusion of the visually impaired learners into regular school programmes, there is still need to for further research to find out the validity and reliability of the findings of this study.

In addition, the conclusions revealed by the study findings are not enough to allow a final judgment on the state of affair. Thus, calling on the need to take a further research in different fields of learners with special needs such as; the attitude of the community

towards inclusion of learners with visual impairment into regular school programmes and the role played by the government and other support organizations towards the learning of children with special needs.

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Appendix i

Questionnaire form to the Respondents

Dear respondent. I am, a student of Kampala International University pursuing a Bachelors Degree of Education in Special needs. The purpose of this study is to seek information on the attitude of teachers towards the inclusion of the visually impaired learners in regular schools as a partial fulfillment for the above mentioned degree.

Feel free therefore to give your views and opinions on this investigation since all the information given shall be treated confidential without passing them to any third party.

Your cooperation on the same within a period of two weeks shall be highly appreciated.

SECTION A: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents:

Age

18- 22 []

23-27 []

28-32 []

33-37 []

38-42 []

43-47 []

48+ []

Marital status:

Single []

Married []

Divorced []

Widowed []

Education level

'O' Level []

'A' Level []

Certificate []

Diploma []
Degree []
Masters []

Working experience

2-5 yrs []
6-10 yrs []
11-15 yrs []
16-20 yrs []
21+ yrs []

SECTION B

1. Do you have children who are visually impaired in your schools?.....
.....
.....

2. What makes you think they are visually impaired?
.....
.....

3. Do have health facilities that take care of the visually impaired learners in your school?

Yes [] No []

4. Do you give learners with visual problems the same activities as the normal ones?

Yes [] No []

5. Does visual impairment affect the performance of these learners in class?

Yes [] No []

6. What are the traditional beliefs held about persons with visual impairment?

.....

.....

.....

.....

7. The following are some of the challenges affecting the education of the visually impaired learners

- a) Lack of visual learning aid/equipment []
- b) Limited parental support []
- c) Inability to recognize and appreciate the school environment []
- d) They are slow learners/under achievers []
- e) Poor teacher motivation []

8. Teachers of learners with special needs are well trained and have enough experience:

- a) Agree []
- b) Strongly agree []
- c) Disagree []
- d) Strongly disagree []

9. Inclusion of learners with visual impairment in regular schools facilitates their learning needs and disabilities

- a) Agree []
- b) Strongly agree []
- c) Disagree []
- d) Strongly disagree []

10. In your opinion, which of the following alternative measures can improve the learning needs of the visually impaired learners?

- a) Supply of adequate visual learning equipments []
- b) Curriculum modification []
- c) General parental support []
- d) Positive community attitude []
- e) Developing of projects for the visually impaired []

11. Give your general observations and recommendations towards this research study

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Appendix ii
Introductory Letter from the University

Office of the Director

1st April 2008

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Dear Sir/Madam,

SUBJECT: INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR MS/MRS/MR... MUSILA STEPHEN MUTOKO

REG. # BED/9890/52/DF

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

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

Attitude of teachers in primary schools towards
inclusion of learners with visual impairment into
regular schools: A case study of Kibwezi division
Kibwezi district, Eastern Province, Kenya.

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

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

Faithfully,

JOSEPH MUTOKI
IN-SERVICE