

**CHALLENGES THAT HINDER THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF
LEARNERS WITH PHYSICAL HANDICAPS IN REGULAR
SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF TUNYAI ZONE,
THARAKA DISTRICT, KENYA.**

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**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE OF OPEN AND
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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.

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Date: 17th.12.2008

APPROVAL

This work has been done under my supervision as a University Supervisor, and submitted with my approval.

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OKETCH CHRISOSTOM

Date: 18TH. DEC. 2008

DEDICATION

This entire work is dedicated to my husband Nashon Kirimi whose efforts, support and prayers got me through my studies.

I also dedicate it to my children; Faith Gaceri, Dinah Muthoni and Joy Kathure who supported and encouraged me to climb higher in the education ladder.

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ABSTRACT

The study carried out a critical analysis and investigation on the challenges faced and academic performance of learners with physical handicaps in regular schools. The study took Tunyai zone, Tharaka 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 physically impaired learners are among the many forces behind their poor academic performance in regular primary schools.

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 with some key informant interviews to the district officials. 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 causes of poor academic performance among these learners are diverse but most importantly, the failure of the ministry of education to address their learning needs given the fact that they need adequate learning assistance and support as well as other learning equipments to facilitate their learning.

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 hearing as well as learning aids, change of teacher's attitude in a positive direction and the need for the community to dedicate efforts towards supporting learners with special needs.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale of the study

Persons with disabilities are groups of persons who are unable to perform given tasks as required in the various communities that they reside in. These special group of children experience many problems because they have some limitations in their different parts of the body that limits their functions in various aspects of the society. Even while at school, they cannot carry out the tasks given to them at the same speed with their counterparts who are physically upright.

Specialists, researchers and authors have attempted to classify children with special needs and have come up with several categories. Randiki (2002) of Kenya Institute of Special Education commented that learners have diverse problems. People with disabilities are normally ignored in many parts of the world because they are seen to be bad people to the societies.

According to Randiki, the communities normally take persons with disabilities as stupid, people with bad luck to the community, morons and people usually capable of bringing bad luck to the society. In fact, some people think and believe that disability is a curse from God as a result of bad doing mainly by our ancestors. Therefore, to get them punished, the heavenly father passes such a bad physical appearance to their off springs.

According to various authors, psychologists and researchers, it has been noted that persons with disabilities are never favoured or sympathized by any member of the

society. They are left out to starve to death, hidden in the house until they die or even at times mistreated so that they die and live the community in peace.

Such learners include those with mobility problems, hearing difficulties, sight problems and in some case those with mental retardation. Such disabilities limit them from going to school like other learners. Worse still, those who endeavor to go to attend school cannot match up with their counterparts when it comes to class work, school activities such as extra-curricular activities among others.

When it comes to learning, they require to be given assistive devices which in most cases are rare to find their availability in most regular schools due to the lack of funds to purchase them. In addition, those who handle such a special category of learners who require adequate care and vigilance do not possess the required technical and moral support knowledge to render the needful assistance. Such a scenario therefore forces most learners with special needs to remain in their homes than going to be mis-treated by those meant to take care of them in school settings.

Learners with physical handicaps therefore call for special attention from the concerned parents, community leaders, their fellow peers and most importantly, teachers who are meant to bring them up. They require assistance in classroom settings because they are also human beings just as other members of the general community. The researcher therefore took a critical yet significant lead in recommending for the most appropriate

measures that are in position of assisting learners with special needs benefit equally in academics just as their counterparts.

It should however be noted that such a special category of learners should be encouraged by the immediate communities to accept and appreciate their physical disabilities most especially considering the phenomenon that “disability is not inability” given the fact that they can perform very influential tasks in society to the surprise of the general communities to the extent of being extra-ordinarily outstanding performers than the physically upright members of the community.

To make learners with special needs explore their abilities and capacities to the full, they should be encouraged to use other parts of their body that is not affected to assist them in effecting their daily chores as well as responsibilities and duties. For example, one who has a disability in their mobility should be availed a wheel chair to enable them use their hands so as to perform the various tasks that awaits for them.

When they are fully supported, they will definitely be happy because they will develop a sense of security and belonging. They can further be trained in handling and undergoing rehabilitation centers and programmes to enable them gain economic and social living skills crucial to determining whether or not they will lead a meaningful life in their future career and responsibilities.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Learners who are physically handicapped often find a number of challenges while trying to adjust their physical conditions with the attainment of education that would determine their destiny in the nearby future. Quite often than not, they find it very difficult to relate with their fellow peers who are not physically handicapped. This is because their counterparts do insult them by nicknaming them with dehumanizing names that usually makes them lose the morale of going to school.

In addition, when it comes to classroom assignments administered by their teachers, they often finish last as compared to their counterparts. However, in return, teachers convey discouraging compliments to them such as slow learners, unserious groups and other associated concepts without giving due regard to their abilities in relation to their disability.

There ought to be put in place an education mechanism that would help learners with physical handicaps benefit equally like their counterparts. Such improvements would as well in turn improve the performance of such a group of learners given the fact that the existing school mechanisms cannot fully help them to compete favourably in academic circles when it comes to the variable of their performance being compared to that of their counterparts.

The purpose of this research therefore was help improve the learning needs of these special category of learners by investigating those challenges that affect the education of learners who are physically handicapped so as to help the researcher explore a number of

alternative solutions that can help to rectify such problems inherent in their academic endeavors.

1.3 Research Study Objectives

The general objective of this study was to establish the challenges that hinder the education of learners who are physically handicapped in regular schools.

1.4 Specific Objectives

This research study was guided by the following specific objectives;

- ❖ To determine the profile of the respondents in regard to;
 - Gender
 - Age
 - Educational qualification
 - Work experience
- ❖ To examine the challenges that hinders the education of learners with physical handicaps in regular school environment
- ❖ To examine the relationship that exists between learners with physical handicaps and their counterparts who are physically upright
- ❖ To explore alternative solutions that can help combat the identified challenges that hinders the education of learners with physical handicaps.

1.5 Research Study Questions

The study was guided by the following set research questions;

- ❖ What is the profile of the respondents in regard to;
Gender?
Age?
Educational qualification?
Working experience?
- ❖ What are the challenges that hinder the education of learners with physical handicaps?
- ❖ What form of relationship exists between the physically handicapped learners with their peers who are physically upright?
- ❖ What alternative measures and strategies can be employed to help combat the problems that hinder the education of learners with physical handicaps?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The results of the study findings are capable of;

Research findings to this study identifies the various challenges facing the education of learners with physical handicaps in regular schools and therefore puts various stakeholders at a task of trying to rectify the situation at hand.

The study with its findings sensitizes the local community about the presence and the need to assist learners with physical handicaps in regular school environment.

The findings of the study draw the attention of parents about the need to help their children to achieve their full potential while at home in different aspects of life. This is geared towards supplementing on the efforts put by their teachers and instructors while in the classroom and outside the class in such activities such as extra curricula activities.

The research findings are very helpful in enabling learners with disabilities to accept their positions and explore their talents that shall help in improving their lifestyles. This is particularly based on the fact that “disability is not inability”. Henceforth, they can perform a number of tasks that matches with their physical and mental capacities to handle.

The study findings do highlight and create awareness to the public on the causes, characteristics and the types of assistance/services that person with special needs require. This calls upon the attention of the government in consultation with the Ministry of Education about the need to make provision for the supply of these assistive equipments in order to facilitate the learning needs of persons with special needs.

The study findings as revealed by the respondents puts the ministry of education in a task of training more competent and committed staff capable of responding to the needs of learners with special needs since it looks quite clear that these learners do lack

experienced professionals in the field who can engineer their educational needs and demands.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study was carried out from Tunyai zone, in Tharaka District located in Kenya. The zone has a total of fifteen (15) schools but only three schools were approached for information. These include; Kamariro primary school, Tunyai primary school and Meru boys home primary school.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Review of Existing Literature

The definition of learners with physical handicaps has for a long time been an imprecise affair with different terms such as the crippled, the physically disabled, the physically handicapped, the orthopaedically impaired and the neurologically impaired and so on.

According to Kennedy (1990), physically handicapped children are those with physical, neurological and chronic health impairments. He adds that they have problems performing one or more motor activities due to muscular-skeletal disorders, neurological and/or chronic health impairments. The motor activities affected may be include movement, writing, and speed. In general, these are the children who require aids, wheel chairs, prosthesis, helmets, and book readers, page turners, writing aids, rest equipment, special tables and desks.

During 1960's and 1970's, handicapped people formed pressure groups such as Disablement Income Group and Association of Disabled Professionals to further their rights in society. Hunt (1966) as cited in Lynas (1986) stated that a common plea of various groups should have the right to lead useful, dignified lives and be given every opportunity to compete in equal terms with the non-handicapped. They advocate and still do for their rights to be different without being made to feel inferior.

The researcher supports this definition because from the education view point, it delineates the areas that prevent children from performing adequately in one or more motor activities such as walking, writing, sitting, turning, posture among others to such an extent that they are unable to handle educational materials.

2.2 Categories of Learners with Physical Handicaps

It is difficult to study learners with physical handicaps as a homogeneous group. Such an approach would add to fuzziness of trying to describe these children.

According to Ndurumo (1993), learners with physical handicaps can be classified into three major groups: the orthopaedically impaired, the neurologically impaired and the health impaired.

Orthopaedic difficulties

Learners with orthopaedic difficulties have motor impairments resulting from problems related to the bones and muscle systems. Muscles and bones act in a coordinated way to effect the movements of body parts. Examples of learners with orthopaedic difficulties are children with amputations, brittle, bone disease, muscular dystrophy, club foot and poliomyelitis, congenital dislocation of the hips, scoliosis (curvature of the spine), leg calves, perthes and leprosy.

Neurological Disabilities

Learners with neurological disabilities have difficulties in performing activities coordinated by the brain and the nervous system. Ndurumo (1993) stresses that the

disabilities are brought about by conditions like cerebral palsy, spine bifida, spinal cord injury, muscular dystrophy and childhood muscular dystrophy.

Health Disabilities

Health disability means limited strength, vitality or alertness due to chronic or acute health problems such as heart conditions, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, nephritis, asthma, sickle cell anaemia, haemophilia, epilepsy, lead poisoning, leukemia, or diabetes, which adversely affects a child's educational performance.

2.3 Challenges faced by learners with physical Handicaps

Motor functioning

According to Ndurumo (1993), gross and fine motor abilities may be greatly impaired, thereby limiting not only movement of the arms and the legs, but also their functional use such as walking, jumping, writing, holding eating utensils among others. Partial or complete paralysis of the affected body parts reduces sensation and causes contractures and stiffness to develop.

Motor functioning skills are particularly delayed in cerebral palsy children. Denhoff (1976) found out that although normal children achieve head up from prone at 12 months old, all subsequent milestones are attained much later by children with cerebral palsy than by normal children.

Communication

Some learners with physical handicaps experience communication difficulties particularly those who are cerebral palsied. Bleck (1995) stated that speech and

disabilities are prevalent with cerebral palsied children while Lencione (1976) observed that these children have problems with muscles related to the control and production of speech and sounds. They often practice laboured speech, and sometimes, produce speech that is difficult to comprehend.

Bigge and Sirvis (1978) observed that cerebral palsied children experience great difficulties in expressing their ideas to others. They state that these children have a lot they would express to others, but due to unintelligent speech, they get frustrated in social situations.

Psychosocial Development

Learners with physical handicaps face challenges as far as their psychosocial development is concerned especially in the way they react to their situation/condition. Since it is hard to generalize their reactions because of the heterogeneous nature of their handicapping condition, the challenges faced here can be summarized by the observations made by Jourard (1958) who stipulated that any of the following reactions may occur;

- ❖ Denial or refusal to acknowledge that the disability exists or that it imposes any limitations whatsoever.
- ❖ Resignation or giving up seeing the situation as hopeless and refusing to help oneself or to be helped
- ❖ Regarding oneself as a victim of injustice perpetuated by others, and punishing the others by hostility or withdrawal.

- ❖ Showing arrogance or rebellion, rejecting help or empathy, making aggressive demands and remaining aloof.
- ❖ Viewing the disability as a punishment for real or imagined infraction of family or social rules.
- ❖ Becoming dependent and demanding because remaining helpless seems the only way to assure attention, affection, and care.

Additional Handicaps

According to Ndurumo (1993), some children have one or more additional handicaps. These handicaps put more additional stress on how learners with physical handicaps cope in society or at school. The handicaps include visual problems, hearing problems, learning disabilities and mental retardation.

Negative attitudes

It is our attitude that makes us believe that learners with physical handicaps cannot learn comfortably in a regular school setting. Learners with disabilities are easily associated with special schools (Randiki, 2002). The researcher concurs with this idea since most learners with physical disabilities are taken to special schools. Randiki further states that cultural practices and attitudes cannot be changed without offering alternatives and suggestions and that, the most viable alternative is to return these learners to regular schools and support them from there so as to enable them succeed.

The future of the physically handicapped children depends on the actions of the aroused and dedicated citizens. The only question will be who to offer hopes and encouragement in their darkest hour and who will be regarded as a stranger.

Negative attitude of the public towards people with disabilities have an effect on rehabilitation and adjustments. The researcher concurs with this idea since children with physical handicaps shy off from class activities like walking to the learning centre when they are laughed at by their peers. Ropy (1997) states that these stereotyped attitudes are perpetuated in part by the media portrayals. He suggests that continued and regular contact is necessary in order for public attitudes towards persons with disabilities to change in a significant way, (Roener 1961 as cited by Ropy 1997).

Teachers often compare the performance of learners with physical handicaps with that of their peers and describe them as not serious, inconsistent and so on. Persons dealing with physically handicapped learners need support to develop positive attitudes. The researcher agrees that this is true because it has been seen that derogative terms used by teachers on these pupils discourage them from achieving their best as they are demoralized (Oganda and Njuki 2000).

In some cases, the general teachers do not feel it is part of their duty to look after those disabled children. They add that even some general teachers feel that they are not being paid for those children and as a result of which, the resource teachers do not get

cooperation from general teachers. Damodar (1995) says that even in some cases, the general teachers do not have any faith relating to the future of these learners.

In some of the cases learners with physical handicaps are not being accepted by their non disabled counterparts in integrated education schools. The researcher sees this as a challenge because free interaction of the two groups will make those with disabilities learn from copying those without disabilities, (Damodar, 1995).

2.4 The Way Forward

True change can come only from the volition of the people concerned and involved. The researcher sees this as true since change of attitude involves an individual and so teachers, children, parents, and the general community can develop positive attitudes from personal feelings, (watchtower August, 2000).

Positive attitude towards different collaboration and participation are prerequisites for inclusion (Okot and Kutosi, 2001). They further state that positive attitudes may be promoted during interaction between all children i.e. during the process of inclusion. The researcher concurs with the idea since teachers and children can develop positive attitude after interacting with people with disabilities.

Shrive (1964) elaborates that with changing attitude towards the physically handicapped and the growth of teacher-training, a National Association of Teachers for the Handicapped be evolved.

The problem is that teachers are inadequately prepared by college education. Recent studies have found that majority of regular classroom teachers feel that they are not prepared to address individual differences in learning abilities within classroom settings (Freiberg, 1999). He further cites that special educators themselves do not possess sufficient content of knowledge to address the language and reading needs of the children with physical handicaps. Teachers have a tendency of referring children for special assistance because they are ill equipped to provide the necessary services.

Defense against backwardness and retardation is likely to succeed upon a basis of constructive mental health work applied to the education of all children supplemented by some remedial work where this process is necessary (Wall, 1975). He further suggests that teachers can play a key part in constructive work by having sensitive knowledge of their pupils, by close cooperation with parents, by adoption of methods of differing capabilities and above all, by the quality of human relationships they build up with their pupils. The researcher greatly concurs with this idea because it is in agreement with the elements of inclusive education which will help children achieve their maximum potential in all their natural environments.

Parents counseling is one of the components of mainstreaming. Children spend most of their time with parents. So, the parents should be trained to the effect that they will be able to facilitate the learning of the physically handicapped children at home in absence of special teachers as this assist their children in learning daily living skills. The

researcher concurs with this idea since some parents have very low attitude towards their children with physical handicaps. They therefore need to be advised to help their children attain their maximum potential, (Damodar 1995).

Damodar further gives a solution as concerns acceptance of learners with physical handicaps by the non-disabled. He suggests that provisions should be made for providing opportunities to disabled through participation in different curricular activities. To strengthen the relationship between the non-disabled and the disabled children, child to child (peer tutoring) help method should be followed. The non-disabled should be inspired to invite the disabled to different family functions.

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 challenges that affect the education of learners who are physically handicapped in regular school settings.

3.1. Area and Population of the Study

The study was carried out in Tunyai zone, Tharaka District located in Kenya. This area was chosen because the researcher hails and works in the above mentioned zone in a nearby primary school. Thus, aware of the fact that learners who are physically handicapped do face certain challenges that in turn hinders their normal academic performance as compared to their counterparts who are not physically handicapped.

3.2. Sample Selection

The study population for this research study consisted mainly of school-going children, teachers and the general public. There were two questionnaires specifically designed for the pupils who are physically handicapped as well as teachers who teach them.

The pupils who were approached for answers were selected from std 7 to std 8 and selection was based on their sex and given questionnaire forms to fill.

A total of twenty (20) teachers were given questionnaires, and close to twenty five (25) pupils also being administered with questionnaire forms.

3.3. Data Collection Techniques

This study mainly employed the quantitative research technique in collecting, analyzing and presentation of the research findings.

3.4. Questionnaire Forms

This was used to collect views and data that were represented quantitatively. A total of twenty five (25) pupils and twenty (20) teachers were 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 of data collection was too employed to enable the researcher to critically see the difficulties and challenges that children who are physically handicapped undergo in regular 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 to a great extent facilitated this method of data collection.

3.6. Secondary Data

Documentary sources were 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 gave

a general background of the challenges and factors that affect the academic needs and interests of learners with different physical handicaps in their body-a condition that affects their normal body functioning in various tasks and activities that defines both their social well-being and education.

3.7. Data Analysis

The researcher using questionnaire forms to both the teachers as the key informants and pupils who were interviewed as well compiled quantitative data out of the responses obtained from the field.

Analysis of the research findings was based on the content of the survey since it was purely quantitative in nature. Data was analyzed using the descriptive technique with the aid of tables using frequencies and percentages.

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 expected with eager to be paid for their time spent when being interviewed and filling in the questionnaire thus, some respondents deliberately refused to deliver the information relevant to the study.
- ❖ The research was indeed time consuming and very tiresome since it actually required lots of movement from place to place to obtain relevant information to the research questions/problem under study.

CHAPTER FOUR DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher presents the findings of the study in tables with the aid of frequencies and percentages.

4.1 Personal information on the Respondents

Table 4.1 Gender of the respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	18	40
Male	27	60
Total	45	100

Source: Primary Data

As indicated in table 4.1 above, 40% of the respondents who participated in the study were female teachers from the selected study schools in Kiteta zone located in Makueni District. The male respondents dominated the study investigation with a total of 60% of the total percentage of respondents.

Table 4.2: Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18 Yrs and below	0	0
19-25yrs	5	11.1
26-35 yrs	20	44.4
36-45yrs	10	22.2
46-64 Yrs	10	22.2
66 and above	0	0
Total	45	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 44.4%. This is the most critical and energetic age group who mainly run the school affairs ranging from teaching to middle level school administration. 22.2% of the respondents were in the age bracket of 36-45 years engaged in various activities of teaching as well as general top management of the studied schools. Those within the age bracket of 46-64 years also constituted 22.2% whereas the lowest percentage of the respondents was those within 19-25 years who only measured up to 11.1% of the respondents interviewed.

Table 4.3 Professional Qualifications

Level	Frequency	Percentage
'O' Level	0	0
'A' Level	0	0
Certificate	11	24.4
Diploma	23	51.1
Degree	11	24.4
others	0	0
Total	45	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 51.1% of the respondents hold Diplomas in the various fields of education ranging from

Arts, Early Childhood Education to Special needs and Sciences. 24.4% hold certificates just as 24.4% who hold Bachelor Degree 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	22.2
4-6 years	13	28.8
7-10 years	14	31.1
11-+ years	8	17.7
Total	45	100

Source: Primary Data

Study findings as indicated by table 4.4 above reveal that 22.2% 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 28.8% 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 31.1% of the respondents whereas those having a work experience of more than 11 years and above made up 17.7% 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 the physically handicapped learners

Table 4.5: Challenges encountered by the physically handicapped learners

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Learners with physical handicaps have enough mobility aids like wheel chairs:		
Agree	10	22.2
Strongly agree	15	33.3
Disagree	11	24.4
Strongly disagree	9	20
Total	45	100

Source: Primary Data

Study findings as indicated in table 4.5 above gives an account about the availability of mobility aids to assist with the movement of the physically handicapped learners. Accordingly, 22.2% of the respondents agreed that there are mobility equipments in regular schools such as wheel chairs just as another 33.3 % strongly agreed with the set statement. However, 24.4% of the respondents reached for information disagreed with the statement just as another 20% who also strongly disagreed on the availability mobility devices that help with the movement of the physically handicapped learners within the different school environment as well as transporting them back home.

4.3 Teaching and Learning materials used by teachers

Table 4.6: There are enough teaching and learning materials which teachers use

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	9	20
Strongly agree	11	24.4
Disagree	20	44.4
Strongly disagree	5	11.1
Total	45	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 4.6 above accounted for the availability of learning aids that teachers use in the classrooms. According to the findings of the study, 20% of the respondents agreed that there are enough learning aids used by teachers in the classroom lessons with another 24.4% strongly agreeing with the statement (availability of learning aids).

However, 44.4% of the respondents disagreed with the availability of these learning aids with another 11.1% strongly disagreeing on the availability of these learning aids used by teachers in classes while teaching the physically handicapped learners. This implies therefore that the learning of these children are not well catered for since devices that would supplement and facilitate their acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills are not available in good numbers.

4.4 Attitude of the normal learners towards the physically handicapped

Table 4.7: The “Normal learners” have negative attitude towards learners with physical handicaps

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	17	37.7
Strongly agree	13	28.8
Disagree	10	22.2
Strongly disagree	5	11.1
Total	45	100

Source: Primary Data

According to the findings illustrated in table 4.7 above on the attitude of normal learners towards the physically handicapped reveal that most respondents stressed out that their attitudes towards the physically handicapped are negative in most school and community environments. 37.7% agreed that the attitudes are negative just as another 28.8% strongly agreed about the negativity of their peers towards their physical disabilities.

In addition, 22.2% of the respondents interviewed disagreed about the fact that their fellow peers who are normal do hold a negative attitude towards them. Another 11.1% interviewed also strongly disagreed about the statement that their fellow peers do hold a negative attitude towards them.

These findings further indicate that their fellow peers are not supportive to the physically handicapped learners who require a number of support as far as their academic and other

associated social-economic life is concerned. Thus, it remains a big challenge to the physically handicapped learners in accessing basic knowledge and skills critical to their education needs and interests.

4.5 Attitude of teachers

Table 4.8: Teachers have negative attitude towards learners with physical handicaps

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	14	31.1
Strongly agree	18	40
Disagree	8	17.7
Strongly disagree	5	11.1
Total	45	100

Source: Primary Data

Concerning the attitude held by teachers on the physically handicapped learners, the table above indicated that the teachers to some extent have a negative attitude towards learners with physical handicaps. 31.1% of the respondents agreed and another 40% strongly agreed about the negative attitude held by teachers to learners with special learning difficulties. Thus, it is evident and out rightly true to mention that the teacher's attitudes towards these learners have an important bearing towards affecting both the education needs of the physically handicapped learners as well as general performance in class and in the national examinations.

Some 17.7% with another 11.1% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed by the fact that teachers hold a negative attitude towards the physically handicapped learners in regular school setting. This shows the extent to which the learners with physical handicaps cannot benefit fully from the regular school programmes since those who would provide them with the much needed skills and talents to enable them benefit from school programmes.

4.6 Relationship between the physically handicapped with their peers

Table 4.9: The relationship between the physically handicapped Learners with their peers is supportive

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	11	24.4
Strongly agree	13	28.8
Disagree	15	33.3
Strongly disagree	6	13.3
Total	45	100

Source: Primary Data

According to the findings of the study as revealed by the study findings in table 4.9 above indicate that the peer groups to the physically handicapped learners do not give adequate financial support that learners with special needs call for since they have specific learning difficulties that makes it hard for them to attain the necessary skills and talents without being supported.

24.4% of the respondents agreed that the relationship between the peers are supportive just as another 28.8% strongly agreed that the peers to persons with physical handicaps are supportive to enable their learning to take place effectively. Another 33.3% of the respondents indicated that they disagree with the supportive nature that exists between the two parties. In addition, 13.3% of the interviewed respondents strongly disagreed with the notion that the peers to learners with physical handicaps do give the necessary support that is required to enable them possess the necessary social and economic skills for day to day survival activities/needs.

4.7 Solutions towards the physically handicapped

Table 4.10: Alternative solutions that can help solve the challenges encountered by the physically handicapped learners

Measures	Frequency	Percentage
Supply of more learning aid and other special needs equipments	20	44.4
More teacher training	0	0
Motivation of teachers	6	13.3
Community support services	9	20
More appropriate curriculum modification	10	22.2
Total	45	100

Source: Primary Data

Research findings as regards the measures that can be applied towards improving the learning of persons with physical handicaps indicate that more attention have been given to the supply of more adequate supply of learning aids and other equipments as revealed by 44.4% of the respondents.

However, no respondent stressed the need for more teachers training in special needs learners that would help have professionals and experienced persons/teachers to provide appropriate support and needs to the physically handicapped learners.

In addition, community support services as well as modification in the current regular school curriculum that addresses the learning needs of the physically handicapped learners was the other alternative measures suggested by the respondents towards the physically handicapped learners.

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 teachers as well as 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 physical disability 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 teachers of the visually impaired learners are the inadequate supplies of visual learning aid/equipment, their inability to recognize and appreciate what is being taught by teachers among other factors. Thus need of educational resources 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 rightly 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 visually 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 to avail 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 handicapped 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 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 handicapped 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 handicapped 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 visually 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 handicapped 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 handicapped 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.

Lastly but not least, communities should emphasize programmes where both the visually handicapped children do interact with their counterparts without physical disabilities as a way of involving them in similar community activities so as 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 them. This will help provide an environment that is conducive enough to boost the social and economic well-being of the visually (special needs learners) handicapped 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 to 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 challenges that face the education of the physically handicapped learners in regular school 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.

Profile of the Respondents (Tick where applicable)

- a) Age of respondent [] years
- b) Gender Male [] Female []
- c) Qualification: Degree [] Diploma [] Certificate [] Others []
- e) Duration in the field of teaching: 10+ years [] 5-10 years [] less than 5 years []

SECTION B OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Use numbers to fill the spaces appropriately

- 5 Strongly agree-means you agree without any doubt
- 4 Agree-means you agree with some doubt
- 3 Disagree-means you disagree with some doubt
- 2 Strongly disagree-means you disagree without any doubt

1. Learners with physical handicaps have enough mobility aids like wheel chairs:

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

2. There are enough teaching and learning materials which teachers use in class

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

3. The normal learners have negative attitude towards learners with physical handicaps

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

4. Teachers have negative attitude towards learners with physical handicaps

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

5. The relationship between the physically handicapped Learners with their peers is supportive

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

6. Which of the following measures do you think can help improve the learning needs of the physically handicapped learners/children?

- a) Supply of more learning aid and other special needs equipment []
- b) More teachers training []
- c) Motivation of teachers []
- d) Community support services []
- e) More appropriate curriculum modification []
- f) Others (Please specify some of them).....
.....
.....
.....
.....

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

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.....
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Appendix ii

Questionnaire for the Pupils

1. What learning disabilities do you have?
.....
.....
2. In which ways do the above mentioned disabilities affect your learning?
.....
.....
- 3 How supportive are your parents in helping you cope up with both school and home environment?
.....
.....
4. In which ways do teachers support you in class and outside class activities?
.....
.....
5. What is the attitude of teachers towards your inclusion into regular school settings?
.....
.....
6. Do your peers hold a positive or negative attitude towards you special learners?
.....
.....
7. Do you have enough learning aids at school? Mention some of them.....
.....
.....

Thanks for your time.