Special Needs Education (SNE) in Kenyan public primary schools:
exploring government policy and teachers' understandings

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on Special Needs Education (SNE) in Kenyan Public Primary Schools: Exploring Government Policy and Teachers' understandings.

At a time when Kenya is introducing reforms with a view to addressing broad national objectives and providing universal primary education (UPE) after the massive enrolment increases arising from the free primary education declaration (FPE), it was important to establish teachers' understandings on SEN. The study was undertaken in 27 primary schools in urban, municipal and rural parts of Kenya. A phenomenological qualitative approach was mainly used and data were collected from teachers through a survey comprising: (i) 159 self-administered questionnaires ii) Nine in-depth interviews. From the results of a pilot study, necessary adaptations were made for the main study. The data provided insights to teachers' teaching strategies, impacts of mainstreaming, factors that prevent the participation of children said to have SEN, challenges in meeting the diverse needs in the classroom and the support they may require in providing more engaging and effective learning instructions. The findings show that many teachers lack a repertoire of learning and teaching strategies appropriate for addressing barriers to learning and providing individualized approaches in the classrooms. Some teachers were positive about teaching children said to have SEN but lacked the infrastructure of support and guidance, were confused by different terminologies and found the concept of SEN not to be enabling. What teachers are calling for is more training to help them develop strategies which are responsive to the identified learning difficulties. Through Documentary Analysis of the Kenya National Special Needs Education (SNE) Policy Framework, Ministry of Education (MoE, 2009), it was identified that the policy is difficult and ambiguous for teachers to implement. The policy fails to include salient definitions to facilitate a common way of addressing children said to have SEN which results in them being labelled. The recommendations of the research indicate that children's unique needs be made transparent and addressed using effective individualized education plans to influence and maintain high expectations, positive and enriched ways of teaching in order to improve the children's learning opportunities as well as other extracurricular activities. The national policy should be revised to include feasible targets in order to facilitate on-going evaluation and embed definitions of key words which are pivotal to planning, assessment, identification, provision and placement of children said to have SEN. Suggestions for further research have also been included.

DEDICATION

To my dearly beloved parents:

The late Benson Mwangi (Wagithomo) and

Elizabeth Njeri (Wa Mabuku)

whose love for education earned them the nicknames:

(Wagithomo) - One who likes education and

(Wa Mabuku) - One who likes books or reading.

Their love for education steered me to these heights and for this

I shall forever be indebted.

Their love and up-bringing to forever cherish.

May the Lord rest their souls in Eternal Peace.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my independent investigation, except where I have indicated my indebtedness to other sources.

I hereby certify that this thesis has not already been accepted in substance for any other degree, nor is it being submitted concurrently for any other degree.

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

Signature: …………………………………………………………………..
Candidate

Signature: …………………………………………………………………...
Supervisor

Date: …………………………………

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAEA	Association of African Education Assessment
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency
APDK	Association for the Physically Disabled of Kenya
ATS	Approved Teacher Status
BEd	Bachelors Degree in Education
CBR	Community Based Rehabilitation
CIT	Coordinating Itinerant Teacher
DEO	District Education Officer
DfES	Department of Education Standards
EAC	East African Community
ECDE	Early Childhood Development Education
EARC	Educational Assessment and Resource Centre
EBD	Emotional, Behavioural Disorders
EFA	Education for All
FBA	Functional Behavioural Assessment
FPE	Free Primary Education
GC	Guidance and Counselling
GER	General Enrolment Ratio
GHC	Geography, History and Civics
GOK	Government of Kenya
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IEP	Individual Education Plan
ICESCR	International Covenant for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child

IT	Itinerant Teacher
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KAIS	Kenya Aids Indicator Survey
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination
KDHS	Kenya Demographic and Health Survey
KES	Kenya Shilling
KG	Kenyan government
KIE	Kenya Institute of Education
KNCHR	Kenya National Commission on Human Rights
KSB	Kenya Society for the Blind
KSDC	Kenya Society for the Disabled Children
KSMH	Kenya Society for the Mentally Handicapped
LVDs	Low Vision Devices
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
MDG	Millenium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoEST	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
MoEHRD	Ministry of Education Human Resource Development
MoH	Ministry of Health
MOP	Ministry of Planning
MOSPNDV	Ministry of State for Planning, National Development and Vision
NACECE	National Centre for Early Childhood Education
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
OECD	Organisation for Economic Corporation and Development
PTA	Parents Teachers Association
PR	Public Relations
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PRU	People Referral Unit
PWD	People with Disabilities Act
S1	Skilled Level 1
SACMEQ	South African Consortium for Measuring Educational Quality

SBTD	School based teacher development
SENCO	Special Education Coordinator
SENDA	Special Educational Needs Disability Act
TIVET	Technical Industrial, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training
TQE	Total Quality Education
TSC	Teachers Service Commission
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV and AIDS
UNICEF	United Nations Children Education Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
WHO	World Health Organisation

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a framework of the locale and rationale behind this study. An historical overview of the education system in Kenya is given with a discussion on the move towards the development of Universal Primary Education (UPE) and the impacts of the ensuing reforms on special needs education (SNE) as it is referred in Kenya. This research will explore the Kenya SNE Policy Framework and how teachers understand special educational needs (SEN) in public primary schools in Kenya. A description and justification of phenomenology as the philosophical stance will be provided. Details of the aim, scope, basis and significance of the research will also be supplied. The research questions will also be identified and a sequential structure of the chapters of the thesis given.

1.1 Selection of the research

I trained as a secondary school teacher and taught in various schools and colleges in Kenya. Upon arriving to the UK, I was sure I wanted to pursue a Masters in Education (Management) but before commencing this course, I started working as a teacher in both secondary and primary schools and later FE colleges in London. By this time in Kenya, few children said to have SEN were being placed in mainstream schools and majority in special education units, with few progressing to special education secondary schools. Having had no prior knowledge of SEN, my teaching exposure gave me the impetus to find out more about SEN as well as an impulse to make a contribution to SNE in Kenya. Together with the admiration of the philosophical approaches to SEN, research, and systems of education in the UK, especially for the children said to have SEN, I was prompted to pursue a Masters (MA) degree in Special Education at Brunel University.

Studying for the MA degree resulted in an accumulation of literature about SEN, but in order to gain further understanding of SEN policies, research, practices and concepts, this inspired me to crave for more philosophical background on the theoretical and practical aspects of SEN; hence the drive to pursue a PhD by

choosing this topic for my study: Special Needs Education (SNE) in Kenyan public primary schools: exploring government policy and teachers' understandings. In getting ready for the task ahead I carried out a pilot study in Kenya in order to re-familiarise with the primary school set up and to test and redefine data collection instruments for the main study.

As a result, open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were chosen over observations in order to facilitate interactions with the teachers. Teachers' complexities may be considered unique and specific to the individual teachers at different circumstances at any particular time (Creswell, 2007).

1.2   Universal Primary Education (UPE) in Kenya

The Kenyan government committed itself to universal primary education (UPE) by ratifying the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 10 December 1948, 217 A (III). Other international policy frameworks ratified and signed by the government include (The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989), African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990), United Nations Environment, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG, 2000). The Kenyan government declared a campaign for UPE as a long term objective after its independence in 1963 (Oketch and Rolleston, 2007).

Through various free primary education (FPE) initiatives in (1974, 1979 and 2003) Kenya attempted to achieve UPE but without the anticipated success. These initiatives resulted in massive enrolment increases which in turn led to overcrowded classrooms and to severe shortages of physical facilities, qualified teachers and learning materials. There were also huge numbers of children leaving school early during the primary cycle (Somerset, 2009; Sifuna, 2007). Consequently as a strategy to contain costs arising from the effects of the FPE initiatives, the Kenyan government relied on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Structural Adjustment Programme. This too had negative effects on quality,

as the responsibility for provision of textbooks and various learning materials shifted from the government to the parents; this affected many pupils from poorer families. This situation lasted until the declaration of free primary education in 2003 (Somerset, 2009; Sifuna, 2007).

It is estimated that there are 750 million disabled people in the world, approximately 10% of the world's population; 150 million are children and 80% live in low-income countries with little or no access to services. Only 2-3% of disabled children in poor countries go to school (World Bank, 2009). The education for all (EFA) Global Monitoring Report (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2008), estimates that 77 million children are out of school and more than one third are disabled. In Africa fewer than 10% of these children are in school. Subsequently Peters (2007) further states that:

'Only 1-2% of disabled people in the countries of the South experience equity in terms of access,' (Ibid 2007, p167).

Most developed countries have adopted a policy of greater inclusion of students with disabilities and/or SEN within mainstream schooling (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2005). These developments require:

> '... re-examination of the role of teachers and consequently their preparation, work and careers. Teachers are expected to develop knowledge on special education, on appropriate teaching and management processes and in working with support personnel (OECD, 2005, p.98).

The next section outlines the reaction to the implementation of universal education in Kenya.

1.3 Reaction to the implementation of Universal Primary Education (UPE)

In response to UPE, Kenya embraced the Education for all (EFA) policy in 2003 when school fees in primary schools were abolished. Kenya has since attempted to develop inclusive practices by keeping children said to have SEN in ordinary

classrooms, where they learn with their peers (MoE, 2008). The Kenyan government followed the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities, Rule no. 6 which not only affirms the equal rights of children, youth and adults with 'handicaps' to education, but also states that education should be provided in integrated and general school settings (MoEST, 2005). Education opportunities for children said to have SEN has been a major challenge to the education sector. The national education system has been characterized by a lack of systems and facilities that respond to the challenges faced by children said to have SEN. The majority of these children do not access educational services. For instance, in 1999 there were only 22,000 children said to have SEN enrolled in special schools, units and integrated programmes. According to the Ministry of Education statistics, this number rose to 26,885 in 2003 (MoE, 2008).

The Kenya Population Data Sheet (KPDS, 2011) reported that '*more than two out of five people are under age 15* (KPDS, p2). The figure showing these numbers are provided as appendix16. Coincidentally, the same document provides an estimate of the same children as 43%. However, if we are to use the 43%, this would imply that the population of all children would be (43%*38,600,000) = 16,598,000.   Therefore the number of SEN children would be expressed as 26,885/16,598,000 x 100 = 0.16197 = 0.162% of the total population of children in Kenya. This figure is not contextualised in any of the Ministry of Education documents and reports used in this research. Different reports show varied figures which is an issue that needs to be synchronised from the Kenyan government (KG) statistics. More details about prevalence rates are found in section 3.1.4.

The abolition of the primary school fee for all grades had the following results:
- The gross enrolment rate (GER) increased from 64% in 1999 to 76% in 2004.
- Sudden influx of pupils, overcrowded classrooms, acute shortage of teachers, textbooks and materials and large number of over-age pupils.
- New classroom construction programmes.

- Substantial expansion of education which resulted in increased access by groups that previously had little or no access to schooling (MoE, 2008).

Even with the significant increase in primary education enrolment, Kenya is still faced with problems of extending UPE to marginalised and remote areas, and high drop-out and completion rates (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2007). Inadequate government funding and acute poverty levels of parents of children with disabilities have remained a challenge to equitable educational opportunities (Muuya, 2002; Mutua and Dimitrov, 2001). The implementation of FPE was further marked by unforeseen problems in quality education (Kochung Report, 2003). Despite increased enrolment, the sector is still faced with issues of access, equity and quality (MOEST, 2005). Even with increased enrolment in primary schools, after the introduction of FPE, many challenges persist in primary education.

It is true to say, then, that SEN has not received adequate attention to ensure equal access to education for the children said to have SEN in Kenya. Hence, the focus for this study: to explore how teachers view SEN in public primary schools in Kenya. The following data is relevant in SEN.

1.4   Special Education in Kenya

By 2007, the percentage of people with disabilities in Kenya is estimated at 10% of the total population of 38.6million. Approximately 25% of these are children of school-going age (World Data on Education, 2007). This tends to give a general figure without specifying all categories of children like those with learning difficulties and or emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is not clear how many have been identified and/or assessed. Considering the figures for different years: (1999, 2003 and 2007) as indicated under section 1.3 above. The implication of this data tends to show a relatively low access and participation of children said to have special educational needs, (Republic of Kenya, 2012, World Data on Education, 2007). There is need for the Kenyan government to put in place programmes and strategies to facilitate the education of children said to

have SEN, to remove the barriers to education for these children and to create awareness to eradicate negative beliefs associated with disability. The Kochung Task Force (Kochung, 2003) recommended the development of a special needs policy to cater for the learning requirements of children said to have SEN (Kenya National Commission of Human Rights (KNCHR, 2007).

1.5   Primary Education in Kenya

Primary education is the first phase of formal education. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) is responsible for facilitating and coordinating provision of quality education and training at all levels of schooling (MOEST, 1999). The curriculum is uniform throughout the country. Public primary schools depend on the government for their operational expenses and although the government is advocating Free for All (FFA) education, parents are responsible for the provision of school supplies like textbooks and equipment (MoEST, 2005). However, all teachers are recruited by Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) a government department under the Ministry of Education. Teachers train for two years before qualifying to teach in primary schools. They are expected to teach in all classes.

From 2002, primary school enrolment levels have risen from 5.9 million to 7.5 million in 2006 and the Net Enrolment Rates increased from 77 percent in 2002 to 86 percent in 2006. The primary completion rate also increased from 62 percent in 2002 to 77.6 in 2006 (United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF, Kenya Country Programme 2009-2013). The context provided has presented the focus for this research: to explore how teachers view SEN in public primary schools in Kenya. The prevalence rate of children said to have SEN in Kenya is discussed under Section 3.1.4. Following is an explanation of the conceptual framework which has driven this research.

1.6   Philosophical Stance

My study sought to explore how teachers view SNE within public primary schools. This research was driven by the objective of producing rich and

meaningful insights into teachers' practices and attitudes in relation to SEN. All human action is meaningful and has to be interpreted and understood within the context of social practices (O'Donoghue, 2007). It follows that understanding the meanings that are created by interaction between human beings is essential in order to understand the social world and the numerous phenomena which it contains. In order to study the phenomena or the experiences from the social interactions with the teachers, a phenomenological stance was chosen. Phenomenology is the study of phenomena and their experiential meanings (Finlay, 2009). It is considered as a way of looking at the social world (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Phenomenology relates to the way humans make sense of the world. It enabled interpretation of the teachers' actions and gave strength to my own interpretations.

An interpretivist approach was chosen as the epistemology in order to seek teachers' views of SEN. Interpretivist research considers a world where reality is socially constructed, complex and open to change. Ferguson and Ferguson (2000) stress that, researchers learn about particular phenomena from people who experience the issues being investigated. By letting teachers use their own words about the understanding of SEN, I gained insight into how SEN is constructed and collected data on policies and practice. I reviewed my philosophical assumptions in order to understand my position within this research. Ontology provides an account of a researcher's view on what is true or what the assumptions and claims on the nature of truth are and whether truth or reality is subjective or objective. Epistemology helps a researcher to figure out the truth. Crotty (1998) states that there are three positions of ontology including objectivism, subjectivism and constructivism.

In objectivism, knowledge is claimed to exist whether we are aware of it or not. On the other hand, social phenomenon exists in a specific context and concepts are considered part of that context. Human behaviour can be understood by comprehending others on their own terms. As a researcher, my objective was to understand and interpret teachers' views on SEN in public primary schools in Kenya. As a phenomenological researcher, it was important for me to understand

the reality or the truth from different perspectives. In interpretive research, there are multiple realities (Guba and Lincoln, 2008). Vagle (2009) stresses that there is an assumption that an interpretivist researcher tries to understand the phenomena by providing some meaning. I interpreted what the teachers' world is like from their own point of view. My subjective ontological view made it possible for me to understand teachers' behaviour in their own terms. I went to the teachers' schools since I considered them to have experienced the phenomenon of interest. Phenomenology as a philosophy emphasizes on the meaning of the phenomenon which is 'the very staff of subjectivity' (Giorgi, 2005 p77). For the researcher to remain focused they should always question themselves to ensure their research is valid (van Manen, 1997).

It was important for me to reflect and consider the philosophical perspective of my study, based on its nature, what could be learnt from it and how to go about it. The teachers' complexities may be considered as unique and specific to the individual teachers at different circumstances at any particular time (Creswell, 2007).

Phenomenology is a qualitative approach and qualitative approaches seek to portray a world in which reality is socially constructed complex and ever-changing (Creswell, 2007; Naughton, Rolfe and Blatchford-Siraj, 2007 and Glesne, 1999). Therefore, qualitative methodological approaches tend to be based on recognition of the subjective, pragmatic world of human beings and on a description of their experiences in depth (Patton, 2002). The basic tenet of the interpretivist approach is that realities are multiple, socially constructed and influenced by history and culture. Many interpretations can be made and there is no basis by which truth can be determined. A subjectivist ontological position was therefore adopted (Mertens, 1998). An interpretivist approach facilitated integration within the research environment, and thus enabled me to explore the meanings of events and phenomena related to SEN as experienced by teachers in public primary schools in Kenya.

Interpretivists examine the meanings that phenomena have for people in their everyday settings. The concern is with the study of how people define events or reality and how they act in relation to their beliefs. O'Donoghue (2007) points out that every aspect of society can be traced back to the way people act in everyday life. This is illustrated by pointing out that what keeps the educational system together is the day-to-day activity of teachers, learners, administrators, inspectors and other educational professionals. Any changes in education or society are brought about by changes in such activity. To understand education, we must begin by looking at everyday activity in the different education sectors. Hence the objective of this study is to explore how teachers understand SEN in public primary schools in Kenya.

Pring (2004) stresses that education is concerned with the life of the mind and if not carefully nurtured such a life can deteriorate. The job of the teacher is to facilitate that development by putting the learner in the context of further experience or with what others have said as they make sense of similar experiences. Education takes place within a community of children where that community includes previous generations who have contributed to the public and received wisdom upon which each individual draws in trying to make sense of the world.

The expertise of the teacher lies in being able to inhabit the world of the learner and the world of public understandings and thereby establish the continuum between them. There is a public growth of understanding and a personal one and education lies in the interaction between the two. Through interactions the individual constructs meaning (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003). Therefore, my aim was to establish how teachers understand SEN as this would illuminate SNE practice in Kenya. The philosophical stance represented the important assumptions that will underpin my research strategy and methods. This significant assumption will allow me to understand the phenomenon whilst highlighting the context in which it occurs.

1.7 Statement of Focus

The education and training of children and or adults said to have SEN has become an important initiative in most countries in the world and there have been major educational reforms especially with the emphasis on inclusive education (Ferguson, 2008; Kisanji, 1998). Kenya like other developing countries introduced major reforms with a view to addressing the broad National education goals and to provide universal primary education. Although the country implemented the special needs education (SNE) policy in 2009, coupled with other external pressures and internal constraints such as socioeconomic drawbacks, taboos and beliefs associated with disabilities, Kenya continues to face many challenges in the education of children said to have SEN. This scenario is calling for focused, high quality research drawn from wider perspectives in order to contribute to the practices and understand how to continually support children said to have SEN in public primary schools in Kenya.

The effectiveness of policy in terms of its transition to practice relies upon core issues of resourcing and personnel capable of supporting the initiatives. The skills, attitudes and knowledge of teachers regarding pupils with SEN are central to the development of effective classroom practice. In Kenya, the degree to which teachers of young children hold a secure conception of SEN and the way these are manifest in learning situations has not been explored through research.

Kenya is a post colonial government and like other post colonial governments, it has often used education as a principal means to create unity and common citizenship thus strengthening its education systems. In most low income countries of the world, access to computers and the information technology is limited to the elite Peters (2003). Most of the literature on globalised education policies like SEN deals with the industrialized countries of the West and other newly industrialized countries. This literature has limited relevance for low income countries and the literature that relates to low income countries more often than not lacks a notional basis and is limited to a discussion of the impact of economic globalisation on education including economic, political and cultural

aspects (Tickly, 2010). Globalization for post colonial countries overlaps with the process of democratic transformation and national liberation from colonialist.

A prevalent problem in the disability field is the lack of access to education for both children and adults with disabilities. Education is a fundamental right for all, as stressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) through the protection of different international conventions. In low income countries there is a striking difference in the educational opportunities provided for disabled children and for non-disabled children. It might not be possible to realize the goal of Education for All if a complete change in the situation is not realized Peters (2003). Significant numbers of disabled children and youth are largely excluded from educational opportunities for primary and secondary schooling. Exclusion, poverty and disability are correlated and education is widely recognized as a means to develop human capital, to improve economic performance and to enhance people's capabilities and choices (Peters, 2003). Exclusion from education can result in a staggering loss of freedom and productivity in the labour market. The impact of structural adjustment programmes and the growing gap between the rich and the poor, and management of exclusion are the main areas of focus (Tikly, 2010, Peter, 2003). Although the Kenyan government has initiated SNE programmes, the challenges of fully implementing these programmes cannot be underestimated. It is hoped that this study will highlight the SEN practices and how teachers understand them.

1.8   Rationale of the Research

This research is to explore how teachers view SEN in public primary schools in Kenya. Changes towards further integration of children said to have SEN in education are taking place and the government has renewed its commitment to developing education, which is laudable. Special education has for a long time been provided in special schools and units attached to regular schools. The demand for services for children said to have SEN has increased at all levels as a result of the government's commitment to UPE. The FPE decree has created an opportunity for a large number of children to enrol including those children said

to have SEN. Education systems should become inclusive and cater for diversity and SEN while creating equal opportunities. Governments were asked to prioritise the improvement of their education systems by adopting laws and policies which support the principles of inclusivity (UNESCO, 1994).

On the other hand, research suggests that:

> *'... developments of practice are unlikely to occur without some exposure to what teaching actually looks like when it is being done differently, and exposure to someone who can help teachers understand the difference between what they are doing and what they aspire to do* (Ainscow and Miles, 2008, p24).

After the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994) the governments' plans focussed on inclusivity policies which also meant that the concept of teaching needed to be appropriate to provide different instructional approaches to meet the individual needs of each child. The situations in the classrooms represent diverse needs in terms of social groupings and environment including pupils with different abilities as well as children said to have SEN. It is argued that very few national teacher education systems in Sub-Saharan Africa have been completely re-modified to reflect the paradigm of inclusive education for all. So, most countries are adapting the old methods (UNESCO, 2005). It would be important to establish what is happening in Kenya in this regard. Hence, the focus of this study is to explore how teachers view SEN in public primary schools in Kenya.

While various research papers in Kenya have sought to provide current details about SEN, no prior research has explored how teachers view SEN in public primary schools. The Kochung (2003) report on Special Needs Education (SNE) in Kenya, established that research in special education has not received significant attention because of the lack of specialized technical personnel and incentives. Other researchers (Opini, 2010; Mukuria and Korir, 2006; Wamae and Kang'ethe-Kamau, 2008; Wamochu, Karugu and Nwoye 2004; Mutua and Elhoweris, 2002; Muuya, 2002; Mutua, 2001 and Abilla, 1988) assert that more data is required to provide a basis for policy formulation and decision making. Coupled with continuing global campaigns about improving and expanding the

quality of education, the Kenyan government has, like other developing countries, agreed to achieve internationally agreed targets; it is inevitable that the governments would rely on teachers in their effort to deliver quality public education. Some of the consequences of the government's initiatives to meet similar targets have already been mentioned in section 1.3.

The question is how well prepared the teachers are able to cope with expectations placed on them in order to continue maintaining high quality education and dealing with a diverse child population, not least children said to have SEN. On the other hand, teachers are also expected to play a key role in delivering education reforms. So it is crucial that they are clear about the changes in education policy for them to work towards achieving the reform goals (Shrestha, 2005).

I envision that the research findings of this study will be of some use in informing the Kenyan government (KG) about the status of SEN and contribute to an illumination of any gaps between policy and practices in the teaching of children said to have SEN. Similarly I envision that the findings from this study will shed light on the experiences of teachers and what changes are required to improve their practice and policy of SEN: ultimately to improve the learning outcomes of children said to have SEN.

1.9   Scope of the Research

The Ministry of Education (MoE 2007) figures show that there are a total of 26,104 primary schools. There was an overall increase of 33.5% of schools compared to 19,554 in 2003. Most of these are concentrated in the rural areas. Out of these, 18,116 are private schools. The pupil teacher ratio of 1:43 is recorded. North Eastern province recorded the highest ratio because of a shortage of teachers due to the disparities in this area, such as lack of facilities, teachers and infrastructure. The public schools are funded by the government, the community and a central fund from the government; while private schools are funded by different owners, religious organisations or families. The Republic of Kenya

(ROK, 2012) draft policy framework for education   indicates that there are 3,464 special needs education institutions. This comprises (38.2% ECDE, 3.4% Non formal education, 54.1% primary and 4.3% secondary. There are 2713 integrated institutions and 751 special schools. On the other hand, there are 1,467 SEN institutions; these include 17public secondary schools as follows: 10 schools for learners with Hearing impairments, 3 for learners with physical disabilities and 4 for learners with visual impairments. There are five vocational institutions, one Diploma and 3 Primary Teachers' Colleges and 3 universities offering courses in SNE (ROK, 2012). Lack of reliable data on children said to have SEN crossways all levels of education is likely to restrict effective special education service delivery and planning.   It is therefore important to consider the following questions in readiness to explore how teachers view SEN in public primary schools in Kenya.

1.10 Research Questions

The main focus of this research is Special Needs Education (SNE) in Kenyan Public Primary Schools: Exploring government policy and teachers' views**.** In order to provide focus for the study, the following key research questions were considered:

1. What SNE policies does the Kenyan government espouse?
2. What strategies do teachers use in order to meet the SEN of pupils?
3. What are teachers' views about inclusion?
4. What SNE training is accessible to teachers?

1.11 Significance of the Research

The MoEST (2005) highlights the government's commitment in assuring that all children have a right to quality and relevant education and training. Specifically, the government asserts that children said to have SEN join school when they are over age 8 (Kenya Education Sector Strategies Programme (KESSP, 2005). The MoEST has put forward some of the priorities it is working towards in different areas in order to increase investment in human capital and to improve SEN.

These incorporate the recommendations from the Kochung Report (2003). Some of these are:

i.   Facilitating awareness programmes to eliminate 'taboos and beliefs' linked with disability.

ii.   Developing and applying a flexible and child-centred curriculum for SEN learners.

iii. Teacher-training.

iv.   Harmonising different education policies, guidelines and legislation.

v.   'Making learning institutions truly inclusive by removing the key barriers' (MoEST, 2005, p.9).

By undertaking this research, I hope the analysis of the Special Needs Education Policy (2009) and data from the teachers will provide insight to the progress being made.

1.12 Chapter Summary and Conclusions

The research focus is on Special Needs Education (SNE) in Kenyan Public Primary Schools: Exploring government policy and teachers' perceptions. The sample is drawn from urban, municipal and rural schools in order to find out how the teachers understand and meet SEN in public primary schools.

1.13 Thesis Outline

This study comprises seven chapters including this one. Chapter Two provides an overview of the Kenyan context, education reforms and the inception of SNE in chronological order. Chapter Three presents the Literature Review and has two sections. Section one provides a general international perspective on Special Education, some of which developments have been and will be of value to the development of progressive educational programmes in Kenya. The Kenyan context is unique and educational programme development has to be responsive to variety in terms of peoples, customs, beliefs, geography and occupational traditions. Chapter Four examines the methodology and methods and Chapter Five presents the questionnaire and interview findings and results, while Chapter Six draws together the themes of the study, underscores answers to the research questions and stresses the contribution of the research.

The next chapter gives a brief historical background of Kenya, its geographical location, population, economy, culture, education system and some aspects on the inception of Special Education.

CHAPTER TWO: AN HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF KENYA

2.1   Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth review of the fundamentally important factors that have continued to affect the development of SNE in Kenya. An overview of the Kenyan context, education reforms and the inception of SEN is presented in chronological order.   The impact of historical developments in education on perceptions for primary SEN is also provided.

2.1.2 Country Background and Basic Demographics

Kenya became independent from the British in 1963, becoming a republic in 1964 after almost 80 years of colonial rule (Eshiwani, 1993). Kenya is in East Africa and borders the Indian Ocean to the South East, Somalia to the East, Ethiopia to the North East, Tanzania to the South, Uganda to the West and Sudan to the North-West.   Its surface area is 582,366 square kilometres. The population is 41,070,934 people with an estimated growth rate of 3%. Over 60% of the population, 23,346,328, live in rural areas (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS, 2011). This is further broken down as follows:

Table 1: Population Distribution in Kenya

Age	Percentage	Male	Female
0-14	43%	8,730,845	8,603,270
15-64	53%	11,373,997	11,260,402
Over 65	3%	497,389	605,031
Prevalence of people with disabilities and key areas assessed			
	Male	**Female**	**Total**
General	647,689	682,623	1,330,312
Visual	151,793	174,386	326,179
Hearing	89,386	97,438	186,824
Speech	86,101	74,562	160,663
Physical/Self care	197,164	214,816	411,980
Mental	74,742	60,593	135,333
Other	43,747	54,791	95,538
Total			2,649,831

(Adapted from KNBS, 2011)

The UN World Mortality Report (2011) shows life expectancy is at 57 years for males and 59 years for females. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) disability affects 10% of every population. An estimated 650 million people worldwide, and 200 million are children, experience some form of disability. Surveys conducted in 55 countries by the Disabilities Statistics Compendium show a prevalence rate of 0.2 – 21% (Kenya National Survey for Persons with Disabilities (KNSPWD), 2008, p1). Existing literature also shows that the majority of people with disabilities (PWD) live in rural areas (Opini, 2010; KNSPWD, 2008; Mukuria and Korir, 2006). Nkinyangi and Mbindyo (1982) reiterate that disability seems to be predominantly among the disadvantaged. There are more than 40 indigenous communities in Kenya and each has its own local language (mother tongue). Other ethnicities include descendants of immigrants from Asia, Europe and other countries. English is the official language and the medium of instruction from Standard four of primary school (the term Standard is used to imply Grade or Class). English was adopted as the language of instruction in 1961. In 1971, Kiswahili was adopted as the national language and made a compulsory and examinable subject in primary and

secondary school. Schools in the rural areas mostly use vernacular language for instruction in the first three grades. Christianity is the religion of the majority and Islam is practised by about a third of the population. Other religions like traditional African worship and Hinduism are practised by a small proportion of the population (The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ, 2010).

The main sectors driving the economy are Agriculture and Forestry, Tourism, Wholesale and Retail trade, Transportation and financial intermediation. Kenya's economy recovered from a period of stagnation in the 1990s and has expanded steadily since 2002 (Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey (KIHBS), 2005). Nevertheless, over half of Kenyans, including 9 million children, live below the poverty line. The rural population is disproportionately worse off, with over 47 % below the food poverty line and a food poverty gap of 16 % (UNICEF, 2005). This is a significant challenge, as the rural food poverty gap alone translates into an equivalent of US$ 600 million per year (KIHBS, 2005). The affluent middle class are seen to benefit from the gains while the poorest deciles of the population do not (Vos et al., 2004). In monetary terms, this makes the Kenyan society a highly unequal one. This shows that the economic growth of the past years has not yet translated into inclusive development in Kenya (UNICEF, 2007).

2.1.3 Health

The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS 2003) stresses that the major challenges of the health sector have been: inadequate and uneven coverage of the population due to insufficient health service delivery points and the underutilization of some of the existing facilities; shortages of medical manpower due to severe shortages of trainers in the health field; unsatisfactory patterns of utilization of manpower. More staff are deployed in urban areas than in other areas and in major hospitals— with one major referral hospital, Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi. There is unsatisfactory utilization of equipment and emergency transport due to financial and managerial problems relating to operation and maintenance. KDHS (2003) reports show that there is a constant

shortage of drugs and other essential supplies due to financial constraints and an inefficient distribution system. Flow and utilization of available health information is inadequate.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic has affected millions of children across the world with Africa South of the Sahara termed as the most affected region (United Nations' AIDS (UNAIDS, 2004). The prevalence rate in Kenya stands at 6.3% (UNAIDS 2004). It is also estimated that 2.4million children are orphans and half of them through HIV and AIDS. The Kenya AIDS Indicator Survey (KAIS), 2007) reported that 21.4% lived in households that received at least one type of free external support to help care for the children, while the majority (76.6%) of these children's households have received no support. The stress of losing their parents, stigma and poverty are some of the challenges that affect these children's education (KAIS, 2007).

2.1.4 Administrative Boundaries

The following map shows the administrative boundaries followed by an explanation of each province below.

Figure 1 Map of Kenya showing Administrative boundaries

Source: **http://www.mapsofworld.com**

The eight administrative regions in Kenya are referred to as provinces and are written in capital letters inside the map. They are: Nairobi, Central, Eastern, Rift Valley, Coast, North Eastern, Western and Nyanza. Within each province, there are smaller regional offices known as districts which are also sub-divided into divisions and sub-divisions (education zones). The Ministry of State is in charge of Provincial Administration and Internal Security and supervises the administration of districts and provinces. The Provincial Commissioners oversee the administration of the provinces while District Officers administer districts, with Chiefs for Divisions and Assistant Chiefs (Headmen) the sub-divisions or

villages. Regions in Kenya may be argued to be ethnically distinct with specific groups living in the same areas. The British colonial administration created administrative units along ethnic boundaries comprising eight provinces which were further sub-divided into districts often according to ethnic groups and subgroups. The post colonial government aligned and consolidated parliamentary constituencies with ethnic boundaries and these still stand to-date. This is also attested by Alwy and Schech (2004) and Woolman (2001). This research draws data from five out of eight provinces; namely: Nairobi, Central, Eastern, Rift Valley and Coast provinces and a summary of the eight provinces is presented as follows:

2.1.4.1   Nairobi Province

This is the capital city and the most populous in East Africa with a current estimated population of about 3,038,553 million (Kenya Population Data Sheet, (KPDS, 2011). It is the political and administrative centre of the country. Nairobi is the business capital of East and Central Africa thus blending a cosmopolitan culture. Unlike other provinces, it is not divided into districts. It has 248 primary schools and 1,155,834 pupils. Educational standards in Nairobi are diverse with schools in slum areas that markedly contrast with the high standards of education in schools in the city centre and city outskirts. National unemployment levels are soaring at 40 % - 50% and the population lives in four main slum areas; whilst between 500,000 and 1,000,000 live in Kibera, one of the largest slums in Africa (Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ, 2005). The diversity in the population in Nairobi was of interest in my research in terms of some of the above extreme diversities. Nairobi is also home to refugees mainly from Somalia and other conflict torn areas of neighbouring countries.

2.1.4.2   Central Province

The province comprises seven districts, 1,801 primary schools and 894,583 pupils (50.1% female). It is densely populated province with high rainfall throughout the

year and is well endowed with cash crops such as tea and coffee (SACMEQ, 2005).

2.1.4.3 Eastern Province

This province has 12 districts, 4,078 primary schools and 1,110,164 pupils (50.5% female). The province occupies the country from north to south with a geographical, social, economic and cultural diversity. Isiolo, Marsabit and Moyale districts have very low rainfall and limited agricultural land. There are substantial variations in educational quality among districts (SACMEQ, 2005).

2.1.4.4 Rift Valley Province

This is the largest province in Kenya with 17 districts, 4,482 primary schools and 1,400,759 pupils (49 % female). The province also displays geographical, social, economic and cultural diversity and is mostly dominated by the Kalenjin, although other people like the Maasai, who are nomadic, and ethnic groups from different regions have also settled in some districts especially in the arid areas. The more fertile districts have different crops like tea, coffee, maize and wheat (Alyw and Schech, 2004; SACMEQ, 2005).

2.1.4.5. Coast Province

There are seven districts, 1,079 primary schools and 362,593 pupils (45.4% female). The majority of the inhabitants are Muslims, and Mombasa the provincial capital is the second largest city after Nairobi (SACMEQ, 2005).

2.1.4.6 North Eastern Province

This province has three districts, 171 schools and 44,693 pupils (32% female). This is an arid area with Muslims as the main inhabitants.   It borders Somalia. Culture is deep-rooted which provides only limited education for girls. Girls are generally married at an early age and they have low participation rates in the latter years of schooling. The Ministry of Education (MoE) has introduced mobile schools due to the nomadic nature of this pastoralist community in an effort to provide greater access to education (Sifuna, 2005; SACMEQ, 2005).

2.1.4.7   Western Province

There are seven districts, 1,909 schools and 850,951 pupils (50.6% female). The main ethnic groups are the Luhya. Sugar cane is the main cash crop. The area borders Uganda and economic activity along the border has negatively affected boys' education due to widespread child labour practices.

2.1.4.8   Nyanza Province

This province has 10 districts, 3,588 schools and 1,100,144 pupils (49% female). The three main ethnic groups are the Luo, Kisii and Kuria. This is the lake region area, borders Tanzania and fishing, sugar cane and tea growing in some parts as the main economic activities. Occasional floods affect the area and the prevalence rate for HIV/AIDS is particularly high with many children as orphans. This, coupled with cultural practices and early marriages, affects learning in the region.

2.1.5   Political System

Kenya was a one-party state (Kenya African National Union (KANU) from 1963 to 1992 under President Jomo Kenyatta. In 1992, the first multi-party elections were held and President Daniel Arap Toroitich Moi retained the presidency up to 2002. In 2002, a coalition of opposition parties formed the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) and Mwai Kibaki was elected the country's third President. In 2008, President Kibaki and Raila Odinga signed a power-sharing agreement which established a prime minister position as well as the division of an expanded list of cabinet posts according to the parties' proportional representation in parliament. After the amendment of the constitution, Raila Odinga became the Prime Minister. The new constitution was approved in a referendum in 2010 and changes in the structure of the government are expected in the future. The last elections were held on 4 March 2013 and Uhuru Kenyatta was elected as the fourth president.

2.1.6 National Goals of Primary Education in Kenya

The general goal is to prepare and equip citizens to function effectively in their environment and to be useful members of society. Kenya Education is expected to:

- Foster national unity through the adaptation of the abundant cultural heritage of the people of the country.
- Serve the needs of national development by producing skilled manpower, by disseminating knowledge and inculcating the right attitudes and relating attributes of learning to the real problems of society.
- Prepare and equip the youth with knowledge, skills and expertise necessary to enable them collectively and individually to play an effective role in the life of the nation and to enable them to engage in activities that enhance the quality of life, while ensuring that opportunities for the full development of their individual talents and personality are provided.
- Promote social justice and morality by imparting the right attitudes necessary for training in social obligations and responsibilities (Education Act, 1968; Republic of Kenya, 1964).

2.1.7 Management of Education

The Education Act authorises the MoE to manage Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE), in primary, secondary and tertiary sectors. The main tasks include: employment of teachers for government schools, distribution of learning resources and implementation of education policies. Each primary school has a School Management Committee (SMC). The committee comprises of elected representatives of two parents and eight class teachers and the head teacher who is the chairman (Nga'ng'a, 2010). This encourages parents to participate in the decision making process. The SMC monitors the use of funds and monitors how the school works in terms of funds and school infrastructure. This committee prepares and recommends the school development plan, budget, hygiene and

monitors the utilization of grants received from the government or local authority, employs extra teachers to cater for shortages or performs other decisions about education in which case the head teacher has to agree with the SMC. It has to get approval from the education authorities through the Director of Education Board and Provincial Director of Education (Nga'ng'a, 2010; Sifuna, 2005). The MoE is responsible for education in the following areas: The Minister and Assistant Minister work with Directors of Education who are responsible for different divisions; such as: Audit, Administration, Inspection, Reports, Quality Assurance and Standards (Kenya Institute of Education (KIE), Adult Education, Policy and Planning, Semi Autonomous Government Agencies (SAGAs) like Teachers' Service Commission, Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC), Field and Inspectorate Divisions. The provinces are considered under the field division. The Deputy Secretaries are responsible for the Finance, Administration, Planning and Development departments. The Ministry acts as a link to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) for the preparation of Statistical Abstracts and Economic Surveys (MoE, 2007).

2.1.7.1   Structure and Organisation of the Education System

Table 2 Structure of the education system

Stage	Period	Age
Early Childhood Development Education	1 year	3
Pre-primary	1-2 years	4-6
Primary	8 years (Standard 1 – 8)	6-14
Secondary Technical Craft and Artisan	4 years (Form 1 – 4)	14-18
Tertiary (further and higher education institutions) Undergraduate Diploma Technical Tertiary Higher National Diploma and Diploma Certificates	4 years undergraduate Between 1-3 years	Over 18
Bachelors Degree	4 years	
Masters Degree	2 years	
Doctorate Level	5 to 9 years	

Standards one to three are referred to as lower primary and attend school in the morning hours; while Standards four to eight make up the upper primary and have a full day programme.

The school year is divided into three terms as follows:

Term One – January to April

Term Two – May to August

Term Three – September to November

Schools normally break at the end of each term for up to one month. The school holidays start at the beginning of the last month of the term apart from November when they close at the end of the month. Changes are anticipated on the dates of the school year considering the disruptions of the Civic elections which were held in March when schools were in session.

Primary pupils study ten different subject areas. They spend the bulk of their day at school. Some of the students walk for over an hour or more. At home, they do chores and hopefully manage to find some time to study before it gets dark. Most families do not have electricity and may not even have a lantern or candle for their children to study by. Children said to have SEN do not have access to special transport. They, too, walk to school accompanied by their parents. Glewwe and Kremer (2006) assert that one out of every four households in the rural areas send their child to a school that is not within the proximity of the house. Rural areas are frequently characterized by low residential mobility (Glewwe and Kremer, 2006), agriculture is the main economic activity and there are limited infrastructural networks. Kenya has experienced a rapid expansion in the education sector since independence in 1963. In 2010 public and private institutions figures showed that there were:

- 38,523 Early Child Development Education (ECDE) institutions.
- 27,489 Primary Schools.
- 238 Teacher training colleges (combined for ECDE, primary and secondary).
- 818 Technical and Vocational Educational Institutions
- 32 Universities (Republic of Kenya, 2012).

2.1.8 Primary Education

The main goal is to provide access to quality education for all children of primary school-going age on an equitable basis. However, disparities are evident in regions, gender and resources (MoEST, 2005). Primary schools follow a common national curriculum set in 1985 under the (8-4-4) system, which means eight years in primary, four years in secondary and university. The curriculum is prepared by the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) in conjunction with the MoE and includes the following subjects; English, Kiswahili, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Art, Craft, Music and Physical Education. Agriculture, Business Education, Home Science and Religious Studies were added in the 1990s as practical subjects to augment the 8-4-4 system; this was said to be more practical than the 7-4-2-3 system (seven years in primary, four in secondary, 2 at Advanced level and 3 in university) which was criticized as too academic and which had been followed since independence. However, after a curriculum review (MoE, 2008) vocational subjects were removed between 2002 and 2005. This seems to revert to the same academic curriculum abandoned before the 8-4-4 system. The Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination is taken after eight years (MoEST, 2005) and it determines the entrance to secondary school.

The public primary schools benefit from free primary education (FPE) and inputs such as text books, trained teachers and funds for school infrastructure are provided by the government. The FPE led to an increase in the enrolment of public and private schools between 2003 and 2007. Whenever the government withdraws or reduces the primary education school fees, the enrolment rate increases (Omwami and Omwami, 2010; Somerset, 2007) and when there is fee paying, the drop-out rate or repetition figures rise. These occurrences are illustrated in Table 5 and figure 2 below. There is a lack of generally comprehensive up-to-date data on school enrolment of children said to have SEN as well as other typically developing children (MoEST, 2012, MoE, 2008; KESSP, 2005). The need for an efficient Education Planning and Management Information System (EMIS) to enhance the smooth flow of information to and from management and stakeholders at all levels is emphasised (KESSP, 2005).

The EMIS, electronic networking as well as use of e-systems of communication are restricted. This causes delays in decision making and follow-up actions since it implies that the post office is relied upon and the system is not always efficient (MoEST, 2012). Data on school enrolment, facilities, teachers and other school issues are sent to the district level for further processing before being sent to the MoE headquarters and neither speedy analysis nor timely dissemination is guaranteed (MoEST, 2012; KESSP, 2005). The MoEST (2012) projected that the total primary school enrolment will increase from 9 million (m) pupils in 2009 to 10 m pupils in 2012 and 11.5 m by 2015. On the other hand, enrolments in formal public primary schools grew from 5.9m in 2002 to 8.2m pupils in 2007 (MoE, 2008, p, viii).

2.1.9 Inception of Special Education

Education and vocational rehabilitation of persons with impairments was started by churches and other voluntary organisations (Abilla, 1988) without the involvement of the local community. The first schools for children with impairments were segregated and sometimes residential since not all villages had an ordinary school and formal education for young people with disabilities. Some parents were reluctant to part with their children since this was a different idea. This was the form of provision in the home countries of the colonial pioneers of special education and there were very few missionaries who were qualified special education teachers (Abilla, 1988). The church had the support of the colonial government and the village could not reject the directives. Therefore, evangelism coupled with other social benefits made the communities accept the establishment of ordinary and special schools. Teaching and training was done simultaneously. Several attempts have been made to evaluate the effectiveness of projects and programmes such as Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) in Kenya (Miles, 1996) and itinerant teaching service for children with visual impairment in Kenya and other African countries (Miles, 1996, McCall and Best, 1990). However, specific intervention measures which affected the individual child with SEN were ignored (Miles, 1996). Figure 2 shows the timeline of SNE from 1946 to 2003.

1946-1948: People with hearing and visual impairment, mental and physical handicap, were taken care of within the societies. Care centres were organised for wounded soldiers after World War Two. Faith based organisations established boarding schools.

1947: The Salvation Army started the first school for visually impaired in Nairobi.

1948: Two mentally impaired schools in Nairobi started by a voluntary organisation .

1958: Association of physically impaired formed: 7 physiotherapists and occupational therapists were treating over 30,000 cases in a year (UNESCO, 1974, p107) School for physically impaired opened in Nairobi. First clinic for the hearing impaired at King George VI hospital (now Kenyatta Hospital)

1959: School for hearing impaired started by private owners in Nairobi.

1961: Schools for visually impaired started by Salvation Army in Mombasa, Kisumu and Meru.

General curriculum was followed and the first child sat for CPE . Kenyan goverment (KG) paid teachers and boarding school maintenance.

1966: One year certificate training course for teachers for hearing impaired (sponsored byKenya Society for the Hearing Impaired , Commonwealth and Ministry of Education) as well as Diploma Course overseas.

1968: Jacaranda school for mentally impaired' formed after existing two schools merged. SENSES only taught here. Other schools taught Braille, simple Art, Crafts and Domestic Science and equipment available

1969: Kenya Society for the mentally 'handicapped' , Child Welfare Society and Friends of the handicapped children were formed.

1970: International Labour Organisation (ILO) - Started a Vocational and Rehabilitation Training Programme (Technical Skills)

1972: Siriba Teachers' College started course with 12 students

1974: 600 out of 10,000 hearing impaired learners received signing instructions. Parents did not believe that visually impaired would learn and unwilling to send them to school.

Teachers, local adminstrators and therapists made visits to the homes to convince them to send children to school (No exhaustive identification system).

1980: Draft SNE Policy

1986: Ministry of Home Affairs responsible for children with emotional, psychological and sociological problems plus malnourished and sometimes physically and mentally impaired. Ministry of Education responsible for educational needs. Homes established for children sponsored by Red Cross. Ministry of Health: immunisation, health services and disease awareness. Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) set up. Sponsorship -Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA). Kenya Society for hearing impaired started opening more centres.

1988: SNE inspectors at Ministry level.

1990: Funding clubs :Lion's Club and others. School attendance in special schools continued and special units set up. Integration.

2003: Free primary education. (Most of what happened after 2003 represents the bulk of this study.

Figure 2: Special Needs Education Timeline
Prepared by author (*Adapted from: (Stubbs, 2008, Abilla, 1988, UNESCO, 1974), Republic of Kenya (1964, 1965b, 1970, 1979, 1994, 1999)*)

2.1.10   Goals of Special Education

The guiding philosophy of education in Kenya is the concern that every Kenyan has an inalienable right to education regardless of their economic status to basic education (from ECDE to Secondary school) (Republic of Kenya 1999, p135). The specific goals include:

- Provision of skills and attitudes aimed at identification, assessment and provision of early intervention for correction and rehabilitation of children said to have SEN.
- Promotion of integration of the 'handicapped' in formal education training.
- Promotion of awareness in the needs of the 'disabled' and the methods of alleviating the effects of various disabilities.
- Promotion of measures to prevent impairments in order to limit incidences of disabilities.
- Development of appropriate vocational instructional material.
- Capacity building of teachers and their skills and competencies.
- Development and production of training modules and reference materials
- Training of education officers and training of trainers
- Induction and creation of awareness among field officers, parents and communities.

2.1.11   Special Needs Education Expansion

Access to education for pupils with SEN is generally low while children with learning difficulties are not mentioned. The question is how children with other learning difficulties other than the physical and sensory impairments access learning. One of the aims of this study is to explore what strategies teachers apply to meet the diverse needs of children with SEN in the classrooms. From the data provided below it shows that the Special Education sector is slowly expanding. The vision of the Ministry of Education (MoE) is to build a society in which all persons regardless of their disabilities and special needs receive education to realise their full potential.   The number of children said to have SEN was reported to have '*risen from 22,000 in 1999, 26,885 in 2003, 29,228 in 2007 and*

45,000 in 2008' (MoE 2009 p 14). Further details on the prevalence of special education in Kenya, is further explained under section 3.1.4. The problem of integrating students with special needs does not seem to have been adequately addressed at primary, post secondary and university level. There is a need to provide appropriate educational facilities, materials, equipment, trained teachers, professional and support staff to address the diversities in children said to have SEN at all levels (ROK, 2012).

It is estimated that three quarters of pupils with SEN are in special schools while only a quarter are in special units within mainstream schools (Republic of Kenya, 2012). Grants are provided to each special education unit to facilitate the procurement of the necessary teaching, learning materials and equipment. Children with physical impairments get KES 1,020 to 2,000 (Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA, 2012; MoE, 2007). Children with learning difficulties seem not to benefit from the grant. One of the aims of this study is to establish what strategies teachers use to meet the needs of children said to have SEN. The government spends 0.2 percent of the education budget on special education (MoE, 2008) and this is associated with the lack of appropriate infrastructure, facilities and equipment which further exacerbates the challenges in the provision of special education.

2.1.11.1 The Term 'Children said to have Special Educational Needs'

Kenya uses the term children with special needs and disabilities (with no distinction to include those with learning disabilities but rather (those requiring special education). The idea of 'additional needs' does not appear obvious. Norwich and Nash (2011) stresses that this would probably imply that disabilities are an extension to special educational needs. I used this term to include a broad range of children who are likely to be excluded from or marginalised within the education systems due to the apparent difficulties. It is vital to recognise that all over the world there is a debate of whether or not children with special needs can more effectively benefit from separate, specialized provisions of different kinds. The Western Countries have reformed schools in ways that extend their capacity to respond to diversity (Ainscow and Haile-Georgis, 1998). Following the 1990

World Conference on Education for All: - Meeting Basic Needs, exclusion has dominated the political agenda in many countries. This implies that the focus on the range of children likely to be excluded from or marginalised within education systems due to their apparent difficulties. This broad range may include:

- Children already enrolled but for a wide range of reasons do not achieve adequately.

- Children not enrolled in schools but are like to participate if schools respond more flexibly to their needs.

- Children with more severe sensory and physical impairments and who may need additional support.

All these children may be seen as having SEN and this makes it vital to consider policies and practices in relation to the entire educational arrangements within any given context. In this study, my aim was to engage with the teachers, identify and understand about SEN practices and policies in Kenya. There are different ways of categorising children said to have SEN in multiple countries. Taking this into account and the considerable difficulties such as lack of adequate data and research to facilitate definition of the total number of children who receive special forms of education it was important to explore how teachers understand SEN. In the developing countries, there are considerable concerns about poor quality of teaching and systems of SEN Levin and Lockheed (1993). These realities exist despite the ratification of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

For Kenya to develop more effective educational provisions, responsibilities for these children and to reflect on what encouraged the country to ratify the Salamanca Statement of Then the country may need to provide feasible and effective access to education for all groups of children and this definition may be considered to expose teachers' attitudes, beliefs about children said to have SEN and to gain insights into the language used by teachers. For example the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) broader concept of SEN covers: sensory and physical impairments, disadvantages arising from socio-economic and cultural factors including English as a second language,

(EAL), biological and environmental difficulties where causations are questionable. The US system covers additional needs based on legislative titles covering wider SEN concept like Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). This places what is done in England into a UK and international context.

Therefore identifying educationally relevant disabilities and difficulties involves finding a balance between the structures and practices which facilitate responding to increasing diversity in the school population (Czwed, 2007). In reforming the system and definition of terms it is important to be aware of balances in identifying educationally relevant disabilities and difficulties in order to achieve education for all by including those with disabilities and special needs. Hence the use of the term children said to have SEN or children with SEN. However, a country may need to have access arrangements to allow considerable numbers of students with SEN to access appropriate programmes of study and complete them successfully. It is not clear what SEN practices are in place in Kenya, hence the purpose of this study - in order to explore how teachers understand SEN the views of teachers about SEN in public primary schools.

2.1.12 Importance of passing examinations

The score in the Kenya Certificate Primary Examination (KCPE) determines the quality of secondary school a child can attend. The highest score gains a place in the most prestigious national school. The 18 special secondary schools tend to give an indication that few pupils with SEN progress to secondary schools. Children said to have SEN do the same examinations and are allowed 30 minutes extra time regardless of their diverse needs (Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC, 2007). Grade repetition as averred by Buchmann (2001), Abagi and Odipo (1997) and Sifuna (2003) is a popular strategy for increasing one's chances of continuing to secondary schooling. In the absence of relative data for examination results for children said to have SEN, it is difficult to tell the number of children said to have SEN that repeat classes. The question is still how

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teachers focus on day-to-day provision while maintaining the individual needs of pupils experiencing SEN.

The system of education emphasises academic performance and examinations and according to the MoE (2008) poses challenges to the integration of children said to have SEN especially when a lack of reliable data constrains the effective delivery and planning of special education. The question is whether children said to have SEN access the curriculum and whether they get an opportunity to be tested on a curriculum they have had an opportunity to learn. Hence the objective of this study is to explore how teachers view SEN under such constraints.

2.1.13 History of Education in Kenya

2.1.13.1 Traditional/Indigenous Education

Before the introduction of formal education, the traditional Kenyan system was in place where the communities informally taught values. It was practical and relevant to the needs of society (Woolman, 2001). Moral values were taught to children through folktales, legends, myths, riddles and proverbs. They were taught by elders as well as through observation and participation (Emenyonu, 2004; Woolman, 2001). Practical skills such as farming, cooking, fetching firewood and water were taught to girls by example under the guidance of their grandmother, mothers, aunts and elder sisters. Traditionally women were brought up to value three main roles (Mutua and Elhoweris, 2002) those of wife, mother and cultivator. Children were considered as hands to help in fields and at home and the more children in a family the better. Depending on the life skills necessary for survival in different communities (Emenyonu, 2004; Woolman, 2001; Eshiwani, 1993) boys learned to farm, hunt, herd or fish. Education was integrated into the life experience of the family and community. As Abosi (2000), Kisanji, (1995) and Onwuegbu, (1988) state; integration and normalization may be considered as old concepts in Africa.

2.1.13.2 Attitudes towards persons with disabilities

In Kenyan societies, parents expect their children to provide for and support them during old age. So when a parent has a child with disabilities, they consider themselves as having an uncertain future (Opini, 2011; Gona et al., 2010; Hartley et al., 2009). Disability is understood in the context of communities. For example, a person may be considered disabled if they must depend on others for assistance to fulfil the roles expected by their culture (Ingstad and Grunt, 2007). For the Maasai (one of the communities that have continued to preserve their traditional culture) a person who is unable to walk would be disadvantaged in such a nomadic culture (Talle, 1995). Their life course may change after receiving education, enabling them to contribute to the family in a different manner (Opini, 2010; Ingstad and Grunt, 2007) so their life is likely to be outside the expectations of the society. The Maasai definition of being human is pegged to the ability to live among other people. So Maasai people with disabilities are valued as part of the community. They contribute to the community by performing gender appropriate tasks as necessary (Ingstad and Grunt, 2007; Talle, 1995).

However, the majority of persons with disabilities in Kenya are said to be economically dependent on their families, relatives and friends while others beg in the streets in order to survive (Wamocho, Karugu and Nwoye, 2008). This may also be seen in the light of government records as in the Kenya Development Plan (1994 – 1996) where 300,000 persons with disabilities were discriminated against in the job market (Opini, 2010) and young adults in vocational institutions continued to be exposed to outdated technical programmes (Republic of Kenya, 1999). Parents expect a higher number of boys to attend school than girls and boys are encouraged to be independent (Mutua and Elhoweris, 2002). Girls who have severe hearing impairment are married off as a sign of financial security (Mutua and Elhoweris, 2002). Generally, parents in Kenya are interested in their children doing well in education. However, a multi-sited field study conducted in 10 districts over 2005 and 2006 (Ingstad and Grunt, 2007) on 'The Lives of People with Disabilities in Kenya', where 91 interviews were conducted in homesteads with children said to have SEN, shed light on the access to education

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of children said to have SEN. Ingstad and Grunt's (2007) findings stated that parents with children said to have SEN expressed that having the child in school is more expensive than typically developing (TD) children, so they had to make priorities among the children and often sent the TD children to school insead of those with SEN.

Clearly, the kind and level of services that are developed at any time depend on a society's attitude towards people with disabilities (Wamochu, Karugu and Nwoye, 2008; Ingstad and Grunt, 2007; Mutua and Elhoweris, 2002). Socio-political, cultural changes, improvements in different aspects like health services, general increase in level of education as well as individual rights, technological advances, global concepts among other factors (Opini, 2010; Grech, 2009) affect attitudes over time. In all societies, some people stand out as being more powerful than others (Goffman, 1963) and they inflict their norms, values and beliefs on those with lesser power. The more powerful, like the rich and those in high positions set standards to be followed by those with lesser power and establish the category of each member within a particular setup (Opini, 2010; Ndururumo, 2001). The question still remains how teachers in public primary schools view SEN in the face of such milieu.

2.1.14 Missionaries and Formal Education

The foundation for formal education was laid by the missionaries. They introduced reading to spread Christianity and taught practical subjects like Carpentry and Gardening (Alyw and Schech, 2004). Schooling was restricted to basic literacy and vocational skills. The philosophical foundation for British educational policy in Kenya in the 1920's was twofold: to create a small semi-literate indigenous population of Christians and to educate Africans through a village-oriented agriculture and skill-based curriculum. Governments in British colonies did not develop comprehensive educational policies (Yamada, 2008).

The Fraser Report (1909) proposed a separate education system for the Whites. Ultimately, the government set up their own schools thus promoting the colonial segregation policy for the Europeans, Asians and Africans (Emenyonu, 2004).

The need for agricultural and vocational education was stressed by the Phelps-Stokes Commission in 1924 which criticised the African educational system as too literal and impractical for the realities of peasant-based African societies (Oketch and Rolleston, 2007; Natsoulas, 1998). According to Somerset (2007) only a few Africans managed to gain access to primary education and they could not go beyond four years of education because of the Grade IV Common Entrance Examinations. People who managed to achieve secondary education were rewarded with civil service jobs (Oketch and Rolleston, 2007) and were highly respected and this set them apart from the rest of the population. Meanwhile, pupils with SEN continued to be educated in special schools (Abilla, 1988).

Africans were required to sit for '*the highly-competitive Common Entrance Examination (CEE) after four years in school*', instead of seven like the Whites and Asians (Somerset, 2009, p234). Somerset explains that only 45,000 out of 135,292 (33.5%) African CEE candidates qualified to enter Grade 5 in 1960. The system continued up to 1963. After independence, the focus changed to wider access to educational opportunities for the African majority, (Somerset, 2009). Alyw and Schech (2004) aver that the expenditure per pupil was more than five times higher for Europeans than for Africans as shown in Table 3, while Table 4 shows the number of primary schools and pupils from 1961 to 1963.

Table 3: Education Expenditure by Race - 1930

Race	Pupils in state and state-aided schools	Total expenditure in US Dollars	Expenditure per pupil in US dollars
African	6,948	232,293	33.4
Asian	1,900	70,329	37.0
European	776	140,041	180.5
Total	9,624	442,663	45.9

Source: (Alwy and Schech, 2004 pg, 270)

Table 4: Number of schools and pupils: 1961 - 1963

Year	Primary Schools	No. of Pupils
1961	7,725	870,448
1962	6,198	935,766,
1963	6,058	891,553

Source: (Eshiwani, 1993)

A large majority of children of school-going age were not in school and a small number had passed through the system. This is evidenced by the shortage of educated and trained local manpower (Alwy and Schech, 2004) that was important and highly needed for economic and social development of the new nation. In 1948, the Beecher Report visualized the importance of missions as influential in the regular provision of both primary and secondary education to African children. It recognised that the African education system was uncoordinated and unplanned. This, as posited by Yamada (2008) and Oketch and Rolleston (2007), clearly marked the essence of establishing clear structures and standards of educational practice.   The Beecher Report recommended the importance of 'moral' Christian teaching in schools in order to create morally sound, economically valuable citizens at all levels of African society. Literacy-based education was ridiculed for increasing the aspirations of Africans to achieve the same status as Europeans and instilling contempt for African culture (Yamada, 2008). The Africans critically perceived this report as a bias to the independent schools that had developed as a reaction towards the missionaries in 1920 (Natsoulas, 1998).

Natsoulas (1998) also elucidates that the situation deteriorated, attracting the attention of a wide range of organisations with an international and interdenominational appeal to support the rehabilitation of the dependants of detainees.   Scarcity of resources and colonial administration inefficiencies encumbered the church (Stuart, 2008) and mission contributions for rehabilitation and this rendered the venture unsuccessful. The relations between Africans and Europeans in Kenya worsened as nationalist agitation grew and civil servants and

mission officials focussed their efforts on government policies about race relations. Several Africans who experienced colonial education account that it undermined traditional societies by introducing an individualistic Eurocentric value system (Ingstad and Grunt, 2007; Natsoulas, 1998; Eshiwani, 1993) that was strange to African communal traditions and isolated students from their local communities.

The first services for people with disabilities date back to 1946 when different missionaries like the Salvation Army Church established a rehabilitation programme for blind men (Abilla, 1988) and other people who had been maimed or wounded in the Second World War. Later this programme was changed into the first school for blind children in Kenya, the Salvation Army High School. The Catholic, Presbyterian, Anglican and Methodist churches established special institutions for visual, hearing and physical disabilities. Other services were provided over time (Stuart, 2008; Abilla, 1988) by organisations such as the Kenya Societies for the Blind, Mentally Handicapped and for Deaf children including the Association for the Physically Disabled of Kenya respectively. To a great extent, most of the special education developments were, up to the 1970s, facilitated by volunteers and private organisations as well as the missionaries. The government provided the general curriculum and sponsored training for teachers for children with hearing impairments in the 1960s', while liaising with the International Labour Organisation on Vocational and Rehabilitation Training Programmes in the 1970s'.

It was not until the 1980s' that the first draft for SNE policy was prepared. The government relied on circulars, papers and commissions of education (these reports will be discussed in section 2.1.15 and in more detail in section two of chapter three). The Kenya Institute of Special Needs (KISE) was set up in 1986 under the sponsorship of the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA). The government focussed on the expansion of primary and secondary education from the 1960s' through to the 1980s' with a few development programmes designed for special education (Daun, 2000; Abilla, 1988) until after 1990. However, a decline due to economic recession (Oketch

and Rolleston, 2007, Somerset, 2007; Sifuna, 2007; Daun, 2000) structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) and other economic factors contributed to the educational decline in the same sector.

2.1.15 Post Independence Educational Expansion

After independence in 1963, African governments invested heavily in educational expansion and diversification. The education policies focused on national development which included the goals of Africanisation, national unity and economic growth (Woolman, 2001). Kenya declared education as one of the priorities of national development and emphasis was on secondary and tertiary education (Oketch and Rolleston, 2007; Eshiwani, 1993). The 'Harambee' initiative of educational development led to large regional disparities in communities and regions (Buchmann, 2001) thriving especially in the Central, Western and Nyanza provinces where an independent school movement during the colonial period had been better established than in other areas such as the Coast, North Eastern and Rift Valley provinces.

The occupational roles of Africans changed and education had a big role to play in the socio-economic development and change in the new system that was committed to offering equal opportunities and social justice for all its citizens, and eradicating poverty, ignorance and disease (Oketch and Rolleston, 2007; Eshiwani, 1993). This led to the adoption of Sessional paper No. 10 of 1965: 'African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya' which is referred to as an outline to the country's development strategy to integrate the ideals of African socialism policy. This is aligned with the recommendations of the Kenya Education Commission- Ominde Commission Report (Republic of Kenya, 1964) which eliminated the discrimination among the Whites, Asians and Africans. This commission envisaged the ultimate achievement of Universal Free Primary Education (UPE). It also recommended the establishment of special schools for children with disabilities.

The first National Development Plan: 1964-1969, Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 cited education as instrumental to the country's development which was to be regarded as;

> '*the principal means of relieving the shortage of skilled manpower and equalizing economic opportunities among all citizens*'(Republic of Kenya, 1964, p.305)

Other education commission reports which made recommendations in relation to special education included: The National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (NCEOP), Gachathi Report (1976) recommendations which focused on early co-ordination of intervention and assessment of children said to have SEN, creation of public awareness on causes of disabilities in order to promote preventive measures and research on the nature and extent of impairments and provision. Early Childhood programs were stressed as an important part of special schools and development of policy for integrating learners with special needs. This resulted in the establishment of the National Centre for Early Childhood Education (NACECE).

The four post-independence governments prioritized UPE as a means of attaining the global target for EFA (Abagi, 1997). The election of President Uhuru Kenyatta (March, 2013) coincides with the revised Constitution (2010) which calls for radical changes in the government Ministries. Most of the documents signifying the reforms are still in the draft stages, but where final documents are accessible they will be referred to.

2.1.16 Synopsis of the attempts at Universal Primary Education (UPE)

The ruling party's (Kenya African National Union (KANU) manifestos of 1963 and 1969 declared the government's commitment to providing seven years of free primary education (Nungu, 2010; Somerset, 2009; Oketch and Rolleston, 2007; Sifuna, 2007; Eshiwani, 1993). The government considered education as key to social and economic development while formal schooling was perceived as a means to social mobility and quality of life which contributed to the rapid expansion of educational system at all levels (Buchmann, 2001; Bogonko, 1992; Eshiwani, 1993). It was expected that education would result in the creation of

values, attitudes, creativity, emotional and physical quality of life (Keriga and Bujra, 2009); '*health, child care and reduced fertility rates among other things*' were also stressed (Sifuna, 2007, p691). By 1963, there were less than 900,000 children attending primary school but by 1992 the number increased to 5.53million children (Republic of Kenya, 1993).

In 1964, Grade IV examination was discontinued and the 7 year primary education was fully implemented in 1966; as stated by Somerset (2007; Sifuna, 2007; Bogonko, 1992), the number of children proceeding to the Kenya Primary Education Certificate examination (KPE) increased from 62,000 in 1964 to 133,000 in 1966. The integration of racial schools into one national education system and removal of the Grade IV examination (Somerset, 2007; Oketch and Rolleston, 2007; Sifuna, 2007; Eshiwani, 1993; Bogonko, 1992) led to improvements in access to primary education for Africans who had been excluded during the colonial period. Conversely, school fees remained a barrier restricting access for the majority who could not afford them while opened access to emerging African political elites who could afford the fees in the well-equipped schools formerly owned by the Europeans (Somerset, 2007; Oketch and Rolleston, 2007; Buchmann, 2001). Figure 3 shows the trend of the age 6 population estimate and enrolment from 1960-2005.
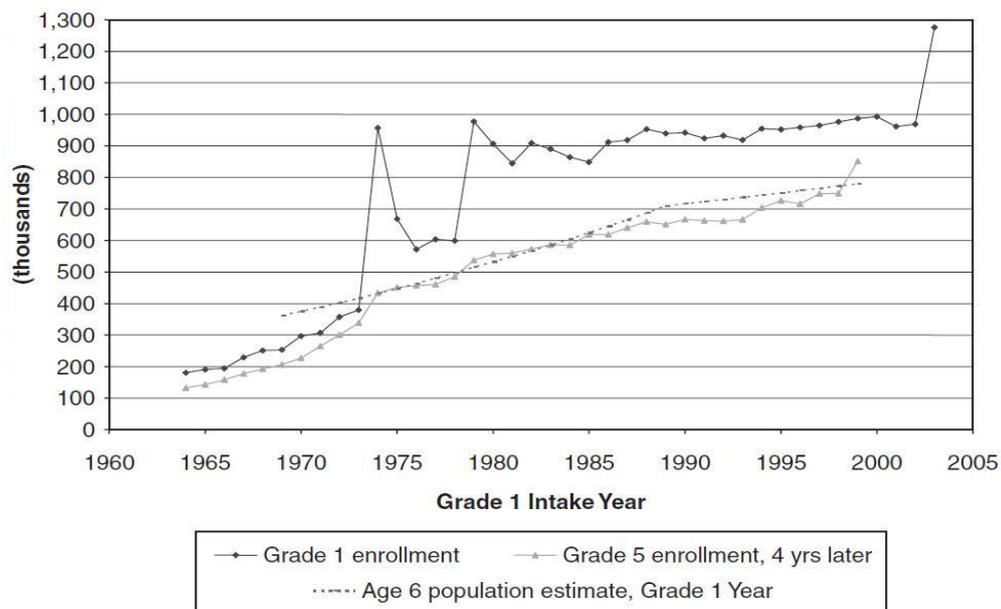
Figure 3 Age 6 Population Estimate & Enrolment 1960-2005
(Source: Adapted from Somerset, 2007)

During the early 1960's most special education schools were still run by missionaries, while the government engaged in the training of teachers (figure 2) for the hearing impaired as well as the use of Braille for the visually impaired. The formation of associations was initiated by private organisations, for example The Kenya Society for the mentally, 'handicapped' accompanied by the opening of the only school for such children (Jacaranda Special School in Nairobi).

In 1971 a second presidential decree discontinued tuition fees for the most geographically disadvantaged areas mainly in the North-Eastern Province, and parts of the Rift Valley and Coast provinces (Nungu, 2010; Sifuna, 2000). By 1973 a further decree discontinued tuition fees in all regions for Standards one to four with a uniform fee of KES60 (UK£0.442pence) for Standards five to seven pupils (Somerset 2009, Oketch and Rolleston, 2007). This decree was claimed to have brought the country close to achieving universal primary education (UPE) (Somerset, 2007; Sifuna, 2005). The enrolment in class one increased from 380,000 pupils to 950,000 pupils. Table 5 below shows the relationship between Standard one (1) intake and fees or non fee paying education systems from 1974-2003. Muthwii (2004) explains that these measures were expected to have increased enrolment despite the government's failure to closely scrutinise the

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financial and logistical implications of these policies (Omwami, 2010). Although school fees had been discontinued (King, 2007; Somerset, 2007; Oketch and Rolleston, 2007) primary schools had to use a building levy since no measures had been put in place to replace the lost revenue.

The building levy expenses were charged to parents. In most cases, the levy turned out to be higher than the school fees charged. Enrolments in most districts fell back to their original levels after the introduction of the building levy (Somerset, 2007). In the 1970-1974 Development Plan the government pledged to support 50 schools per year by providing trained teachers, materials and inspectorate personnel. The government failed to fulfil this promise (Buchmann, 2001). By 1974, government spending on education was 34.5% of recurrent expenditure (Republic of Kenya, 1988), an indication that other forms of aid would be needed to support the education system. The Kenyan government also reacted to the educational developments initiated by the local communities and rewarded additional funds to well established ones. This implied unequal access of education for children from poor communities.

The Kenyan government may also be criticised for enhancing its own legacy and failing to provide equal education opportunities to all children (Abilla, 1988). Apparently the recommendations of the Gachathi Report (1976) which partly emphasised the creation of public awareness on causes of disabilities did not seem to have any effect on the attitudes of parents on children with SEN. Parents did not seem to believe that visually impaired children would learn and they were reluctant to take them to school. This initial post independence era failed to fully control the expansion of educational demand and reflects the significance of enforcing education policies in line with the future needs of the country (Psacharopoulus and Patrinos (2004). On the other hand, the government had started partnerships with organisations like the International Labour Office (ILO) for the provision of vocational and rehabilitation training in technical skills (Miles, 1996). There were also attempts to initiate home visits by teachers, mostly for the visually impaired children (mobile teachers) (McCall and Best, 1990; Economic growth in the late 1960s and 1970s was less positive (Samoff;

2009; Somerset, 2007; Sifuna, 2005; Daun, 2000) and the government could not successfully sustain a policy of universal and free primary education. As a result of the economic decline there were fewer funds available for education and a shift of costs occurred from public authorities to parents and local communities, eventually worsening educational quality.

By 1978, universal primary education (UPE) had not been achieved but the enrolment rate had grown from less than 50% in 1963 (891,553 to more than 85% by 1978 (Republic of Kenya Development Plan 1979-1983). Primary education was recognised as the foundation of economic and national development.

> '*The primary stage of education is the most important for any child since it is here that basic knowledge is provided to the child and foundations for an economically productive and satisfying life are laid*' (Republic of Kenya, 1979, p154).

Primary level enrolment increased by 23.3% between 1964 and 1968 from 980,849 to 1,209,680 pupils. By 1983, 4.3 million pupils were enrolled, nearly 93% of school-age pupils. This is an increase from 60% in 1963. The highest rates of growth were between 1970 and 1974 after the abolition of school fees which was initially done in semi-arid areas and for needy cases in the country and for the first four years in 1974 throughout the country (Somerset, 2007; Buchmann, 2001; Bogonko, 1992. The following table shows the enrolment for Standard one which continued to rise but fell in the years when fees were required.

Table 5: Summary of impact of free and fee paying primary education systems from 1974-2003

Year	Free	Fees paying	Comments
1974	Class1-4	Class 5-8	Class One (1) enrolment increased from 380,000 to 950,000 pupils. (Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) rose from 93 – 221%).
1975 - 1978	Class 1- 5	6-8	118,000 (19.5%) entrants to Class One were more than 8 years old. Drop-out rates increased and Grade 5 lost nearly 55% of original number since fees had to be paid in the subsequent years. Building levy - £60 (Kshs600) was also a hindrance to enrolment.
1979	Class 1-8	7-8	Grade 1 enrolment rose to 977,000 (63%) over 1978. Entrants more than 8 years – 274,000 (28%). Additional facilities required for schools. Local communities expected to fund through self-help activities 'Harambee' – Swahili word) meaning (pulling together). Rise in cost of building class using permanent materials (£2437) Prolonged pupils' absences, followed by dropping out when parents could not afford Survivors to Grade 8 – 400,000 Drop out between Grade 1 and 2 (20%)
1980 - 1984	Cost Sharing	Cost Sharing	1983 Grade 5 drop out to 45% 8-4-4 system parents had to support the schools.
1985 - 2003	Cost Sharing	Cost Sharing	8-4-4 Stagnation in enrolment. GER – dropped from 99% in 1984 to 87% in 1999.
2003	FPE	FPE	Grade 1 enrolment – 0.969m from 2002 (35% increase)

Adapted from (Somerset, 2009)

In 1984, the Mackay Report (1981) was initiated and recommended changing from a 7-4-2-3 system of education. The former system was seen as too

academic, elitist, and theoretical, while the new system, the 8-4-4 system which started in 1985, placed more emphasis on vocational subjects in the final years of primary education and throughout secondary school (Nungu, 2010; Somerset, 2006; Sifuna, 2000). The more practical and vocational subjects were considered as a means to:

> '*Instil realistic attitudes and aspirations regarding employment in both parents and school leavers* (Republic of Kenya, 1989 p212).

Although the Kenyan government had initiated vocational and rehabilitation training, the enrolment of children said to have SEN is questionable since at this time the government was dealing with other problems like malnourished children, immunisation, provision of health services and funding for children said to have SEN. Furthermore, different ministries (Ministry of Home Affairs, Health and Education) were dealing with children said to have SEN (figure 2) and there was no specific policy on special education until 1980 when a draft was prepared (Abilla, 1988) with the first policy being launched in 2009. The government, as explained in Chapter three was relying on circulars. It started paying more attention to SEN by establishing KISE in 1986 for the training of teachers. The Kamunge Report (1988) recommended the appointment of special education inspectors at district level. This would enhance liaison between the village heads (Chiefs and district officials) on the education of children said to have SEN.

Although President Daniel Arap Toroitich Moi has been criticised for enacting policies that were politically popular but of questionable value for long term national development (Muthwii, 2004; Amutabi, 2003), some of the policies signified greater opportunities for all Kenyan children— not least the increased enrolment rates in all sectors of education. Vocational subjects increased costs of schooling, cost of employing new teachers, equipping workshops, wider subjects and examinations in order to compete for higher and formal employment. Access to primary education in the mid 1980s and into the 1990s did not expand notably. This was due to the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) initiated by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF); (MoE, 2007; Somerset, 2007; Oketch and Rolleston, 2007; Sifuna, 2005).

After Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) policies the role of the state was reduced and that of the market highlighted in determining economic activities and policies (Oketch et al, 2010). As a consequence, cost sharing was introduced and parents had to carry the burden of educating their children. Enrolment declined and only started to improve after 2003 when the FPE was announced (Samoff, 2007; Oketch and Rolleston, 2007). One of the consequences of cost sharing has been a decline in school attendance and enrolment, since not all parents could afford to cover the full costs of their children's education (Oketch et al., 2010; Oketch and Rolleston, 2007; Sifuna, 2007). These costs included uniforms, textbooks and other instructional material. Also, the parents were to contribute to school construction and maintenance costs.

Furthermore, the inadequate provision of complementary inputs like textbooks meant that the effectiveness of teachers in delivering quality education was reduced significantly (Vos et al., 2004). Hence the objective of this study is to explore how teachers view SEN while ensuring equal opportunities for children said to have SEN under the given circumstances. With a view to establishing a more democratic political system, President Mwai Kibaki declared free primary education in 2003. The commitment by government to continue free primary education saw 1.5 million additional children enrolling in primary schools between January 2003 and June 2004 (MoEST, 2004). Nevertheless, teacher shortage and inadequate facilities continued to hinder the initiative (King, 2007; Somerset, 2007; Sifuna, 2007). Moreover, problems stemming from poverty like families' inability to provide necessities such as uniforms, have kept many children away from school to date (Oketch and Rolleston, 2007).

2.1.17 Kenya Institute of Special Needs Education (KISE)

Teachers achieve diploma qualifications, certificates and distance-learning courses in Special Needs Education. The Diploma course runs for two years on a full-time residential basis and three years through distance learning. The certificate course runs as a three month residential in-service course and one year for distance learning. The Diploma in Special Education covers: Hearing visual, physical and intellectual impairment. A Diploma course in Audiology is offered

at the University of Nairobi. From 1986 to 2003 – 741 Diploma teachers were trained, 3,124 teachers at Certificate level and 5,700 had enrolled for distance learning programmes.   Degree and Postgraduate courses are offered at Kenyatta, Moi, Maseno and Methodist universities. However, the number of teachers graduating from these universities has not been accessible.

2.1.18 Primary Teachers' Training

The total number of primary school teachers is recorded as 192,306. The staffing norm is one teacher per class.   There are 33 public primary teacher training colleges (PTTCs) and 3 Diploma teacher training colleges. The course is run on a two-year residential basis.   The public colleges also provide a three-year in-service up-grading programme, both residential and distance learning, catering for already serving teachers. The Teacher Pupil Ratio (TPR) shown below (2.1.19.3) confirms that there is an acute shortage of teachers (Ng'ang'a, 2010).

2.1.18.1 Teachers' Qualifications

 The number of SNE teachers graduating from the universities or where they teach was not accessible in the course of this study. Itinerant assessment teachers are also trained at KISE.   They are qualified teachers with a Diploma in Special Needs Education and they have additional training in the education of children with visual impairment.   They are responsible to the Coordinating Itinerant Teacher or Educational Assessment and Resource Centre (EARC) coordinator. Educational Assessment and Resource Centres are based in each district to ensure early identification, assessment, intervention and placement of learners with special needs and disabilities. Special needs teachers deal with the assessment of children said to have SEN. According to the EFA (2000) Country Report over 80,000 children had been accessed while only 23,940 had been placed in educational programmes.   This figure is different from the one provided from the Ministry of Education. The following table shows teachers' qualifications.

Table 6: Primary School Teachers' Qualifications

Qualification	Male	Female	Total
Trained			
Graduates	620	463	1,083
Approved	23,692	19,730	43,422
SI/Diploma	7,209	7,437	14,646
P1	55,897	43,193	99,090
P2	6,949	5,181	12,130
P3	827	977	1,804
TOTAL	95,194	76,981	172,175
Untrained			
Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E.)	359	122	481
Kenya Junior Secondary Education (K.J.S.E) an examination taken after two years in secondary education)	45	22	67
Certificate of Primary Education (C.P.E)/others	270	160	430
TOTAL	674	304	978
GRAND TOTAL	95,868	77,285	173,153

Adapted from (MoE, 2007)

The teachers on study leave and those performing no teaching duties are not included (hence the difference in figures: 192,306 quoted under 2.1.18 above). However, there have been variances in the data provided from different Ministry of Education sources.   Teachers' grading depends on length of time, self development, dedication, continuing service, qualifications and whether there is any budget allocation from the government for further training or promotion. Teachers normally take their own initiative to enhance the chances for promotion. However, the criterion appears subjective and does not seem to be standardised. P1 stands for Primary Certificate 1 and is awarded to the newly qualified teachers. So, P1 teachers may progress up to graduate level.   The Approved teachers are

also promoted on merit; while SI are diploma certificate holders (MOEST, Sessional Paper No. 1, 2005, p 73).

The untrained 'A' level teachers may be promoted to P1 after 6 years of continued service and have at least one principal pass. In 1997, the Teachers Service Commission was only allowed to recruit teachers in order to replace those exiting through natural attrition. This was at a time of economic crises and at a time when the World Bank had initiated Structural Adjustments and had withdrawn education grants (MoEST, Sessional Paper No. 1, 2005). One of the aims of this study is to explore what SNE training is accessible to teachers to ensure that they have skills to provide relevant and supportive services to all children said to have SEN.

2.1.19 Indicators of the quality of school inputs

The national benchmark for the selected indicators of the quality of school inputs include: basic learning materials - exercise book, pencil, pen and ruler (100%); sole use of Mathematics textbooks - (100%) at teacher pupil ratio (TPR) of 1:40; and an average class-size of 1:45 in a class of standard six pupils (Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ, 2010, MoEST, 2005). The results are from an international study (Hungi and Thuku, 2010) which sought to examine the quality of education provided in primary schools in Kenya and 14 other African school systems. This study collected data from 4,436 Standard 6 pupils in 193 primary schools in all eight provinces in Kenya and showed the status of the four basic indicators.

2.1.19.1 Basic Learning Materials

The basic learning material indicator showed that 78% of Standard 6 pupils had at least an exercise book, pencil or pen and ruler (SACMEQ, 2010). One in every five (22%) pupils did not have all the three basic learning items considered necessary for effective participation in classroom activities. There were no large variations among provinces. However, Rift Valley and Eastern provinces results had the lowest percentages of 73% and 77% respectively, while there were little variations between pupils in rural schools (79%) and Urban schools (77%).

2.1.19.2 Mathematics Text Books

Urban schools had the largest percentage of pupils with sole use of Mathematics textbooks (47%) but no large variations were recorded among other provinces. However, Western (7%) and Rift Valley (9%) percentages were significantly lower than in other provinces. In rural schools (15%) the textbook situation was as bad as in other municipal schools (16%). The textbook situation in public schools (14%) was worse compared to that of private schools (29%). Allegations of corruption in the provision of textbooks are widespread in Kenya (SACMEQ, 2010). It was reported that funds donated by the Department for International Development (DFID) for the purchase of textbooks for each primary school child failed to serve the purpose (Transparency International, 2010; SACMEQ, 2010).

2.1.19.3 Teacher Pupil Ratio (TPR)

The TPR increased from 1:38 in 2003 to 1:42 in 2007 (Ministry of Education, 2007 p 55). The mean TPR in primary schools was 33 in 2000. The country's set benchmark ratio is 1:40, but it had risen to 1:42 pupils in 2007. Two provinces (Central and Eastern) had mean values within the national benchmark while North Eastern (1:59) and Coast (1:53) had the worst ratios. Generally, there was no marked difference between the TPR for schools located in urban and those in rural areas (Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality, SACMEQ, 2011; MoEST, 2005). However, the First-Medium Term Plan (2008-2012) of the Kenya Vision 2030 estimates that currently there is a shortage of 42,000 teachers in primary schools (Republic of Kenya, 2012).

2.1.19.4 Class-Size

The mean number of Standard 6 pupils had risen from 37 in 2000 to 45 in 2007. The number was comparable to the SACMEQ mean of 46 pupils per class. In the Coast, Nairobi and Western provinces the numbers per class exceeded the national benchmark by five to seven pupils while other provinces were within the benchmark figure. The numbers in rural schools are slightly lower than those in urban and municipal schools because people move from the rural areas to seek employment in major towns. Benett (2006) reflects on the fact thatparents'

aspirations, teaching styles, aspects of practice, management, expenses and welfare of teachers as well as pupils when setting class size levels may reduce the deterioration in the school conditions and learning environment.

The above indicators seem to include inputs for the typically developing pupils and the question still arises whether indicators need to be more comprehensive and holistic to include more aspects in order to address the individual needs of all children as well as those said to have SEN. A typical primary school day is shown in the following table.

Table 7 Typical Primary School Day

7:00 - 7:30	Students arrive at the school and begin to study quietly
7:30 - 8:00	Parade - announcements for the day. (Assembly)
8:00 - 8:40	Period 1
8:40 - 9:20	Period 2
9:20 - 10:00	Period 3
10:00 - 10:40	Period 4
10:40 - 11:00	Break
11:00 - 11:40	Period 5
11:40 - 12:20	Period 6
12:20 - 1:00	Period 7
1:00 - 2:00	Lunch
2:00 - 2:40	Period 8
2:40 - 3:20	Period 9
3:20 - 4:00	Studies
4:00 - 5:30	Extra Curricular activities

2.1.20   Primary school settings in different areas

Figure 4: Teacher Marking Work in Class
(Rieser, 2008, p20)

Figure 5: Typical Classroom

http://www.google.co.uk/imgres?q=public+primary+schools

Figure 6: Compound of a city school

http://www.google.co.uk/imgres?q=public+primary+schools+in+Nairobi

The African continent including Kenya has invested great hopes in the early 1960s' rapid expansion of formal education systems (Maclure, 2006; Bachumann, 2001).   However, since the end of the 1980s, high rates of attrition, low achievement levels, shortfalls in infrastructure and learning materials, indications of poor teaching and low teacher morale and disjunctions between school-based learning and subsequent job opportunities have persistently overwhelmed education throughout sub-Saharan Africa (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005).   Kenya has continued to participate in educational reforms and the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2000 gave a boost to Kenya's commitment to Education for All making it more determined to achieve quality basic education by 2015.   The provision of education and training has become fundamental to the government's overall development strategy.   Universal access to basic education and training ensures equity for all children to enrol in schools including the disadvantaged and vulnerable.   The government has introduced major reforms in all sectors with a view to addressing these broad National goals. With these in mind this study aims to explore the teachers' conceptualization of SEN in public primary schools in Kenya.

2.1.21 Chapter Summary

Kenya is a developing country that is 50 years old and has continually expanded its education system despite other major economic, social, political, technical,

legal and environmental challenges. The importance of education is outlined in different education commissions, initiatives to achieve UPE and the impact of education on income and other policy issues. Although this study relates to teachers' conceptualization of SEN in public primary schools in Kenya, the provision of SNE and other historical aspects pertaining to primary school education were necessary to provide the reader with a clear representation and full insight in which the study will be conducted. The chapter provides the country background and basic demographics including the key assessed areas of disabilities, traditional customs, beliefs, attitude towards pupils with special needs and disabilities, inception, goals and expansion of SNE alongside those of the entire primary school, teacher training and challenges that are facing the development of SNE. Special needs education development has been slow, with more preference given to the expansion of primary, secondary schools as well as universities.

The policies seem to stress the physical presence (quantity) and focus on the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. One of the aims of this research is to establish what SEN policies the Kenyan government espouses. Issues pertaining to the provision of education: namely, how education programs and systems affect the quantity and reasons why the government has continually failed to control the expansion of educational demand. Reasons for failure to achieve UPE have been given. Per pupil expenditure and school quality is generally low. The Kenyan government continued to support the expansion of education despite, the long term economic and social costs and the uncoordinated growth of schooling to meet the demands of the nation. This background unveils potential barriers and situations that are significant while making suggestions on the development of progressive educational programmes in Kenya.

There is still room for improvement as the Kenyan government continues to introduce major reforms in all sectors with a view to addressing these broad National goals. The education system has been highly centralized but with the new constitution (2010) more decentralization is anticipated with communities participating in not only education but overall development matters. The

following chapter covers the Kenyan perspectives of SEN research and a general international perspective on Special Education which may be imperative in the development of future educational programmes in Kenya.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1   Introduction

This chapter has two sections. Section one explores the broader perspectives on special educational needs (SEN) and locates these within the Kenyan context. This section will examine Kenya's SEN developments and practices alongside the wider perspectives in order to contextualize the actual research objective and to answer the research questions in Chapter One. Contextualizing the problem being researched will underpin the implications drawn out for professional practice. Section two is a documentary analysis of the special needs education (SNE) policy as provided by the National Special Needs Education Policy Framework, Ministry of Education (MoE, 2009).

However, it is worth noting at this point that in sub-Saharan African countries, many do not have existing universal primary education. Most of these countries, as stated by Grech (2009), do not have policies and/or programmes for specifically educating children with disabilities; nor are issues affecting the education of such children investigated. Generally, existing research on cross-cultural perspectives of disability has pointed out how complex it is to undertake such research (Mutua and Elhoweris, 2002). Stuecher and Suarez (2000) stress the lack of serious, uncoordinated research, and Abosi (2000) and Akkok (2000) the low prioritisation of research. Overall, there is paucity in disability studies (Opini, 2010; Grech, 2009; Keller and Thygesen, 2000) from which to draw guidance (Akkok, 2000; Stuecher and Suarez, 2000; Danseco, 1997). There is a tendency to rely on research and policy outcomes from Western countries where such work is very much developed in this field (Mutua, 2001; Abosi, 2000; Kisanji, 1999). Some of the research depicted in this literature review might only have a small element of special education provision and practice which I considered relevant to inform the topic of this study. Muuya (2002) stated that one of the limitations in her study was:

'Lack of information and research evidence on the extent and nature of special educational needs provision in Kenya (ibid, 2002, p230).

In this study, UK terminology will be generally used but where this differs from the Kenyan terminologies this will be highlighted. Notwithstanding, efforts are made to pull together research from developed and developing countries in order to facilitate identification of relevant gaps and to provide an insight, to underscore and understand how teachers view special education in public primary schools in Kenya.

3.1 .2 Effects of FPE on Special Needs Education

The KG's declaration of free primary education in 2003 increased the primary enrolment to 7,404,280m (Omwami and Omwami, 2010; Somerset, 2007, UNESCO, 2007). Despite the extra ordinary achievement of enrolling 1.3m additional children in January 2003 as part of the Free Primary Education (FPE) guarantee, about one million school-aged children in the urban slums and Arid and Semi-arid lands (ASAL) are still not enrolled (Oketch et al., 2010; Tooley, Dixon and Stanfield, 2008; Sifuna, 2005). This did not re-affirm the right to education of every individual. The provision of free primary education (FPE) is considered as one of the major components of the poverty reduction strategy (Vos, et al., 2004). Put in place in 2003, it is expected to yield significant long-term gains with a better skilled workforce and an expanding domestic private sector (Psacharopoulos and Paterinos, 2004).

The strategy, however, was primarily based on the assumption that school fees were the main obstacle to universal primary education and kept the poorest children out of school. This called for huge budgetary and teacher requirements to satisfy the additional entrants (Omwami and Omwami, 2010; King, 2007) increasing the quality of education and education outcomes remain an important goal (World Bank, 2011). The government has however endorsed the United Nations Education for All (EFA) goals aimed at increasing access to education and improving literacy which are fundamental elements to quality education.

After signing the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education in Spain in 1994, the Kenyan government gradually started the development of Special Education to enable children with SEN to access

education. The Commission of Inquiry into the Education System in Kenya, Koech Commission Report (1999), was set up to recommend ways of introducing manageable curriculum content at all levels of education (MoE, 2007, 2005). This commission proposed a new system of education with the conceptual title 'Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training'(TIQET). It also recommended the establishment of a national special advisory board and noted the lack of a broad policy or legal framework on SNE despite there being various policy guidelines. Only the recommendation on rationalization of the curriculum was later accepted while the other recommendations were not adopted due to alleged cost implications (Mwiria, 2004; Amutabi, 2003). The Dr. Kochung Taskforce (2003) was set up to appraise the status of special education in Kenya and based on the recommendations of the Kochung Taskforce, the Kenyan government set the priorities on Special Education as set out in Chapter One (Section 1.11). A draft policy was prepared before the launching of the final one in 2009. An account of this policy will be presented in section two of the literature review.

Oketch et al (2010) highlight that parents react to the perceived poor quality of public education, as indicated by the pupil teacher ratios of public schools (42:1), by moving their children to private schools and/or transferring to different schools. Their reaction depends on the measure of wealth of households (Omwami Omwami, 2010; Oketch et al., 2010; Tooley, Dixon and Stanfield, 2008). After the EFA (2003) decree, the increase in the gross enrolment rate (GER) implied that children who would not otherwise have been able to enrol prior to this had an opportunity to join a school. It is therefore important to carry out detailed research to explore how teachers view SEN given these large new populations under the FPE regime.

It is widely reported that sub-Saharan Africa requires an additional four million primary school teachers to achieve EFA (UNESCO 2008; UNESCO, 2007). Teacher education, both pre-service and in-service, is progressively recognised as the key to achieving good quality education for all children (Buckler, 2011; Moon, 2007). According to the Teacher Training Institute of sub-Saharan Africa

(TTISSA, 2007) national governments in sub-Saharan Africa and international organisations are working towards strengthening the policy base for teacher education as well as the data around which these policies are built. It is increasingly stressed that teachers' preparation should cover a wider spread of continual demands than in the past and be able to not only execute change but anticipate its need and be creative and skilful in the provision of solutions to problems (Hargreaves, 1999; UNESCO, 1998). The same number of teachers must now cope with an increased student load, and classrooms which seem to have reached capacity level. Clearly, addressing only one component of the demand side of education did not ensure universal primary education.

3.1.3 Special Needs Education and Integration

Most children said to have SEN are in mainstream schools whilst others are enrolled in special schools, units and integrated programmes, especially those with hearing and visual impairments and sometimes physical disabilities (Oketch, 2009, Kiarie, 2006; Mutua, 2001).   Up to the 1980s' and 1990s' children with disabilities were educated in segregated special schools or other social or medical institutions while others did not attend school at all (Muuya, 2002). Integration was introduced at primary education level in the 1990s'. Non-governmental organizations like Christoffel Blinden Mission and Sight Savers International carried out different SNE projects at both urban and rural sites. Although this called for involvement of all professionals and families, the level of involvement was restricted to those areas in proximity to communication such as roads and telephone services (Abilla, 1988).

3.1.4 Prevalence of children said to have SEN in Kenya

In Kenya, similarly to other developing countries, there is a lack of robust data regarding disability prevalence rates in (Groce, et al 2011; Grech, 2009). This has been linked to a lack of consistency in identifying and defining the categories. Over the years, Kenya has used estimates for the data on children said to have SEN. The Kenya National Survey for Persons with Disabilities (KNSPWD, 2008) has attempted to provide up to date data for persons with disabilities.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) disability affects 10% of every population. An estimated 650 million people worldwide including 200 million children, experience some form of disability. It is not clear whether the 10% refers to children with physical and sensory impairments, or emotional difficulties. This may imply that the total figure of children with some form of learning disability would be much higher where one includes acquired disabilities as a result of poverty, non-attendance, accidents and diseases. The recent political insurgences after the 2007 general elections in Kenya, is evidence for an increase in children with acquired disabilities. Surveys conducted in 55 countries by the Disabilities Statistics Compendium show a prevalence rate of 0.2 – 21% of children with impairments.

Kenya uses the WHO 10% figure which roughly translates to approximately 4million people in different categories (Kenya National Survey for Persons with Disabilities KNSPWD, 2008, p1). It is fundamental to have reliable data on children's needs in order to facilitate forward planning, ensure appropriate range of provision and expenditure priorities. The incidence would be an indicator of what category of SEN is common or rare within a particular gender, age, region or circumstances. Further research is required in this area.

The Kenyan government (KG) established the Kenya Institute of Education to offer a specialised teacher training programme in 1986. In 1988, the Kamunge Report recommended the mainstreaming of children with disabilities in schools as policy (Kiptarus, 2005). The integration policy was enforced in 1990 with the opening of units in the mainstream primary schools. Children said to have SEN would be withdrawn in turns into the mainstream classes for specific subjects. The units for children with hearing impairments were among the first ones and comprised less than 12 pupils in a class. A mainstream class teacher would accept up to three children said to have SEN at a time.

In an Inclusive and Supportive Education Congress (ISEC) – International Special Education Conference on 'Inclusion: Celebrating Diversity' held in Glasgow,

Scotland on 1 – 4 August, 2005, Kiptarus presented a paper entitled 'Including the deaf in the mainstream class in Kenya'. According to Kiptarus (2005), there was a shortage of specialised trained personnel and teachers. Teachers also required that these children be taught by special education teachers. Although Kipatarus (2005) argues that pupils with hearing impairments are able to socialise in class, no mention is made on how these children are able to participate in the classroom and school activities, access the curriculum or interact with others when they have communication difficulties.

In the United Kingdom, the education of disabled children and young people with special educational needs was driven by the Warnock Committee Report, 1978 [Department of Education and Science (DES, 1978)]. The Special Educational Needs and Disability Discrimination Act, 2001 part of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, promoted the initiative that wherever possible children with SEN should be included within the mainstream school instead of being taught in separate special schools (Shah, 2007; Vislie, 2003). The concept of 'Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) stresses that it is a legal duty for the education providers to treat children with disabilities no less favourably and for schools to make reasonable adjustments in order to enable such children to benefit from the available curriculum. The LRE is a United States (US) not United Kingdom (UK) concept although the UK disability legislation does include the reasonable adjustment requirement.

 The principle of integration was established through the Education Act (1981) and was reaffirmed by the Education Act (1988) when all children were entitled to equal education opportunities which was enshrined in the National Curriculum (Lloyd, 2000). This kind of governmental and legal support is necessary for any reform to thrive. In the UK, despite the 1981 and subsequent Acts, integration was not required but to be pursued wherever possible. Inclusive education practices were the policy goals of the New Labour Administration under the Blair Government from 1997 onwards. However, there remain caveats to the inclusion of all children with disabilities and/or learning difficulties in ordinary classrooms. The important caveat relates to the provision of efficient education for other

children and further the judgement as to whether the ordinary classroom provides a context in which the child may thrive.

When the Kenyan government (KG) enforced integration it had not launched the (SNE)Policy (Ministry of Education, 2009); there was no accompanying government legislation stipulating how the needs of the children said to have SEN are to be met in the special units or the accommodations to be made in the mainstream in support of the diverse needs. Several Education Commissions and Reports were initiated at different times and while some recommendations were applied as circulars, guidelines or policy for a specific time, other recommendations were not initiated. These Commissions and Reports of Education are discussed in section two of this chapter. However, after the launch in 2009, the terms resource teacher (p5) and special units (p6) of the policy are defined without specifying accommodations to be made to support the diverse needs of the children said to have SEN joining the mainstream.

Alqurani (2011), Avramidis and Norwich (2002) and Norwich (1996) avow that this association may be educational or social.

In the Kenya SNE policy (MOE, 2009) integration is defined as:

> *'A progress through which, learners with and or without special needs are taught together to the maximum extent possible in a least restrictive environment. The child is expected to adapt to the environment* (MoE, 2009, p 5).

Although children are educated with non-disabled peers in regular schools in Kenya, Kiarie (2004, p51) states that, *'there is no support, adaptation or modification'* made for the children said to have mental impairment in primary schools. In other research, Pontefract and Hardman (2005, p100) describe the general condition of mainstream primary schools in Kenya as follows:

> *'…schools lack electricity, resources and other facilities, as do the homes of the teachers, support staff and children … most of the classrooms had a traditional seating arrangement with all desks facing the chalkboard and many were overcrowded resulting in cramped conditions'*

The above evidence from Kiarie (2004) and Pontefract and Hardman (2005) does not depict an educational landscape that is focusing on the placement of children with SEN. As Farrell and Ainscow (2002) point out, the problem with defining integration solely in terms of placement is that it tells us little about the quality of the education received in that context. The emphasis of integration was the provision of support to individual pupils in order to make it possible for them to 'fit in' to the mainstream programme without any changes being made to that programme.

The goal of meeting the needs of all children of school age depends upon their being at school. Whilst the Kenyan government is committed to free primary schools, most of the schools still require parents to contribute towards the development and maintenance of the school. These additional charges and levies occasionally discourage attendance of children especially in a country where poverty and inequalities are predominant (Tikly 2009). Challenges of tackling widespread poverty involve understanding compound types of disadvantages and the process of marginalisation which revolve around funding and resources and increasing equity of access to education. In order for meaningful, relevant and valued education which reinforces goals for education for social justice within the extensive scope of the historical and contemporary context of the country, it is imperative that education reforms reorganise, represent and involve the excluded group of indigenous people to meet the goals for social justice (UNESCO, 2011).

3.1.5 From Integration to Inclusion

In the UK, the main education issue in the 1990s'was on integration (Vislie, 2003) and how the international community and national governments would promote the right of disabled persons to suitable education. Pioneers of special education argued for and helped develop provision for children and young people who were excluded from mainstream education (Booth, Ainscow and Dyson, 1997).

The initial concern for integration in Western countries was an attempt to reform systems to educate children with disabilities in separate special schools or other institutions (Pijl and Vann De Bos, 2001; Slee, 1997). The system eventually

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changed and special education systems were reorganised, focusing on all aspects of identification, financial issues, local school structure, teaching and learning in integrated classes (Vislie 2003). Integration refers to the inclusion of children and young people with special educational needs into ordinary regular classrooms. From a school perspective, integration refers to a child adapting to a '*host of settings*' while inclusion refers to the school adapting in order to meet the needs of current and potential pupils (Lindsay, 2007, p3).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 1990) further supported the concept of educating students with disabilities alongside their peers in their neighbourhood public schools in US. This introduced the term 'mainstream', describing the practice of educating students with disabilities in a least restrictive environment. The limiting nature of segregation in education and stigmatising gave rise to issues of equality of access and educational opportunity whilst integration became the focus. Political pressure about disability and parental advocacy groups began to transform the values of the society, which, as pointed out by Thomas et al (1998), inevitably resulted in changes to reform education.

3.1.6 Integration and Inclusion

Values about children said to have special educational needs (SEN) have been shifting and these have influenced policy, practice and legislation by stressing on the rights of disabled people to fully participate and enjoy equal opportunities in every aspect of their life (Cole, 2005).   These terms (integration and inclusion) are different although they are sometimes used synonymously. Education systems in several African countries have been generally influenced by the established systems of western countries (Milligan, 2011, King, McGrath and Rose, 2007; Lomofsky and Lazarus, 2001).   Mmbaga (2002) has argued that this has added to the confusion and application of the terminologies and concepts. Notwithstanding, until the end of the 1980s' the integration principle was the main focus to advance the right of disabled persons to an appropriate education which was embraced by international communities and national governments. Inclusion is described as more than the physical presence and involves the process of changing values,

attitudes, policies and practices within schools (Lindsay, 2007; Elewwe, 2002; Mittler, 2001; Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle, 2000).

Evans (2000) opines that including learners with special needs in mainstream schools remains a goal and challenge for most educational systems around the world. Evans and Lunt (2002) observed that inclusion is based on changing the philosophy and structure of schools in order to educate children said to have SEN with their peers, regardless of their diversities in the regular classroom or in the neighbourhood.

While inclusion has been on the agenda for more than two decades, the struggle to achieve education for all (EFA) has been established for more than five decades. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) confirmed inclusion in education as a human right. Article 26 was followed by a number of main declarations including: The World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons (UN, 1982), Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989), The World Declaration Education for All (World Conference on Education for All, 1990), Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (World Conference on Special Needs Education, 1994, The Dakar Framework for Action (World Education Forum, 2000), The Education for All (EFA) flagship Education for Persons with Disabilities Towards Inclusion (UNESCO, 2010) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2007).

The journey towards inclusive education has been problematic and slow in low-income countries. Inclusion International (2006) confirms that that only 2% of disabled children received education in low-income countries at the beginning of the 21st Century and this did not change in the first few years of the century. Some of the special education policies have been influenced by international policy documents. The World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca in 1994 with the espousal of the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education signifies the event that set the policy agenda for inclusive education on a global basis (UNESCO, 1994).

Kenya signed the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994) and re-affirmed its commitment to education for all (EFA) by recognising the necessity and urgency of providing education for children, youth and adults within the regular education system and also endorsed the Framework for Action on Special Needs Education. The Dakar Framework for Action (2000), which refers to vulnerable and disadvantaged children, calls for inclusive practices to ensure that they are included in the education process and have access to schools. In pursuing the goals, the government has not considerably focussed on these groups of children who are excluded from school and the education system.

3.1.7 Special units and schools

A study carried out in two provinces in Kenya with 50 head teachers (Muuya, 2002) to establish their views on the most important aims for children in special units and schools highlighted that the most important aims for children said to have SEN are: conventional (traditional), academic achievement, personal and social development and citizenship, alongside skills of personal care and the control of difficult behaviour. As stressed by Muuya (2002) the importance of traditional aims of special education in terms of control, containment and care still prevail and overshadow those of a broad and balanced educational provision. There was relatively little emphasis on the importance of preparation for employment. Despite the rapid developments in the provision for special educational needs, there is a gap between the national policy objectives and actual provision at school level.

In Kenya the attitudes of head teachers and classroom teachers remain crucial in determining the ethics and pedagogical practices in respect of children with SEN. Muuya's (2002) research indicates that there remains a negative attitude amongst head teachers to the integration of children said to have SEN in the schools. She further asserts that such attitudes need to be addressed through suitable in-service training. Rose (2001) asserts that teachers have a responsibility to develop a range of suitable teaching strategies in order to meet the complex needs in a

diverse population; and in a more inclusive education system they would be expected to provide effective teaching to children said to have SEN. On the other hand, the national education policies should focus on enhancing equality of access and participation in education, developing the curriculum as well as providing opportunities for children to interact with their peers— something which they might have missed prior to the decree. Imperatively, teachers should develop their professional skills, knowledge and understanding in order to enhance the learning opportunities for all pupils. Hence, one of the aims in this study is to explore what training teachers have access to on SEN.

Kenya offers special needs education to four basic categories of children with special educational needs. These include: those with hearing impairment, 'mental handicap', visual impairment and physical 'handicap'. However, other learners have been included in this list in the Kenya SNE Policy (MoE, 2009, p14). This list shows 22 categories of learners said to have SEN. The terms 'handicap', 'deaf', 'blind' 'retarded', 'disabled' continue to be used in some of the academic research and different government and media communications (Njogu, 2009). This represents a medical model which is explained under the labelling section below. Conversely the terms 'special needs' and 'learning difficulty' are not defined. There is an over generalisation of the use of the terminologies which verges on labelling with the usage of terms like: 'child with disabilities', 'disabled', 'handicapped', 'mentally retarded' in Kenya (Njogu, 2009; Kiarie, 2006; Kiptarus, 2005; Muuya, 2002; Mutua, 2001). This is due to lack of data, clarification and definition of SEN terminologies to reflect the diversities of children said to have SEN. A fundamental aspect of this study is to establish how teachers define the term SEN and how they deal with these children in the classrooms.

The SNE policy defines special needs education as:

> *'The education which provides appropriate modification in curriculum delivery methods, educational resources, medium communication/learning environment in order to cater for individual differences in learning'* (MoE, 2009, p6)

This definition relates to the process and what needs to be done differently. This definition is not explicit on 'individual differences'. The question is how teachers offer appropriate support to children said to have SEN.

Defining the term 'special educational needs' is beneficial since it is used to replace disability categories (Warnock Committee Report, 1978) and includes all children who have developmental difficulties affecting their learning, behaviour, emotional and social development communication and ability to care for themselves and gain independence (Lindsay, 2007). On the other hand SEN was originally used to ensure that pupils with difficulties in learning or accessing the curriculum receive appropriate levels of support. The introduction of SEN is considered as an attempt to remove the use of labelling and categorisation. Humphrey et al. (2012) stress that it is important to understand the factors that influence the ability of children said to have SEN as a crucial aspect to develop more effective provision.

Avramidis and Norwich (2002) define inclusion as a reorganisation of mainstream schooling to facilitate all schools to accommodate every child regardless of their disability and ensure all learners belong to a community (Ibid, 2002, p131). Different components of inclusion have been claimed by Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) to include:

i.	elimination of barriers to learning
ii.	participation for all students
iii.	increasing the capacity of schools
iv.	responding to diversities from students from local communities
v.	treating students as equals in schools and communities
vi.	Including and observing values in education and society (Ibid, 2006 pp295-297

The Kenya SNE policy MoE (2009) defines inclusion as:

> '*An approach where learners with disabilities and special needs regardless of age and disability are provided with appropriate education within regular schools*' (Kenya SNE Policy MoE, 2009, p5).

Nevertheless, the phrases:

'…*appropriate educ*ation…' '…*learners with disabilities and special needs…*' are not clarified further.

A study was carried out by Mutua and Dimitrov (2001) to develop a logistic regression model for the prediction of school enrolment of Kenyan children with intellectual disabilities in four districts covering three provinces; 425 questionnaires were administered to parents by research assistants and technicians. The findings established that 69% (351) of children with intellectual disabilities were enrolled in primary school while 31% (109) were not enrolled. The educational placement of children with moderate intellectual disabilities is in segregated special classrooms, known as Special Units, while the educational placement of children with severe intellectual disabilities is in separate special schools. The educational curriculum in these special units and schools is focused mainly on functional education such as farming or craftsmanship and life skills training. Although the Kenyan government has attempted to enrol the children with intellectual disabilities in schools and in spite of the government claiming to provide '*appropriate*' education as shown in the above definition of inclusion, the provision of formal education is not mentioned.

Inclusion focuses on the reconstruction of curricular provision to remove barriers to learning and participation (Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE), 2002). Children said to have SEN have unique needs and it is vital that their individual strengths and weaknesses are realised. However Oketch (2009), Mukuria and Korir (2007) and Kiptarus (2005) state that the Individual Education Plan (IEP) system and systems of services to provide for the children's needs are not obvious in Kenya. Systems for identification, assessment and placement are important for teachers to appropriately support the learning of children said to have SEN. Without an IEP, the unique special need for the child will not be made transparent. Inclusive education has been defined by different authors to embrace the participation of all learners from all marginalized and excluded groups if at all

possible, in the cultures, curriculum and communities of local learning centres (Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle, 2000).

Philosophically, the notion of inclusion requires recognition that the interaction between the child and his or her socio-ecological environment helps or hinders his or her educational development. The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO 1994) gave the lead for countries to develop a more effective educational response for children with disabilities and those who experience difficulties in learning. Peters (2007) and Vislie (2003) point out that the statement focuses on inclusive education as a strategy to include children said to have SEN in mainstream education by responding to the needs of individual learners. It is an instrument for moving practice towards more inclusive schools and was responsible for a global policy shift from SEN to responding to diversity within a common school for all. This implies that any person with a disability has a right to express their wishes regarding their education as long as they can be identified.

3.1.8 Developing an Inclusive environment in Kenya

Leonard Cheshire International (LCI) is a regional training and development programme which has been working with the Kenyan Government and a higher education establishment to retrain teachers and support a pilot inclusive education programme in five schools in Oriang, Western Kenya since 2001. LCI provides technical and financial support for the project. It has benefited 2,200 children, 174 of whom have minor to severe disabilities (mainly low vision, physical disabilities, epilepsy or learning difficulties). A few of them have hearing difficulties. Rieser (2008) states that many children have intellectual impairments caused by malaria and lack of access to treatment and over 700 children with disabilities have been included more recently. Since 2007, the project has been extended to 300 schools in Kisumu Province.

The strategy adopted highlights the promotion of inclusive education, with a shift from long-term residential support to community-oriented activities. Teachers from lower primary classes (and head teachers) have recently been trained. They

are encouraged to incorporate positive aspects of African culture and tradition in primary school literacy and language studies. Rieser (2008) emphasizes that with the initial focus on oral culture, teachers can create enjoyment in language and literacy learning through artistic conversations, tongue twisters, riddles, proverbs, folk tales, legends and songs The question is whether the government is ready to sustain the project after the pilot phase, whether the activities mentioned are likely to be embedded into the curriculum and whether time is allocated for children said to have SEN to participate.

The question is what strategies are adopted in regular schools in the other parts of the country while this inclusion initiative takes shape. Hence the aim of research questions on teachers' opinions about inclusion and the strategies they use to meet the diverse needs of children said to have SEN in their classrooms. The implication is that an inclusive school would be required to modify or restructure the systems, policies, practices and culture to incorporate the above aspects, hence children being educated in a least restrictive environment (LRE). Therefore the government's budget should factor in the implication of costs of inclusion in this regard. However, the least restrictive environment aspect is only mentioned in the definition of integration and no further explanation is given.

An inclusive school should meet the diverse needs of all pupils within the community it is located. Similarly Ainscow, Dyson and Booth (2006) and Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle (2000) like Kinsella and Senior (2008) stress that inclusive schools are concerned with increased participation and expanded educational achievements of all groups of learners who have been excluded. Inclusive schools provide favourable settings for achieving equal opportunity and full participation. A concerted effort is required not only by the teachers and school staff but also peers, parents, families and other members of the society. However, this depends on peoples' confidence, dedication and support (Slee, 2001; Befring, 1997). On the other hand, Kinsella and Senior (2008) also avow that an inclusive school should facilitate access, have a structure to facilitate identification, assessment, planning, intervention and review for pupils' abilities. Similarly, pupils are expected to achieve planned targets with the involvement of

parents and different professionals (Kinsella and Senior, 2008). However, this hinges on the preparation and review of the Individual Educational Plan (I.E.P) which, as stated earlier, does not seem common in Kenya.

3.1.9 Assessment and Intervention

Itinerant and Vision Support teachers are trained at Kenya Institute of Special Educational Needs (KISE) to work with Assessment Centre Coordinators and other agencies and staff like medical doctors and psychologists at the district level in the assessment of children said to have SEN. In addition to the Diploma in Special Education they have additional training in the education of children with visual impairment (Lynch, et al., 2011). Kenya applies

> '*A multidisciplinary approach which is only conducted informally since it has not been formalized*' (MoE, 2009, p22).

The idea of Itinerant and Vision Support teachers working part-time may not leave ample time for the itinerant teacher to collaborate at a wider level with other agencies. The itinerant teacher may require additional qualifications and time, not least to improve the early identification and intervention procedure of children said to have SEN but also to be in a position to advise teachers. More action research would enable the itinerant teachers to judge the efficacy of certain practices in the early identification, assessment and intervention system and also enquire about what principles underscore the basis of certain educational practices (Lloyd, 2002).

The procedure of referral and placement is not defined. This leaves a lot of room for assumptions and tends to portray a non-comprehensive exercise where the role of the assessment teachers is over emphasized. The question is how teachers follow up with the students who may be assessed.

However (Mukuria and Korir, 2006) claim that:

> '*The rights of children with disabilities to have special care and assistance in relation to access to educational opportunities are non-existent…*' (Ibid, p50).

They also refer to the assessment for SEN learners, especially those with EBD, as:

> '…*inadequate and fragmented*' (Mukuria and Korir, 2006).

According to Kiarie (2006), the Ministry of Education (MoE) does not seem to have developed services for students with learning difficulties or 'mild mental retardation', and in most cases *these children fail to be recognised as having a disability* (Ibid, 2006 p51).

With the foregoing comments from Kiarie (2006) and Mukuria and Korir (2006), it is plausible to consider further research on the operations of the Early Assessment Resource Centres (EARCs) and its connection with the schools. The assessment procedure seems to ignore factors that impede accessibility and intervention making the follow up by the teacher difficult. So it is necessary to establish from the teacher what happens in the classroom given the uncertainties in the assessment process. As Muuya (2002) suggests there is a gap between policy and practice. Assessment centres exist but more research is required to establish the processes.

On the other hand, a report from the Tropical Institute of Community Health and Development in Africa (Muga, 2003), about screening disability in a community in Western Kenya using ten questions, emphasises the importance of early identification and intervention of disabilities. The routine screening requires intensive training for those working as screeners before more rigorous techniques are introduced. Muga (2003) also highlights that there is a wide disparity between the needs of persons with disabilities and provision of services in Kenya and that screening and therapeutic services for disabled children are relatively sparse and expensive. Availability is often associated with the ability of parents to identify their children's impairment, seek advice and pay for the services with limited access to specialised services (Muga, 2003). Almost two thirds (2/3) of the children are incorrectly placed due to lack of proper assessment before they are admitted to the special schools or otherwise and only a small proportion of disabled children receive formal education. These findings are also expressed by Muuya (2002). Korir et al (2007) also explain that there is a lack of a mechanism to provide special education services since the instruments are unreliable and not valid.

In the study with 50 head teachers, Muuya (2002) also stated that there was substantial conflict across different educational difficulties; for example, between the provision for children with '*physical handicaps*' and mentally '*handicapped*'. The conflict was also evident with the provision of half of those mentally '*handicapped*' that were also described as physically '*handicapped*'. Other institutions had children said to have hearing or visual impairments and many had multiple '*handicaps*'. Some institutions did not disclose whether they had children with hearing or visual impairments (Muuya, 2002 p233).

3.1.10 Inclusive education challenge in Kenya

Inclusive education is considered as the most fair and all-embracing method in the education of all children (Ainscow, Howes and Tweddle, 2006). For the Kenyan government to transform from a traditional integrated system, which seems to be predominated by the medical model to a whole-school approach to inclusion, is a complex challenge. Providing for equal education opportunities for all students requires an overall change in roles and responsibilities of stakeholders working with children, especially those said to have SEN (Forlin, 2010; Samoff et al., 2005). Like Darling-Hammond (2003; Rose 2001) avers that head teachers play an active role in all the programmes within the school and they have a responsibility to create systems '*which address the needs of a whole school population*' in terms of special education services (Rose, 2001 p73).

Head teachers may not be left to fulfil the role alone. However, they may not be able to do that without the participation and empowerment of teachers, while inspiring them and their pupils to have a high sense of belonging as well as parents and other partnerships (Armstrong, 2005 and Ainscow, 1999).

The Taskforce on the Re-alignment of the Education Sector to the New Constitution Report: 'Towards a Globally Competitive Quality Education for Sustainable Development' (Ministry of Education 2012) confirms that the:

> '*Kenyan government has embraced inclusive education and learners with 'disabilities and special needs are provided with appropriate education within regular schools*'.

Nevertheless, the same report also highlights that the regular schools are

'ill-equipped to deal with special needs learners' (MoE, 2012 p140).

The above quotation portends some confusion considering that inclusive schools are expected to '*respond positively to pupil diversity*' (UNESCO, 2005 p5) as well as have increased participation, expanded educational opportunities and achievements for all groups of learners (Kinsellah and Senior, 2008; Ainscow, Dyson and Booth 2006; Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle, 2000).

The Kenyan government's vision is to have:

'A *society in which all persons regardless of their disabilities and Special needs achieve education to realize their full potential*' (Kenya SNE Policy, MoE, 2009 p5).

The head teacher is considered to play a key role in the successful implementation of governmental educational reforms. As in any reform process, the head teacher is faced with a myriad of complexities and challenges which make it difficult to implement the policy. These may include: lack of adequate finances and stakeholders renouncing their responsibilities, in addition to the top-down and centralized reform model of Kenyan policies which reduces the head teacher's innovative role (Kamunde, 2010). Strong school leadership is a key requirement for school success, effectiveness and improvement (Ouma, 2009). With the foregoing, as Muuya (2002) states, the SNE policy implementation lacks any guidelines to facilitate stakeholders to make any innovative and proactive decisions leaving them unable to contribute to promote the learning of children with special educational needs.

The Kenyan government may require developments in terms of more opportunities to ensure '*appropriate*' education of children said to have SEN. It is important for the schools, teachers, parents, school administrators and other personnel including the student to work together to maximise the education opportunities and outcomes for children said to have SEN. Eleweke and Rodda (2000) also stress that successful inclusive education programmes require the services of different professionals to assist in identification, referral, diagnosis,

treatment and training. This might not be possible where no reliable data on children's needs or their incidence is available (KNSPWD, 2008)

3.1.11 Teaching Practices on teaching reading

In a study conducted in 24 lower primary classes in the coastal region of Kenya and funded by the Spanish Evaluation Fund, Education Program Development Fund of the World Bank, Imperial College of London Partnership for Child Development, Harvard University Committee on Africa Studies and the Ministry of Education (Brooker, et al., 1993) to explore the delivery and how literacy instructions align with practices that promote reading acquisition, it was concluded that teachers prioritised the acquisition of oral language skills instead of teaching the relationship between sound and symbols (Brooker et al., 1993). This is affirmed by Dubeck, Jukes and Okello (2009) and Commeyras and Inyega (2007). However, in an extended study conducted by Commeyras and Inyega (2007) on teaching reading established that teachers allocated a minimum amount of time for teaching phonetics. There is also an emphasis on choral repetition although the MOE curriculum identifies a list of reading for example 'Word recognition' (MOE, 2006). Teachers assume that the entire class is reciting, but they do not stress that pupils follow the physical actions or words (Dubeck et al., 2009). Generally, these methods could include teaching the relationships between the letters and their sound (phonics), teaching words as a whole (that is, look-say) or a combination of these techniques.

On the other hand, the SACMEQ (2005) assessment project established that 21% of pupils in Standard (class) six reached the required level of reading, while 66% reached the planned minimum level but were not likely to survive during the next year of schooling. The SACMEQ survey covering more than 100,000 pupils aged between three and 16 established that only 33% of children in class 2 read a paragraph at their level and a third were unable to read a word while 25% of class 5 students were not able to read a class 2 paragraph. However, the other 13% is not mentioned in this research (Uwezo, 2010).

The above section on literacy and reading uncovers the reading problems children in public primary schools encounter. Many children from low-income families do not grow up in homes that emphasize the entertainment value of reading, which has implications for their later reading. Children are not exposed to cultural practices for learning about reading and writing from their infancy. Reading habits amongst the majority of Kenyans are still underdeveloped which is an aspect related to the colonial history of Kenya and especially because of lack of public libraries (Ogechi and Ogechi, 2002). More positive motivations towards reading and setting regular times for reading throughout the school term may lead to higher levels of reading achievements.

Once again, the main focus is on the whole class teaching without paying attention to the difficulties of children said to have SEN, for example difficulties they might experience in Reading and Mathematics. Hence, one of the aims for this study is to establish teaching strategies applied to meet the diverse needs of children said to have SEN.

3.1.12 Curriculum for special needs education in Kenya

The findings of a study on a curriculum offered for children with intellectual disabilities between the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE, 2007) and Volunteer Services Overseas (VSO, 2002) highlighted that curricula on Perceptions, Communication and Mathematics skills have been approved (Kenya Institute of Education, KIE, 2007).
Other complete curricula include:
- Curriculum for Pre-school children with 'visual and hearing impairments'.
- Developmental and independent living skills for learners with 'visual impairments'.
- Mathematical skills syllabus for learners with intellectual disabilities.
- Foundation syllabus for learners with visual and hearing impairments.

On the other hand, the curricula for social skills education and vocational training were so undervalued by the government as stated by (KNCHR, 2007) that no certificates were given. However, KNEC has allowed pupils with disabilities additional time in which to write their external examinations (KIE, 2007). The same extension time is given to all students said to have SEN. This seems to imply that some children who may not be assessed or identified to have SEN may not get equal opportunities to demonstrate their abilities. The procedure of determining which child needs extra examination time is beyond the scope of this study and may benefit from further research.

3.1.13 Effective Teaching Practices on SEN

According to Cook and Schirmer (2003), special educational needs practice is actually good teaching practice. This means that the learning is planned to start from where each child has reached with due regard to the need for modifying methods and teaching required to ensure effective curriculum access. Florian and Linkelater (2010) suggest that many techniques for typically developing students have positive effects on the learning of students said to have SEN and vice versa. They also argue that what matters is how the teachers apply their knowledge to deal with learners when they experience difficulties. It is therefore obvious that various models and criteria for determining effective practice are required for each country and such models should be applied and re-applied to a wider spectrum of practices in order to determine what is all-inclusive for students said to have SEN.

However, there are no real benefits to students with disabilities if effective practices are not frequently and appropriately used. The practices should therefore be implemented consistently and with commitment (Fuchs and Fuchs, 2011). The question then arises how such practices may be implemented in Kenya where a paucity of research in this field is extensive. Hence, one of the aims of this study is to explore what teaching strategies teachers apply for children said to have SEN. Rose and Howley (2007) and Rose (2001) argue that the demands of learning present difficulties that hinder children said to have SEN from making progress and this is likely to damage their self-esteem or lead to a feeling of alienation from the school.

Pupils with SEN often require access to a service that is different from that of other learners. However, teaching approaches should be adjusted to facilitate differentiation (Bailey, 1998). For pupils with SEN to receive effective access to learning, sometimes specific interventions, specialist resources or teaching approaches and additional attention to planning may be required (Rose and Howley, 2007). Consequently, it is logical that effective instructional practices for most learners can also be effective for students said to have SEN if delivered in a specific way (Berry, 2011; Landrum and McDuffie, 2011; Vaughn and Linan-Thompson, 2003).

However, what is additional provision depends on what is available in general provision; the more the general system is designed to accommodate differences, the fewer adaptations there will be. This connection can also be analysed and related to the individual diversities of the children and making some response to them as part of the general system of education (Pearson, 2011; Mackenzie, 2009). This implies that teachers need to promote the participation and engagement of all learners and respond to their individual needs in the classroom. In this light, it would be interesting to explore what teaching strategies teachers apply for children said to have SEN given that the teacher pupil ratio (TPR) is 1:42 or even higher in different schools (MoE, 2007).

From the pre-service teacher training and continuous development details provided above, the emphasis appears to be on the typically developing learners where children said to have SEN are considered to adapt to the whole classroom teaching where the text book is the main point of reference (Hardman et al., 2011, 2009; Ackers and Hardman, 2001). Hence, the aim of this study is to explore how teachers view SEN and this also includes the teaching strategies they apply to meet the diverse needs of children said to have SEN in the classrooms.

3.1.14 Other studies related to SEN in Kenya

There are growing numbers of children at risk of educational failure through various circumstances. However, orphans are listed as children at risk of having SEN in Kenya (Kenya SNE Policy, MoE, 2009, p14). This only goes to increase

the diversities in the classrooms and calls for adequate teacher professional preparation to work with students with special needs in general and in inclusive settings. Kendall and O'Gara (2007) posit that most of the vulnerable children especially orphans do not seem to be considered as children said to have SEN. Wamocho, Karugu and Nwoye (2008) highlight the need for baseline data in order for a comprehensive Guidance and Counselling framework to be initiated for students said to have SEN. From Kendall and O'Gara's comments above, the framework does not seem to have been initiated.

The Ministry of Education Science and Technology, Special Education Task Force (MoEST, 2003) which was set to examine the challenges individuals with SEN face, reported that individuals with behavioural problems are usually educated in rehabilitation facilities where they are treated like juvenile offenders (Kochung, 2003). They have little or no access to education, health, employment and rehabilitation (Mutua, 2002; Miller and Mwavita, 2002). However, it is vital for teachers to know the children well, understand their unique needs as well as the manifestations of EBD to avoid reinforcing the behaviour. Teachers need the knowledge and support in identifying and dealing with the diversities in the classrooms.

3.1.15 Class Size

The class size has continued to rise after abolishing school fees in 2003; Kenyan primary school enrolment has increased by 28 percent, from 5.9 to 7.6 million between 2002 and 2005 (UNESCO 2006) (Fees for kindergarten have not been eliminated, nor is attendance compulsory, so first grade is the first formal school setting for many children). To maintain instruction quality, lower-primary streams (sections in grades 1–3) are officially capped at 40 students, but increased demand, combined with limited resources, means that a teacher teaches one, two, or three streams simultaneously. So in effect, lower-primary classes range from 40 to 120 students in the same room (Dubeck, Jukes and Okello 2012; Mukudi, 2004; Pontefract and Hardman, Anderson, 2002.

3.1.16   Quality Education

Quality has been the core debate around educational delivery in sub-Saharan Africa (Sifuna, 2007, Somerset, 2007). The rapid enrolment increases associated with EFA have led to a change in emphasis on quality (Milligan, 2011; Sifuna, 2007; King, 2007). EFA was considered as a vehicle for national development growth while sustaining basic education as a human right. Like Milligan (2011) and King (2007) it can be claimed that the anticipated outcomes based on rights and development have not yet been broadly achieved. The definition and contextualisation of quality and the impact this is likely to have on practice remains elusive (Milligan, 2011).

The quality and relevance of the provision for those children who complete five or six years of basic education seems to be low and many leave without achieving a functional level of literacy and numeracy (UNICEF, 2010; Lewin, 2009). A regional assessment of 15 countries conducted by the Southern African Consortium for Measuring Educational Quality (SACMEQ 2010), suggests that only 57% of students are attaining basic levels in reading and 25% for mathematics. In view of the above challenges, it is recognised that issues of quality and access need to be addressed and pedagogy and its implications for training should be placed centre-stage if these countries are committed in improving retention, progression and learning outcomes (Aslam and Kingdom, 2007; Stuart, Akyeampong and Croft 2009; Mulkeen, 2010).

Schools ought to be places where teachers have access to one another so that they have an opportunity to create supportive communication that results in higher quality education (Eisner, 2002). However, attention has not been paid to the ways in which teaching and learning is actually carried out. Provision for wider distribution of text books has been made but the sudden expansion in enrolment has led to a shortage of teachers and a lack of adequate classrooms, leading to a general decline in quality (UNESCO, 2005). Access to schooling, as the basis of the right to education, is an 'input' factor (McCowan, 2010; Samoff, 2009). Yet the input factors, tell us little about how resources are used and which outcomes

they lead to. Educational achievements such as literacy, analytical skills and ability to communicate are essential prerequisites to a full life.

The 2009 EFA monitoring report (UNESCO 2010) focusing on marginalized children, emphasises the commitment to policies that concentrate on the creation of an effective learning environment for all children regardless of background, through the provision of adequate facilities, well-trained teachers, a relevant curriculum and clearly defined learning outcomes. Most importantly, it acknowledges that educational quality is largely obtained through pedagogical processes in the classroom and students' achievement is heavily influenced by the knowledge, skills, dispositions and commitment of the teachers in whose care students are entrusted. Keriga and Abuja (2009) stress that the quality of education is assessed in terms of strategies which are developed to question unfair systems, institutions and practices and the extent to which quality is concerned with giving a voice to all learners and redistributing power. There is a need to establish what SNE policy the government espouses in this respect.

3.1.17 Training Initiatives

In an attempt to improve the quality of teaching and learning in primary schools, it is important to develop national in-service education and training (INSET) strategies and continuous development initiative systems for teachers. It is also crucial to focus on pedagogy and its implications on training. Continuous professional development programmes (CPD) target processes in the school and classroom as the necessary levels of intervention in order to improve the quality of teaching (Hardman et al., 2009). In order to improve pedagogical practices before the announcement of free primary education (FPE) the Danish Funding International Department (DFID) funded training projects in Kenya. The programme ran from 2001 to 2005 to improve the quality and cost effectiveness of teaching and learning in primary schools. No evaluation report is available for the training.

The systems developed during this period were meant to cope with the increased enrolment when FPE was announced and to attain the goal of Universal primary

education (UPE) by 2015. In 1990, the Kenyan government developed a national INSET and CPD programme in order to improve pedagogical practices. The Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP 2005-2010) and a national textbook management system were launched. This launch aimed at improving the availability of textbooks and reducing the costs of education (MoEST 2006). The training included Kiswahili, Guidance and Counselling. The Ministry of Education (MoE) also ran a national, distance-led teacher cost effective education scheme for classroom teachers. It was aimed at the acquisition of new skills to promote active learning and train teachers in the use of new textbooks (Hardman, et al., 2009). Invariably, a well-designed INSET programme, supported by other main interventions should have an impact on teaching and learning practices.

This initiative was carried out through distance learning modules, combined with face-to-face cluster meetings and self-study. Over 47,000 primary school teachers successfully completed the three core modules on English, Mathematics and Science and each school trained three Key Resource Teachers (KRTs) to lead school-based professional development within their subject area. A team of 1,000 advisory centre tutors were also trained to provide zonal-based support to the KRT's and distance learning materials. Training materials were sent to head teachers in support of the school-based training (Hardman et al., 2009; MoEST, 2007). This training initiative does not relate to SEN. Hence the question on what SEN training teachers have access to.

On the other hand, the Kenya National Primary Baseline (Ministry of Education Human Resource Development MoEHRD, 1997) incorporating the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) survey in 1998, and other studies such as evaluations conducted in 2005 and 2006 investigating the impact of school based teacher development (SBTD) and the provision of textbooks on classroom practices (Hardman, et al., 2009) and pupil-teacher interaction (Ackers, Migoli and Nzomo, 2001) showed that there had been major changes in pedagogic practices in the primary schools. The high level of directive and rote learning in practice especially for English, Mathematics and Science by 1999 had changed to: paired/group work, peer interaction, alternative

classroom layout, and constructive feedback between other educational professionals, inspectors and teachers (Hardman, et al., 2011). However, the SACMEQ survey (2005) highlighted the challenges with English Language teaching and the results. There is a need to establish what strategies teachers may still be using with children said to have SEN and what training they have access to.

Guskey (2000) asserts that the impact of training evaluation is realised in terms of participants' reaction, school support in charge of learning organisations, use of new knowledge and skills and pupil learning outcomes. He also maintains that for staff development to succeed focus should be on the contents of teaching and the methods used in teaching that content. These methods should be linked and sustained in daily classroom practices in order to affect all students. Ultimately it is essential to improve the capacity of the teaching profession in order to boost the quality of teaching and learning in Kenya.

Although the above initiatives may be seen as remarkable (United Nations Environmental, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, UNESCO (2007) and the decentralized INSET was considered to have facilitated access to competencies required in order to deliver higher quality basic education the proportion of teachers who participated in these initiatives represented 24% of the teachers in the country. This number is negligible given that the initiatives were sporadic. Perhaps a systematic, long-term and sustainable approach would be preferable rather than the ad-hoc provision which is inequitable and intermittent. Although the above CPD initiatives are reported to affect pupils' learning, SEN training is not mentioned. Hence the aims to establish what SEN training teachers in this study have access to.

3.1.18 Teachers' Attitudes towards children said to have SEN

In the absence of research evidence from Kenya, work done in other countries may provide useful ideas. Generally, teachers' beliefs, practices and attitudes are important for understanding and improving educational processes. As stressed by

Ferguson (2008) attitudes are closely linked to teachers' strategies for coping with challenges in their daily professional lives. Research from different countries show how several factors contribute to the effectiveness of special education in inclusive settings. Some of these factors range from the nature of the disability (Hodkinson, 2009; Corbett, 2001; Moses, 2000, Scruggs and Mastropieri, 1996), children's behaviour (OFSTED (UK), 2004) and extreme behavioural difficulties (MacBeath and Galton, 2007). Avramidis and Norwich (2002) highlight that teachers favour the inclusion of children with mild physical and sensory impairments rather than those with learning difficulties, severe disabilities and autistic spectrum disorder. Teachers from Arab societies give students with motor disabilities preference for inclusion (Opal, Wormnaes and Habayeb, 2001). Younger teachers and those recently trained are more supportive to students with disabilities (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002). Provision of internal and external resources and support systems improve the attitude of teachers towards inclusion. Increased training associated with more positive attitudes which makes teachers favour the inclusion of students with disabilities in their classes and feel that they are able to maximize their teaching efficiency in serving these students (Hanko, 2003; Avramidis and Norwich, 2002; Opdal, Wormnaes and Habayeb, 2001; Cornoldi et al., 1998; Scruggs and Mastropieri, 1996).

Studies in African countries about teachers' attitude towards inclusion of special needs children such as in Nigeria Fakolade, Adeniyi and Tella (2009) and Ghana Agbeneyga (2007) showed that professionally qualified teachers tend to have more favourable attitude towards the inclusion of special need students than teachers who are not professionally qualified. In Nigeria, it showed that teachers felt that they lack professional knowledge and skills to work with children said to have SEN in mainstream settings. They also highlighted that female teachers have more positive attitude towards inclusion of children with SEN. In Ghana, teachers who have practised inclusion are more accepting of the idea than others. They stressed that their pre-service teacher education curriculum did not have any content in the different categories of disabilities and related academic needs.

Eisner (2002) stresses that teachers and the school authorities should motivate children to pursue the educational aim which pertains to enlightening, developing abilities and artistic experience. They should focus on creating conditions in the classrooms and the entire school that make the process of education one that students wish to pursue. Mukuria (2012) (as quoted in Mutua and Szymanski, 2012) claimed that some teachers who have trained in special education lack competency and confidence to instruct students with exceptional needs, especially those with severe intellectual disabilities. This was also pointed out in a paper presented at the Inclusive and Supportive Education Congress (ISEC) – International Special Education Conference, University of Manchester (Muchiri and Robertson, 2000). Research from the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR, 2007) shows that some schools are reluctant to admit children said to have SEN in case they cause the schools' mean score grade in the national examinations to drop.

This study focuses on how teachers understand SEN and includes their views, opinions, experiences and awareness of including children said to have SEN in public primary schools. The positive attitude of human resource staff and school administrators towards the inclusion of children said to have SEN is known (Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007) to determine the success of inclusion. According to the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD, (2006) which the Kenyan government has ratified, it is crucial that the disadvantages people with disabilities face be lessened. Working from a social model perspective is likely to challenge the attitudes and develop inclusive practices (Porter, et al., 2011; Hughes and Paterson, 1997).

3.1.19 Section conclusion

- There are few studies on SEN and disabilities focussing on parents, head teachers, children with impairments such as hearing and intellectual disabilities and other social perceptions. None of this research has been undertaken to specifically examine how teachers understand SEN at primary school level. In light of the literature herein, it is necessary to engage in this study to understand this phenomenon. Considering that

most of the studies in this review highlighted the social aspect of SEN and mainly focussed on disabilities as well as the general school population in primary school, the findings from the above studies will help to augment and understand the position of children said to have SEN from the primary school context and be added to the evidence from the teachers.

- There is a paucity of research on how well or how poorly children said to have SEN are doing under the SNE initiative.

- The Kenyan government does not seem to prioritise special education. There is no authoritative prevalence rate of children said to have SEN, some form of which could guide policy and the strategic planning of provision.

- The identification and assessment of children with SEN at relatively early stages of development could lead to 'placement' being guided by secure data on individual children.

- Special education terminologies used tend to assume the medical model trajectory.

- The use of Kiswahili and English Languages as well as local language in the lower classes of schools seems to influence the delivery of standard literacy instructions.

The following section provides the analysis of the Kenya Special Needs Policy (MoE, 2009).

SECTION TWO: BACKGROUND TO THE KENYA SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION (SNE) POLICY FRAMEWORK (MOE, 2009)

3.2.1 Introduction

This section provides the analysis of the Kenya National Special Needs Education Policy Framework as provided by the Ministry of Education (MoE) in 2009. A Documentary Analysis approach was used to examine the developments of special education within the context of larger cultural and political processes located in the educational reforms and society at large. This approach, as asserted by Artiles (2003), enables researchers to understand the complexities, gaps and struggles that shape the educational outcomes of children said to have SEN and is discussed in detail in the Methodology Chapter.

3.2.2 Salient documents associated with SNE policy

The salient educational policies or reports and documents associated with the education of children said to have SEN, or universal primary education (UPE) after independence and up to 2003, are provided. These documents will help to trace the events that led to the launching of the SNE policy.

After independence in 1963, the drive for educational development was spurred by the need to establish free universal primary education as a key goal within the national agenda for post colonial change. Under British rule, education was neither free nor universal to the indigenous Kenyan population. Children were largely illiterate and in outlying areas of the country most had never received any kind of schooling. Children with observable disabilities received little or no assistance from public agencies and their conditions were attributed to magical forces. The task facing the newly independent government was immense. Faced with inadequate financial resources and a professional education workforce limited both by number and training, the preliminary plans for primary education were essentially inspirational and progress was recognised as being likely to take a generation to achieve. However, change was initiated through a number of key

documents including: sessional papers, circulars, reports and different task forces working towards specific aspects in education.

The first document to mention universal free primary education was the Kanu Manifesto (1963) which declared provision for free education, followed by the Education Act (1968) – Cap 211 (revised in 1980) that stated that nobody would be refused admission or excluded from school on the basis of race, colour or any other grounds (MoE, 2009, p15). This was the first time inclusive education was mentioned in Kenyan schools policy, an issue the Kenyan government is still struggling with to date. The underpinning reports and commissions included:

- The Kenya Education Commission-Ominde Commission (Republic of Kenya, 1964) recommendations stipulated that there would be no discrimination as in the colonial era between White, Asian and African citizens (Republic of Kenya, 1965b). This resulted in Sessional Paper No. 5 of 1965 which expressed education as an economic rather than a social service and a key means to alleviating the shortage of a skilled domestic workforce and of creating equal economic opportunities for all citizens (Republic of Kenya, 1965b). However, this may be considered as segregating those who may be unable to work due to disabilities.
- The Committee on Care and Rehabilitation of the Disabled, Ngala Mwendwa (1964), resulted in the formulation of Sessional Paper No.5 of 1968. There were 28 recommendations which were not implemented until in the early 1980s' when the government started to pay increased attention in this field and the first draft SNE policy was recommended.
- The National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (NCEOP), the Gachathi Report (1976), focused on co-ordination of early intervention and assessment of children said to have SEN, creation of public awareness on causes of disabilities in order to promote prevention measures and research on the nature and extent of 'handicaps' for provision for these children. This is still an issue to date. Early Childhood programs were stressed as an important part of special schools and development of policy for integrating learners with special

needs. This resulted in the establishment of the National Centre for Early Childhood Education (NACECE) which offers training to-date. The government has increased support for early childhood education training which was previously funded by parents.

- The Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond, the Kamunge Report (1988), recommended the deployment of SNE inspectors at the district level and cost sharing in education. The role of these inspectors is not mentioned in the current SNE policy. This would have served as a critical way of maintaining necessary contact with schools, teachers and the community and would involve all stakeholders at different levels. This, according to Bronfenbrenner (2005) would enhance the shift from a medical model to a social model. However, the practice of the school inspection process in Kenya is associated with many problems (Wanzare, 2002) which do not enhance the quality and standards of the education system and general teaching and learning. The cost sharing system as explained in Section One of this chapter was introduced during the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) to reduce government expenditure on education and left parents responsible for tuition, textbooks, examinations, building and the maintenance of buildings (Omwami and Omwami, 2010; Oketch et al., 2010; Somerset, 2007; Sifuna, 2007).

- The Commission of Inquiry into the Education System in Kenya, the Koech Commission Report (1999), is discussed in Section 2.1.16. Budgetary constraints were allegedly stated as a basis for not implementing the recommendations. However Ojiambo (2009) and Amutabi (2003) have criticized the failure to implement the recommendations as questionable and linked the decision to the politics of the day than to budgetary constraints. Nevertheless, some recommendations were later accepted which led to the setting up of the Kochung Taskforce (2003). Chaney (2012) stresses that political power is one of the complexities that dominates education polices of Kenya.

- The Kochung Taskforce (2003) also referred to as the Kochung Report (2003) drew a lot from the Koech Commission Report. The Kochung Report (2003) was set to examine the challenges individuals with SEN face. These were highlighted in Chapter One (1.4 and 1.11). This report led to the launching of the SNE draft policy and eventual launch of the SNE policy in 2009.

The recommendations provided by the Gachathi Report in 1976 have set good grounds and pace for SNE where parents and other people would understand the issue of disability; this still stands as an issue to be dealt with to-date. Having traced the documents that led to the launching of SNE policy in 2009 the following section focuses on an account of this policy.

3.2.3 An Account of the Kenya Special Needs Education (SNE) Policy Framework (MoE, 2009)

The SEN policy has 15 objectives as shown in the following table. Each objective has three sections: background, statement and strategies that the MoE shall assume in order to achieve the objective. Within the scope of this study, it is not feasible to account for all the strategies, but reference to them will be made along with the policy statements and the main MoE objectives. The stakeholders in this policy are given as the Minister and Permanent Secretary – Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) representatives from: Non-Governmental Organisations, faith and community -based organisations, private sector service providers, members of parliament and Union representatives (Kenya SNE Policy, MoE, 2009 p10 and KESSP, 2005). Kenya Institute of Special Education officials, head teachers and teachers, as well as parents, are not mentioned.

Table 8: Special Needs Education Policy Objectives

1	**Assessment and Intervention** To strengthen the existing structures and develop new ones for early identification, assessment and intervention of learners with special needs and disabilities in every assessment centre
2	**Access to quality and relevant education** To increase access to quality and relevant education for learners with special needs and disabilities at ECDE, primary, secondary, Tertiary and University levels
3	**Conducive Environment, Health and Safety (adaptation of facilities)** To enhance provision of accessible, safe and friendly learning environment and facilities for learners with special needs
4	**Specialized Facilities and Technology** To support learners with special needs and disabilities access affordable assistive devices and advanced technologies
5	**Inclusive Education** To increase enrolment and promote values which enhance access to education and retention of learners with special needs and disabilities in all learning institutions
6	**Curriculum Development** To develop a diverse and flexible curriculum that meets varied needs and learning environment of learners with special needs and disabilities.
7	**Capacity Building and Development** To facilitate provision of effective and efficient professional and support services to learners with special needs and disabilities in institutions of learning /training.
8	**Participation and Involvement** To promote participation of learners with special needs and other key stakeholders in decision making on matters that affect their education.
9	**Advocacy and awareness creation** To advocate and create awareness among stakeholders on the needs and issues affecting learners with special needs and disabilities
10	**Partnerships and Collaboration** To establish new and strengthen existing partnerships and collaborations in special needs education among all stakeholders
11	**Gender Mainstreaming in SNE** To enhance gender mainstreaming in SNE programmes at all levels and ensure increased enrolment, participation and completion rates for both girls and boys, men and women with special needs and disabilities in education
12	**Research and documentation** To promote research, documentation and information sharing in Special Needs Education
13	**Disaster Preparedness** To put in place measures to advocate, mitigate, evacuate and care for people with special needs during disasters and conflicts
14	**Resource Mobilization – finance, human and material resources** To enhance resource mobilization and sustainable professional and support services to learners with special needs in education
15	**Guidance and Counselling** To develop diverse and specialized guidance and counselling opportunities to meet the varied needs of learners with special needs

Source: (The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework, Ministry of Education, 2009b, pp21-37)

According to the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA 2012) report into the process of policy development, this policy was developed

through a participatory process initiated by stakeholders with the MoE facilitating the process. UNESCO (2006) recommends that teachers ought to be involved in policy making in schools given their unique relationship with children. If teachers were not consulted, and as noted this is unclear, it would appear to be a lost opportunity for receiving the views of the key agents of change. The following section will unpick some of the general terminologies used in the Kenya SNE Policy (MoE, 2009). Other definitions discussed in different sections will be signposted accordingly.

3.2.4 Disability

The Ministry defines this as:

> '*Lack or restriction of ability to perform an activity in the manner within the range considered normal within the cultural context of the human bein*g' (MoE, 2009, p5)

This definition is based on a traditional approach which focuses on the 'within-child' factors. This approach is deep-rooted in the colonial past (Whyte and Ingstad, 1995) reflecting the prevailing approach and views of the previous colonial administration. The Warnock Committee Report (1978) argued for a move away from such a position in the UK. According to Grech (2009), recent underlying socio-political issues have increased the basis for pressing for equal rights and opportunities. Disability is said to be intrinsic and the idea that the facts of the disability may be ameliorated by identifying and removing obstacles to learning has not been appreciated or incorporated into the spirit of the legislation. As Herbert (2002) asserts, people with disabilities have achievement needs and their disability should not be regarded as an obstacle for them to access, participate and more importantly achieve like others. In Kenya, different people view disability based on their societal compositions (Groce, et al., 2011; Gona, et al., 2010; Opini, 2010, Ingstad and Grunt, 2007; Mutua and Dimitrov, 2001).

Whilst even advanced societies recognise the administrative difficulty of providing funding based on individual SEN, attempts are made to differentiate support costs based on an assessment of need. In the UK, Local Authorities tie support needs to provision through a complex system of differentiated functional

categories. This does not happen in Kenya. The Kenyan government provides a standard amount to all school-going children said to have SEN regardless of their individual needs.   As stated by Norwich and Nash (2011) the definition implies an individual deficit and ignores the social context of the individual.   This represents the medical model and it implies that issues of inclusion and participation are not addressed. Since people are focusing on the individual deficits the 'within the child' factors (Yell, 2006; Yeo and Moore, 2003)

However, such definitions tend to overlook and are inconsistent with the objectives of the various documents the government has ratified about the right to the education of children said to have SEN; these include the Children's Act (2001), Persons with Disabilities Act, (2003), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 2006) and the United Nations Conventions on the Right of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006) on the right to education with an emphasis on inclusive education.   Section 18 of the Persons with Disabilities Act (2003) in Kenya requires learning institutions to consider the entry requirement, pass marks, curricula, examination, school facilities and class scheduling. However, neither the role of the government nor its obligations in effecting these provisions are given. The question is how such children are identified and supported in the classroom and how the government is committed to ensuring the children said to have SEN have the human right to benefit from education. In the Persons with Disabilities Act, there is a slogan implying that disability should not be considered as incapability.   Although this may be considered as an encouragement to those who perceive people with disabilities as helpless, it also contains an element about the attitude towards the rights of the same people.

In the United Kingdom, the Warnock Committee Report (1978) recommendations attempted to ensure that people with disabilities were protected against gross categorisation and that educational provision was determined by an analysis of their special educational and learning needs. This has proved administratively difficult to sustain even though new categories may be regarded as a refinement to focus on resourcing.   The UK the Equality Act (2010) made it illegal to discriminate against an individual on the grounds of disability and required public

agencies to make appropriate adjustments to service provision so that access for the disabled person became possible. Some theorists, for example Gardner and Hatch (1991) utilise the Bronfenbrenner model of social ecological factors to indicate environmental factors on how they may affect and exacerbate the situation of individuals with disabilities, and in so doing provide a justificatory counterpoint to the 'within child' or medical model of learning difficulties.

Within the Kenya SNE Policy, various terms (MoE, 2009 p, 14) are implied without corresponding definitions from which it is difficult to relate which model is being inferred for children said to have SEN. These terms include, impairment, inclusive school, Least Restrictive Environment, Special Needs, Individualised Education Plan (IEP), learning difficulty, Gifted and Talented, Cerebral Palsy, Autism, Down Syndrome, Emotional and Behavioural Disorders and Multiple 'Handicaps'.

3.2.5 Assessment and Intervention

Objective:

> *'Strengthen the existing structures and develop new ones for early identification, assessment and intervention of learners with special needs and disabilities in every assessment centre' (MoE, 2009 p22).*

The policy has put forward positive aspects about early intervention which relate to continuous reviewing of the curriculum by the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE). The KIE will also develop training manuals, guidelines and develop assessment tests, *'administrator's and norms manuals'* as well as develop referral tools to conform to the recommendation after the review. It has included professional development for *'assessment teachers'* (MoE, 2009, p22) and expressed that it shall organise mechanisms for engaging parents, professionals and other ministries in the assessment and rehabilitation procedures through joint committees, planning meetings, implementation at all levels and pooled resources. Itinerant and Vision Support teachers work closely with the Early Assessment Centre Coordinators and other agencies and staff like medical doctors and psychologists at the district level (Multi-disciplinary team) in the assessment of children said to have SEN. In addition to the Diploma in Special Education, the

assessors have additional training in the education of children with visual impairment (Lynch, et al., 2011). Kenya applies

> '*a multidisciplinary approach which is only conducted informally since it has not been formalized*' (Kenya SNE Policy, MoE, 2009, p22).

The proposed procedure of referral and placement is unclear. In practice, the referral may be initiated by the parent or principal carer. Much depends, however, on whether the parent or carer is knowledgeable about the services available, where the assessment centres are located and whether there is a cost for the service. Consequently, the children of poor families are amongst the least likely to receive an assessment prior to school and the most likely to carry an undiagnosed impairment. For children at school, the process in principle enables teachers to make referrals based upon their experience of working with individual children. However, it is not clear how the assessments are conducted, what training teachers have received and what input they may have to the process.

Nowhere in the Kenya SNE Policy document (MoE, 2009) or subsequent guidance documents, is the assessment process clarified. In the early years of a child's schooling it can be difficult for a teacher to know individual strengths and weaknesses given that class size varies from 45 to 120 children with one teacher in class. No universal surveillance mechanism exists for children of school age. Clearly the role of teachers, school administrators and government as pointed out by Vaughn and Fuchs (2003) is important to ensure equity in assessment. One might argue that a comprehensive educational assessment should provide awareness and parents should be able to understand the importance of assessment. It should moreover provide an accurate picture of the learning difficulties and the associated tools required to comprehend, evaluate and identify key clues to a child's learning difficulties.

In each district there exists Early Assessment Resource Centres (EARC) whose role is to identify and assess children with difficulties. Referral to these centres is not part of a systematic process of review. The Kenya Education Sector Strategies Programme (KESSP, 2005) affirms that out of a total population of 750,000 children with special needs who had reached school-going age, only 90,000 had been assessed. The Kenya SNE Policy (MoE, 2009 p21) accepts that teachers are

not well trained in assessment and lack the necessary facilities to assess learners with special needs and often have a limited understanding of SEN beyond physical, sensory and behavioural difficulties. Consequently, referral to these centres is haphazard, depending on local knowledge, parents' capacity to pay or the occasional visit of an itinerant assessment teacher. It is unclear how achievement and reading tests to measure cognitive skills are conducted and communicated to the school or parent.

Mukuria and Korir (2006) claim that the assessment for SEN learners, especially those with EBD is: '...*inadequate and fragmented*' (Mukuria and Korir, 2006 p50). Similarly, Kiarie (2006) asserts that the MoE does not seem to have developed services for students with learning difficulties or '*mild mental retardation*' and in most cases, '*these children fail to be recognised as having a disability*' (Ibid, 2006 p51). It is not clear from Kiarie (2006) what support is given to those who receive most of their instruction in the general curriculum but may be having considerable difficulty in learning. One of the purposes of the present research has been to illuminate teaching practices given that relatively little is known about this. With the foregoing comments from Kiarie, Mukuria and Korir one might argue that further research on the operations of the Early Assessment Resource Centres (EARCs) and their connection with the schools is much needed.

A report from the Tropical Institute of Community Health and Development in Africa (Muga, 2003), about screening disability in a community in Western Kenya using ten questions, emphasised the importance of early identification and intervention of disabilities. There is a wide disparity between the needs of persons with disabilities and provision of services in Kenya. Screening and therapeutic services for disabled children are relatively sparse and expensive. Muga (2003) attempts to highlight how assessment is done and states what action needs to be taken but the connection between the routine screening and the schools is not spelt out. It is still not clear from Muga (2003) whether the screening results are used to make inferences about the teaching of students with disabilities. Muga (2003) also asserts that almost two thirds (2/3) of the children are incorrectly placed due to lack

of proper assessment before they are admitted to the special schools or otherwise and only a small proportion of disabled children receive formal education. This tends to be close to the figures provided by KESSP (2005).

3.2.6 Access to Quality and Relevant Education

Objective:

> '*To increase access to quality and relevant education for learners said to have special needs and disabilities at ECDE, primary, secondary, tertiary and university levels*' (MoE, 2009 p25).

Kenya has been making attempts towards Universal Primary Education (UPE) but a variety of deep-seated cultural, institutional, economic and political barriers have negatively affected its successful implementation (Oketch and Rollestone, 2007; Sifuna, 2007; Somerset, 2007; King, 2007 and MoE, 2005). Unequal access to education is widespread in developing countries and girls more than boys seem to suffer more discrimination in terms of access to education (Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemang, 2004). An estimated 8.8m, children in East and Southern Africa remain out of school and around 50% are failing to complete primary education (UNICEF, 2010, Lewin, 2009). Hardman et al (2012) assert that relevance of access and quality appears to be low with many having a low level of literacy and numeracy after completing five or six years of basic education.

The need to address issues of quality and access while focussing on pedagogy and its training implications is stressed as significant by many researchers (Mulkeen, 2009; Stuart, Akyeampong and Croft, 2009; Aslam and Kingdom, 2007) in order to improve student retention, progression and learning outcomes. However, the EFA Global Monitoring Report: The Quality Imperative (UNESCO, 2004) highlights that access and quality tend to ascertain how well students learn and the extent to which their education achieves different personal, social and development goals. The report also emphasises that each child has unique needs and various factors need to be considered to ensure that their cognitive, emotional, behavioural, social and physical needs are met. Issues of access, equity, quality, relevance and efficiency in the management of educational resources have been

the main challenges facing the education sector in Kenya as highlighted by the Association for the Development Of Education in Africa (ADEA), 2012; Cheserek and Mugalavi, 2012; Kenya Education Sector Strategic Plan (KESSP), 2005 and MoEST, 2005 p49).

The Kenya SNE Policy (MoE, 2009) affirms that a major challenge to the education sector is educational opportunities for learners with Special Needs and Disabilities. It also attests that majority of these learners do not access educational services (Ibid, 2009 p14). The Kenya SNE Policy (MoE, 2009, p14) further elucidates that *'these facilities are still inadequate despite the government's commitment to support the provision of equal access to education for all children.'* The Kenya Sessional Paper No.1 (MoEST, 2005) estimates the population of people with SEN at 10% of the total population and about 25% of these children are at school-going age. Out of those who had been assessed only 26,885 pupils had enrolled in educational programmes (MoEST, 2005, p8). This implies that over 90% children with special needs and disabilities are at home. Some of the children enrol in school when they are 8 years and above and this implies that they become adults before completing their primary education (MoEST, 2005; Adagi and Odipo, 1997). However, Mukuria and Korir (2006) in a study seeking societal perceptions of individuals with emotional and behavioural difficulties from special education teachers, social workers, administrators and teacher education students at a university in Kenya (sample number not given) assert that it would appear that…

'The rights of children with disabilities in relation to access to educational opportunities are non-existent…' (Ibid, 2006, p50).

Other reports (ADEA, 2012; MoE, 2009 and KESSP, 2005) verify that special schools and units in primary schools only cater for children with hearing, visual, mental or physical challenges. This means that not all children said to have SEN are included; yet the government avows to have '*…changed to inclusive education through regular schools…'* (MoEST, 2005, p49). Children such as the gifted and talented, those with autistic spectrum disorder, those with multiple handicaps, specific learning difficulties and communication disorders are left out.

There are further challenges relating to provision of education and training which highlight the lack of reliable data on children with special needs, inadequate tools and skills in identification and assessment and curriculum not adapted to meet the SEN of pupils (ADEA, 2012; MoE, 2009; MoEST, 2005; KESSP, 2005).

Lack of reliable data about disabled children is problematic and is, as posited by Miles and Singal (2010), to a great extent related to the challenge posed by the absence of standardised definitions of disability and lack of prevalence or incidence rates. Exploring teachers' opinions about inclusion of these children in the mainstream classroom is hoped to elucidate this situation. In an educational world that is endeavouring to be inclusive, the diverse curriculum needs of children with special needs and disabilities as stressed by Millar and Morton (2007) need to be explored more fully to avoid a continued disadvantage.

The reports on access, quality and relevance of education contain general information without highlighting specific analysis on special education. This may be confirmed by the way the government presents the baseline data on education matters, for example, on specific targets like enrolment rates, completion rate, and achievement of a transition rate from primary to secondary. Sessional paper number 1 of 2005 (MoEST, 2005) outlined short, medium and long term sector targets which included the attainment of universal primary education by 2005 and education for all by 2015. Some specific targets were set: primary school net enrolment rate (NER) of 100 % by 2015; completion rate of 100 % by 2010; achievement of a transition rate of 70% from primary to secondary school level by 2008; a 50% NER in Early Childhood Education (ECDE) by 2010; gender parity at primary and secondary by 2015; and achievement of a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2010. Most education reports or targets focus on gender and not broken down to demonstrate how the overall primary school objectives impact SNE.

It is important for the government to involve relevant stakeholders while producing these targets. Having arbitrary goals and targets is what the government has been doing since independence. A change in terms of improving

educational learning should be emphasised. This implies the contexts and time period with adequate and measurable checks in place to follow up progress and check accountability in all areas. Acquisition of data to implement the targets should be key in the effecting change in educational learning at all levels.

Hayes (2003 p11) states that there are persistent 'silences' in terms of who is disadvantaged because 'students are not simply girls or boys' neither are 'disabled children just disabled'. Omitting children with disabilities from such lists, (Hayes, 2003) indicates a persistent silence in the broader discourses of education and this might continue despite the best intentions of those who aim to be inclusive. Its uniqueness is based on the needs of an individual child and not the entire student population.

The issues of access, quality and relevance have been recurring in Kenyan government reports (ADEA, 2012; MoE, 2009; MoEST, 2005; KESSP, 2005) but these reports do not highlight what specifically has been done in relation to the children said to have SEN. That is, what the parameters are to assess quality and relevant education and what outcomes or goals and standards are envisaged for individual children said to have SEN. Therefore, it is important to explore how teachers view SEN in this respect.

It is important to highlight that the figures across several government documents as well as other sources are inconsistent and where other reliable sources have similar data, like the World Bank, this was supplemented. Lack of reliable data from the MoE was also reported in the JICA (2012) Report mentioned in Chapter two.

3.2.7 Conducive and safe environment – health and safety (adaptation of facilities)

Objective:

> *To enhance provision of accessible, safe and friendly learning environment and facilities for learners with special needs* (MoE, 2009 p24)

The definition of the term 'integration' in the Kenya SNE Policy (MoE, 2009, p5) denotes that pupils with or without special needs are taught together under the 'Least Restrictive Environment' (LRE). This mandate requires that children said to have SEN have access to the general education classroom to the maximum extent possible, unless the nature and severity of a child's disability would not permit them to do so or unless the child would not benefit even with the provision of alternative elements (Lindsay, 2004). The KG has also signed documents (UNCRPD, 2006; UN, Enable, 2008) signifying full and effective participation of people and children with disabilities respectively. According to the Constitution of Kenya (2010) Article 43 Section 1 (f) and Article 54 Section 1 (b) affirm the right to education for every person, persons with disabilities, minorities as well as the marginalized. In addition, Article 55 (a) also mandates the state to take measures as affirmative action to ensure citizens access relevant education and training.

However, following the introduction of the FPE in 2003, the notable increases in primary school enrolments created additional pressure on existing infrastructure which at the same time was in generally poor condition due to lack of investment capital, poor construction standards and inadequate maintenance during the 1990's recession and World Bank Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) as explained in Section 2.1.16. There is a shortage of permanent classrooms especially in poor communities, both in the rural and urban areas and especially in the Arid and Semi Arid lands (ASAL) as well as the urban slums (ADEA, 2012; Oketch et al., 2011; KESSP, 2005). The sharp increases in numbers caused numerous unfavourable situations like overcrowding in the classrooms resulting in poor conditions that are not conducive to good learning environments (ADEA, 2012; JICA, 2012; MoE, 2009; KESSP, 2005; MoEST, 2005). On the other hand, a limited number of primary schools serving populations in isolated rural areas as well as those living in low-income areas and within large urban centres experience similar problems. Further complications are caused by inappropriate infrastructure, inadequate facilities and lack of equipment. Case studies by Kendall and O'Gara (2007) on primary schools and vulnerable children in Kenya,

Malawi and Zimbabwe showed that: '*these schools have not re-organised or built capacity to meet the needs of children said to have SEN…*' (Ibid 2007, p5)

Environment is a facet argued by the International Classification of Function, Disability and Health (WHO, 2001) to significantly modify participation and achievement. Fundamental elements of an environment include physical, forms of support, relationships, attitudes, services, systems and policies within a particular context. Guidelines established for the general environment and or features of the school and classrooms for children said to have SEN may pertain to different aspects such as physical layout, use of different aspects including: lighting, noise levels, stationery, equipment, tactile and audio features, Braille, working spaces, furniture adequate for the diverse needs of the individual children said to have SEN (Brown, Packer and Passmore, 2013). Other aspects may include features depending on the government's expenditure; but not excluding those that meet the needs of individual children. The allocation of time, support and resources depend on the needs of the individual child. Elements worth considering may also include the services of associated health professionals, teaching assistants and appropriate accommodation. The policy recognises the inadequacy of the existing aspects but little is known about the guiding principles of the environment for children said to have SEN. The Directorate of Basic Education and Quality Assurance and Standards departments are responsible for initiating a system on preparedness which should ensure that all children are aware of safety issues and may need to collaborate with different government bodies to improve this service.

The state of the classes in primary schools is highlighted by Pontefract and Hardman (2005) in a study which addressed the role of classroom discourse in supporting children's learning in Kenyan Primary Schools in two districts. The methods used included interviews with 27 teachers teaching English, Mathematics and Science and a survey questionnaire (n=359) for teachers. Although this study is not based on SEN it was found to be important in the description of the classroom situation since these are the same classrooms where children said to have SEN learn. Pontefract and Hardman (2005) stress that the classes lack the

essential resources and are overcrowded while Mutua and Dimitrov (2001) highlight the fact that there are no adaptations made for the children said to have SEN.

However, the reports have not discussed how teachers in public primary schools endeavour to have a learning environment that is conducive for children said to have SEN, which is one of the aspects to be explored in this study. The MoE states that it will collaborate with the Ministry of Health (MoH) to:

> *'Ensure that learners with SNE and disabilities are provided with regular treatment and medicine to preserve or improve their level of functioning'* … *'Provide clinical services towards prevention and treatment of disability conditions'* (MoE, 2009 p25).

Poor health has been shown (Glennerster et al 2011) to impede educational access, attainment, and achievement for students in developing countries. Researchers (Wachira and Martin, 2011) aver that the resources available to the MoH cannot match the demand for the service, while Oyaya and Rifkin (2003) pronounced that 70% of Ministry of Health funding in Kenya is allocated to staff salaries leaving scarce resources for the operational and strategic service delivery role of the government. It is agreed that (Wachira and Martin, 2011; Oyaya and Rifkin, 2003) problems of poor infrastructure and lack of accountability and co-ordination afflict the effective functioning of the health sector.

3.2.8 Specialized facilities and technology

Objective

> *'To support learners with special needs and disabilities access affordable assistive devices and advanced technological systems'* (Kenya SNE Policy, MoE, 2009 p25).

Teachers should not only access specialized facilities and educational resources but also build capacity. Zhushu (2010) asserts that teachers' skills on computer operations and other specialised facilities should be developed in an on-going manner. The Taskforce on the re-aligning of the education sector with the Constitution, (2010) and Vision 2030, (MoE, 2012) has proposed revised costs for children with SEN considering different categories, which have shown KES 18,000 as the lowest cost and over KES40,000 as the highest for each child per

year (ADEA, 2012). With this ADEA (2012) stresses that the figure for the amount given to children said to have SEN has been revised to KES 2,000. This is a hallmark given the challenges the Kenyan government has to deal with. However, the revised figure is not reflected in the MoE documents. The Kenya National Survey of People with Disabilities (KNSPWD, 2008) indicates that there is a shortage of assistive devices which includes hearing aids, Braille, wheelchairs and crutches. Using special facilities and technology enables children said to have SEN to access a wide range of learning resources which may lead to improved engagement and innovative ways of engaging children.

3.2.9 Curriculum Development

Objective:

> '*To develop a diverse and flexible curriculum that meets varied needs and learning environment of learners with special needs and disabilities*' (MoE, 2009 p 27).

The country follows a strictly academic curriculum with examinations at the end of primary school. The Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) is the chief curriculum developer for all education sectors except the university. The MoE reports that KIE has developed a:

> '…pre-*school curriculum for children with visual impairment (VI) and (VI) and hearing impairment, developmental and independent living skills syllabus for learners with VI, perceptual training, communication and mathematical skills syllabuses for learners with mental handicaps, foundation syllabus for learners who are blind, certificate curriculum for SNE teachers and various Diploma curricula in SNE…*' (*MoE, 2009, p 27)

From the above quotation, not all children are represented, which raises more questions on the failure to include all children. This implies that:

'*It will not be possible to implement EFA or inclusive education if some children continue to be invisible or overlooked*' (Miles and Singal, 2006, p5).

It is important to ensure the different curricula prepared by the KIE are implemented by the teachers and that teachers are supported to do so. The MoE may need to revise some of the terminologies to reflect the social model.

However, this may depend on the socio-cultural practices of specific societies. Awareness creating campaigns have been necessary in advanced Western societies to ensure that teachers develop appropriate attitudes to Special Needs children and understand the principles of curriculum modification and adjustment. (Florian and Linklater, 2010). It is likely that such professional endeavours would advance the cause in Kenya; as has been said earlier, too little is known about the way teachers in Kenyan primary schools view SEN to remain sanguine about their ability to identify cases where curriculum modification is required. The MoE states that by the time the SNE curricula is ready, new changes may have taken place in the same curriculum which makes the SNE learners lose out on their learning.

'… *These delays make the students lag behind in the syllabus implementation which adversely affects their performance in schools…*' (MoE, 2009, p27)

The MoE notes also that:

> '*... Currently, there are six types of special institutions catering for three major categories of disabilities leaving out more than three quarters of learners with special needs and disabilities without a curriculum to address their needs...*'(Ibid, 2009, p27).

The curriculum strategies are dominated by the KIE and Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC). In a country working towards inclusion, failure to fully investigate the diverse curriculum needs of children with disabilities leads to a continued disadvantage in learning. This suggests a '*persistent silence in the broader discourses of education*' (Hayes, 2003p11)

In Kenya, the move to broad social inclusion and the incorporation of the idea that difference is accepted and respected on a national level has many hurdles. This is due to the different tribes, traditions, cultures and their attitudes towards children, especially those said to have SEN. Traditional discourses of disability represent the '*deep structures of theories, values, assumptions and beliefs … of educational practices*' (McDonnell, 2003, p261). Currently, the expert and medical discourses appear to dominate practices. As noted earlier, the move to a more social-ecological theoretical model of explanation and hence pedagogy will require time to be embedded.

3.2.10   Capacity Building and Human Resources Development

Objective:

'To facilitate provision of effective and efficient professional and support services to learners with special needs and disabilities in institutions of learning/training.'

The MoE acknowledges that there is a shortage of specialist SNE teachers and other personnel such as: '…*teacher-support, house mothers and fathers, sign language interpreters, physiotherapists and readers'* (MoE, 2009 p29).

Moreover, the ADEA (2012) (MoE, 2009; MoEST, 2005; KESSP, 2005) state that many teachers lack the capacity to handle children with special needs; there is lack of co-ordination among service providers, inappropriate placement of children with disabilities, inadequate and expensive teaching and learning materials and inadequate supervision and monitoring of special education programmes. Moreover, little is known of the ways in which teachers view SEN and how they plan curriculum experiences for children with learning difficulties. Teachers should be considered to be important in ensuring quality and relevant education.

The above objective does not statewhat is effective and efficient professional support services and for which category of disability. Capacity Building and Human Resources Development may not only include and relate to professional and support services as indicated. The situation seems to suggest key changes in the education of special education as marked by the different national and international agreements and documents the Kenyan government has signed and shown commitment to, which also imply major reforms. The question is what needs to be changed and what can the government afford to ensure sustainability of SNE practices. This may call for, among other aspects: evaluation of the education system (Daniels, 2010), construction of standards (Erickson, 1998; accountability and assessment of standards (King and Newmann, 2001; Erickson, 1998; Newmann King and Rigdon 1997). Additional strategies for school improvement may also include: curriculum development, organizational restructuring and professional development for teachers as emphasized by (Hardman, McDonnell and Welsh, 1998; Newmann, King and Rigdon (1997).

However, it is the participation of every teacher in identifying and taking stock of barriers and challenges to learning in collaboration with other stakeholders that is likely to lead to the identification of a common ground which may contribute to working towards a common direction. Since teachers are in more direct and sustained contact with students and control what is taught (Hardman, McDonnell and Welsh, 1998) within a specific environment, it is important that they are involved in establishing new and better ways of increasing students' learning and establishing high standards (King and Newmann, 2001; Massell, 2000).

The Kenya SNE Policy also mentions the Resource teacher (p5) without the corresponding role of the resource room. In order to gain insight into how teachers view SEN in public primary schools it was critical for the researcher to explore what happens between the teacher and the pupils in the day-to-day classroom and what SNE policies the government espouses.

In 2003 there were 4,225 SEN teachers and the population of children said to have SEN was estimated at 1.8m. Applying the 10% prevalence rate would imply that the Teacher pupil teacher ratio (TPR) would be 1:422. Such a high TPR is contrary to the already mentioned government's acceptable level which is 1:40. However, the TPR for SNE was not provided but the goal is to have one teacher in each school. It appears that TPR has continued to rise and there were only 20% of teachers in the special needs education programme. (http://www.Kenyadeafnet.ort/content/view/79/138).

On the other hand, the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) endorses that the number of teachers falls short by 70,420. The Kenyan government restricted the number of teachers to 235,000 following the World Bank SAP in the 1990s. The restriction was lifted in 2007 (KESSP, 2009; MoE, 2007). Special programmes or special schools are still far from adequate in the provision of education and training for this target (MoEST, 2005 p50). However, the Kenyan government set up measures to improve access, quality and relevant education through an

education investment programme strategy for five years (ADEA, 2012; KESSP, 2005) for, among other things:

- In-service teacher training from regular and special schools
- Training assessment for teachers
- Developing flexible curriculum to cater for special needs
- Sign language.
- Developing modules for teacher training colleges.

However, a Basic Education Sector Analysis Report prepared by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA, 2012) for 13 sub-Saharan countries including Kenya analysed existing education documents, international documents on education, conducted field surveys for government agencies, international partners and organisations and visited schools. This report pointed out that the lecturers in the pre-service and in-service training lack capacity, a comprehensive framework and insufficient coordination. In-service courses were infrequent and courses not well prepared (Kenya Institute of Education (KIE, 2011a), where training is expensive with incompetent resource persons and all the diverse needs of the teachers were not addressed (MOE, 2009a). This raises the question of whether or not teachers are involved in the education reforms and work together to determine key factors that affect student achievement and address barriers to learning in collaboration with other stakeholders (Daniels, et al., 2012). The KIE has been cited in different places in this policy as the sole body dealing with the curriculum. It is important to improve teachers' knowledge and skills but it is equally important to ensure that best practices are established. The purpose of this study is to try to understand what SNE training is accessible to the teachers as well as understand how teachers meet the needs of children said to have SEN.

Furthermore, the Kenya SNE Policy gave the insufficient number of teachers as the major limitation affecting capacity building (MoE, 2009, p29). However Glennerster et al (2010) pronounced that there was inadequate money to employ teachers graduating from the national system of teacher-training colleges. Education International (2007) reported that the TSC pays some teachers a special allowance which ADEA (2012) declared as 10% of the basic pay to some SNE

teachers (the number of teachers was not given). Despite there being teachers from three universities graduating with a degree certificate, the policy states that:

'*SNE teachers do not have established promotional structure or scheme of service and this could be the reason given for them to opt out of the service after trainin*g' (Kenya SNE Policy, MoE, 2009, p29).

Evidence from different researchers seems to highlight the nature of classroom practices in primary schools, for example, Pontefract and Hardman (2005) asserted that whole-class teaching is prevalent; while Ackers et al (2009) noted repetition and choral answers as some of the teaching approaches. However, child-centred strategies are well known to meet the unique individual needs of children said to have SEN. Hence, one of the aims in this study is to establish h what strategies teachers use to meet the needs of children said to have SEN. *(*Berkhout and Wielemans, 1999). Teachers' applied

> *'…ability to influence education policy is equally restricted by their limited access to resources, their exclusion rendering them 'voiceless' (*Berkhout and Wielemans, 1999, p408).

It is envisaged that the participants in this present study will give a 'voice' to the teachers and provide needed information on the training required to support the government's aspirations for SNE. Since the government spends a large proportion of the government budget on teachers' salaries, it would be sensible to retain them in the profession. Consequently, there is a general agreement that motivation is one of the key elements associated with quality education, yet research evidence on the aspect of understanding teachers' ability to do their job effectively is normally neglected (Watkins, 2000). Similarly, the social context of teachers, their attitudes and their working conditions are complex, interrelated and need to be understood. There is no clear picture of what motivates or what de-motivates teachers or teachers' job satisfaction in developing countries (VSO, 2002). This study forms a basis on which this may be researched.

The Human Resource Development issue in schools among other aspects may determine how teachers view schools and education, find their work meaningful, relate and interrelate and work together to achieve specific outcomes. This aspect is not adequately covered under this policy. Hence the aim of this study is to

explore how teachers view SNE. On the whole, it is vital that teachers demonstrate ways to facilitate collaborative and trusting relationships with other teachers (Daniels, 2010) parents, and professionals to advance their teaching skills and provide different forums and networks for them to consider key factors that affect student achievement within a given environment. McGregor (2003) asserts that relationships in schools are dynamic with interconnecting networks of practice which extend beyond what is variably conceded as the institution.

The Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) and MoEST (2004) affirmed that Kenya has been '*exporting teachers to neighbouring countries such as Sudan, Rwanda and Seychelles' (*Education International, 2007, p38). The aspects affirmed by JICA (2012), (World Bank, 2011; MOE, 2009; KNUT and MoEST, 2004) above cast doubts on how the Ministry of Education demonstrates attention to the human resource issue. Some of the issues also tend to have an implication on the risk of financial management of the government (JICA, 2012, World Bank, 2011), a scope that is beyond this study but which affects the entire 'topography' of the teachers' world in different ways.

3.2.11 Participation and Involvement

Objectives:

> '*To promote participation of learners with special needs and other key stakeholders in decision making on matters that affect their education*' (Kenya SNE Policy, MoE, 2009, p29).

The government has declared affirmative action that vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of persons are actively involved in policy and governance issues. However, neither the learners with special needs and disabilities nor their parents and members of the schools are mentioned as stakeholders. The Association for the Physically Disabled of Kenya (APDK) is active in Kenya and most members are adults. It is not clear from the MoE data how many children said to have SEN are members of this association. The policy highlights that sometimes learners with special needs and disabilities are marginalized and are not represented in management and decision making processes (MoE, 2009, p30). The learners have also not been actively involved in recreational activities due to inaccessibility and

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unsuitable facilities.   This is a contradiction because researchers (Muga, 2003; Mutua and Elhoweris, 2001) have asserted that parents are not aware of some of the available services for their children.

The policy has stipulated the formation of clubs and associations, employment decision issues that concern them. None of the issues mentioned relate to the children said to have SEN and disabilities having a choice on how, or what they learn or what sports or facilities their school should provide. The community is mentioned but not in the form of a support group working with these children. The roles of the school and parents seem to have been sidelined. Parents and schools need to be supported in fostering more inclusive practices (Ainscow, 1997).

More research to establish how the children said to have SEN are involved in decision making processes would expound on these details. It is also not clear what representation is in place to ensure that the vulnerable children and the parents understand and assent to the activities. It is therefore envisioned that this study will elucidate some of the challenges teachers face.

3.2.12 Advocacy and Awareness Creation

Objective:

> *'To advocate and create awareness among stakeholders on the needs and issues affecting learners with special needs and disabilitie*s' (Kenya SNE Policy MoE, 2009 p32)

> The MoE shall '*educate stakeholders on the legal and social rights of learners with special needs and disabilities*' (Ibid, 2009, p32).

There is no clarity on how the stakeholders will disseminate the legal and rights to knowledge of the children said to have SEN whilst the curriculum does not include such a subject. Similarly, the stakeholders meet twice a year and it is not clear whether they meet the children. The stakeholders meet twice a year, or when the need arises, to: develop and produce training modules and reference materials, train education officers and train trainers, prepare induction and create awareness among field officers, parents and communities (KESSP, 2005). The

policy recognises that lack of awareness about issues surrounding learners with special needs and disabilities by service providers, policy makers and the community at large is a common problem (Kenya SNE Policy, (MoE, 2009 p30). Although the policy highlights that the '*media has an important role in sensitizing the public on the needs and rights of persons with special needs and disabilities' (p31),* establishing how many children access the media communication is a hurdle. Depending on the media chosen, those with visual or hearing impairments may not benefit.

The Children's Act (2001) in Kenya is the main legal document stipulating the rights and responsibilities of a child, the role of parents and government in promoting and protecting the rights of the child. However, children said to have SEN need to be safeguarded. The policy does not mention how to work out ways to empower and work with the parents to give them a voice. Having ethical guidelines to enable such awareness needs to be researched.

3.2.13 Partnerships and Collaboration

Objective

> '*To establish new and strengthen existing partnerships and collaborations in special needs education among all stakeholders'*

Different working relationships develop between schools, community groups in different regions (Peters, 2003) or even countries depending on the systems. These relationships may be involved in developing strategies and can lead to successful collaborations with strong relationships among the school and community group, facilitating interactions while exploring innovative solutions to identified problems. This may lead to the promotion of minimum standards relating to how certain projects will be done in future. The school, parents and the community need to work out ways of effecting changes in the school, home and community or environment (Tikly, 2011). These groups share a vision of change. They may review ways of implementing the school policy. They may instigate checks and balances for the school and the environment. Research evidence also asserts that:

> *'...students, parents and the community's involvement contribute significantly to the effectiveness of values education since children learn and develop beliefs, values and norms from their family and immediate community environments...'*(Raihani ,2011 p,116).

For schools to effectively initiate and sustain such a shift where school-wide changes challenge the traditional school systems and emphasise individual student's learning, this would imply a positive step towards inclusion. However, this policy states that *'Parental and family support in terms of health, nutrition and provision of learning resources for children with special needs and disabilities is important...'*(p32).

Subsequently, there are mitigating factors such as isolation, ignorance, lack of representation, entitlements or access to the necessary services in addition to poverty that may hinder some parents from participating, which is highlighted as a constraint (p32). However, in Lesotho, parents contributed as equal partners with teachers by sharing on how to manage their children and giving talks about their experiences in teacher seminars and in-service training (Stubbs, 2008).

An inclusive environment implies that the diverse needs of all involved are met and all are respected. Inclusive education is emphasized as a philosophy based on the rights of all individuals (Peters, 2007) and opportunities are equal. Guidelines and/or procedures specifying the roles of all involved in the partnership would help to '...*avoid wastage and duplication'* (MoE, 2009, p32) as stated in this policy. Partnership and collaboration involves the entire education system not only the poor parents. The support resources, projects and community as well as government participation including parents' involvement in activating the change within the education system would provide a clear picture of SEN initiatives in this respect. Training and support should be given to project leaders as well as Psychologists, Therapists and other personnel whose services are needed for children said to have special needs and disabilities. Exploring how teachers view SEN would contribute to this picture.

3. 2.14 Gender Mainstreaming in Special Needs Education

Objective

> *'To enhance gender mainstreaming in SNE programmes at all levels and to ensure increased enrolment, participation and completion rates for both girls and boys, men and women with special needs and disabilities in education'(Kenya SNE, MoE, 2009, p32).*

The tradition of favouring boys runs deep in the African culture Aikman, Hali and Rubagiza (2011); Reiser, 2006; Mutua and Elhoweris, 2000; Abagi and Odipo, 1997).   Using the same parameters to bring out the disparities, say in enrolment, performance, and completion rates especially when they are presented as a comparison with those for the entire school population seems to perpetuate the gap. As Lewis and Lockheed (2007), state, other aspects on the demand side need to be highlighted. For example, physical facilities, number of schools within the locality, curriculum, safety, environment (Stubbs, 2008) and focusing on all individual risk factors, equal participation and overall vulnerability associated with the external environment. It is important for girls to reach their educational potential since this has an effect on the overall development. Girls' education is significant for economic and social development (Lewis and Lockheed, 2007). The World Bank (2001) stressed that there is a positive link between gender equality in educational attainment and economic development. Enrolments in primary education have become universal and it is argued that (Lewis and Lockheed, 2007) this has shifted the attention from development effects to primary and secondary school completion as well the quality of what has been learnt in school.

The SNE policy confirms that despite *'the rapid growth in education over the last 40 years, the SNE sub-sector has lagged behind'* (p 32). The policy also confirms that:

> *'The community and society in general has a negative attitude towards people with special needs. The situation is worse for the girl child with special needs and disabilities…'* (p32).

More data highlighting the prevalence and incidence rates of learning difficulties, other population sub-groups as well as carefully targeting this data on a regular

basis to elucidate what needs to be done to raise the standards of living and education for children said to have SEN especially girls would be more pertinent and calls for more research.

3.2.15 Research and documentation

Objective

> *'To promote research, documentation and information sharing in Special Needs Education' (Kenya SNE, MoE, 2009, p34).*

For education research to effectively contribute to the improvement of policy and practice and meet international human development needs in the next century, Herriot et al. (2002) assert that it is crucial for all partners at all levels of government to criticize and contribute to the research process. This is also stressed in this policy. The MoE highlights that it shall collaborate with partners while undertaking and providing an enabling environment for research development, documentation and information sharing in the Kenya SNE Policy (MoE, 2009, p34). It may be argued that identifying partners implies gaining an understanding and responding to the differences between them for example with parents. Herriot et al (2002) also argue that growing interest in collaborative research partnerships signifies the development of new relationships and possibilities for knowledge generation. This is considered a major challenge especially in the national and global arena where influence of funding agencies is linked to economic and political criteria and orientations.

The policy however, also confirms that:
> *'there is inadequate research in SEN and the Kenyan government has not actively generated knowledge and manipulation of original and emerging innovations in the field of special needs and disabilities' (MoE, 2009 p34).*

Limitations facing research and development include: lack of effective co-ordination between various actors, limited research funding, inadequate systems for dissemination and utilization of research findings and lack of up to date research bank inventories (JICA, 2012; SACMEQ, 2010). The issue of lack of data would also exacerbate some of the failure to update the Education Management Information system (EMIS) for one year due to the official in-charge

travelling abroad for studies as highlighted in the JICA (2012) Report. Oduol (2006) suggests that different cases of education problems associated with FPE situations in Kenya have led to hurried decisions that have been inadequate and inappropriate. However, there has been some progress in moving towards using evidence-based research for policy in education (Nzomo, 2005) although this should be a continuous process. Education conditions deteriorate when funding is not available and adversely continues to affect quality of education in primary schools, especially during the Free Primary Education (FPE) initiatives (SACMEQ, 2010; Somerset, 2007; Sifuna, 2007). This still calls for sustained research to underscore the impacts on children said to have SEN.

Recent educational reforms (Darling-Hammond, 2006) prescribe the need for teachers to be well prepared to deal with the changing roles and responsibilities, diverse needs of individual learners and additional resources. Concomitantly the same reforms the Kenyan government has ratified, stipulate the need for teachers to account for the outcomes of all children said to have SEN. The purpose of this research is to explore how teachers view SNE in public primary schools in Kenya.

3.2.16 Other Objectives

The inclusive education objective was discussed in sections (3.15 to 3.1.10). Some of the objectives, numbers (13 to 15) in Table 8, were considered to contain overlapping issues which appear to be implied in other objectives. For example, disaster preparedness could also be covered under a conducive environment and health and safety. The policy highlights issues such as '*collapsing buildings due to tremors and/or poor construction, flooding and accidents*'… (Kenya SNE Policy (MoE, 2009, p35). These occurrences are likely to happen in any environment including schools. Similarly, this policy highlights some of the consequences of similar occurrences on children said to have SEN:

> '*The negligence of learners with special needs and disabilities by those concerned with their care exposes them to immense suffering during emergencies, conflicts and disasters*' (Ibid, 2009, p35).

A field study describing the lives of people with disabilities sponsored by the World Bank (2007) 'See me, and do not forget me, People with disabilities in

<u>Kenya'</u> (Ingstad and Grunt, 2007) was conducted during two weeks of May/June 2005 and two weeks of October 2006 (91 interviews in 10 districts were conducted and described the state of the buildings):

> *'The construction and building environments pose many difficulties in physically accessing public buildings, roads and other infrastructure to persons with physical impairments. Building codes, physical planning laws and standards are unresponsive to the needs of the disabled* (Ingstad and Grunt, 2007 p15.)

This raises issues of legislation relating to children said to have SEN.

The policy is silent on the rights of the child as stipulated by the Children's Act, 2001 and the Persons with Disabilities Act (2003) among other documents the Kenyan government has ratified, not least the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons (1975) and Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). These documents highlight that the same rights apply to all irrespective of their impairments or environments.   The strategies are also silent on the immediate action to benefit the parent. Further research and collaboration with different local agencies and universities on the production of alternative devices, facilities and equipment may be explored.

The objectives on resource mobilization and Guidance and Counselling would be covered under capacity building and human resource. Guidance and Counselling relates to inadequacy in specially trained teachers, skilled counsellors and specialists (Wamochu, Karugu and Nwoye, 2008; Njoka, 2007; O'Gara, 2007).

3.2.17 Learning points

- It is vital to compare and analyse the effectiveness of the past and present policies in order to choose the best option. This is an aspect stressed by Kitamura (2009). The best option is determined by feasibility, affordability and/or desirability.
- The evaluation process should involve different stakeholders at different levels including those affected and those effecting it. The implemented policies should be monitored and evaluated for feedback to future policy making and should benefit all levels. While policies are being drawn,

monitoring and evaluation systems should be in place, as well as a clear timeframe for evaluation. Interventions need to be demand driven not donor driven since problems will ensue when the project ends (Alexander, 2001).

- Continuous reliance on research is important to push innovation in all fields forward and to identify new and different ways of embracing change.

- The implied changes should be related to relevance within the framework of the SNE policy. Although the policy has stated that the key target is to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by 2015 it is difficult to know how the Ministry or other stakeholders will know the progress because the targets are rather generalised and not specific to time and are not measurable. Effective targets will be very clear on what they will do and by when. Similarly, no budget figures are given. Sometimes some actions might not require financial resources but a different way of doing things. The policy will be evaluated in five years. Since policies are constantly evolving, periodic evaluations would reflect any changes or improvements as they are being implemented. Therefore, some objectives may require short, medium or long term targets.

However, this may be considered a laudable endeavour for the Kenyan government (KG) to have put a policy together as it is a document which forms the basis of the operation systems in Special Education. Suffice to say, there may be benefits from further reflection, re-examination, synchronising and revision of the different parts against the current legal provisions in Kenya pertaining to the child, parent and society at large. Inputs from schools, teachers, children, and multi-disciplinary teams need to be considered vital and in-depth analysis to compare the policy with the different national and international agreements has to be carried out in a bid to achieve universal primary education. This may imply initiating a process of monitoring and evaluating the current practices against the intended education reform(s) reflected in the MDGs of 2015.

Summary of this Chapter

Most of the SNE policy objectives seem to overlap and are dominated by issues of capacity building and human resource development, funding and inadequate access and participation, provision of support services, facilities, equipment coupled with lack of specific responsibilities and accountability for government organisations dealing with SNE.   A lack of data and follow up systems are predominant. The MoE is responsible for all objectives but no specific body to push SNE forward. The KIE is responsible for all curriculum matters without necessarily mentioning any auxiliary department(s) to collaborate with.   There are no representatives or organisations assigned duties to empower the children said to have SEN or their parents; leaving advocacy matters unattended.

Schools appear to have the sole responsibility of the overall issues pertaining to the children said to have SEN. Important issues raised by the commissions of education in the 1960's have not been implemented. For example, causes of disabilities in 1976, district level teams 1988, and Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training (TIQET 1999). Teacher training is not tailored to meet the individual needs of children said to have SEN coupled with the lack of a common language to address children said to have SEN. The overall school commitment to inclusion is not evident and the systems and services integrated in this policy are currently insufficient to meet the standards set by the international as well Kenyan government documents. The definition of terminologies is also confusing. This policy highlights that Kenya follows an inclusive as well as an integrative system.   As mentioned earlier, one of the aims of this study is to explore the teachers' views about inclusion. So this will be interrelated.

From what is previously indicated, once there is a framework in which to develop an SNE policy within Kenya, it is still the case that many of the terms employed and the methods used remain unclear due to the lack of definition. Similarly, the interpretation of the policy by teachers in schools has not been prioritized and in consequence, teachers in schools will not inevitably understand even if they have access to the policy. Therefore the purpose of this study, as has been said before,

is to try to understand how teachers view issues around SEN in the light of a policy framework which is less than clear.

The following chapter provides a discussion on the process of undertaking this study which involves the methodology and methods that have facilitated an in-depth understanding of SNE through the meaning brought by the teachers.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion and critique of the methods and methodological context for the research study in order to answer the research questions. A discussion of the research approach, design and strategy are given including a consideration of the appropriateness of the survey method. The research process and limitations of the study are also provided. The key research questions are explained below. As a response to the current teaching conditions and issues raised about SEN in the literature review, it is evident that there is a paucity of SEN research in Kenya. This study aims to explore how teachers view SEN in public primary schools and it is expected that the data collected will facilitate future research.

4.2 Research Questions

Research questions should reflect the peculiarities of a study (Maxwell, 2005). They help to define a specific area of a more or less complex field which researchers regard as essential (Flick, 2009). Research questions serve as a guide that helps to point towards specific areas of theory and assist in designing the study and they are listed in Table 9 below. The key research questions, as set out in chapter one, and identified in the literature review, provide the focus for this study. Through the literature review it was possible to assert that in Kenya there are special education initiatives towards the national goal of Equality for All (EFA) by 2015. The research questions have been used to establish the actual case relating to how teachers view SEN in public primary schools in Kenya, the investigated phenomenon.

Table 9: Key Research Questions

	Question	Method	Analysis
1.	What SNE policies does the Kenyan government espouse?	Documentary Analysis	Documentary Analysis
2.	What strategies do teachers use in order to meet the SEN of pupils?	Questionnaires and interviews	Thematic analysis and adapted approach for questionnaires
3.	What are teachers' views about inclusion?	Questionnaires and interviews	Same as question 2.
4.	What SNE training is accessible to teachers?	Questionnaires and interviews	Same as question 2

4.3 Philosophical stance, epistemology and ontology

The theoretical perspective behind this research is based on the assumptions made about the reality brought to research work (Crotty, 1998) and is the philosophical stance that informs the methodology and provides a context for the process, forming the basis for its logic and criteria. For example, it facilitates the understanding of what human knowledge is, what it entails and what status can be attributed to it (Crotty, 1998). Jubas (2010) asserts that methodological decisions reflect epistemological frameworks. He also stresses that decisions

> '…*should also be underpinned by common philosophical and theoretical stances*' (Jubas, Ibid, p224).

On the other hand, he reiterates that there is a connection between theory and methodology and that:

> *Knowledge emerges from the combined endeavours of intellect, emotion, feeling, experience and engagement with the people. Knowledge is also based in the concrete, rather than the abstract, and is developed in a social context'* (Jubas, Ibid, p226).

Researchers want outcomes that merit respect and would like observers to recognise a study as sound research. Conclusions need to stand out, be objective and valid (Creswell, 2007; Silverman, 2011). The outcomes also need to be suggestive and reasonable, with processes laid out for scrutiny by any observer.

The process of this study has enabled a descriptive account of the teachers' views on SEN in public primary schools in Kenya. Epistemology provides a philosophical basis for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how to ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate (Crotty, 1998). In order to understand the research design, it is necessary to explain the researcher's ontological and epistemological stances. Ontology focuses on the reality to be sought to know and epistemology focuses on knowledge. Crotty (1998) explains ontology as the study of being - which is concerned with '…*what is the nature of existence…*?' and '…*the structure of reality...*?' (Ibid, p10). He also explains epistemology as a way of looking at the world and making sense of it which involves knowledge: '*How we know what we know*' (Ibid, p3).

An interpretivist epistemology was chosen in order to explore how teachers view SEN in public primary schools in Kenya. Interpretive research considers a world where reality is socially constructed, complex and open to change. Interpretive researchers endeavour to learn about particular phenomena from people who experience the issues being investigated (Ferguson and Ferguson, 2000). Through teachers' own words during interviews, I gained insight into how they view SEN in public primary schools.

The phenomenological process enhances researchers' access to the participants' world which facilitates description, interpretation and exploration of their implications (Zur and Eisikovits, 2011).

> '*Most phenomenological researchers go to those who have experienced the phenomenon of interest through standard qualitative data collection techniques such as interviews, observations and writings to describe/interpret the phenomenon (Vagle, 2009 p588).*

The interpretive philosophy was significant and allowed me to gain access to the world of the teachers in order to understand their world from their point of view. The teachers' complexities may be considered unique and specific to the individual teachers at different circumstances at any particular time (Creswell, 2007). Interpretive researchers view reality and knowledge as flexible, subjective, multifaceted, contextual and qualitative. I therefore assumed both a relativist and

a subjective view of the world. However, my main goal was to understand how teachers view SEN by analysing the meaning that they associate with the phenomena. An interpretive view addresses essential features of shared meaning and understanding whereas constructivism extends this concern with knowledge as produced and interpreted to an anti-essentialist level. Constructionists argue that knowledge and truth are the result of perspective '*hence all truths are relative to some meaning of context or perspective*' (Schwandt, 1994, p125).

Social interaction is the base for knowledge in trying to understand how others understand their world. Knowledge is constructed by mutual negotiation and it is specific to the situation being investigated (O'Donoghue, 2007). Smith and Lowatt (1991) conclude that the way one proves one knows these things is through either a verbal or written account although often the meaning of such accounts still need to be negotiated between the speaker and the listener or the writer and the reader. All human action is meaningful and hence has to be interpreted and understood within the context of social practices. It follows that understanding of the meanings that create and are created by interaction between human beings is essential to an understanding of the social world and the vast amount of phenomena which it contains.

Phenomenology was chosen as the most appropriate approach to bring this hidden phenomenon to light. This was especially when exploring teachers' experiences from different schools, looking for patterns and recurring entities and finding connections. In this light, phenomenology enabled me to investigate the different ways in which teachers create and use meanings in their work on special education in public primary schools in Kenya. The teachers used their own words to communicate with the researcher. So, I became part of the process as explained in the reflexivity section later in this chapter. I was on a level playing field with the teachers.

> '*Researchers stand within the research process rather than above, before or outside it*' (Charmaz, 2006, p180).

Self reflection is cited as an important aspect in observing with phenomenology. Researchers need to self-reflect about their ontological and epistemological beliefs (Luttrell, 2010) and indeed through the entire research process.

4.4 Methodology and research paradigm

Research methodologies and methods depend on the research study and questions, or the nature of the problems that the researcher's inquiry seeks to answer. Therefore, justifying the choice of methodologies and methods depicts the reality brought to research work (Crotty, 1998). It is important to choose a paradigm most suited to a particular study in order to execute good research (Groenewald, 2004;Luttrell, 2010). A paradigm is a loose collection of logically related assumptions, concepts or propositions that orient thinking and research (Luttrell, 2010). There are various research approaches which fit different epistemologies, theoretical traditions and practices. Different paradigms support different methods of data collection and analysis techniques that in turn cover a range of theoretical and empirical frameworks. Methodologies which are frequently used in human and social science research and fall within a qualitative approach are: phenomenology, ethnography, case study, focus groups, and grounded theory among others (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2008; Creswell, 2007). Positivist and subjectivist views were considered. Scientific positivism, however, is a paradigm which emphasises the objectivity and passivity of the human being (Creswell, ibid)

Positivist research attaches importance to explaining matters by means of '*clear data, specific facts and observable actions*' (Xingping, 2002, p40). An objectivist view is one where understanding and values are considered to be objectified in the people to be studied with a possibility of getting the truth if the right way is used (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2008). The positivist model therefore, does not seem to address the uniqueness of human life. According to the subjectivist ontology, truth or meaning comes into existence when researchers engage with the realities of the world (Mcphail, 1995). It is clear, though, that different people may attribute different meanings to the same phenomena. It is evident that they

also construct meaning in different ways, an aspect which is overlooked by the positivist model.

Crotty (2005) asserts that interpretive epistemology fits with the qualitative paradigm. Therefore it was found suitable for this study. It is the theoretical position that suits practice and method. Interpretive epistemology appeals to qualitative researchers. It involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This study, centred as it is on understanding human experiences, is based upon teachers' actively constructed meaning of their social world which was studied in their natural state the schools, where '*meaning is not discovered but it is constructed*' (Crotty, 1998,p8). So positivism was found not to be suitable for this study. A subjectivist and not objectivist ontological view was therefore adopted. It was important to engage with the teachers in order to explore and understand how they view SEN. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data from the teachers. The elicited meaning facilitated articulation of themes arising from the interaction of the teachers and, to agree with Pring that:

> '*The world researched is affected by the research itself, our knowledge is a "construction", reflecting the world, not as independent of our deliberations but as something constructed by them*' (Pring, 2004, p 44).

The constructed themes formed a good basis for the data analysed in order to answer the research questions. Interview data especially, enabled the construction of themes and articulation of findings from the perspective of the teachers (Broussard, 2006). Therefore, teachers contributed to the construction of meaning. Teachers' consent was sought and issues of confidentiality, withdrawal and anonymity explained before, during and after they participated in the research. Consent was also considered as a continuing process within the researcher and participant relationship rather than a one-off event. I continually ensured that teachers understood the implication of their participation in this study, when distributing questionnaires or conducting interviews. More details of how this was done are discussed in the research process section. To this effect, qualitative research was chosen for this study. To gain knowledge about the teachers'

conceptualisation of SEN, I engaged with the teachers in their school settings: in the urban, municipal and rural settings - natural settings.

Teachers were partners in the generation of meaning. I interacted with the teachers and was able to construct meaning in different ways. For example, different teachers attributed different meanings to the definition of Special Educational Needs (SEN) which made it clear that, in understanding knowledge, different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomena. Different meanings were constructed from the teachers by interacting with them and it was possible to collect data which had a profound impact on the way the research outcomes were conducted and presented. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2004) define meaning as 'a taken-for-granted' assumption in qualitative inquiry that studies meaningful social action '…*cannot be adequately described in purely physical terms*' (Onwuegbuzie and Leech Ibid, p.153). They also assert that, in an attempt to make insights, qualitative researchers tend to seek to construct meaning from their data. '*A significant finding is one that has meaning or representation*' (Ibid, p774). The meanings constructed were analysed as themes which had a bearing on the findings of this study.

Interpretive epistemology informs the theoretical perspective of phenomenology. It is the epistemological position of making meaning through the process of construction of knowledge as we engage in the world we are interpreting (Robinson, 2002). Interaction with teachers in different schools in the urban, municipal and rural settings in Kenya led to the collection of data which was later analysed to unravel the meaning of the phenomena of the teachers' experiences as expressed in the questionnaires and interviews from the different research settings.

By contacting teachers in their natural environments, this researcher obtained descriptive data that facilitated the understanding of the teachers' experiences, which formed a good basis for the data collected for this study. This research used

an interpretive approach to inquiry in order to gain comprehensive insights into how teachers view SEN in public primary schools in Kenya.

The interview schedule and questionnaires used with the teachers were understood as '*interacting with ordinary people in their particular situation*' (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003, p23), whilst also gaining a descriptive account for the study. It is from this interaction with the teachers that enabled the construction of interpretations of the empirical material collected.

> '*Qualitative research insists upon face-to-face, heart-felt encounters between knowing subjects, recognition that each of us is unique in our effort to make sense of ourselves and the world around us*' (Luttrell, 2010, p1).

Teachers were provided with opportunities to disclose their ways of viewing the world. This was done through communication by filling in the questionnaire and interviews. I entered the world of the research sample and got to know them and earn their trust, systematically keeping a detailed research diary. In order to understand how the teachers in public primary schools in Kenya view SEN, I travelled to different schools in Nairobi, Coast, Rift Valley, Central and Eastern provinces and met with the teachers in their own environment. An interview schedule was used to collect data. Interviews were recorded and pseudonyms given to the transcripts to safeguard the confidentiality and anonymity of respondents. More details are provided in the methods section.

Charmaz (2006) asserts that influences from the past, cultural background and other situations shape peoples' view of the world and the meaning of truth. Holloway and Biley (2011) assert that:

> '*Researchers are not tabula rasa - blank slates without any assumptions but like the other participants, they come with their own backpack of pre-conceived ideas usually rooted in th*eir *experiences and culture. The self is an integral part of any study*' (Ibid, 2011, p971).

Qualitative researchers need not only reflect on the complexity of what happened in the field and the possibility of transforming the story into a scholarly piece of work, but the story should also be interesting, original and contribute to the area

of research. Qualitative research was chosen to facilitate the means of exploring the participants' points of view and experiences (Creswell, 2008).

They not only capture reality but also *'condense and represent it'* (Smart, 2010, p6). My study is based on the evidence from the teachers and their meaning is central to this evidence. The participants and the researcher shape the text and make meaning from the text (Creswell, 2008; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Therefore qualitative research is:

> *'a situated activity that locates the observer in the world.*
> *It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes*
> *the world visible …involves an interpretive, naturalistic*
> *approach to the world … qualitative researchers study things*
> *in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to*
> *interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring*
> *to them' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p3).*

The following section underlines the procedure in undertaking this study.

4.5 Preparation and Implementation

This research study has aimed at exploring how teachers view SEN in public primary schools in Kenya. As discussed in the literature review, Kenya is one of the countries that reaffirmed its commitment to the goals of learning and completion of basic education for all. However, like many developing countries Kenya is far from reaching these goals and the challenges inherent in this commitment are overwhelming (Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA, 2005; UNESCO, 2010). The Kenyan government's vision is to acquire the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) by 2015 and it is steered by the understanding that quality education and training contribute to significant economic growth and better employment opportunities. The government also avows that the right to education will be achieved through the provision of inclusive and quality education that is accessible and relevant to all Kenyans (MoEST, 2005).

One of the lessons learnt from ADEA is that inclusive education can be achieved if success in expanding access is combined with success in improving quality. It

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would not be practical to focus on access without significant gains in terms of learning outcomes and without ensuring universal access, with the most likely results being an exacerbation of the unacceptable inequalities already in existence (Verspoor, 2005). Although the government has implemented a policy on Special Needs Education (SNE), there are differences reported in the post colonial section in chapters two and three on the way that quality of education is experienced. So the question still remains how the government plans to achieve universal education. Teachers play a crucial role in providing quality education (Florian and Rouse, 2009; Pearson, 2009) and it has been argued that teachers' attitudes are central to the success of the implementation of inclusive education (Mittler, 2000; Rose, 2001). Hence, the objective of this study is to explore how the teachers view SEN in public primary schools in Kenya.

4.6 Sampling Process

Sampling is an important step in research because it helps to inform the quality of implications emanating from the key findings (Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007). Patton (1990) avers that one of the greatest values of purposive sampling is being able to select cases that are '*information-rich*' (Ibid, 1990, p 169). A sample of schools (n = 27) was selected from different settings in urban, municipal and rural location. It was felt that these settings were '*information-rich'* from which a great deal of issues on Special Needs Education (SNE) in Kenya would be understood and would illuminate the questions in this study in order to understand the relationship between what is said (say through government reports and other researchers) and known by the teachers about SNE in Kenya. Selecting a sample that would enable an understanding of the research phenomenon and the meaning constructed (Merriam, 1999) by the teachers from different schools in urban, municipal and urban settings would provide a realistic experience. The chosen samples enabled the combination of data about the phenomenon from different contexts and reduced the reliance on the already existing information. This experience provided rich data on how teachers make sense of SNE from the world they live in and from their own experiences. This combination provided a realistic experience from the teachers and the unique interactions in different

research sites (Patton, 2002) accumulated rich data which enabled me to gain in-depth understanding of the meaning teachers have constructed and how they make sense of SNE in Kenya. Hence, purposive sampling was chosen. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) maintain that the researcher must resist the temptation to generalise to the wider population where the sample is either too small or insufficient evidence exists regarding its representativeness relating to the context of the study.

Samples were drawn from five of the eight provinces in Kenya. Some schools, in Nairobi and Central provinces, were easy to reach because they were within the vicinity of main towns and accessible from Nairobi where the researcher was based during this study. Considering the financial constraints, timeframe, poor infrastructure and the distances involved in travel, it was considered not feasible to cover all of the eight provinces. The researcher is encouraged to consider feasibility in terms of the resource costs of money and time, practical issues of accessibility and compatibility of the researcher's work style with the sampling strategy (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

As explained in the literature review chapter, there is a paucity of research on SEN in Kenya and I envisage that there is still a need to explore this area in the future. It is my expectation that the data collected in this study is consequential in underpinning future research in Kenya. The procedure for the selection of schools was not aimed at recruiting a representative sample of schools in these regions, but a sample of schools where teachers might be expected and were ready to volunteer in order to share their opinions about SEN in public primary schools with the researcher. The number of schools and teachers participating in this study was low compared to the total number in the country, implying that the results form an inadequate basis for generalisation.

 However, the selection of participants depended on whether they were available, interested and willing to participate in this study. Only questions relating to how teachers view SEN were used in the analysis of the data. Selecting cases for the study is fundamental to a researcher's understanding of the validity of qualitative

research which needs to be addressed rigorously (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). I considered choosing places which made it possible for me to pool evidence from a broader perspective and where rich information was likely to be generated in line with my phenomena (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

> '*Intensive research depends on the collation of thick description', of the phenomena which are conceptually important*' (Curtis et al., 2011, p1003).

The aim of my research was to seek different teachers' opinions in order to understand their points of view, from within the world in which they work (Cohen et al., 2007). The study covered 27 primary schools from five different provinces in Kenya. These schools were drawn from urban (U), municipal (M) and rural (R) areas. The details of the provinces including Nairobi, Rift Valley, Eastern, Central and Coast Provinces are provided in the context chapter. However, the given areas represented a reasonably accessible sample of schools that was in manageable proximity to the main towns; this limitation is a bias against the inaccessible remote areas of Kenya. The infrastructure is poor and some areas of the Western and North Eastern provinces insecure. The Mail delivery service is not door-to-door and is sometimes unreliable especially in the rural areas. Relying on postal questionnaires was not possible because of the infrastructure set up (Mutua and Elhoweris, 2002).The questionnaires were therefore hand delivered by the researcher.

The Director of Education from the Ministry of Education in Nairobi provided a frame of schools in different zones. They selected specific schools from the larger population of schools based on the practical considerations above. The District Education Officers provided a frame for the municipal and rural schools which were in close proximity to the towns where accommodation facilities were available. I could then choose from the frame and approach the head teachers. Having taught in Kenya, I knew a few head teacher*s* and teachers in some schools in this study. This implied that I was relatively familiar with the teaching conditions within Kenya and it was more likely I could get honest responses as posited by Thomas and Thomas (2011) from the participants to enhance this study.

I relied on purposive sampling with an explicit purpose to address my research aim and answer the research questions. This was compatible with the philosophical assumptions about ontology, epistemology and methodology that underpin the research study design (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). The following table shows the different sites for this study.

Table 10: Summary of survey sites

Site Settings	No. of schools	Provinces	No. of schools
Urban	8	Nairobi	8
Municipal	10	Rift Valley	2
Rural	9	Coast	8
Total	27	Eastern	2
		Central	7
		Total	27

4.7 Sample size and response rate

In order to ensure that the sample size was neither too small to make it difficult to collect adequate data for analysis nor too large to have overwhelmingly large data for analysis, the initial distribution was to have twenty questionnaires per school. However, this did not transpire because the actual number of questionnaires for each school depended on the number of teachers who volunteered to fill in the questionnaires and to participate in interview schedules. An adequate sample size is one that is large enough to answer research questions but not so large to prohibit in-depth analysis (Marshall and Rossman, 2001). On the other hand Patton (1990 p184) stresses that '*there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry*' but it depends on the purpose of the inquiry and what will be useful, credible and what can be done within the available time and resources. On this premise, two hundred (n = 200) questionnaires were distributed and 159 were completed and returned. The response rate was thus 80%. A summary of the response rate is shown in table 11 below.

Nine face-to-face structured audio-taped interviews were conducted. The quality of the recording of these interviews proved variable - some interviews were partly

inaudible due to interruptions from teachers' noise in the staffroom and children during morning and lunchtime breaks. Each teacher and the researcher listened to the tape at the end of each interview session where teachers were free to make any changes, corrections or additions. In most schools, the head teachers' offices were relatively less noisy and therefore proved the most suitable rooms from where interviews could be recorded - in most cases these were the only rooms that had windows, especially in the rural areas.

It may be assumed that using the head teacher's office might have had a limiting context that might have inhibited interviewees. However, this did not appear to be the case since the meeting place was agreed with the teachers after debriefing and before the interviews began. The interviews were conducted in English, the official language in Kenya. The explanations on how the interviews enabled the research to be an emerging process (Creswell, 2008) are explained in the interview section below. The following table shows the response rate.

Table 11: Response Rate

Areas	Number of schools visited	Number of questionnaires	Face-to-face interviews
Urban (U)	8	56	3
Municipal (M)	10	52	3
Rural (R)	9	51	3
Total schools	27	159	9
Response rate		79.5%	100%
Total analysed		159	9

4.8 Participants

Primary school education in Kenya covers grade levels (standard) one to eight. This study covers teachers from all the levels. The sample of teachers for interviews was drawn from 159 teachers in the mainstream primary schools with varying levels of teaching experiences and qualifications as shown below. The graphical representations are shown in chapter five.

Table 12: Teachers' Teaching experience in current schools

No. of years taught	Urban	Municipal	Rural	Total teachers
0-4	27	23	20	70
5-9	12	11	17	40
10-14	10	11	7	28
Over 15	7	7	7	21
Total teachers	56	52	51	159

The following table shows teachers' (participants') qualifications.

Table 13: Participants' Qualifications

Qualifications	Urban	Municipal	Rural
Untrained	8%	-	-
P1	41%	34%	63%
P2	-	4%	-
Certificate SEN	-	2%	-
Diploma SEN	3%	9%	7%
Diploma E.C.D.E.	1%	4%	3%
Diploma in Education	-	2%	4%
Approved Teacher Status (ATS)	5%	19%	12%
Bachelors Degree	15%	9%	2%
Masters	2%	4%	-
Other	5%	2%	-
Not specified	20%	11%	9%

The following figure shows a summary of the research process.
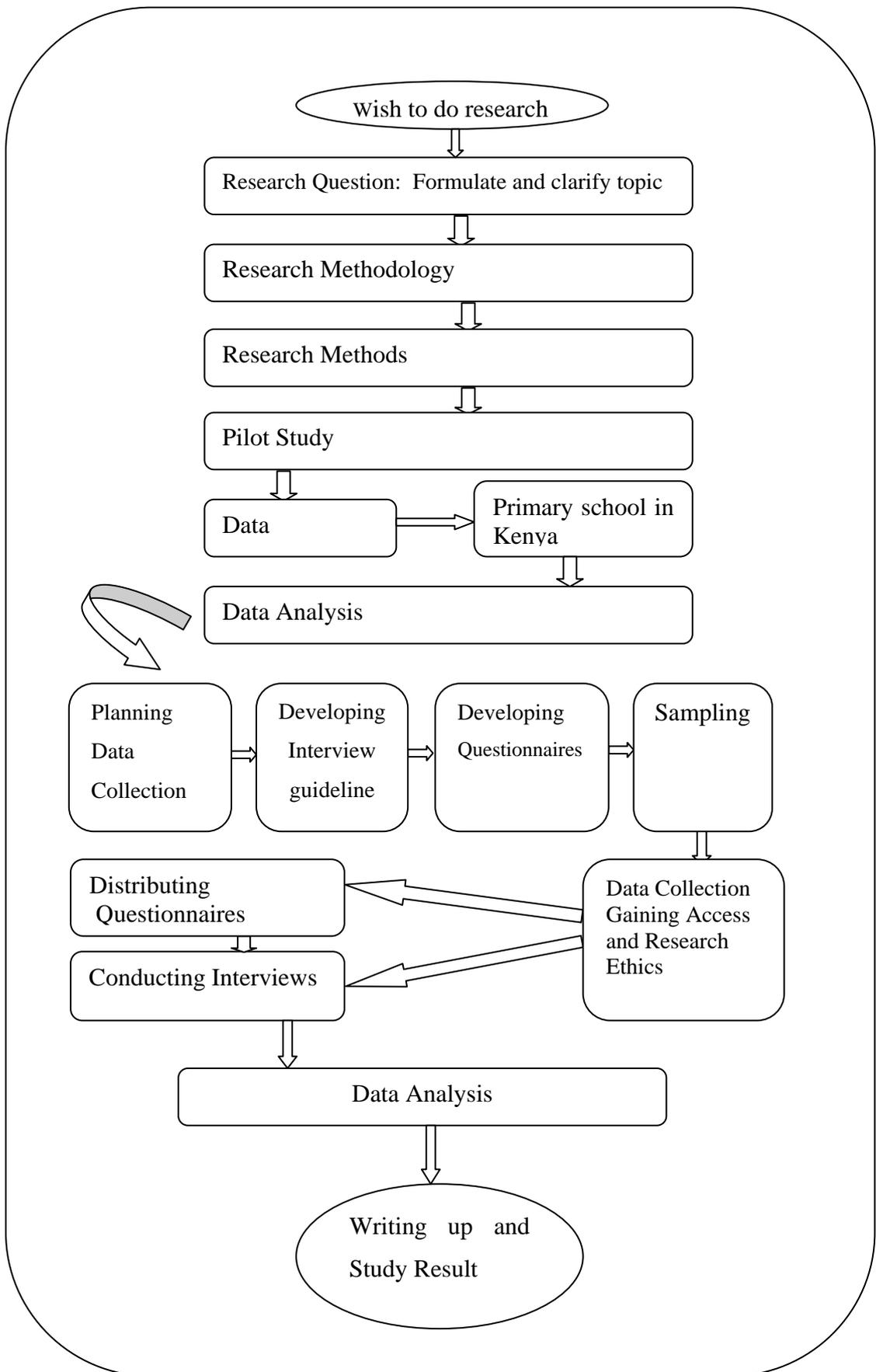
Figure 7: The Research Process

4.9 Research Design

4.9.1 Pilot Study

The pilot study was conducted from 9th June to 3rd August 2007 in a primary school in Nairobi, Kenya. This was an exploratory phase for the researcher to familiarise herself with what happens in the classrooms and to obtain deep insights about classroom situations. The aim was to refine the research instruments such as the questionnaire, observation and interviews. A pilot study plays an important role in foreshadowing research problems and issues. It can highlight gaps and wastage in data collection. It also facilitates broader and highly significant issues such as validity, ethics, representation and researcher health and safety (Marshall and Rossman, 2010). Smith (2007) asserts that doing pilot interviews helps in understanding oneself as a researcher and eliminates broad barriers such as mistrust of the agenda and more narrow ones like resistance to tape recorders.

The pilot study sheds light on setting aside some time in future research to practice voice recording with different research participants in order to enable them have a positive experience. The primary school follows the same curriculum as public schools. Hence not much difference would be envisaged in terms of exploring how teachers understand SEN. The pilot study enabled the determination of purposive sample units for the main research, to develop, modify and check the feasibility of the instruments and to determine how large the final sample needed to be. Although the resources, facilities and general school outlay in the pilot school displayed a somewhat better environment and surroundings than might be usual in a public school, the findings from the pilot study were not radically different from those of the main study.

A questionnaire, lesson observation and semi-formal interviews were used for pilot data collection. Ten teachers in the pilot school volunteered to complete the questionnaires, 20 were observed in the classroom and ten were interviewed. As a result of this process, questions were revised or eliminated in both the questionnaire and interviews. For example, the format for Question 1 was revised and the school name added; Question 5 was changed to read 'learning needs' instead of 'basic learning need'. Question 11 and 17 were compressed to one question, and an introduction, comments and a contact section were added on page 8. Teachers who participated were asked to sign a consent form.

Interviews were semi-structured and took place after school hours or other times depending on individual teachers' availability. The interview questions were asked and the answers from the teachers were written by the researcher and read back after every interview for the teachers to confirm that that was a true record of the interaction. On the other hand teachers who volunteered to do the self-administered questionnaires wrote down their answers from the questionnaire. Teaching sessions were observed against an observation schedule and field notes made to record these observations. Some of the aspects observed included lesson aims and objectives, management of the learning environment, resources available and used, teaching delivery and use of learning strategies. Observations were carried out on almost all subjects; namely English Language, Number Work, Science, Mathematics, Kiswahili, Music, Social Studies, French, CRE, Languages, Number Work, Computer Studies and Physical Education. They involved teachers from Nursery, Lower and Upper Primary School.

4.9.1 Observations

Observations involve watching research participants and recording any undertakings. They may be structured or unstructured. Quantitative observations are more structured than qualitative ones. Quantitative observations are based on a hypothesis and follow detailed observation schedules. Qualitative approaches are also highly flexible (Robinson, 2002). The main intention, as mentioned earlier, was to familiarise with what happens within the primary schools. So I wanted to observe as much as I could and felt a structure would be restrictive

(Punch, 2009). I was generally interested in exploring planning, records of work, available resources, general classroom management and most of these aspects came up in the interviews and questionnaires. I concluded that more time is required to carry out intensive observations. Furthermore, it was close to the end of the term with most teachers focussing on revision. So, after a few observations I decided to rely on the questionnaires and interviews in order to explore the SEN phenomenon in primary schools and hope to carry out detailed observations in the future.

4.9.2   Advantages and limitations of observation methods

According to Robinson (2002) people's behaviour and actions are central in any inquiry. Where data from questionnaires or interviews from one teacher are contrasted, the details from the observations can be used to complement and interrogate their answers. For example, in cases of variances on data from interviews, information from the observations can ensure that aspects of reliability and validity need not be compromised. Hence, observations can reduce aspects of artificiality on the part of the teachers given that they are based on the performance and/or activities in the classroom.

Reliance was placed on a qualitative approach to observation without any pre-set '*categories and classifications*' (Punch, 2009, p154). These observations allow comparisons of data among different methods; for instance, data from the different teaching methods would be compared with what was noted from the questionnaires and some critique developed while challenging and exploring the findings from the observations (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003). The observations were used to gain a general overview of teachers' classroom practices (Punch, 2009). Although:

> '*Unstructured observation, by contrast, can focus on the larger patterns of behaviour, more holistically and macroscopically, data analysis is rather demanding* (Punch, 2009, p155).

The actual observations in the pilot study, however, proved unsuccessful and very limiting. Although data collected were considered relevant, the use of a semi-structured observation schedule ran the risk of excluding possibly relevant data.

At this point, the decision was made not to use observation as an instrument for the main study. The following section discusses the preparation of instruments for data collection.

4.10 Preparation of instruments for data collection

The objective of this qualitative study is to investigate a phenomenon that is difficult to quantify and personal experiences from the teachers are key in order to understand the phenomenon. The study aims to explore how teachers view SNE in public primary schools. Investigating participants' subjective views of SNE required methods that would allow them to express themselves in different ways in order to provide valid responses and accurate responses (Adams and Cox, 2008). Therefore questionnaires were chosen to understand the processes while interviews were chosen to facilitate teachers to express themselves. While preparing the questionnaire, concepts used and contents included in the questionnaire were carefully selected. Most of the previous studies as well as theories and concepts about teachers' perceptions on inclusion are based on Western contexts. When formulating the items, considerations were given to cultural and education knowledge and systems in Kenya.

4.10.1 Advantages and disadvantages of survey questionnaires

Field survey work was conducted in Kenya in order to collect data about the research study and understand what was happening on the ground with the intent of exploring how teachers view SEN in public primary schools. Surveys are defined as descriptive studies used for gathering limited data from a relatively large number of cases at a particular time (Robinson, 2002). They are normally used to denote existing conditions or particular trends such as

> '*population trends and movement, pupils and/or teachers, pupil drop out, opinions, attitudes on various educational matters*' (Verma and Mallick, 1999, p79).

Robinson (2002) also states that surveys are simple and straightforward in studying attitudes, values, beliefs and motives and they work with standardized questions. A paper questionnaire was therefore used for interpretive purposes and

to gain data from the teachers, and to provide an explanation of the phenomena and patterns of results. Appendix one (1) shows a filled in questionnaire. The empirical material collected enabled an understanding of SEN in Kenya as explained by the teachers from their experiences. To build the evidence, numerical data was used to enable frequency counts, tabulations and other low level statistics, to be represented by tables, pie and bar graphs where appropriate. Surveys utilise standardised questions where it is possible to have questions with the same meaning for all respondents and in this instance, provided information about the distribution of a wide range of teacher characteristics with questions based on practice.

Surveys make it possible to collect data from a number of individuals and may be adapted to generalise information from any human population. They make it easy to choose the nearest and most convenient persons. It is possible to investigate opinions of a sample in a population and it is well established in research methodology as well as common practice.

I ensured that the questions were read loudly to the teachers upon issue to ensure that all questions were legible. If not well designed, survey questions might result in subjective data, where the wrong inferences about attitudes might be drawn. The questions were deemed clear and unambiguous where the researcher used simple words so that the teachers could answer the literal meaning, in order to allow the researcher to make inferences about the meaning of the answers. I stressed to the teachers that their answers would be considered confidential and anonymous.

The teachers were after this left alone to complete the questionnaires independently. The closed questions were specific to teachers' demographics for example, the number of years of teaching experience, qualifications, classes and subjects taught, and number of pupils in a class. Other open-ended questions were based on educational environment variables; such as defining SEN, difficulties encountered while meeting the diverse needs of children said to have SEN, support and involvement from parents, school administration, and the government

and the teachers' attitude on inclusion. I stressed the issue of anonymity and assured the respondents of the same. Respondents provided in-depth details of issues like difficulties encountered in meeting the learning needs of children said to have SEN. Questionnaires were numbered from 1 to 159 starting with the urban, municipal and rural schools in that order respectively. The pseudonyms U for urban, M for municipal and R for rural were used.

I relied on the honesty and accuracy of teachers. However, open-ended questions cannot be relied on to examine complex social relationships. Questionnaires are generally thought to be a relatively expensive method of data collection. This was certainly the case here, because questionnaires were hand delivered. The postal system is slow and unreliable. Long distances were covered to get to the schools in different provinces. In answering Question 2, the section on the qualifications, some answers included words such as: 'graduate', 'trained', which were found not to be specific to the answer, thus leading to such answers being classified as 'other' in the graphical illustrations. I had envisaged this to be a direct question and not an invasion of the respondents' privacy. Incomplete questions on SEN issues, such as, age range of children identification, comparing abilities with other children and learning strategies (Questions 10, 11 and 14) were answered by a few teachers. Question 6 on difficulties of meeting learning needs, Question 7 on causes of difficulties and Question 13 on barriers were combined to form the challenges. Questionnaires did not allow probing, prompting and clarification of questions; hence some partial responses were evident in some teachers' answers.

Marshall and Rossman (2001) cite questionnaires as an appropriate method of inquiry for making inferences about a large group of people based on data drawn from a relatively small number of individuals. Hence, they were used to describe and explain statistically the variability of certain features in the different school settings. The questions need to be examined for bias, sequence, clarity and face validity. Here, it was possible to test them on small groups during the pilot study to determine their usefulness and reliability by comparing answers from urban, municipal and rural schools. They are amenable to rapid statistical analysis and were easy to manage and administer.

4.10.2   Process of the main study

The researcher travelled to Kenya to conduct the survey. Follow-up calls were made to the head teachers who had previously been sent letters (appendix 2). Some of them were no longer willing to have their schools participate. So, other schools were contacted. In addition to the introduction letter from Brunel University (appendix 3) permission to conduct research was sought (appendix 4) and granted by the Ministry of Education (appendix 5) and Director of the City Education Department in Nairobi (appendix 6a and 6b respectively). Following permission to access the primary schools, appointments were made with different head teachers by travelling to the schools.

The postal service in Kenya is slow and not reliable. In some parts it can take up to seven days to receive a letter. Initial meetings were made with each head teacher, and the objectives, process, nature and duration of the study was explained while answering and clarifying any questions or concerns from the head teachers. Ethical issues including participation, consent, confidentiality, withdrawal and anonymity, were discussed and emphasized. The researcher would make an appointment with the respective head teachers on when to come back to meet with the teachers. Once in the schools, the head teachers allowed the researcher to address the teachers in one room. The objectives of the study would be explained, and similar ethical issues as those discussed with the head teachers would be discussed and emphasized. Questions and clarifications about the study process, methods and rights of the teachers would be stressed. A brief information sheet would be given to the teachers (appendix 7) and was read through with them and any questions answered. However, teachers would be left with the form and the researcher would make it clear that the next meeting would be with those willing to participate in the study.

Researchers have a responsibility for ensuring that those willing to participate are also willing to share their personal experiences and beliefs and as stressed by Kvale and Brinkmann (2003) they should provide the participants an opportunity to object by informing them about the research and their rights in the research. In

the next meeting, the willing participants would be requested to sign the consent forms. The questionnaires would be distributed and read together with the teachers whilst the research would make any clarifications and answer questions from the teachers. The researcher would also visit the different schools where the questionnaires were distributed especially those within the same region in case of any questions from the teachers. The researcher would visit schools to share a cup of or lunch with the teachers to ensure that there were no problems in filling in the questionnaires. The interviews would be held the same day or any other day the participants specified and the questionnaires would be collected as per the participants' convenience.

4.10.3   Power Relations in research

It was imperative to create professional distance between the participants and researcher as well as reflect on how best to establish a welcoming non threatening environment. According to scholars, such an environment creates '*a feeling of empathy for informants*' enabling them to '*open up about their feelings*' (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998, p48). The researcher shared her experiences as a Kenyan teacher and her awareness of the nature, culture, systems and history of Kenya. As explained earlier the researcher shared light moments with the teachers over a cup of tea and/or lunch in the staff room. This implied that the researcher while acting as a professional was able to create a feeling of intimacy by not rigidly visiting the schools to distribute and collect the questionnaires or conduct interviews. The visits to schools were unstructured, informal with the researcher requesting the participants' consent on each activity while adhering to research ethics and guidelines given by head teachers especially on the school times. The researcher was able to listen to the participants wishes on the duration they needed to fill in the questionnaires and followed the ethics guidelines which were explained and reminded to the teachers to ensure they understood issues of withdrawal and non-participation at any time.   This implied adhering to methodological thoroughness and transparency which, as asserted by Karnieli-Miller, Strier and Pessach (2009) provides the research process with credibility.

The atmosphere was flexible enough to allow the participants express themselves. Similarly, during interviews, as will be explained below, the participants were able to listen to the recorded interview sessions and make any changes accordingly. Karnieli-Miller, Strier and Pessach (2009) assert that the professional distance allows researchers to make a professional judgment and enhances their responsibility to construct knowledge. Teachers who volunteered to participate in the interviews were met in the schools with the help of head teachers (normally the head teacher's office was set aside for the interviews). The head teacher would not use the office for that period.

Some methods of gathering qualitative data are more suited to phenomenology than others (Finlay, 2008) including narratives in interviews, diaries, observations and reflective accounts. The use of other techniques like documentary sources and artwork may explore meanings further. Doing interviews was an effort to access the teachers' lived experience and engaging them in a dialogue which would provide details of the phenomenon as teachers described their experience while answering the questions asked.

4.10.4   Conducting the interviews

Before commencing with the interviews, it was important to establish whether the individual teacher was still willing to participate and whether they wanted the session to be voice recorded. Teachers were also reminded about ethical guidelines, withdrawal, confidentiality and anonymity were reviewed and re-emphasized. All interviews started with an informal session to establish rapport through greetings and asking general questions about the general region. The recordings were played back to the teacher for them to listen to their responses before the recording started. This was only done with the teachers who requested to listen to their voices before being taped. After this session, the interview would start and the interview schedule appendix 9 would be followed.

4.10.5   Advantages and disadvantages of interviews

Interviews are considered to be a form of guided conversation and require skills in social interaction. I recognise that listening, remaining engaged and interested in

the interviewee and suspending judgement while being able to probe participants to provide in-depth information without them feeling that they are being interrogated was crucial throughout the interview session (Finlay, 2008; Lofland and Lofland, 1995). Verbal skills, body language and applying emphatic cues were some of the techniques I found useful whilst conducting the interviews. In order to understand the views and opinions of teachers in their own words, and learn about their school and work, I used an interview schedule to guide me and to ensure focus during the interviews. It also enabled me to understand the world from the respondents' point of view.

The participants were encouraged to ask questions while the researcher also used secondary questions to clarify and illuminate their statements. Some views that were not articulated on the questionnaires were raised in the interviews. These included typical experiences in class like best lesson, conducive learning classroom environment, how they meet SEN of pupils as shown in appendix 10.

The interviews lasted about 30 to 60 minutes. The nine interviews were based on twelve similar questions. In order to illuminate and clarify statements made by the teachers, additional secondary questions were asked. Where the respondents were not in favour of having the session recorded, they were informed that the researcher would take notes and only continue if there was no objection. The notes were shown and read back to the respondent after the interview session. They were reminded to feel free to stop at any point in case they changed their minds and wanted to withdraw from the interview. The tape recording started after an assurance to participants that their responses would be treated as confidential. At the end of the interview, the respondent was asked if they were ready to move on or if there was anything they would like to add. Depending on the answer, the responses were read back for clarification and for the teacher to agree that it was a true record of the interview session. The researcher thanked the teachers for their time and participation. Thereafter, the researcher reflected on the responses and made notes to facilitate further analysis.

Interactions between interviewer and respondents during interviews facilitated the construction of knowledge (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2008). By talking, interacting, posing, questioning and answering, I understood the respondents, their experiences, feelings and attitudes. This approach needed careful questioning and listening. I introduced the topic of the interview and keenly followed up on the teachers' answers. So, I would repeat significant words from the respondent. This proved that I was not dominating the conversation and was reflecting on the answers given. Then I played back the recorded session for the respondent to confirm that this was a true record of the session. I later interpreted the meaning of the descriptions given and elicited themes as shown in the analysis section. It was possible for me to follow up the answers, ask for specifics and use counter questions to try and get the stand or belief of the respondents on particular aspects.

I was able to get the respondents' opinions by asking for further elaborations in order to get the argument the respondent was putting across (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2008). Darlington and Scott (2002) posit that an interview situation denotes an implied or overt sharing and/or negotiation of understanding which is lacking in other research procedures. Any misunderstandings on the part of the interviewer or respondent can be checked, unlike in the completion of questionnaires (Ibid, 2002).

Therefore, pauses in the conversation gave the respondents time to associate with the question and reflect and then break the silence themselves, giving significant information which was relied on in the analysis and findings of this study. In some schools the environment for recording interviews was not conducive. For example, noise from teachers at break time and children affected the quality of three recorded interviews which were partially inaudible. I could not have gone back to have them re-recorded because the schools were from municipal and rural areas and far from Nairobi and it was towards the end of the study. To reduce the risk of recognition, synonyms were given.

It is, therefore, important that one is honest in communication with all parties and develops a transparent process about informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality and the possible impact of the research on teachers. Therefore, I concur with Darlington and Scott (2002) that the qualitative perspective makes it possible to focus on the cultural, day-to-day and situated aspects of human thinking, learning, knowing, acting and ways of understanding ourselves as persons rather than a quantified approach to the study of human lives. This further influenced the researcher's decision to choose a qualitative approach for this research study. The following sections discuss the data analysis procedure for the interviews and questionnaires. Thematic data analysis was used for the interviews and is discussed in section 4.11 while questionnaire analysis using an adapted approach is discussed in section 4.11.6. A Documentary Analysis approach was used to analyse the special needs education (SNE) policy in Kenya and is covered in section 4.12.

4.11 Data Analysis process

Data analysis plays a fundamental role in assessing the quality of a study. I chose the Thematic Data Analysis approach because it is a flexible and easily accessible method for analysing qualitative data, as well as being adaptable to a '*range of epistemologies and research questions*' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p79). Conversely, thematic analysis is linked to phenomenology since it

> '*clarifies meanings because it allows the moving back*
> *and forth between whole meanings and part meanings*' *and*
> *this is said to be significant in the consistency and*
> *coherence of qualitative research* (Holloway and Todres, 2003, p348).

The researcher is able to identify, analyse and report patterns within data. This approach enabled me to collect opinions and explore different features from the interviews (Flick, 2006), thus giving clues about my participants' world (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003). Green et al. (2007) stress that the data analysis process facilitates the examination of the information collected in order to provide a rational account of what was found to enable the researcher to reach conclusions.

This examination of the collected data helped me to understand the subject at hand (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Bogdan and Biklen (2003) maintain that an inductive process of analysing data is important in order to present the participants' perspectives as accurately as possible. The process of analysing data in this research was inductive and is explained below. The role of the researcher is emphasized throughout the study and especially in the reflexivity section. Thematic analysis is the process of creating meaning from data in a complete and credible way, articulating several steps.

As a researcher, it is my professional and ethical responsibility to provide a data analysis process that carefully and rigorously connects with the evidence produced. To prevent bias and to strengthen validity, the interpretations were continually challenged for alternative explanations. After developing codes and identifying themes, a friend who is well versed with this method of analysis was approached to check that the development of codes and the meanings attributed to them were consistent. The consistency was followed by further comments from my supervisor and further revision was done and agreed.

As discussed under 4.11.6 and appendix 14, different stages of data were checked by critical professional friend in order to address problems of rigour and to avoid an entirely intuitive approach. The analysis entailed reading, re-reading, coding, re-coding, summarizing, combining data creating categories, patterns and eventual themes. I was careful '*not to strip data from the context*' by retaining and counterchecking with the initial key data file (Punch, 2009, p174), as explained in the following section.

4.11.1 Transcribing Interviews

The last thing I did after the interviews was to read back the recorded interview conversations to the respondents in order to confirm that they were a true record of the conversations thereof. This was only for those who did not want their conversations recorded. The recorded conversations were played back to those who volunteered. They were requested to sign that this was a true copy of the session (appendix 8).

Transcribing is an interpretive process where oral speech is translated into written texts.

> '*…verbatim descriptions are necessary for linguistic analyses;*
> *the inclusion of pauses, repetitions and tone of voice may also be*
> *relevant for psychological interpretations*' (Kvale, 1996, p98).

However, pauses, repetitions and one-off voices were not considered, since this research was exploratory. The transcriptions were changed to a literary style which according to Flick (2009) may highlight the meaning of a statement and facilitate communication of the meaning of the subject's story to the readers. A transcribed interview is included in appendix 10.

4.11.2   Immersion Stage

The thematic analysis method was used to identify, analyse and report patterns within the data transcribed. It forms the basis for researchers to learn skills that are useful for conducting various forms of qualitative research (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This stage involved a detailed examination of the teachers' responses in order to have an in-depth understanding of the data and to have the whole picture of how to proceed with the analysis (Green et al., 2007). Appendix 11 shows the steps in the analysis process.

The recorded interviews were listened to many times and were transcribed by typing out the responses against the participants from various sites. My aim was to examine the data further by relating to the notes made during data collection while trying to fit the transcribed notes with the objectives of the study (Green et al., 2007). As Rapley (2008) notes transcribing interviews from an oral to a written mode organises the interview conversations in a form open to closer analysis and it is an initial analysis. The initial ideas were noted down. The transcriptions were read several times. Different ideas and meanings were recurring and these facilitated the creation of codes. Codes are descriptive and apply to sections of the transcript so they should be relevant to the context of the statement data in which they are made within the interview data.

4.11.3   Process of coding

All responses were grouped together ready for initial coding. I attempted to sort and decide what different issues were being shared by the teachers and which were relevant to the study (Green et al., 2007). These transcripts were also read closely many times and highlighted relating to the objectives of the study. While establishing what each participant was saying, the transcripts were read again highlighting the relevant text from each participant. The relevant texts from each participant's data were marked to show the main issues. This was compared with the concepts in the study as well as the general direction of how all participants were relating to this relevant text. This led to further clarity of my role as a researcher as well as the part played by the teachers. The task ahead was how to connect the different phrases, sentences and words from different teachers in order to get a clear outline of their views in relation to the objective of my study.

I re-read the data noting down how the highlighted details related to the concepts in my study. So, the data presented different aspects of the data that guided me in understanding the context of the interviews further. These aspects included nuances of repeated phrases, words or similar or dissimilar answers to the same questions. This process rendered the data more manageable (Green et al., 2007). So I was able to move on to the next stage. Each transcribed interview was read to establish what each participant was saying. Groups of data, phrases or portions of data were shaded relating to the concepts of this study. It was important to also highlight what the relevant texts from each participant were compared with the initial coding to establish whether there were any changes or additions to be made to the coding. This meant going back and forth between what was initially shaded, comparing with the participants' differences and the relevant text. This was in order to decide whether the group of codes corresponded to the main concepts of this study and to understand the connection of the various parts to the whole (Finlay, 2008; 2003).

Table 14 : An example of coding data in the interview analysis

No	Relevant Text (Data immersion)	Coding
1.	'Their performance is below the mean score and some of them copy inverted letters; 'b' instead of 'd' and they are unable to concentrate in class'.	• The performance of children with SEN is poor and they have poor concentration and are unable to write letters appropriately.
2.	'I make sure I know the background of the child and identify who to talk to because some children are orphans. In such a case, I inform the guardian and reassure them that I will guide the child and make them feel comfortable in class in order to improve'.	• Teachers take their own initiative to establish children's backgrounds and deal with the parents. • The children are orphans.
3.	'Slow learners whose background I endeavour to find out through their appearance, shaggy clothes, lateness, absenteeism, truancy and lack of basic needs and writing	• Children suspected to have SEN are untidy, miss school and lack necessities and writing materials'
4.	In fact it is very hard to understand the background of 1,500 children who are admitted in this school. It is not possible to have all the details'.	• Teachers take their own initiative to establish children's background. The number of children makes it difficult to get all the details.
5.	'I as much possible try and find out the background of these children and then I adapt my teaching to meet their needs; for example I have a few cases of children with no grandmother after their parents died'.	• Teachers take their own initiative to establish children's background. • Teachers have no support on how to teach children said to have SEN. • Children are orphans.

411.4   Process of categorising data

The steps followed in analysing data are summarized in appendix 11. The following section covers the questionnaire data analysis.

During the coding process I re-examined the already coded data to establish how they could be linked. Further re-reading was done and a detailed examination carried out to categorise the different ways the research participants were 'talking' about the issue I was investigating. I examined whether the codes shared a relationship relevant to the study. This link gave different experiences from the teachers. These experiences were given descriptive labels and these were the sub-themes, because in trying to do the explanations for the different labels, I realised some of them would fit under one label better than the others. In other words some sub-themes were broad and had to be collapsed to get a better fit while others had to be combined with different categories and others were making sense the way they were linked initially.

This process of linking and examining how data from participants related to the main issue being investigated is emphasised by Green et al. (2007) to enable researchers to make sense of what understanding the participants share about a common aspect. Therefore, this made me make sense of the experience of the participants in the different categories in the study and also report on what experiences they had in common in their life experiences. For example the following sub-themes and categories: were initially under the label 'lack of school administration support' lack of training, behavioural issues, lack of maintenance of basic personal history records, lack of respect for children said to have SEN, external problems affecting the school, lack of learning materials. After further examination, this was collapsed into two different categories with different headings:

>   a) Teachers' difficulties   (b) School administration issues (c)
>   Challenges/difficulties working with children. An example of the process
>   of coding, categorizing, creating, sub-themes and themes is provided in
>   table 14.

4.11.5 Identifying themes

In getting ready to compile, interpret and explain the issues under investigation as reported by different participants, I examined the linked experiences in all the categories to ensure coherence with the labels and how these fitted into the whole data set. So, I explained the different experiences under themes. The researcher's role in the analysis process may be criticised as not being fully neutral, but the identity of a researcher and locale as posited by Denscombe (2007) plays a role in the analysis of data. The interview is not only considered as an interpersonal encounter, but also as a social one and simply not a data collection exercise (Cohen and Manion, 1989). As much as possible, I kept an open mind when interpreting data (Denscombe, 2003). Therefore, while analysing, familiarising with data in order to choose relevant text, coding, creating categories and identifying themes, there was a meeting of minds between the participants' experiences and the researcher during the interviews and the themes identified are a true communication of the meaning of the teachers' views and, according to Flick (2009) reliable and valid. The categories a) Teachers' difficulties   (b) School administration issues (c) Challenges/difficulties working with children were further scrutinized and collapsed to one theme – Challenges teachers face as shown in table 15.

Table 15: An Example of generating themes from interviews

No.	Creating categories	Sub-themes	Theme
1	1. Lack of training 2. Challenges working with children	Challenges in working with children	
2.	1. Lack of support from school administration. 2. Lack of systems to identify children 3. Challenges working with children.	Administrative issues.	
3.	1.Lack of support from school administration 2. Challenges working with children	Administrative issues Challenges working with children.	**Challenges teachers face**
4.	1. Teacher' difficulties in identifying children. 2. Children difficulties. 3. Lack of support from school administration	Administrative issues Challenges working with children	
5.	1. Lack of training 2. Lack of systems to identify children 3. Children difficulties.	Administrative issues Systems failure	

4.11.6 Questionnaire data analysis process

Data from all the questionnaires were manually keyed in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet (see screen print in appendix 13) in order to provide a rational summary of what has been studied and to facilitate access to data that can be readily analysed in an attempt to answer the research questions (Sapsford and Jupp, 2008). The completed questionnaires were chronologically numbered 1-159, with coding to denote the settings: U for urban, M for municipal and R for rural schools. The responses from each respondent were allocated a row, with each column representing a separate subtopic. This shows that a permanent record of

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the various concepts suggested by the participants was created and this would allow sorting, cutting, pasting and allocation of categories. Sapsford and Jupp (2008) assert that a set of keyed in answers could be used for illustrative purposes and extended, if necessary, by adding further answers from a larger sample of the questionnaires. During the analysis, care was taken to elicit themes, bearing in mind the need subsequently to utilise these themes in order to provide evidence to support responses to the original research questions in chapter one.

Analysis proceeded on the basis of the need to identify commonly occurring concepts and issues, initially ordering them on the basis of the frequency with which they emerged from the questionnaire responses. The initial phase of data analysis is one of reduction (Robson, 1993). It entails coding, recoding and summarising and reflecting on the compiled data. Reduction to a manageable set of response data was achieved through grouping evidently similar concerns into a single category.   It remained open to me to use verbatim statements from respondents for illustrative purposes so that the originally captured data was not lost.

However, it was necessary to reflect and consider

> '…*the suitability of my analytical concepts, my sensitivity to people involved, or the adequacy and appropriateness of interpretations made and lessons drawn'*, (Wolcott, 1990, as quoted in Eisner and Peshkin 1989, p.132).

4.11.7   Managing and Analysing Questionnaire Data

A number of different 'schools of thought' stress that there is no single kind of qualitative data analysis or application but a range of approaches and procedures related to the data to be analysed, different perspectives, purposes and preferences of the researchers (Dey, 2005, p2). Several analytic strategies can be used in qualitative data analysis, including grounded theory, narrative and discourse analysis. Researchers can also opt to analyse data the old fashioned-way by cutting and pasting pieces of paper or using computer-based analysis programs (Mertens, 1998). Some of the general features common to the analytical phase of qualitative research were followed and these include:

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General features common to the analytical phase of qualitative research
♦ Some form of review of all the information to gain an initial insight of the data.
♦ The process of organising data into some manageable form which is often referred to as 'reducing data' and typically involves developing codes and/or categories.
♦ Interpreting data.
♦ Presenting it diagrammatically in different forms (Mertens, 2010; Dey, 2005; Ritchie and Spencer, 2003).

Figure 8: Common features of the analysis phase of qualitative research

It is important to point out that while collecting the questionnaires in a few schools some teachers had not completed filling in the questionnaires by the time of collection. They were personally encouraged to do so and this increased the response rate of the returned questionnaires. As the teachers handed in the completed questionnaires, I would check through them for the 'fairly obvious' errors such as omitted answers and failure to follow instructions (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Sapsford and Jupp, Ibid p.173). Questions one to four of the questionnaire had closed questions and the remainder (18) were open-ended. The closed questions formed demographic data, which were coded into variables and the values were treated to provide descriptive data while the open-ended questions had to be reduced to a suitable form to enable the analysis (Sapsford and Jupp, 2008; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Frequencies and percentages were commonly used in this study. In order to shape the raw data to readily allow for inspection and analysis, familiarisation with the raw data was necessary (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Ritchie and Spencer, 2003; Sapsford and Jupp, 2008).

Data were read and various concepts compared, combined, classified and related to other parts and related to previous knowledge (Dey, 2005). The purpose of doing this was to be able to highlight the essential aspects of the phenomena of this study and to summarize the salient features for the purpose of answering the research questions and examining how the responses from participants linked with the entire investigation. All answers were typed out and then listed and re-sorted

to identify answers of the same kind, and then grouped and highlighted. They represented answer categories that were of interest in relation to the research objectives. Coding continued on the grounds that the responses were thought to answer the respective questions and/or were of '*sufficient interest and diversity*' to warrant coding (Sapsford and Jupp, 2008, p166).

In answering the research questions, the participants interpreted and understood their meaning by generating an opinion or reflecting on the past. The open questions from the questionnaires elicited a wide variety of responses (Payne, 2004) which provided background for interpreting answers to the relevant questions. However they took long to administer and responses were difficult to interpret and analyse. Analysis of data depends on study design, number of groups and type of data (Payne, 2004). Researchers can often gauge importance of certain data but coding and interpreting becomes very challenging. Therefore more rigour is vital in interpretation of data with open questions Dey (2005). Although the response rate for the questionnaires was 79.5%, not all questions had a similar response rate and not all questions were answered by the respondents. The response rate depended on the questions and the number of responses given.

The questionnaires contained specific contents of interests and phenomena considered worthy of investigations and were administered in different ways. While categorising some of the categories were unclear and overlapping especially where participants were asked to define Special Educational Needs (SEN). While analysing, Implicit and loosely defined classifications of definitions were initially given. The boundaries were not firmly defined and while assigning the categories, the dissimilar aspects were not entirely excluded from others. Possibilities were discounted but not completely excluded. For example, the definitions were classified into different groups in an attempt to sort out and classify different teachers' responses and to understand what was common or dissimilar in their definitions. The categories were differentiated ensuring that no piece of data fitted into more than one category. They were mutually exclusive. This process was iterative in order to ensure that all data was assigned to at least one category. Where any data did not fit in existing categories more were created

to make it exhaustive (Dey, 2005). This was done iteratively. I ensured that the response rate for each question was exhaustively considered.

However, some responses could not be coded because they were incomplete, illegible and some teachers had failed to record answers according to instructions or not answered at all. In such instances, the answers were considered as missing, since they could not be interpreted within the structure of the question or questionnaire as a whole. However, if they were substantial in number and represented new ideas, they were coded separately. Nevertheless, I recognize that maximising responses is a major challenge for any survey and higher response rates add credibility to the results.

 Data were refined to a manageable level in order to engage in the data leading to a description and explanation of the social phenomenon under investigation. This entailed looking across the entire range of cases across the data. The real meaning of the original data was retained in the worksheet and saved using a password protected format, forming the basis of key terms, phrases and experiences used by teachers.

> *'The methods of generating categories depend on type of data being analysed and the aims, inclinations, knowledge and theoretical sophistication of the researcher'* (Dey, 2005, p103).

While generating categories, I relied on the inferences from the data, theoretical issues, intuition and knowledge, taking the varying context of the data into account and relating to the phenomenon under investigation in this study.

Manual analysis was preferred to any computer software in order to facilitate further immersion, scrutiny and navigation of the data while familiarising with the story of the participants and connecting with the data in order to identify related terms and significant relationships across the data. Corbin and Strauss (2008; Green 2007; Dey, 2005) assert that engaging with data contributes to the analysis process. As a qualitative researcher my goal was to understand the teachers' lived experiences'. I felt that analysing data manually enabled in-depth engagement and understanding of data which was necessary given the open-ended

questionnaire and the rich data (text) accumulated from the teachers' experiences. Like the interviews, an iterative process was used to engage with the data.

Although human judgement was applied throughout the analysis process, it was felt that the combination of other Microsoft Office tools like Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word together with the iterative process contributed to in-depth engagement. To reiterate, critical friends would check through the steps highlighted and this reduced any effect of bias. On the other hand, this experience contributed to the analysis approach and increased my knowledge which was limited in extensive analysis. Appendix 15 shows how key relevant clusters were mapped from the questionnaires.

The following section discusses the method used to analyse the Kenya Special Needs Education (SNE) Policy Framework (MoE, 2009).

4.12 Documentary Analysis

The research question (What Special Needs Education (SNE) policies does the Kenyan government (KG)espouse?) is considered a descriptive one and according to Silverman (2006) such research questions can be answered using official statistics, documentary analysis or observation. Documentary analysis (DA) was chosen over the other methods. It allowed the gathering of new facts to facilitate understanding about the Special Needs Education (SNE) phenomenon in Kenya. This question was important in addressing whether teachers are aware of the policy espoused by the KG. It would have been fruitless to study how teachers understand SNE without addressing the construction and interpretation of this government artefact. This study applies an interpretivist approach which seeks to understand the meaning of concepts in their specific set up in order to as stressed by (Lin, 1998) uncover the conscious and unconscious explanations people have for what they believe or do. Atkinson and Coffey (1997) point out that, documents actively construct the same organisations they purport to describe. Documents are recognised as social constructions, they construct specific kinds of representations using literary conventions (Mogalakwe, 2006).

Therefore DA focussed on how organisational realities are reproduced through textual convention (Atkinson and Coffey, 1997). Organisations in the contemporary society produce documentary materials and it is important to pay attention to the forms and functions of such documents. In its own right, documentary work is the main method of qualitative research (Atkinson and Coffey, 1997) and this is a qualitative study seeking multiple realities. Atkinson and Coffey (1997) claim that documentary data from policies 'enshrine a distinctively documentary version of reality' (p47). Documents do not provide an obvious representation of organisational routines and decision making. They represent plans and aspirations for a possible future. Documentary analysis enabled me to determine the major stakeholders involved in the running of SEN and in retrospect information that was not available from other documents. The explicit and implicit emphases were also unpacked to understand key policy concepts.

The application of documentary methods refers to the analysis of documents that contain information about the phenomenon we wish to study (Bailey 1994). It is described as a procedure used to categorise, investigate and identify the limitations of physical sources in written documents both in the private and public domain. Educational settings are implicitly represented as devoid of written documents and other forms of textual recording. The analysis enabled me to understand how the government represents itself collectively and to others through the construction of documents. Silverman (2006) stresses that documentary constructions of reality depend upon particular use of language and lend itself to this sort of documentary analysis.

Documentary research methods have often been incorrectly considered to be dominated by professional historians, librarians and information science specialists, whilst social scientists rely on surveys and in-depth interview methods (Mogalakwe, 2006). Primary data was considered from interviews and documentary data policy details were considered as secondary. However, DA

research is considered a useful and under-utilised approach that can be adopted by researchers in the full confidence that, like other methods requires rigorous adherence to research protocol. They have been written with a purpose and are based on particular assumptions and presented in a certain way or style and to this extent, the researcher must be fully aware of the origins, purpose and the original audience of the documents (Silverman, 2011). It must be noted that documents are not deliberately produced for the purpose of research, but naturally occurring objects with a concrete or semi-permanent existence which tells us indirectly about the social world of the people who created them (Payne, 2004).

The documentary analysis of the SNE policy focussed on the particular discursive practices of the written genre. In order to interpret the semiotic understanding, sharpen clarity of presenting the policy in general and to draw the most important aspects, I took account of forms of textual materials (Silverman, 2011) making sense of a range of different texts in order to interpret and draw partial understandings or representations to infer underlying patterns or state of affairs. I had to fill those 'texts' with common sense knowledge. I read between the lines in order to re-construct a picture of the SNE that is being described drawing on what I knew about typical departments, academic staff members and typical projects as referred in the literature review.

In interpreting the semiotic functioning of the document, I also paid attention to documentary form and language, issues of readership and authorship and the relationship and interrelationship between texts and how similar texts influence or differ from each other. Atkinson and Coffey (1997) highlight that documents cannot be treated as firm evidence of what they are assumed to report since they often provide nuances of a typically documentary version of social reality. Texts depend upon background assumptions so that they can convey more than they say because readers and writers apply a variety of social and cultural assumptions. While the SNE policy document offers guidelines, it is prescriptive rather than advisory. Atkinson and Coffey (1997) cautions that anonymity is not in itself adequate to add status to a text, rather it is achieved through interaction with

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different features such as organisational or bureaucratic contexts and status of teachers.

The SNE policy seems to link together several practices and discourses typical to the social life of teaching. However, the DA does not describe the passage of time so the socio-historical or pre-existing discursive formulations which impact the SNE discourse were considered separately at the beginning of the analysis Although qualitative data is descriptive I went beyond simple description and provided an interpretation of the data. Being analytical is central to being a researcher (Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007). The following steps were taken:

• Obtain the SNE policy from the Ministry of Education in Kenya without any prior plan. My aim was to understand the contents of the policy relating to SNE structure. • What public and institutional discourses are important in terms of SNE knowledge and what has been stressed.
• Established how many sections and how they are arranged and in what texts the discourses appear.
• 'Technical' words and how or whether they are defined. • Repetition and how different sections relate.
• Iteratively question and refine the constructions of connected understanding across the collected information. A set of questions asked pertained to what is defined as problematic and by implication what is not. Explanations or theories provided and any explanations or solutions omitted or rejected.
• It was important to question what a critical reading of the policy document uncovered in terms of: Ascertaining the nature of the document. • Range of explanations provided • 'Tone' in the document and how children said to have SEN are

	addressed.
	• What control situations were reported.
	• I would then compare with the literature review and education reports seeking to ask question about the audience addressed and whom the policy represents. Such information was evaluated, interpreted and condensed.
	• Twin concepts of 'deconstructions and reconstructions' were central to this analysis.
	• Deconstruction involved breaking down of knowledge into its own elements. This involved collection of empirical data and the examination of such data in relation to the abstract constructs that constitute knowledge.
	• Reconstruction involved re-examining the constructs in terms of the wider social structural arrangements which underpin and sustain it. For example, provision, gender, access, identification, participation, disability and inequality. This was accompanied with reading and reflecting upon SNE and looking into ways in which language used and values involved and portrayed subject of discourse. Theories and knowledge embodied in policy and institutions were examined and considerations of power deep-seated in such theory and knowledge underscored.

I therefore looked beyond separate texts and how they relate. Any system messages, documents make sense because they have relationships with other documents. The literature review formed a brief preview about SNE practice and these details provided a good basis for the interpretation. It involved an examination of assumptions underpinning any account and considering what other possible aspects are concealed or ruled out. It can also involve moving beyond the documents to cover a critical analysis of the institutional and social structures within which such documents are produced (Silverman, 2011).

By the time I obtained the hard copy there was no soft copy available. This affects accessibility and readability.

Conforming to the interpretivist approach enabled the researcher to uncover relevant practices that seemed to matter and other factors which affect the operation of SNE policy. This provided general concepts and insights and perspectives rather than unearthing causes. Therefore the method of analysis involved reading and reflecting and is not exclusively a critical reading of the text but is also a challenge to the text. It is solely concerned with 'communication' with the text. Individual texts were interrogated, unpacked, adapted and informed by critical sensibilities (Mogalakwe, 2006). In order to enhance the quality of connections the multiple pieces of information were explored, questioned, reflexivity used and updating with the recent literature done.

The SNE policy document provided data, processes and events which were not available from the questionnaires or interviews. Documentatry Analysis provides material for study to researchers especially where policy being studied is new without distorting the meaning of the contents. It also informs other stages of the research process. Policy analysis is not vast in Kenya and I envision that these insights and perspectives are significant in terms of the broader focus of SNE. Arguably, the researcher is the principle tool of data collection. Researchers need to be reflexive by recognising their role in the research process to minimise bias and enhance credibility (Creswell, 2009). Thinking through the process from inception of the research idea to the presentation of the report entailed continuous reflexivity.

4.13 Gaining Access and Research Ethics

Cohen Manion and Morrison (2007) assert that educational researchers should be aware of the sensitivities of research and these should be identified and addressed. Possible effects of any research project in terms of conduct, outcomes, reporting and dissemination should be considered not only on the researcher but also on the participants and those likely to be affected by or with stakeholder interest in the

research. The research was therefore carried out as per the guidelines set out by the Brunel ethics committee which I adhered to as discussed above in sections 4.10.2 to 4.10.5. Respecting the participants is a continuous process before, during and after the study. Thus, I ensured that throughout the research process I observed professional ethics and laid bare the intents and purpose of the research to the participants and showed respect for them. I developed a formal relationship where openness was critical throughout the research process to enable me see the world from the participant's perspective (Finlay, 2008). Furthermore Finlay (2008) avers that when researchers are open, they are willing to not only listen but also see and understand whatever may be revealed by the participants and by so doing allow the phenomenon to present itself without imposing any preconceived ideas.

When interpreting data, I avoided personal bias and judgment. This was done by reading back the recorded interview or any notes taken in order for me and the teacher being interviewed to confirm it was a true record of the interview. The transcripts were re-read and directly transcribed as per the recorded pieces. Rigour was established through the debriefing (Creswell, 2007) and the re-reading of the transcripts as well as remaining professional throughout the research process.

4.14. Validity

In social research involving international research, some researchers prefer the term authenticity in preference to validity.

Validity is '*the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers*' (Silverman, 2011, p289).

Validity deals with the notion that what you say you have observed is in fact, what really happened. In the final analysis, validity, is, always about truth' (Shank, 2002, p 92).

The recorded as well as written interviews were read back to the respondents so that they could confirm that these were a true record of the interview session. For those who volunteered for a recorded version, the session was played back. This activity at the close of the interview ensured that the respondents were given an opportunity to correct any misunderstandings.

During analysis, the transcripts were also read back and forth many times to ensure that the recorded evidence was correctly and accurately recorded. A friend was also asked to listen and proofread interview transcripts to ensure that they were a correct version of the recorded interviews (Kvale and Brinkman, 2008). Therefore, I relied on the views from the teachers. Empirical material collected from teachers was interpreted and themes drawn. General and broad themes were made and interpretations drawn from all the schools. Then I sought to understand the teachers' experiences as described in the questionnaires and interviews.

4.15 Reflexivity

This is the acknowledgement;

> '… *that the inquirer is part of the setting, context and social phenomenon he or she seeks to understand. It is a means for critically inspecting the entire research process*' (Luttrell, 2010, p3).

A researcher should critically reflect on one's biases, theoretical inclinations and preferences (Schwandt 1997). I ensured that each part of the research process depended on the other in order to make a coherent whole. There was interaction between the researcher and the surroundings through the distribution and collection of questionnaires. Interviews were only conducted with teachers who volunteered. The recorded interviews were played back to ensure that the respondent confirmed this to be a true record of the session. The data confirmed as true was later transcribed, with emerging themes used to augment the findings of this study.

Transcribing interviews was an iterative process, where I kept going back and forth to make sense of interpretations and to check whether there was any coherence in the transcriptions and whether they represented what the recorded

respondents communicated.   This was achieved by listening to the recorded version of the data over and over again and making changes appropriately. Any bias was minimised by choosing three different research settings from where to gather data; that is, urban, municipal and rural schools. This also contributed to maintaining the quality of the data collected (Creswell, 2009).   To establish rapport with the teachers, I used to have one day of debriefing sessions in each school where I could talk about my research and explain the implications while emphasising voluntary participation, withdrawal and consent.

 The following day we would have another session with the teachers who were willing to participate in the research and again remind them of the same aspects before distributing the questionnaires or conducting interviews. We would agree on the times to meet with teachers and I would then clarify any questions especially from the questionnaires to ensure the teachers understood all the terms. I did not want the teachers to feel that I was only reducing them to data sources and objects.

I am aware that there are relationships of power embedded within the research process (Karnieli-Miller, Strier and Pessach, 2009; Wanda, 2003). I ensured that only the willing participants and those who had agreed and were willing to participate in the research were considered for the study. I threaded together each experience in my research process and showed a timeline for my actions as a researcher within the process, explaining each step in the study. Thus my focus was on theoretical groundings, ethics, timeliness, collecting and analysing data and writing up interpretations (Kleinsasser, 2000). It was important to be reflexive throughout the process of this study. Like Lincoln and Guba (1985) I made sure that I played back or read and showed the participant what I had taken down during the interview especially to avoid any control of the participant's information. I acknowledged the impact of the researcher's view and values that are inevitably brought to the research process. I ensured that the participants understood what the research study was about and what participation would involve so that they make their own free decision about what they were getting and under what terms to participate (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004).

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Arguably, the researcher is the principle tool of data collection. Researchers need to be reflexive by recognising their role in the research process to minimise bias and enhance credibility (Mason, 2002). Thinking through the process from inception of the research idea to the presentation of the report entailed continuous reflexivity.

4.16 Generalisability

This is the extent to which the results and conclusions can be transferred beyond the particular context in which they were generated. This is normally considered in relation to the generalisability of the results and conclusions. The results derived herein are likely to stimulate the understanding and thinking of other developing countries especially those within the same region (Sub-Saharan Africa) and subject to having similar educational policies, beliefs and attitudes towards SEN. However, any generalisability may depend on how much others are able to draw meaningful inferences to enable them to understand the area of study better. This depends on how well the results and conclusions contribute to new interpretations and facilitate or enhance comparisons of what is already in existence in order to build on and/or develop, support or contest what exists. This calls for clearly defined and reflexive research concepts and practices.

4.17 Summary and Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to gather the perceptions, thoughts and ideas of individuals involved in teaching children said to have SEN. It was an exploratory research and thematic analysis lent itself to a search for relevant themes. Relevant themes arising from questionnaires and interviews were explored and this facilitated the construction of distinctive descriptions of the major elements of the study (Powney and Watts, 1987). I moved backward and forward from the source material, continually checking for theme relevance and arranged the findings to link with the themes. This type of analysis offered opportunities to continually sift through a rich source of data synthesise tagged categories into arising themes and revisit the dataset to confirm findings.

Therefore, this chapter presented a critique of the research methodology, the underlying paradigm, related approaches and practical problems, and research methods employed (interviews and questionnaires). It described the means of analysing data. The next chapter presents the results and findings from the questionnaire and interviews.

CHAPTER FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS FOR QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEWS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the analysis of data obtained from the questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires were filled in by 159 teachers from the 27 research study schools while the interviews were conducted with the nine teachers who volunteered. Data were collected from primary schools in the urban, municipal and rural settings in Kenya. The data analysis process for the questionnaires is discussed in sections 4.11.6 - 4.17 and appendices 14 and15. The interview data analysis is aimed at providing additional information on how teachers understand SEN in public primary schools in Kenya which provides deeper insights into the topics that this study is investigating.   Semi-structured interviews were conducted using a sample of nine primary school teachers from the schools where the questionnaires were distributed.

The structured interview schedule focussed on defining children said to have SEN, teaching strategies and support, resources, training, school policies and procedures, and suggestions for changes that could be made to improve the learning of these children. As indicated in chapter four, only teachers who volunteered were interviewed. Interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewees and transcribed by the researcher.   The tape recorded interviews were typed out on a matrix and each teacher's transcript given pseudonyms (U1-U3 = urban school teachers, M1-M3 = municipal school teachers and R1-R3 = rural schools teachers) in order to protect the identities of the interviewees. Quotations from the tape recorded interviews are presented in italics. Although a reasonable number of interviews were initially arranged, on some occasions teachers did not turn up due to prior commitments.

It is important to remind the reader that letters before the excerpts represent different areas. U represents urban, M: municipal and R: rural schools. The table below maps how questionnaire data was analysed.

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Table 16: Mapping How Questionnaire Data was Analysed

Question Number	Contents/Themes	Principal Outcomes
5 8 9 10	**Teachers' understanding about teaching SEN in primary schools** Children's most important learning needs in primary school. SEN Definition Most common kinds of SEN in class Methods of Identifying children said to have SEN in the classrooms	♦ 98 (62%) teachers provided the following as the key learning needs: 28(29%) Social Skills and Well-being 23(23%); Reading and Writing 16 (16%); Communication Skills 16(16%) Guidance and Counselling/ Behaviour Development and Language Cognition/use and development of knowledge 11(11%) =94 ♦ 31(38%) teachers provided an alternative explanation representing materials or support in the classroom. ♦ 36(23%) teachers defined the term SEN; 49(31%) defined 'Special Needs' 44(28%) described categories; 26(16%) defined how needs are different from those of other children =129 ♦ Most common kinds of SEN in classrooms included: Physical disabilities 30(19%); Learning difficulty 25 (16%); Emotional, Behavioural difficulties 25(16%); Cognitive 24(15%)=104 ♦ Teachers mentioned 63(39%) observations and 33(21%) assessments as the main methods of identifying children said to have SEN in the classrooms =99
2 20 20	**Additional Professional Development** Pre-Service Training Post-Service Training: (Short Term)	♦ Pre-service training demographics (Figure 1) ♦ Teachers reported that they had attended the following Post-Service Short term courses after pre-service training: 22(14%) HIV/AIDS seminar; 20(12%) Guidance and Counselling; 14(9%) School Based Teacher Development; 13(8%) SEN; 10(6%) Basic Computer Training; ECDE and Train Teachers seminar respectively. =99 ♦ (n=28) teachers attended post-service long term courses where 2(7%) attended Masters Degree; 7(25%); Other Degrees; 4(14%) SEN Degree; 6(21%) Diploma in SEN; 5(18%) Diploma in Guidance and

	Post –Training: (Long Term)	Counselling 3(11%) Diploma in Early Childhood Education and One (1%) Distance Education, SEN. ♦ 24 (15%) teachers reported that they had not attended any training since their pre-service training.
11 **14**	**Managing Diverse Needs in the Classroom** Teaching Strategies Abilities of children said to have SEN	♦ Teachers cited the following main teaching strategies: 23(14%) Class Discussions and peer learning; 20(13%) Group Work; 20(13%) Reward and praise hard work; 17(11%) Drama, song, poetry and stories; 15(9%) Varied methods of teaching.=95 ♦ 135(85%) of the teachers indicated that children said to have SEN perform poorly in class while 14(8%) had positive comments. ♦ Out of the 135(85%) the following were cited: 68(43%) poor performance; 16 (10%) Reading and writing as well as Communication problems =100
6 **7** **13** **22**	**Challenges in meeting diverse needs of children said to have SEN** Difficulties in meeting individual needs of children said to have SEN Causes of difficulties Barriers in accommodating individual learning needs in class **Impacts of mainstream learning** Benefits of mainstream	♦ The highest challenge given by the teachers was poverty 19(12%); 14(14%) Absenteeism; 12(12%) Socio-economic/political problems; 9(9%) language barrier; 8(8%) behaviour; 8(8%) Lack of pupils' interest; 7(7%) negative attitude from peers, teachers and society and lack of parent's support respectively; 5(5%) incomplete homework; 4 (4%) orphans, AIDS and neglected children; 3(3%) Medical Problems and 3 (2%) Class/grade repetition. =91 ♦ Teachers stressed positive and negative impacts of mainstream as follows: The positive aspects include benefits such as 41(26%) socialising; 29(18%) reduce stigma and acceptance; 27(17%) interaction and moral support = 97 ♦ The negative impacts underline the following: ♦ Teachers have low sense of self-efficacy. They tend to feel that they are unable to effectively manage differences among children said to have SEN without specific training in SEN. ♦ They stated that children with challenges,

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		mental health and medical issues should learn in special schools. ♦ Curriculum inflexible enough to increase the opportunities for these children to learn and participate like others.
		For questions 3, 12, 16,17, 18 and 19 please see Chapter 4 for explanations

Although urban, municipal and rural schools are key in this study, it was decided not to separate reports for the three areas although the comparison would form a basis for future research. However, I ensured that the evidence quotations were drawn to represent the different schools. I sought to explore teachers' understandings of SEN in Kenyan public primary schools and not to compare the areas; although the comparison would form a basis for future research. The following letters are used to differentiate quotations from teachers. Letter U is used for urban schools, M for Municipal and R for rural schools.

5.2 Interview Data Analysis Method

A thematic analysis approach for the interviews data was described in sections 4.1 – 4.15 and it was used to elicit the themes which contributed towards the findings of this study. Qualitative interviews focus on the interpretation of the everyday world by participants. I was seeking to interpret the meaning of central themes elicited from experiences of the participants (Kvale, 1996). It is also recognised that access to reliable and trustworthy records of the stories given is the basis of validity and reliability (Miles and Huberman, 1994). To this effect, quotations from the teachers (respondents) are presented.

The following themes and sub-themes were elicited from the interviews transcriptions.

Table 17: Themes and sub-themes from the interviews

1.   **Factors that prevent the participation or involvement of children said to have SEN in classroom tasks**

<u>Sub -Themes</u>

- Performance *
- Physical and observable learning difficulties*   *See Appendix 15
- Behavioural difficulties
  - Schools have no behavioural management strategies or intervention plans.
  - Teachers unprepared to respond effectively to children with behavioural difficulties.
  - Need for teachers to understand other underpinning challenges associated with behavioural difficulties.
- Reading and writing difficulties
  - No scheduled programs or activities or time to prepare children's reading skills or to enhance their cognitive skills.
  - Learning style of children not known.
  - Instructions are not specially designed for children said to have SEN.
  - Problems with identifying children said to have specific difficulties.
- Intellectual impairment
  - Intervention to promote positive mental health and associated complexities needed.
  - No collaboration networks between teachers and parents.
  - Background information on children is not readily available

2.   **Barriers to Learning**

- Effects of overcrowded classrooms
  - Poor classroom environment
  - Lack of supportive relationships and varied cognitively challenging activities for children.
  - Lack of participation for children.

- Lack of accessible physical resources and safe school environment
  - Social exclusion and denial of right to play
  - No adaptations or modifications to improve accessibility and mobility in school

- Lack of learning resources
  - Inadequate resources hamper quality of learning

3.   **Need for whole-school policies and procedures**

  - Current systems fail to provide equal opportunities for all children.
  - No shared values between children, teachers and administration.
  - Teachers need empowerment to have a sense of belonging.
  - Lack of in-service training (INSET).
  - No supportive communication among teachers and parents.
- Referral system
  - There is a referral system which needs refining to improve clarity on line of action.

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		• No shared responsibilities for the identification, assessment and follow up of different children's challenges including discipline.
		• There is need for a specialist to validate teachers' views about children diagnosed with different SEN.
• Sexual abuse		• Child abuse of orphans and those with mobility challenges.
		• Teachers need support to work with advocacy, consultancy, counselling and welfare organisations or systems to empower, protect and safeguard children.
		• Lack of personnel to instigate legal action.
• Relationship between parents and teachers		• Teachers contact parents to get background information on the child, report any problems children have.
		• Some teachers ready to work with children until they improve.
		• There is no clear pattern for when parents and teachers collaborate on school or different matters.
• Guidance and Counselling Policy		• There is a Guidance and Counselling Policy which mainly deals with discipline matters of ordinarily developing children. Committee and teachers need to have sufficient knowledge of a wide range of SENs and work closely with other multi-disciplinary teams.
• Discipline problems		• All children need to have a vision of learning and high expectations instilled by the school administration.
• Lack of school administration support		• Lack of finance.
		• Lack of a system in managing personal history of all children.
		• Need for further training in institutional management and other management skills and SEN in order to enhance school changes.
• Attitude from peers and teachers		• Focus on the child's 'deficit'.
		• There is a need for the whole school to understand abilities and characteristics of different children said to have SEN and how disabilities manifest in them.
		• Teachers have low expectations of what children said to have SEN can achieve. They do not seem them as capable and competent.

4. Supporting teachers to provide more engaging and effective learning instructions

• School-based training		• No institutional learning
		• Teacher training in-service courses do not stress on learning processes and learning diversities.
		• More training on pedagogical skills, reading, engaging children in cognitively demanding activities and improve learning outcome of children said to have SEN.
• Teaching approaches		• Teachers to adapt more pro-active learning activities for different learners and child-

	centred teaching and classroom management.
• Curriculum development	• Teachers to share ideas with other colleagues work in teams and take up different responsibilities and projects.
• Policy-making	• CPD to develop/build capacity in order to take up decision-making roles and to participate in education reforms.
• Anticipated teacher training	• Teachers are interested in pursuing more training.

5.2.1 Amalgamating themes from the questionnaires and interviews data analysis

Themes from both the questionnaires and interviews data analysis respectively were amalgamated into one chapter and the themes from the two chapters were merged as follows:

Table 18: Combined themes from the data analysis

Themes		
Questionnaires	**Interviews**	**Combined Themes**
Teachers understanding about teaching SEN in public primary schools	-	Teachers understanding about teaching SEN in public primary schools
Managing diverse needs in the classroom	Factors that prevent participation or involvement of children said to have SEN in classroom tasks -Teaching approaches	Managing diverse needs in the Classroom
Challenges in meeting the diverse needs of children said to have SEN	Barriers to learning	Challenges in meeting the diverse needs of children said to have SEN
Additional professional Development	Supporting teachers to provide more engaging and effective learning instructions	Additional Professional Development
-	Need for Whole-School Policies and Procedures	Need for Whole-School Policies and Procedures
Impacts of mainstream learning	-	Impacts of mainstream learning

Themes from the questionnaires and interviews data analysis that seemed to have some congruence were combined and discussed under one heading. For example the theme from the interviews on: Factors that prevent the participation of involvement of children said to have SEN is combined with the theme: Managing

diverse needs in the classroom. The sub-theme on Teaching Approaches from the interviews is also discussed under this theme. Barriers to learning theme from interviews is combined and discussed under the theme: Challenges in meeting diverse needs of children said to have SEN. The theme on Additional Professional Development is combined with the theme from interviews: Supporting teachers to provide more engaging and effective learning instructions. However, the sub-theme on teaching approaches is discussed under the theme: Managing diverse needs.

The following sections (5.3 to 5.3.2) provide the demographic details of the teachers in this study.

5.3 Number of years taught in the current school

The following table shows the years taught in the current schools up to 15 years as shown from the questionnaires.

Table 19: Number of years taught in the current school

No. of years	0-4	5-9	10-14	Over 15	Total
Urban	27	12	10	7	56
Municipal	23	11	11	7	52
Rural	20	17	7	7	51
Total	70	40	28	21	159

The reasons for not including other demographics are found at the bottom of this section. The sample represents a total of 159 teachers: 56 (35%) teachers from urban, 52(32%) from municipal and 51(32%) from rural areas. Teachers with 0-4 years of service add up to 70, while a total of 40 teachers have 5-9 years of service, 28 teachers have 10-14 years of teaching and 21 teachers have more than 15 years of teaching. Urban teachers with 0-4 years of teaching represent 27/70*100= 39%. 23 teachers from municipal with 0-4 years represent 23/70*100 = 33% and Rural teachers represent 20/70*100= 29%. Teachers in the urban

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schools with 5-9 years of teaching represent 12/40*100= 30% municipal: 11/40*100 = 28% and rural teachers: 17/40*100 = 43%. Teachers with 10-14 years represent 10/28*100 = 36% urban teachers, Municipal – 11/28*100=39% and 7/28*100=25%. Teachers with over 15 years represent 7/21*100=33.3% from urban and this figure is the same for municipal and rural schools. There are more teachers in the urban areas with 0-4 years of teaching, while there are more teachers in the rural schools with 5-9 years of teaching and the municipal teachers with 10-15 years of teaching while teachers with over 15 years of teaching are equal for all the regions.

Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) in Kenya is responsible for the recruitment of teachers in public schools and may post teachers to different schools depending on existing vacancies. However, teachers may choose to work in different areas or remain in the profession based on the interplay of various unique factors such as professional interests and other push and pull factors.

It is not known what proportion of teachers will have acquired an awareness of and perhaps reasonable understanding of the SEN initiatives even though the main initiative dates back to 1994. Factors affecting such knowledge will include when and for how long teachers were trained and also their take up of SEN related continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities. The responses to this research will provide some illumination of this question in a mixed sample of urban, municipal and rural schools. The following section provides the teachers' qualifications.

5.3.1 Teachers' Qualifications

The following chart shows the qualifications of teachers in this study.
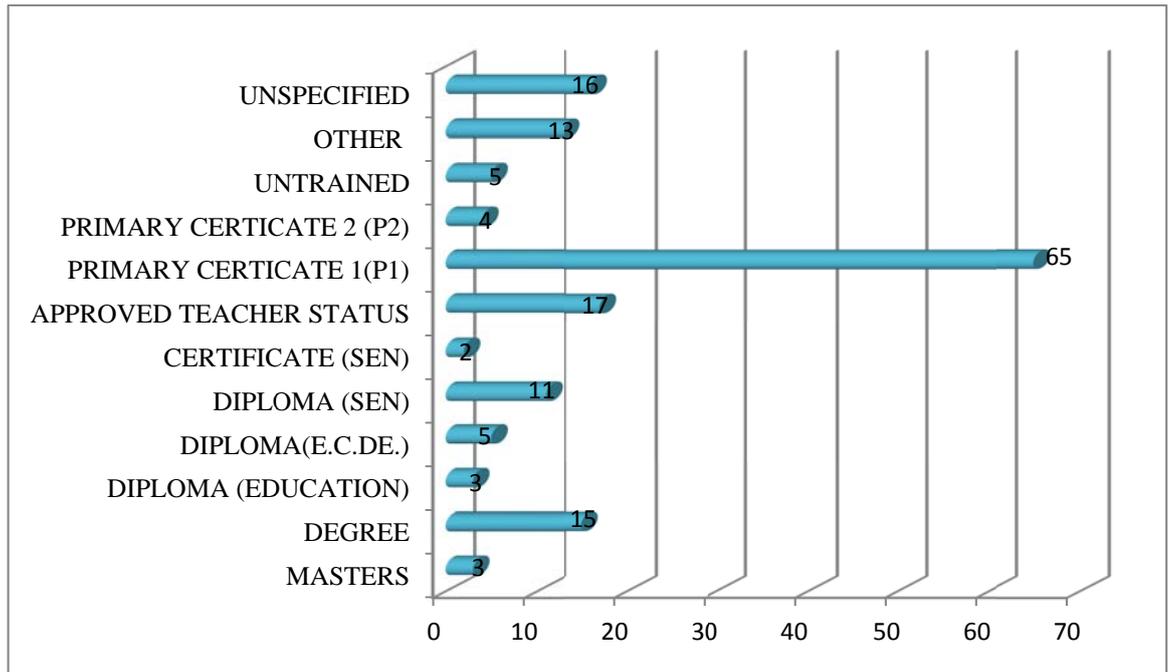
Figure 9: Teacher' Qualifications
Key: E.C.D.E. – Early Childhood Development Education

Primary school teachers undergo an initial teacher training course for two years. They are placed at different levels (P1, P2 and P3) depending on qualifications achieved and experience gained after the training. Some of the training in particular (P3) represents the lowest level qualification and was stopped in 1994. The levels may also change to Approved Teacher Status (A.T.S.) which is considered as an equivalent to a Diploma and/or degree depending on the qualifications. This qualification is based on merit for qualified teachers. However, there are teachers who have qualifications from other disciplines like Bachelor of Arts, who do not have a teaching qualification, and may acquire Approved Teacher Status depending on their experience. This could be Approved Teacher Status II – III.

Out of 159 teachers, 65(41%) had a basic teaching certificate (P1). The teachers also had additional qualifications as follows: Masters 3(2%), Degree 15(9%), Diploma in Education 3(2%), Diploma in E.C.D.E. 5(3%), Diploma in SEN 11(7%), Certificate SEN 2 (1%), Approved Teacher Status 18(11%), Primary

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Certificate 1 (P1) 65(41%), Primary Certificate 2 (P2) 4 (3%), Untrained 5(3%), other 13(8%), unspecified 16(10%).

Untrained teachers represent 5(9%). This may be attributed to the fact that the Ministry of Education used to employ 'A' Level students to teach in primary schools whilst they are waiting for their results or waiting to join the university or any teacher training college after their secondary school. Those who did not qualify to join university or college would continue teaching as untrained teachers. On the other hand, from 1980 to 1990, the government recruited untrained teachers to cope with the demand of high enrolments after the introduction of the '8-4-4' education system and FPE mentioned earlier. Similarly, these teachers would be employed by the Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) to deal with the shortage of teachers. A total of 13(8%) have qualifications in SEN; these include 11(7%) with a Diploma and 2(1%) with a SEN Certificate.

The municipal schools have more additional qualifications 37(63%) than the other schools; rural, 22(43%) and urban 33(37%) respectively. The municipal schools also have more teachers with a Diploma in SEN. This may be due to the proximity of the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE). There are more degree qualifications 9(6%) in urban schools while teachers 15(9%) in municipal and rural schools have the highest A.T.S qualifications. Teachers who did not specify their qualifications 16(10%) are mostly in the urban schools 10(6%) while those who represent the 'other' category of qualifications 13(8%), are more common in the rural areas 9(6%). An attempt to explain the likely reason for these answers may be found at the end of this section. Other graduates from different disciplines other than education would also be considered as untrained.

In order to acquire higher qualifications, teachers would be expected to pay for their fees and make time for their training outside school time. Qualifying as an A.T.S. appears to be a more accessible, flexible and a more suitable route to promotion or attaining higher professional grades in the teaching profession without necessarily attending formal training. The government also introduced part-time courses in universities where teachers may be able to expand their

professional skills. It is possible that able young teachers can progress more quickly by getting a university based qualification than waiting for longer professional time to be seen as an A.T.S., hence the possible reason for the reduced number of A.T.S. with only 3(5%) in the urban schools. Furthermore, there are better options and prospects for these teachers in the urban areas.

The variety of courses shown in the above charts indicates how the government continues to invest in teacher development. It appears that teachers are willing to improve their qualifications and professional development, hence the increasing number of additional qualifications. Qualified teachers may leave the profession for well paying jobs in different sectors, as reported in the literature review teachers' salaries in Kenya are low. Despite the various evident qualifications, SEN qualifications revealed in this study have a low representation.

5.3.2 Explanations for omitted demographics data

In retrospect, the respondents who failed to specify or indicate their qualifications may have found the questions 'sensitive' although the researcher did not consider them to be 'potentially' sensitive as such and were not considered as an infringement to their personal and/or private lives (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2008, p 19). However, it is plausible that the same reason that made this particular question yield such fields as 'unspecified' and 'other' is a way of acknowledging the fact 'that 'nominal, demographic details might be considered threatening by respondents and that 'greater bias and unreliability' are expected from such questions (*Ibid*, p 334).

Respondents tended to skip or leave the section incomplete especially in schools where I was not able to check through the questionnaires due to the schedule of the Head Teachers. However, although I had specified the purpose of my study and explained the procedure, anonymity, withdrawal and confidentiality to the respondents, I would not rule out the fact that they might have had 'some fear of scrutiny and exposure' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2008, p119). Hence my purpose of using pseudonyms, protecting the data by passwords and keeping any printed or recorded work secure in a locked cabinet and shredding what is not

required. This being empirical research, it will be presented to the GOK and ethical guidelines used during the research process will also apply.

5.3.3 Class Size

It was considered essential to highlight the number of pupils in classes in the context of SEN, especially after the declaration of free primary education (FPE) which marked Kenya as committed to achieving quality basic education by 2015. The enrolment in primary schools has increased at such alarming rates without a corresponding increase in resources or buildings to accommodate the influx. Therefore, it seems important to ascertain the effects large classes, for instance, are likely to have on teachers' perceptions about SEN pupils and their learning and other classroom processes.
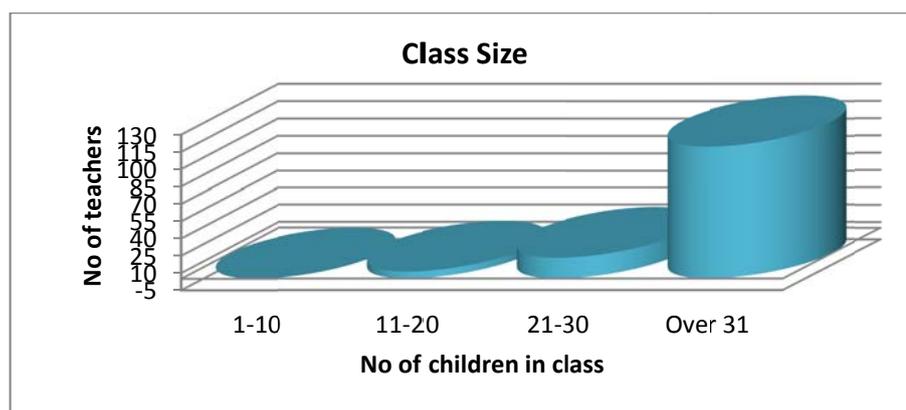
Figure 10: Class Size

Over 120(75%) of the teachers had classes with over 31 pupils. This may be attributed to the Kenyan government's implementation of FPE in 2003 which led to an increase in the enrolment rate of children to primary schools. What emerged from the pilot studies for this research was that the norm in Kenya, by and large, is children sitting in crowded classrooms at desks with shorter space and with few teaching learning resources. It is commonplace to share books (1:3) where classrooms have a blackboard and teaching instruction methods utilise chalk on blackboards. The conditions in Kenyan schools are reminiscent of the state of elementary education, in the United Kingdom (UK) for example, prior to the Second World War.

In its commitment to achieve the 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the GOK set the limit of pupils to be taught in classes of not more than 30 pupils per teacher. Irrespective of what may be considered an appropriate number of class size where the children who are said to have SEN are included, the GOK guidelines are clear. However, these are not always followed. Most developed countries decree a class size of 20-25 whether or not there are children said to have SEN. The Kenyan government set a limit of 30 pupils per teacher. Irrespective of what may be considered an appropriate class size where the children who are said to have SEN are included, the guidelines are clear. However, these are not always followed. Most developed countries decree a class size of 20-25 whether or not there are children said to have SEN.

In this study classes with less than 30 children represent 25% of the study sample population. Class size may be considered as an important factor for meeting the needs of children said to have SEN. This is because some children with profound needs and/or a multiplicity of learning difficulties may have a range of other difficulties such as physical disabilities, sensory impairments as well as medical conditions and may require high level support. So if the classes are large, as depicted in the chart above, not only would the area to walk in class be limiting but also where to work from especially if children have physical disabilities; movement becomes difficult with the possibility of accidents or other occurrences and this may be linked with pedagogical issues. The question would arise about the health and safety issues in place to cater for the needs of these children.

On the other hand, the teacher might not be in a position to give individual attention or supervision. Similarly, small classes may be considered important in improving the educational achievement of children said to have SEN. The teacher is likely to know the individual needs of students, have better classroom management and not only spend more time dealing with disciplinary problems but there is likely to be an increase in achieving learning outcomes. In the foregoing, hiring and training fully qualified teachers implies that they would be in a position to apply different and effective teaching strategies in order to improve the learning

of children said to have SEN but also their peers, both in small and large size classes. It may be implied that there is a higher potential for improved learning in small rather than large classrooms especially for children said to have SEN. Although small classes would be welcomed in all countries, fewer children per class are not inevitably linked to greater academic achievement and personal success for all children; other factors come into play. The subsequent sections continue with the analysis of the questionnaire in order to explore teachers' understanding and the ways in which they saw it appropriate to behave in the classroom.

The effects of overcrowded classrooms are provided under barriers to learning sub-theme from interview data analysis section 5.8.3.

5.4 Teachers' understanding about teaching SEN in primary schools

5.4.1 Most important learning needs of children in primary schools

This aspect sets an overview of the teachers' place in meeting the learning needs of children at primary school level. This was significant in order to elucidate teachers' expectations on the children's achievement at the start of their formal learning. At the start of primary school, children experience an enormous transition in their lives, especially those said to have SEN. The new environment may have a positive or negative impact— depending on how the teachers manage this transition. Therefore it would be crucial for teachers to be aware of the needs of these children and to successfully motivate them to learn and engage in the learning process whilst also enabling them to acclimatize to the new environment. Children need to speak, listen, pay attention, acquire a vocabulary, speak clearly and gain confidence in order to be able to learn. They also need to make friends and learn to be themselves. Essentially, children need to be able to develop speech, language and communication skills which are significant for the development of cognitive, social and emotional well-being.

The following table shows responses from the teachers on the most important learning needs for children in primary schools.

Table 20: Learning needs of children in primary schools (N=98)

Learning Needs	Number of teachers	Percentages (%)
Communication Skills	16	16%
Guidance and Counselling/ Behaviour Development	16	16%
Social Skill and Well-being	28	29%
Reading and Writing	23	23%
Mathematics	4	4%
Language Cognition/use and Development of Knowledge	11	11%
Total	98	99%

Out of 159 teachers, 98 (62%) defined learning needs and the other 61 teachers (38%) defined learning requirements. The 62% showed substantial knowledge of what the learning needs of children in primary schools were. The 61 teachers (38%) tended to focus on support materials within the classroom which was not the question that had been asked. The general interpretation of the question as it was put by the teachers represented their attempt to talk about a means of supporting children said to have SEN. They interpreted learning needs in terms of a pedagogical requirement. There is a sense that the question of learning needs was not fully embraced by these (38%) teachers.

The teachers took a different view of what this question required. I have for the purpose of this analysis isolated the views of those teachers who used learning needs in the sense that it represented something about the children's own requirement to support their learning. In other words what in answer to this question showed the curricular requirements needed? However, this was not to ignore some insightful responses made by a small number of teachers which were a little different and presented a variety of alternative answers, which included non-specific answers focusing on physical resources, conducive learning environments, and inadequate facilities, shortage of trained teachers, books and instructional materials.

After initial teacher training, teachers are considered ready to start teaching and to engage children in the learning process at different levels within the primary

school. It is likely that teachers may find it difficult to engage and motivate children to learn at the relevant developmental stages if they are not sure of their learning needs and if the same children are said to have SEN. Most teachers (98) appear to be aware of the key learning needs of children in primary school but the question remains as to whether they are able to use this awareness to promote supportive programmes of study. Some of the learning needs mentioned are reading and writing as well as mathematics and may be said to correspond to Article 1 of the 1990 World Conference on Education for All on 'Meeting Basic Learning Needs'.

However, mathematics represents the smallest portion of the key learning needs 4(4%), while social and well-being 28 (29%) leads followed by reading and writing 23(23%). Guidance and Counselling and behavioural development 16(16%) seem to denote there could be issues of children with social or behavioural problems; this boils down to the implication that teachers may be expected to develop effective classroom management, challenging activities for the class and have skills to cope with different issues in class in order to motivate these children to achieve their goals. Some of the responses included:

> U33 *'Writing inadequate and poor arrangement of work – writing with a left to right orientation due to inadequate practice in pre-school'.*

> M93 *'To be able to learn and understand English and Kiswahili which are languages of communication and final testing in national exams'.*

> R131 *'Ability to live with other members of society to achieve life skills for self reliance'.*

5.4.2 Definition of the term 'SEN'

As discussed above, it is important for teachers to define the learning needs of children in primary schools. Teachers working with children said to have SEN on a daily basis may also be expected to look at all aspects of a child's achievement in different subjects and monitor the progress and other experiences which are likely to form the basis of planning the child's learning. I took the view that

meeting the SEN of children has, since the Warnock Report, been represented as finding ways of enabling these children to fully access the required curriculum. So their learning needs only makes sense when expressed in curriculum terms.

In other words, it represents a way in which the obvious difficulties that this child has in accessing the curriculum can be served by the actions of teachers. That is, curriculum issues need to be accounted for to enable the child to access the curriculum, otherwise, if there is no access, then they cannot learn. By defining the term 'SEN' teachers would portray their understandings of the child said to have SEN, the nature, difficulties and provisions which might be important in unpacking the interpretations and implementations for SEN policies. As explained below, some teachers in this study tended to define SEN using categories like: Autism, Attention Deficit Hypersensitive Disorder (ADHD) while others looked from an interactive perspective where they defined it in terms of the extra help or equipment; while some reported that there were no children said to have SEN in their classes. The following figure shows the representation of the different definitions.
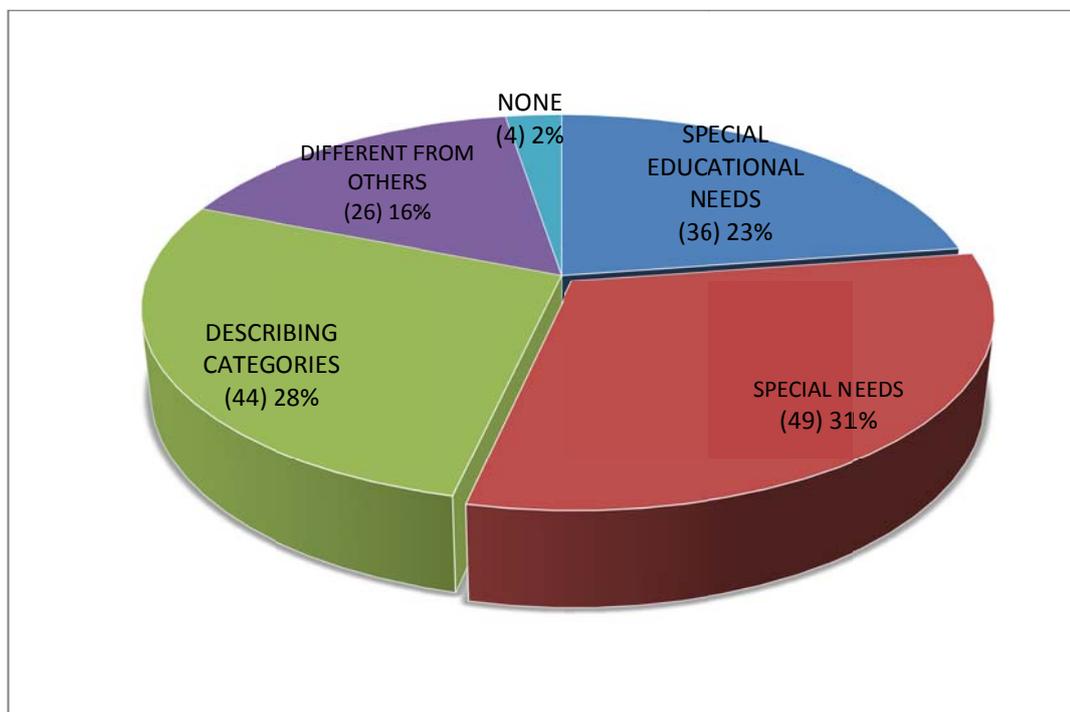
Figure 11: Explanation of the term 'Special Educational Needs'

Thirty six 36 (23%) teachers' responses represented the term SEN, 49 (31%) defined Special Needs, 26(16%) explanations were on how the needs are different from those of other children; 44(28%) seemed to describe categories, while 4 (2%) indicated that there were no children said to be having SEN in the schools they taught, although their colleagues in the same school expressed different views.

The latter definition may be explained by implying that this group of teachers may be untrained or lack the knowledge about the education and capacity of children said to be having SEN. Notwithstanding, these teachers seem not to have sufficient information and are not aware of the capability and individual differences of children said to have SEN. It is important to remind the reader that the trend in Kenya is to use the term special needs education (SNE) instead of SEN. Disability categories may include 'visual impairments', sometimes ('blind'), 'hearing impairment' ('deaf'), 'physical disability' (handicapped) and 'mental retardation' with no distinction on mental illness. Words like 'intellectual disability' and 'learning difficulties' are rarely used despite being included in the SEN policy. The following are some of the responses:

> U41 *'Education that is narrowed down to the specific needs in a learner especially those with special needs'.*

> M104 *'A curriculum designed to train a diversity of people to be able to teach and handle learners with SEN so as to be self independent in the future and discover their self independence and be fruitful'.*

On the other hand, such children may be seen to have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age where their learning difficulty may hinder them from making use of similar applications generally provided to other children of the same age. The teachers seem to indicate that if no special educational provision is made for them this would affect their performance. The following definition implies that the teacher is specific about the definition.

> M97 *'Needs that affect one's ability in achieving full potential in*

> *various learning fields compared with others of the same age group'.*
>
> U45 *'Structured programme given with specific need e.g. deaf, blind, Autistic, mental handicap, physically handicapped and learning difficulties'.*

Teachers referred to special needs when they implied disabilities, thus including physical difficulties:

> R120 *'Education given to less privileged pupils, e.g. hearing problems, visually /physically impaired'.*

Teachers may be expected to respond to diversity in the classroom, yet the children seem to be defined as different from others 26 (16%), which seems to depict the child as needing different special equipment, teachers as well as environment:

> U9 *'Not 'normal' like other children, needs assistance, learning aids, needs placement in special institutions'*
>
> M141 *'Identified variations/diversities in learners who tend to deviate from 'normal children'*

An example of some categories used by the teacher while defining special needs also include: 'not normal', 'slow learners'

> M106 *'Children who need special attention during learning time because of a 'malformation' of a part of their body e.g. brain cells, eyes, ears'.*

From the above definitions, it may be implied that teachers defining SEN 36 (23%) may be said to have some knowledge on SEN and they are seen to appreciate children's differences whilst the others are seen to focus on what the children cannot do and how different the children are from others. This is seeing the child as the problem and not the school. This seems to imply that the problem is considered to be 'within' the child, which signifies a medical model. For example, in the following quotations:

> U66 *'Problems in reading for the poor ones'.*

> M82　*Disabled, slow learners, gifted, those with behavioural problems'.*
>
> U47　*Types of difficulties in children that cause learners to have difficulties in the learning process in all or some subjects'.*
>
> R125　*'Behavioural problems and language acquisition'.*
>
> U65　*'Mentally challenged, language disorder'.*

From this, regardless of the number of years a teacher has worked in the same school it seems that all of them, from one to over 15 years of service, have a different way of referring to the children said to have SEN. However, there are teachers who seem to be applying new terms such as*:* response from *U65*: 'Mentally challenged', and not 'mentally handicapped'; 'learning difficulties and not slow learners'. However, other terminologies like *'slow learners' 'mentally handicapped and 'retarded'* are still prevalent.

In defining children said to have SEN, teachers' also indicated that some children have low cognitive ability in their classes 'mentally retarded', some have speech problems/ or limited verbal skills and 'no coherent speech', as well as orphans (those being taken care of by the grandmother). This shows the complex needs a teacher has to deal with in a single classroom. The lack of (or limited) verbal skills makes it difficult for the children to talk about their feelings and also difficult for teachers to identify anxiety and mood symptoms.   Interventions are needed to promote and sustain positive mental health for children with complex needs. It would be expected that children with complex needs who are orphans may suffer from levels of anxiety and depression, especially if their emotional needs are not being met. For example, the following response from the interviews seems to highlight such children.

> M1　*'Children who require special attention or those with some abnormalities like physical and those living with traumatised experiences or backgrounds'.*
>
> R2　*'They need a spacious class, not over-congested (overcrowded). This would ensure that those with epilepsy are not hurt during*

attacks.

Therefore, teachers need training specifically related to the identification or management of children with such tendencies. On the other hand, children with profound learning difficulties have significant intellectual cognitive impairments which have a major effect on their ability to participate in the school curriculum without support. They may also have difficulties with mobility and perception and the acquisition of self-help skills and may need support in all areas of the curriculum.

People with learning difficulties are at a higher risk of developing mental health problems as well as physical and medical problems such as epilepsy, hearing or visual impairments. Late diagnosis in hard of hearing problems, delay in provision of hearing aids and a failure to advise on sign language may increase the likelihood of the development of mental problems.

5.4.3 Methods of identifying children said to have SEN in class

It is important for teachers to recognise individual learning needs of children in order to provide classroom support for differentiation. Identifying and valuing the progress of each child entails different aspects which may not be stipulated in this section. Planning, teaching and assessing in primary school learning takes into account the diverse abilities, needs, aptitudes and interests of children. The following responses denote how teachers in this study identify children said to have SEN. The different methods used by teachers to identify children said to have SEN in the classrooms include: 63(39%) observation; 33(21%) assessment; 31(19%) Classroom activities, 17(11%) interviewing pupils; 5(3%) hearing and sight impairment, 4(3%) information from parents or guardians, 3(2%), medical information, and 3(2%) former teachers' information.
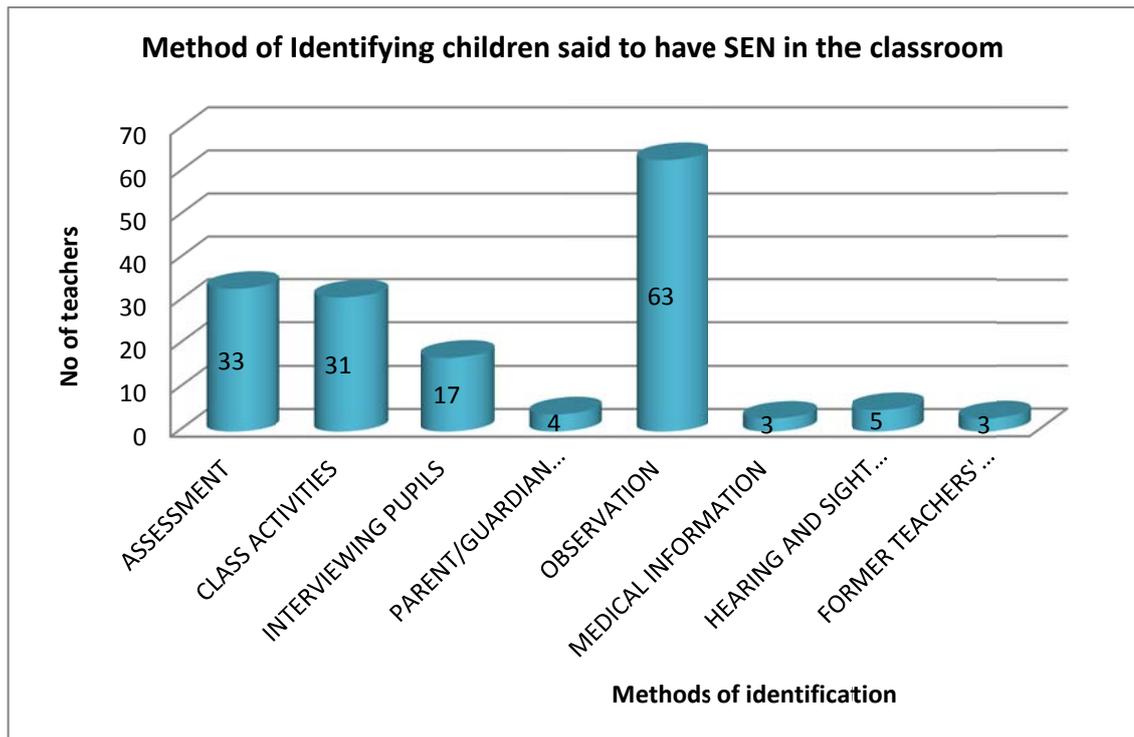
Figure 12: Methods of Identifying children said to have SEN (N=159)

The above methods may imply that teachers use the easily observable methods to identify children said to have SEN. These methods appear to be based on the teachers' own judgement and seem to attribute difficulties to 'within child' factors. The identification of children said to have SEN in these schools seems to focus on teachers' own perspectives. It may be implied that the less obvious SEN such as specific learning difficulties may not be easily identified.

This approach has mainly been associated with the medical model which is rooted to the view that difficulties reside exclusively in the child. The easily observable methods mentioned above focus on different elements such as behaviour, posture, appearance, relationship with others, concentration, language and speech among others. The following are some of the responses:

U40 *'Inability to handle given learning tasks, withdrawal and introvert and low self esteem'.*

M99 *'Poor memory, they show echolalia (parrot like sound) in their language. Hyperactivity and self stimulation behaviour'.*

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R156   *'They are brutal, slow learners. They do not obey instructions'.*

R118   *'Absenteeism, not answering questions and physical disabilities'.*

U17   *'Reading/writing problems, truancy, lateness, outside appearance and disobedience'.*

M154   *'Neglected – inadequate basic necessities, body defects – swollen eyes, poverty'.*

Response from *M99* tends to use specific language while describing symptoms of the children they identify; for example 'echolalia parrot-like sounds…' are features associated with children in the Autism spectrum disorder who make repetitive sounds in their communication. This response also represents clear diagnostic criteria. Response from *U40* may imply that the children have a problem socialising with their peers. Children with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) tend to be withdrawn. Teachers may be lacking the knowledge, skills and expertise to understand and assist this learner. The other responses from teachers' observations seem to imply that teachers are unaware of the consequences of different aspects that may hinder the learning process of children said to have SEN. For example response from *R156* appears to imply that children said to have SEN are violent and like response from *U17*, are disobedient.

On the other hand, response from *M154* seems to imply that these children are from poor backgrounds and may be having other underlying problems which may not necessarily manifest in SEN. However, the response from *R118* tends to indicate that children from such backgrounds have physical difficulties. The extent to which these teachers' views can be shared across the schools is questionable. The elements mentioned for observation denote a problem within the child. Although some of these symptoms are likely to manifest in children said to be having learning difficulties; they are not adequate to pronounce a child as having SEN. Just because a child is 'slow in learning' may not denote that they have SEN. These symptoms call for teachers to take action by identifying the difficulty, its cause and thinking of ways to support the child.

Each child is unique and normally a teacher would consider intervention procedures before deciding that the child has SEN. The teachers do not seem to provide the specific difficulty the child is having. The question is how teachers successfully identify children said to have SEN and what school practices and support exist in this respect. On the other hand, the easily observable methods including observations represent 116 (73%) teachers while the other methods (Assessments, parents and guardian as well as information from medical reports and former teachers) represent 43(27%) teachers.

Although assessments may be considered more specific in terms of measuring the existence and degree of disability in children, they do not seem to be a common method of identifying children said to be having SEN among the teachers in this study. The assessment of children said to have SEN in Kenya commences when a child reaches school going age. The set of tools and equipment used in this method is said to be impractical because of excluding cases of children with mild disabilities and medical conditions who require further prevention and treatment. These children are likely to further develop potentially disabling conditions exacerbated by aspects including malnutrition, accidents, inadequate prevention and treatment of infectious diseases if left unattended. Another implication would be that the community is also not fully aware of the benefits of EARC and it is reported that the screening, medical and therapeutic services are inadequate and expensive.   Results of inaccurate tests are not only likely to produce undesired outcomes but also in the absence of an alternative method, the results are likely to be compromised.

Teachers receiving children in schools would need the assessment information to assist with the smooth transition of these children in subsequent years. The question is whether there are any records to build relevant case histories for children said to have SEN which may be updated and accessed in the future.

However, it appears that the EARC depend on primary school teachers' ability to identify and advise on the children said to have SEN. This also seems to reflect that with the upsurge of the enrolment of children after FPE in 2003 children

might have been enrolled without any screening. The following teachers may be said to illustrate some experience in the assessment process as well as knowledge in medical conditions from children. However, a child cannot be recognised as having SEN if the medical problems or otherwise do not require additional intervention.

Some of the responses under assessment include:

R122 *'Assessments, medical history given by parents, looking at his/her participation in class and his/her manner of doing class work'*.

R161 *'Through assessment by Early Assessment Resource Centres (EARC) officers give background history if the child has medical history where he/she has been suffering from epilepsy and polio etc.'*

R123 *'Assessment of the pupil through assessment centres, medical recommendation from doctor concerned'*.

In giving examples of how teachers identify children said to have SEN in class, they specified some of the activities as follows, which are also evident from the responses of teachers from the interviews.

M109 *'Maimed, who only looks at the teacher while the lesson is in progress and does not understand anything'*.

U34 *'Have difficulties reading and copying words, sentences that are far away, poor handwriting'*.

R133 *'Failure to shape numbers/letters properly, copy something totally different from teacher, their understanding of things is different from others, poor construction of sentences'*.

U28 *'Pupils struggling to read books, cannot read letters on the blackboard'*.

R121 *'Answer questions very loudly, write omitting some letters, takes a lot of time to complete the work given by the teacher'*.

Responses from the interviews also include how teachers identify some of the children which like responses from the questionnaires mainly include: observations, behaviour, poor performance and appearance. However, some of

the teachers from the interviews tend to provide more specific aspects which enable them to identify the same children.

The following are some of the responses from the interviews:

M1   *'Through observation, evaluation of written work, those who require special attention and during physical activities.   For example, aggressive behaviour'.*

M2   *'I identify them by behaviour. They do not like others.   … They harass others, do not concentrate, nor listen: they lack interest.'*

U2   *'Slow learners whose background I endeavour to find out. Through their shaggy appearance, lateness, absenteeism, truancy, lack basic needs and do not have the basic requirements'.*

U3   *Mostly in my class, there are some children who give irrelevant answers in a funny way. Their performance is poor. They are not able to read something written down and their behaviour is bad'.*

R2   *'They need a spacious class, not over-congested (overcrowded). This would ensure that those with epilepsy are not hurt during attacks.'*

The response from *M1* indicates what type of learning task or activity enables them to identify children said to have SEN unlike some general responses from the questionnaires like *U40*, *U28,* and *R121*. Similarly *M2* and *U2* explain some of the behavioural aspects that allow them to identify children said to have SEN unlike in response R156 where the children are referred to as 'brutal'. Response *U2* also indicates that the teacher takes extra effort to establish the background of the child while *M1* not only observes but also evaluates the written work.

Some teachers take the initiative to find out the background of children said to have SEN. Response from *U2* raises the question of why such information is not included in the personal records and is not accessible for all school staff. *U2* depicts children who may be considered as having myriad learning challenges, used by teachers to identify children said to have SEN. In order for teachers to maximise the learning of these children who seem to be struggling in different areas and who seem to be having behavioural difficulties, it is crucial that teachers

acquire skills to assist them to identify and interpret the challenges.

The children mentioned by *U2* may also come from poor backgrounds 'they lack basic needs' and may be abused or neglected ('shaggy, absenteeism'), may have reduced self esteem or underpinning problems which need specific programmes and/or interventions. Similar aspects were also mentioned in responses *U40* and *M154* as key in the identification of children said to have SEN in the questionnaires. In carrying out classroom activities and observing children said to have SEN, it appears that teachers concentrate on academic development, ability and what a child does differently from others, instead of managing the full and rounded development of these children based on age. The responses seem to suggest that teachers are generalising and they may fail to look for particular problems that an individual child has. For example, handwriting might not always be an indicator of poor ability. It may also be implied that teachers' characteristics for SEN differ in different schools. Invariably, the reporting of SEN is likely to differ significantly across the schools. The schools do not seem to have a clear cut protocol of identifying the children who may be said to have SEN.

However, five teachers (3%) from the questionnaires seemed to report a reliance on parents' information in order to identify children said to have SEN in the classroom. In the absence of other conclusive methods of identifying children said to have SEN, the various methods used by teachers other than assessment of medical information and parents form a great source of information for the continuum of SEN in primary schools. As mentioned under assessment, it depends on whether they are aware about the services or not. Parents who are aware of the service and can afford it may benefit. Children from poor parents may be compelled to stay at home without going to school and without support. The lack of support, financing and proper understanding of how disabilities affect functioning may lead to the parents' negative feelings and misconceptions about the service.

The lack of parental involvement may limit the parent's participation and decision making process about the education of their own child. This denial may be seen in

the light of power struggles surrounding the parents' involvement in their child's education. This may also imply a medical model in special education. Parents share details about the child because the school is the first contact where a child's potential becomes apparent for the first time and therefore their contribution is vital.

A clear picture of the situation of identification and assessment and plight of parents and their children who are said to have SEN in Kenya may be viewed under 'World News International Headline stories and video' from CNN.com CNN website online 'World's Untold Stories' – on 15 June 2009; February 26 and 27, 2011.

From the teachers' responses the role of the school seems inchoate. Schools with good assessment systems for all pupils will be able to easily identify those pupils who need additional support to meet their individual needs. They also develop a continuum of SEN and they are not only able to identify what the barriers to learning are for children said to have SEN, but provide appropriate strategies to overcome them. This depends on the system that is already in place to manage the process. The education system should be responsive to all learners and the educational support provided will enable each individual child to optimise their abilities and overcome or minimise the learning difficulty or disability.

However, they may be said to draw from the assessments, parents, medical and former teachers' information although this is to a lesser extent compared to other methods suggested above. Although schools are said to be part of larger communities with a range of stakeholders, the identification process seems to be dominated by teachers without any mention of other support teams to deal with the process of identifying children said to have SEN. To a large extent, teachers seem to be relying on their subjective judgements when identifying the children said to be having SEN without reference to any specific formal record. The teachers tend to be using academic skills and performance set against some normative expectations. It appears that teachers initiate the process of disability

diagnosis. So the question is how the schools can arrange support, intervention, placement and provision without identifiable and sustainable records.

After highlighting the methods teachers use in identifying the children said to have SEN the following section describes the kinds of children said to have SEN that teachers have in their classrooms.

5.4.4 Kinds of Special Educational Needs in the Classrooms

It is acknowledged that any education system is predominantly striving to provide quality education for all learners, which is a formidable challenge, especially for a developing country like Kenya. In order to focus on the strengths and to consider the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of learners as a source of potential to promote a rich learning environment, teachers need to understand the diverse needs of learners in order for them to learn and develop optimally. Children said to have SEN have additional support needs but their needs specifically refer to a learning difficulty whether moderate, severe, profound or specific but requiring aspects of provision different to their peers of the same age.   It would also be important for classroom teachers to understand how different categories of disabilities are defined. Teachers in this study presented the following as the kinds of SEN in their classes.
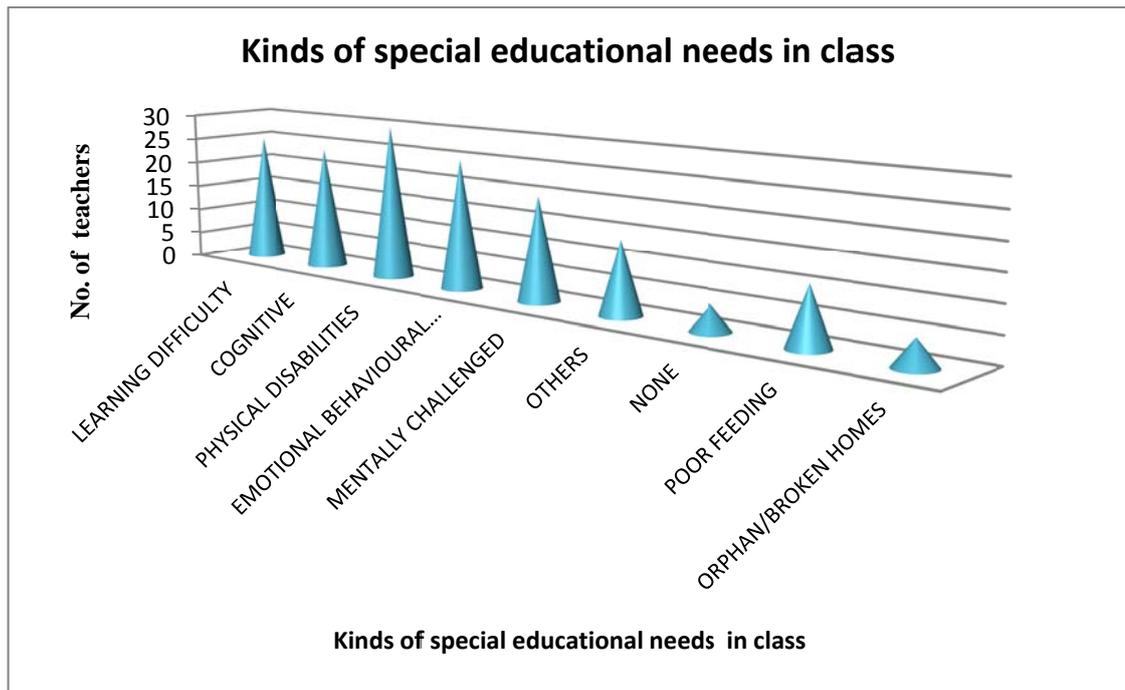
Figure 13: Kinds of Special Educational Needs in the Classrooms (N=159)
159)

The most common kinds of SEN in the classrooms included: 25(16%) learning difficulty, 24(15%) cognitive, 30(19%) physical disabilities; 25(16%) emotional and behavioural disorder, 20(13%) mentally challenged, 14(9%) Others were 11(7%) poor feeding, 5(3%) orphans and broken homes. Five (3%) teachers suggested they did not have a child with SEN in their classes. Teachers seemed to suggest that there is a high prevalence of children with physical disabilities in the classrooms. The answers included those with 'visual and hearing impairment', 'multiple handicaps' and those lacking in co-ordination. Some of the responses are included below:

U4   *'Lame pupils need well designed classrooms, need teachers with special education'*

U2   *'Handicapped children'*

M154   *'Neglected children, poor bodily defect'*

M69   *'Those learning through the Braille media'*

The implication likely to be drawn from the above responses is that teachers use different terminologies while referring to the children with physical difficulties in the classroom. They are categorised as: 'lame', 'handicapped', 'impaired', have a '…bodily defect', 'disabled' and that they need 'teachers with special education'. Referring to how teachers defined SEN and through to the methods they use in identifying children said to have SEN, special education seems to be treated as synonymous with the education for the visually and hearing impaired as well as those with physical difficulties. In this context too disabilities seem to imply a problem resulting from the impairment due to the surrounding environment and society. According to the Social Model of Disability, disability manifests from the manner in which the society is structured but not from the impairment. Responses from teachers' indicated that the children with disabilities have multiple problems in addition to their learning difficulties. For example, the following response:

> *M61: 'There are some who have mental retardation, autism, epilepsy, cerebral palsy and hydrocephalus condition'*

The above response includes: cognitive – 'mental retardation'', specific learning difficulty, learning difficulties – 'cerebral palsy and medical conditions – 'epilepsy' and 'hydrocephalus'. The latter seems to denote problems with medical services but it would only manifest as SEN if the condition requires additional intervention. Hydrocephalus is a condition often noticed in infants, but as reported by the above teacher, children suffering from the condition are reported to be in primary school. This may also affirm the importance of early identification and intervention.

Early diagnosis and appropriate intervention improve the prospects of children said to have SEN and reduce the need for expensive intervention. The question is how prepared the teachers and the schools are to make an enabling environment for this child and others. Inadequate medical attention to infants' medical problems causes more disabling conditions such as mild intellectual disability. On the other hand, some disabilities for example assessment of learning difficulty may not occur until after a child has failed to respond to interventions carefully

designed to prevent them. Therefore, the above teacher may be said to have some knowledge of SEN but improving the early detection, prevention and intervention of children said to have SEN would call for more than one stakeholder. These may include all the teachers, parents, children, community, the school administration and multiple fronts of the government.

On the other hand, the kinds of SEN in the classes seem to include other compounding difficulties which may be related to a socio-political as well as economic condition. For example: poor feeding, orphans and broken homes. These may be seen to be a reflection of some of the problems Kenya is grappling with as a developing country.

These different aspects like poverty, malnutrition, inadequate medical facilities and infections cause a high prevalence of disability especially in developing countries. The problem is further intensified by the fact that Kenya implemented the FPE with high enrolments without commensurate services or facilities. This is intensified by unsteady economic growth and reliance on international donors and agencies for funding. This may lead to intermittent provision of public education. The compounding difficulties may further include emotional and behavioural disorders not necessarily raised by the children's behaviour in the class but due to the problems and/or experiences in their lives.

Teachers may be required to play dual roles to ensure that not only are the learning needs of children said to have SEN met, but also the 'unmet' emotional needs of these children from broken homes, orphans and those suffering from medical and poor feeding problems. Teachers may need skills to cope with this dual role as carers and/or counsellors as well as parents. It is also imperative that the teachers know the background of the children in their classes upon enrolment. This will not only help teachers to understand how pupils said to have SEN experience the world but also enable them to examine the context within which these children's interactions take place.

Apart from what may be considered as objectively identifiable kinds of SEN, such as physical difficulties, speech and language, visual and hearing impairments shown above, teachers seem to apply different relative judgements about kinds of SEN in different contexts. This may be problematic because it would imply that the needs and funding of these children in different categories would be different, as well as their impacts on schools, which is not necessarily the case. Some of the comments include the following:

> U2   *'Slow learners, little brains.'*
>
> U40   *'Slow learners, low intellectual ability and poor academic foundation.'*
>
> M87   *'Slow learners, truancy.'*
>
> U89   *'Some did not attend nursery school, they are slow in learning.'*
>
> M109   *'Hectic due to adolescence stage, jumping brain where a kid rushes to answer a question wrongly, retardation (slowness in learning)'*

The above responses seem to denote children who stand out more and are different from the majority of others who can be considered as 'normal', as referred to by the teachers from different schools. In Kenya as in other African countries, passing primary school level examinations is considered a landmark to joining secondary school and children are assessed in terms of whether they pass or fail their exam. Failure is considered as poor intelligence and the child tend to be blamed for it. Similarly in these schools the same kind of mindset may be reflected in the way some teachers are referring to children said to have SEN and especially those with learning difficulties. The above responses refer to them as 'slow learners'. This may have a bearing on the way teachers are influenced by their beliefs, values and culture about children with disabilities generally.

The responses seem to be driven by stigma and justified by the reality of children being unable to keep up with the curriculum. On the other hand, response *M109* seems to imply that the teacher finds it 'hectic' to deal with children with learning difficulties. Responses from *M109* and *U2* seem to use negative and labelling language; while responses from *M87* and *U89* imply a bias towards children with

learning difficulties as truants and those who did not attend nursery school as 'slow learners'. Generally, motivated students develop self-confidence but as suggested by responses *U43 and R14,* these children may be rational and lack motivation to learn.

However, learning takes place as a child is apprenticed to the patterns and routines of the family, classroom, school, community and the larger societal cultural context. Since children cannot be separated from their total environment, the teacher has a critical role in shaping the child's understandings of self and environment. The question is whether children said to have SEN are given the same opportunities to develop their own ability to think and develop their aptitudes.

The following responses seem to denote a different aspect of the children with learning difficulties as defined by the teachers in this study:

R143   *'Hyperactive behaviour, uninterested, inactive participation'.*

R162   *'Emotionally disturbed'.*

U48   *'Inadequate speech, concentration, hyperactivity and reading difficulties'.*

U32   *'Inability to read and write'.*

R118   *'Reading and writing problem (Dyslexia) mentally handicapped, low vision, hearing impairment'.*

U59   *'Poor conceptualisation of writing, reading and comprehension of number work'.*

M132   *'Inability to understand some concepts like Maths'.*

U57   *'Down Syndrome, Autism'*

Children with learning difficulties have significantly greater difficulties in learning than the majority of children of the same age. However, teachers in this study seem to consider children with learning difficulties as lacking in ability and having problems in Reading, Writing and Maths (number work) and failing to live

up to the norms in the mainstream school. Although the children with difficulties in this study are said to have problems in Reading, Writing and Maths, the responses do not seem to substantiate the problem in relation to the age of the child or standardized tests to indicate teachers' valid criteria in making the judgement about the kind of SEN they have in their classes.

This may suggest that the means of determining the attainment of the children said to have SEN are subjective. For example responses *R143, R162 and U48* seem to indicate that these children demonstrate 'hyperactive behaviour' in class. Children with learning difficulties have other accompanying academic challenges which can lead to low self esteem and behavioural problems. However, this is not always the case. However, if teachers give tailored instructions to suit these children the 'hyperactivity' may be reduced. Teachers seem to be able to identify the kinds of SEN in the classes they teach but not the social manner of how the difficulty is manifested. However, a child with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) may disrupt learning if a teacher has no knowledge about it and this leads to the generation of categories. These include interplay of historical, political and institutional forces. The implication is that the children will continue to be labelled but needs do not seem to increase in proportion to available resources. None of the teachers who answered this question mentioned disruption as the basis for identifying children with learning difficulties. As the categories in Kenya are still dominated by the ideology of traditional beliefs, the implication is that there are major barriers in the classification system which also seems to affect the efficient and effective delivery of services to the children and families of children said to have SEN. On the other hand, some teachers use terminologies which may imply that there are attempts to use the non-traditional and categorising terms. For example:

U3,M82,M88,M99   *Gifted and Talented*

This may imply that some teachers who may have had SEN training are applying the more contemporary terminologies while addressing children said to have SEN.

'Gifted and talented' students are self directed learners and may get bored especially if they do not benefit from undifferentiated instruction settings.

Notwithstanding, the system of assessing and identifying does not seem to be well co-ordinated and seems to rely on the teachers' methods of identifying these children. It seems unclear how these children are placed, enrolled and provided for in schools thereafter. Before establishing how teachers' knowledge and beliefs related to practice, it was important to correlate between categories of SEN knowledge and understanding against training. Hence the following theme, detailing the courses they attend after initial teacher training, compared to pre-service courses.

5.5 Additional Continuous Professional Development

It is important at this juncture to establish what professional development courses are in place for teachers in this study with special reference to the short and long-term training courses they have undertaken after leaving college. The short-term courses were considered as those for the duration of up to a period of one year and long-term courses more than one year. The initial teacher training system in Kenya is inchoate and after teacher training, teachers are considered as qualified to start teaching without further follow up. So the term post-service training is used instead of in-service.

5.5.1 Post-Service Training

 As Kenya faces up to the challenges of the 21st Century especially in the nature of schooling, it is vital to determine how teachers' post- training prepares them for their role in meeting the needs of pupils seen to have SEN and raising the standards for all children. The following figures depict the short-term and long-term post training courses teachers have attended after their pre-service teacher training course:

Post-Service Training Courses
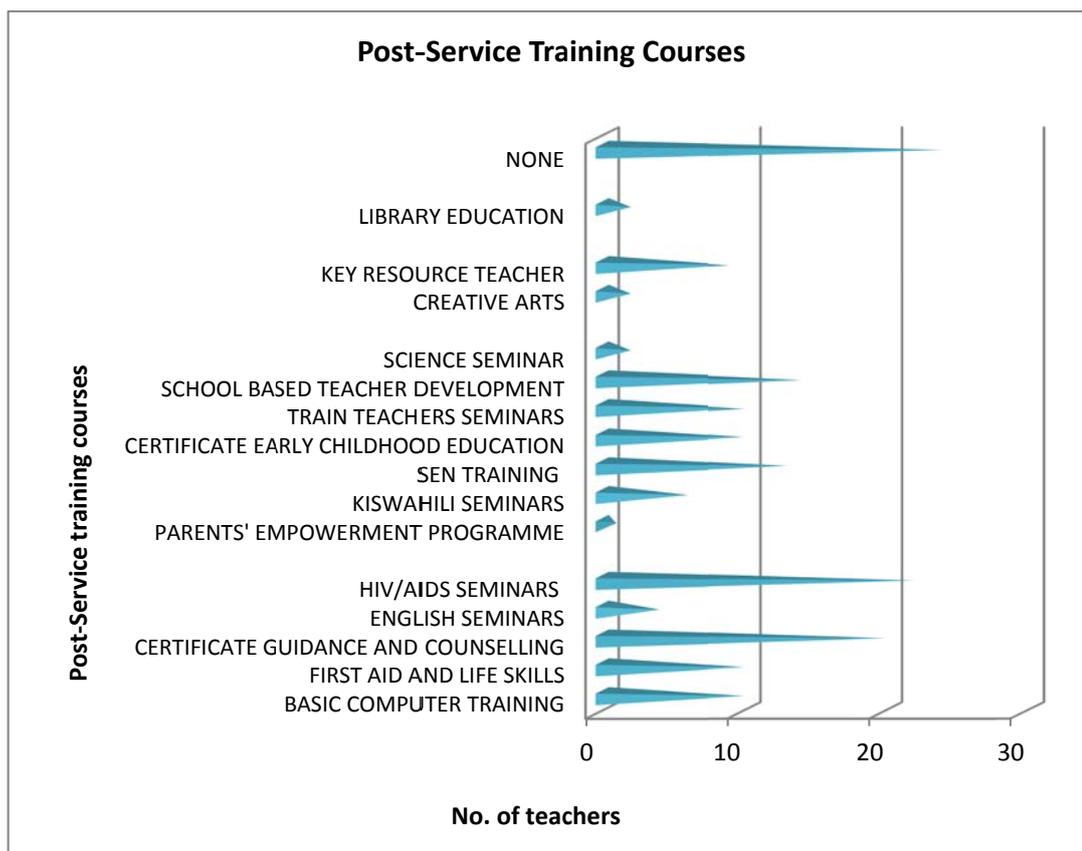
Figure 14: Post-Service Training Course

5.5.2 Short- Term Courses

The teachers reported that they had attended short term initial teacher training courses as follows: HIV/AIDS 22(14%); Certificate in Guidance and Counselling 20(12%); School Based Teacher Development 14(9%); SEN 13(8%) teachers; Basic Computer Training; First Aid and Life Skills; Certificate in Early Childhood Education (ECDE) and Train Teachers Seminar respectively 10(6%); Key Resource Teacher 9(5%); Kiswahili Seminar 6(3%), English Seminar 4(2%) and 2(1%) teachers had attended Library Education, Creative Arts Course and Science Seminar, while one teacher had attended a Parent Empowerment Programme. Meanwhile, 24(15%) teachers have not attended any training and among them are those who have been teaching in the same school for over 15 years.

The reason for these teachers not having had any training since they left their pre-service course may be attributed to different factors. It may be reasonable to assert

that teachers who have a high sense of self-efficacy are said to reinforce their efforts when their performances fall short of their goals and interests. It may be plausible to posit that such teachers are more open to new ideas and more willing to trial new methods.

Teachers are meant to build on their current knowledge base in order to attain more skills and improve in their profession. This may be possible where the teachers are reflexive. However, there are many factors which may not be exhausted in this study. It would be practical to suggest that the courses specified certain qualifications or nominated particular teachers. The government is taking positive strides to improve initial teacher training by instigating courses like Key Resource Teacher, School-Based Teacher Development and Train Teachers seminars normally facilitated by contracted agencies or donors due to the unsteady position the economy is in to afford this kind of training. These courses train a few teachers from different schools, who then organise sessions to teach the other teachers. This has been on-going for subjects like Mathematics and Reading but not on SEN. The government has been organising seminars for HIV/AIDS since the prevalence rate is high and to meet the MDG goals by 2015. HIV/AIDS has been incorporated into the curriculum as pandemic preventive education. Logically, teachers act as a potential network to reach countrywide segments of the entire population because of their geographical representation.

First Aid Skills are significant interms of providing teachers with the skills to confidently cope with medical emergencies, while Life Skills enable teachers to help youth in developing personal and social skills. The languages and Sciences seminars are organised especially if there is a change in the curriculum and these seminars may include specific teachers. Kiswahili and English language enable teachers to continuously support children in reading, writing and communicating in both their national and official language. Teachers attend the Guidance and Counselling Course (12%) which was initiated after the government banned corporal punishment. This course enables them to deal with disciplinary cases and to provide additional and/or necessary support while dealing with academic, emotional and social challenges of the children. Presumably there is restricted

access to tailor-made courses, seminars or workshops for teachers to attend regularly and continuously.

The use of computers is limited to a few public schools in Nairobi and a few municipalities but they are mostly used in private schools and rare in rural schools where electricity is atypical. Undertaking Basic Computer Skills 10(6%) may be conceived as a teacher's personal initiative especially for those in public primary schools. This seems to suggest a problem in implementing a two-way information and communication education system considering the dysfunctional postal system. It is reasonable to conclude that important management decisions or crucial information may fail to reach the destined geographically dispersed offices and/or services in time and this may negatively impact on monitoring and evaluation.

Other courses include, 2(1%) teachers attending Creative Arts and Library Education. These are two fairly recent courses. In primary schools children are familiar with drawing as a subject which is offered in the lower classes. However, Arts and Crafts and not Creative Arts is offered to upper primary classes but it is non-examinable and not taught anymore. Schools are working with private NGOs as an alternative way to enrich the provision of creative education in schools. This is done after school hours. Correspondingly, Library Education is a recent development.

The growth of libraries in Kenya is associated with its colonial history, which, as discussed in the context chapter, was marked by discernible segregation between the Europeans, Asians and Africans. High cost private schools have libraries, but there are none in public primary schools. Head teachers have the role of developing libraries in public primary schools, an obligation which is marked by lack of adequate funding. The question is how teachers gain access to current resources, publications and identify materials for resourceful individual or collaborative planning. This could also raise the question of how teachers are expected to benefit from their own research activities.

Ten (6%) teachers obtained a certificate for Early Childhood Education (ECDE). The government took over the management of nursery schools in 1997. It is plausible to surmise that the government may be taking an interest in the training of teachers in order to streamline education provision in this crucial stage of cognitive and other personality development. One teacher is attending the Parent Empowerment Programme. This programme may be construed as one which clarifies the position of parents, especially regarding their rights and those of their children. However, only one teacher attending may not be practical to instigate change. It is not clear how these courses may support teachers to differentiate teaching practice.

The above courses and seminars are meant to improve the learning outcome for children at primary level. This implies that the government seems to be taking positive albeit small steps towards meeting the MDG goals in 2015 by initiating courses like HIV/AIDS, School Based Teacher Development, Train the Teachers Seminars. It is feasible that some teachers played different leadership roles while presenting the School Based courses: Train the Trainer and Key Resource Teacher. It is also plausible to presuppose that these courses may positively influence collaborative learning and make meaningful interactions with the teachers and administration. However, there appears to be no regimented training programmes for teachers to improve on their professional capacity or upgrade their career.
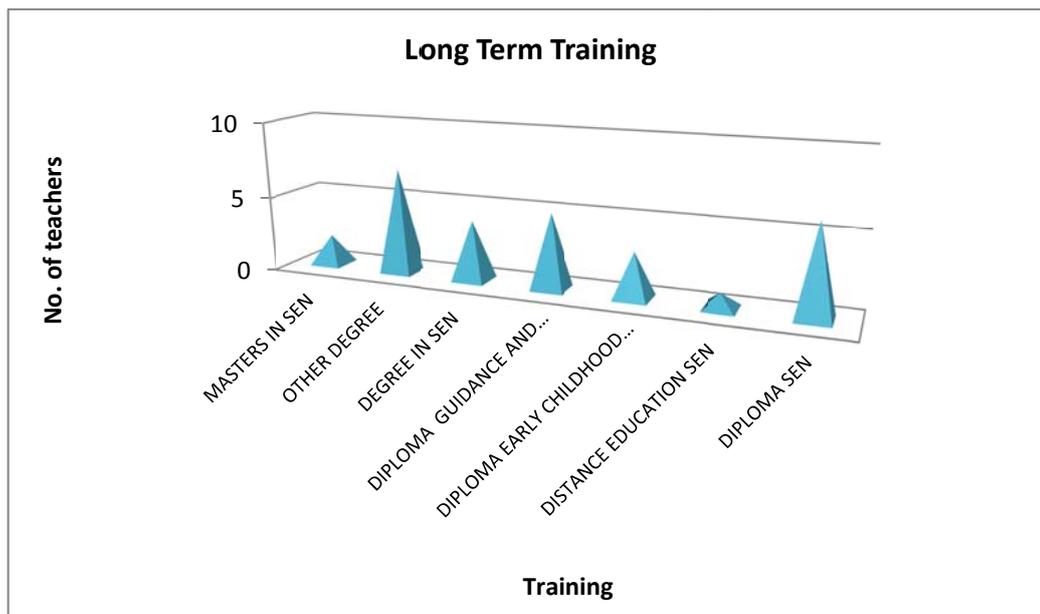
Figure 15: Long Term Training

5.5.3 Long-term Courses

Figure 15 displays the long-term courses (n=28) teachers had attended. As discussed above teachers act upon their own initiative to upgrade their skills. Two (7%) teachers have achieved a Master's Degree; 7(25%) other degrees; 4(14%) Degree in SEN; 5(18%) Diploma in Guidance and Counselling; 3(11%) Diploma in Early Childhood Education; 1(4%) Distance Education and 6 (21%) SEN Diploma. These (n=28) teachers may be construed to be interested in advancing their skills and are paying for the training. There may be different foreseeable reasons that may be ascribed to these teachers' post training interests. The structure followed in promoting teachers in Kenya is through the A.T.S. method mentioned in section 5.3.1. This promotion system and pay levels as well as structure are relatively fixed. The sole reward for good performance is promotion. Promotion is based on length of service, teaching ability, flexibility in teaching methods, participation in hardworking activities, not ruling out the relationship with the Head Teachers. Some teachers may feel motivated by this arrangement and others may not.

The (n=28) teachers may be interested in an upward progression in their careers which is lacking within the system and this may encourage teacher attrition. This

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may also explain why teachers are ready to pay for their own courses in the absence of future development opportunities. Generally, lack of training has been reported to severely affect teachers' morale and motivation. However, the general representation of SEN training is poor and although some of these courses like Creative Arts, ECE, Guidance and Counselling, Parents' Empowerment Programme can integrate with SEN it may not be in a clear cut manner. The Kenya Institute of Special Education Institute (KISE) has the responsibility of training SEN teachers but they do not deal with curriculum issues, while the TSC principally deals with recruitment of teachers.

After pre-service training, teachers start teaching immediately and SEN is not integrated in the pre-service training modules as a subject. So teachers more often than not pay for their post-training courses unless the government is initiating the training. The presumption is that the courses chosen are linked to school reform and related to the daily activities of the teachers and learners. Although the contents and duration of courses that teachers attended are not obvious to the researcher, most of the post-training courses seem to refer generally rather than specifically to practical pedagogy practices such as Classroom Dynamics; Instructional competencies; Assessing children's SEN; Nature and causes of disabilities and their associated characteristics; Resources and Policies; Teaching and intervention approaches and methods; Managing behaviour; Child Development; Developing social skills in children; Personal skills, Curriculum adaptation, Use of resources, Counselling and communication skills with parents; Parents-teacher relationships and not least Child-centred pedagogy.

It is also questionable how regular follow ups may be carried out to ensure teachers have acquired new knowledge and experiences based on their prior knowledge and whether the new knowledge contributes to improvements in educational practice. This also tends to raise the question of how the chosen training relates to specific teachers' competences and how the school organisations determine how the training promotes teachers' professional development. Teachers seem to be interested in their professional development; despite minimal support from the government. Nonetheless, it seems the government has initiated on-going training for teachers albeit at a slow and

intermittent rate, but this seems to be when funds are available from an external agency. The wide-ranging training experiences from teachers seem to be reflected in the strategies adopted when teaching children said to have SEN.

5.5.4 School-Based Training

Teachers need to be supported to cope with the various challenges, changes and reforms within the education system. Their support may be enhanced through professional development, initial training and professional induction, as well as in-service and post–experience training. Head teachers are expected to play an instrumental role in providing opportunities for all teachers to learn the valuable skills necessary to work within a diverse world.

Generally, the school administration should understand the historical background of special education as well as the current trends and practices in order to facilitate change in schools in line with the new policies. The following interview responses highlight the kind of training facilitated by schools.

R1 *'The school does not facilitate any training. Individual teachers identify courses they would like to attend and apply whilst consulting the head teacher to authorise their attendance to the courses.'*

R3 *'None is offered. We are only informed that the K.I.S.E. is offering a course in SEN and a Diploma is not enough. One needs to specialise more in this field.'*

M1 *'Usually the head teacher encourages teachers to apply for further training especially at K.I.S.E. but this depends on whether one has the money to pay tuition fees.'*

R2 *'There are occasional seminars from K.I.S.E., otherwise teachers are encouraged to enrol for the SEN course.'*

U1 *'The school sometimes has workshops on Guidance and Counselling.'*

M2 *'None at all. I have done a Diploma and want to move on to a Degree course in Early Child Development, but I cannot afford it.'*

U2 *'There are many courses as long as one has expressed the wish to*

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> *take part. For example, IT, HIV/AIDS, Guidance and Counselling.*
> *For further studies individuals pay for themselves. The school is*
> *supported by Sisters of Mercy and the Director ensures teachers*
> *attend different seminars and training.'*

U3   *'Recently there are new seminars for Kiswahili teachers. ...started*
> *in 2007.'*

Responses *R3* and *M2* express a willingness to continue in their studies in order to become more knowledgeable in the field of SEN. However, they have to pay for these themselves. Some head teachers encourage teachers to enrol for SEN courses at Kenya Institute of Special Education (K.I.S.E.) as mentioned by *M1* and *R2*. While some teachers, *R1, R3, M1, M2,* state that their schools do not offer any training, others specify that seminars are occasionally held for Guidance and Counselling - *R2* and Kiswahili - *U3*. Response *U2* states that their school offers different courses for the teachers. However, the courses seem to be sponsored by an external agency. There seems to be no government sponsored courses or seminars on SEN. The schools also seem not to hold any in-service training (INSET) for teachers. As a result, the standards of achievement for developed countries are higher than those for a developing country, such as Kenya. Teachers, especially in UK schools, may have five days each year where they have in-school training courses without the children present. The aforementioned seminars and courses are intermittent and Kenyan teachers seem uncertain as to whether they will attend any courses, depending upon availability of personal funds. The courses do not seem to relate to the learning process, improving children's learning or developing reflective teaching methods.

5.5.5 Anticipated teacher training

Kenya does not have a combined pre-service training system for special education. All prospective teachers are trained to work in the education system under the general curriculum. Teachers who wish to specialise in SEN go for training after the pre-service course. Teachers in this study are interested in professional development and their learning, striving to facilitate learning and participation of all pupils in heterogeneous classrooms in the wake of varied

changes and policies in the education milieu. However, they need support, time to learn and to share experiences while establishing relevant collaborative networks in the society and integrating theory with practice in order to improve the learning outcomes of all children, as well as responding to the diverse and varied needs of pupils in the classroom. The following sections provide some of the support teachers suggested.

Most of the teachers who were interviewed seemed to express an interest in undertaking more studies not only to improve their existing skills but also to acquire new skills in dealing with children said to have SEN. Subsequently, it is crucial to improve the classroom teacher's skills through an intensive focus on quality teaching. Classroom diversity contrasts with new political pressures, reforms and a focus on accountability. These demands affect teachers and how they approach instruction. Teachers need to be prepared to play a new and active participatory role in all aspects of education. Teachers would like to attend courses in Kiswahili and English languages and SEN, as well as science as follows:

> M2 *'I would like to get more training in English language especially how to teach reading and writing to children in their early years of school: class one to three. I find this is what hinders the education of most children.'*

> U2 *'Kiswahili and English. These affect the day-to-day lives of all people and make communication easy. They are major subjects and they keep changing. For example, Kiswahili has been modified to 'Mfti' for 'Sanifu.'*

> U1 *'I would like to do a course on how to teach reading. This is because children are not able to read at their relative age.'*

> R3 *'I would like to train in subjects, like dealing with those with hearing problems, hyperactive and 'slow' learners.'*

> R3 *'Include a system where teachers are trained in the use of Braille'*

> M1 *'How to handle the visually impaired, mentally 'retarded' and physically impaired.'*

> R2   '...I would still like to specialise in deaf children and learn how to communicate with them.'
>
> R2   'Also, there should be more workshops for teachers on epilepsy, administering medication.'
>
> R2   'More personnel should be trained to deal with SEN children.'
>
> U3   'Seminars on any new things to keep abreast with SEN.'

The training needs suggested by the above teachers seem to focus on the challenges they are facing when teaching children said to have SEN in their classrooms. These suggestions seem to focus on languages and SEN. As underscored in section 5.7.2 on reading difficulties, effective reading remedial programmes are necessary. The Kenyan government is committed to eradicating illiteracy and plans to reach a functional literacy level of 50% by 2015 (World Education Report, 2000). Although the Kenyan government has initiated different training programmes and, as indicated by a few teachers, some seminars and SEN training, it is still evident that the key task is to develop competent teachers who are ready to engage pupils in cognitively demanding activities, maintain a positive discipline and climate in school and the classroom, while responding to the diversities of children said to have SEN and improving their learning outcomes.

5.5.6 Other Support areas suggested by teachers

5.5.6.1 Curriculum development

The primary school education curriculum in Kenya has been altered several times since independence in response to the shifting needs of Kenyan society. The general curriculum is academic and examination orientated, and it is left to teachers to try to make adaptations to suit the learning needs of children said to have SEN. Teachers' responses about the curriculum are presented below.

> R1   'The government should give the teachers an opportunity to suggest what subjects would be more suitable for these children instead of exposing them to the same academic subjects like other children.'

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M1 *'The syllabus is too wide. Narrow it to avoid overloading teachers. … teachers should be involved more in the early stages of initiating curriculum development because they are the ones who engage with the children learning on a day-to-day basis.'*

M2 *'Craftwork should be re-introduced. These are activities to do with hands. Expose the children to creative work. There should be other things to develop children wholly other than academics, for example: creative arts, psychomotor skills and craftwork.'*

U1 *'A different curriculum should be written for these children and a class should be specifically set up where these children will be getting more attention. This should be an initiative from the government.'*

U2 *'Subjects should be reduced. The syllabus is too large for the teachers to cover in good time.'*

R2 *'This could include basic arithmetic, activities of daily living, vocational training like machine work, tailoring, candle, soap and sweater-making. For example, one of our pupils, a boy, was last year trained to work in butchery at K… shopping centre and he has learnt some of the tasks. In fact, he is now considered as an employee and is being paid wages.'*

R3 *'SEN children should have their own syllabus. They should not have the same syllabus but less challenged. There should be a department dealing with that group. They should be examined differently in a separate environment.'*

Some teachers *R1, M1* and *M2* tend to feel that they should be involved in the development of the primary school education curriculum since they are in contact with the children on a daily basis *M1*. It may be important to involve teachers in the process of curriculum planning since they may be having reliable, valid data and are able to make suggestions that are likely to inform the targeted problems. They may be allowed to work as teams in projects that expand their roles. This may imply that the school structure, as well as the education system, might need to generate opportunities for teachers to get involved in decision-making roles. Teachers with high efficacy seem to be keen to participate actively. The question remains as to whether teachers have the ability to interpret and translate the curriculum at the appropriate levels. Teachers also commented that the curriculum

includes academic subjects *M2* and that the syllabus is too wide *M1* and *U2* indicating that it should be reduced to avoid overloading and for them to be able to cover all of it in good time *U2*. Teachers seem to suggest that the curriculum is crowded and too strongly tied to examinations. This may tend to reduce teachers' time for experimenting or trying out new ideas which would be necessary while attempting to reach all pupils.

Teachers may eventually teach to the syllabus, making it likely that they will alienate children said to have SEN or those who may not cope with the increasing demand of the academic curriculum. Research evidence (KNCHR, 2007) shows that some schools are reluctant to admit children said to have SEN in case they make the particular schools mean score in the national examinations grading drop. Such schools may consider children's diversities as a big problem which makes them busy and does not signify equal opportunities for these children. Another question still lingers as to whether teachers are sufficiently trained to make appropriate accommodations and adaptations to the curriculum in order to ensure access of the curriculum for children said to have SEN.

Teachers' responses *R2* and *M2* also seem to suggest subjects that are more hands-on in nature in order to expose the children to creativity. They seem to have difficulties in addressing and exploring the diversity in their pupils in terms of what they have to teach and how to teach across the curriculum. This is especially the case if they are not well trained and have low efficacy.

The question is also whether teachers are aware of the education policies and their role in their development and operation. Investment in teacher education may affect pedagogy and the ability of staff and teachers to interpret and translate the curriculum at appropriate levels.

5.5.6.2. Policy making

As highlighted in the context chapter, Kenya's education system is centralised, hierarchical and bureaucratic and the central government makes most decisions (including policies) which are then implemented by the schools. Teachers have a

key role to play in student learning. They are expected to contribute in other areas, including school management, culture, assessments, standards, parent and community partnership, curriculum, resources and different administration processes. Teachers may be considered to be in touch with the reality of schools and may connect policy with practice in an effective manner in order to inspire and implement sustained reform.

Six teachers referred to the Guidance and Counselling policy, while the other responses were as follows:

M1 *'Teachers to be involved in policy making and be called upon to make recommendations about the curriculum.'*

R1 *'There is nothing in particular.'*

R3 *'Our school's motto is 'Hard Work Pays. The vision is self actualisation and the mission is discipline…'.*

The response *M1* shows that teachers would like to be involved in policy making, while *R1* does not seem to be aware whether there is any policy. Response *R3* seems to confuse the difference between mission and policy. Nevertheless, it tends to show that some schools might have mission and vision statements but they need to contribute to whole-school approaches. Schools may need to revise their philosophies and to reiterate more leadership, and management training is needed for head teachers. The following section covers the training areas suggested by teachers.

5.6 Managing Diversities in the Classroom

Teachers can play a significant role in promoting the abilities, attitudes and motivation of individual children said to have SEN. They provide different skills, instructions and create school environments where these skills can be practised. A variety of skills to meet the complex demands in the classrooms are required. When pupils are having difficulties, teachers provide individualized support, matching the level of support offered to the students' needs and abilities. It is,

therefore, vital for teachers to identify the diverse range of children in their classrooms. Teachers tended to focus on the limiting factors they used to identify children said to have SEN. These included performance, physical and observable problems, behavioural issues, reading and writing, medical and intellectual impairment. These were highlighted in both the questionnaire and interview data analysis especially when teachers were defining SEN and explaining Kinds of SEN (sections 5.4.2 to 5.4.5). To avoid repetition, the list from teachers' interviews is attached as Appendix 16.

School populations are becoming more diverse with students coming from a broad range of cultures, socio-economic backgrounds, languages, family structures and diverse ability levels and school experiences. These diversities should ideally create rich experiences for students and teachers but are also reported to pose challenges in different situations. Teachers are expected to be able to meet these students' individual learning needs in terms of teaching strategies and learning materials and they are also expected to assess learning and teaching on an on-going basis. Through monitoring of the attainment of learning outcomes teachers are able to support and facilitate the learning process. The strategies seem to highlight an interesting professional dilemma that emerges from what the teachers have reported in the questionnaires. On the one hand they made me aware that they had insufficient guidance on the identification of children said to have SEN. On the other hand they are equally clear about the kind of strategies that they use when a child appears to have SEN. The following are the teaching strategies teachers stated from the questionnaire:

5.6.1 Teaching Strategies

Appropriate instructional materials would provide support during the learning process and are likely to make a difference in the achievement of children. However, children said to have SEN have unique needs and may present distinctive challenges. Therefore, it is important for teachers to be aware of and understand different types of disabilities and any individual children's background information that would possibly affect or impact on their performance in the

classroom.	Such information has been shown to enable teachers to explore suitable ways of engaging the children (Berry, 2011).	Teachers' responses pointed out the following strategies:

Figure 16:	Teaching Strategies

Teaching Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Class Discussions and Peer Learning	23	14%
Group Work	20	13%
Reward and praise hard work	20	13%
Drama, Song, Poetry and Stories	17	11%
Varied methods of teaching	15	9%
Extra time for task and remedial work	11	7%
Experiential Learning	14	8%
Team teaching, one-to-one and create routine	10	6%
Individualized Education Plan	8	5%
Use tangible materials	5	3%
Role Play	5	3%
Teach and build on simple concepts	3	2%
Use the resource room	3	2%
Use of video and slides	2	1%
Use points for behaviour	2	1%
Set and evaluate targets	1	1%

From the above results, teachers seem to apply a wide range of strategies. This may be seen as a positive indicator in that children seen to have special educational needs are learning together. The most common strategies are represented as follows:	Class discussions and peer learning 23(14%); Group Work 20(13%), Rewarding hard work 20(13%); Drama, song, poetry and stories 17(10%); Varied methods of teaching 15(9%); Experiential learning 14(8%); Extra time to complete task and remedial work 11(6%); Team teaching and one-to-one and creating routine 10(6%); Individualized Education Plan (IEP) 8(5%); Role Play 5(3%); Using tangible materials 5(3%); Teach simple concepts and building on them; and Using the resource room 3(1%) respectively; use of video and slides 2(1%) and use of points for behaviour 2(1%) and setting and evaluating targets 1(1%).	Instructional practices that are known to be effective for most

learners may also be effective for learners seen to have SEN; it is important to posit that they need to be effectively delivered to benefit these children.

The teaching strategies portrayed by teachers have been documented to work well with children with special educational needs in different forums. For example, *'giving remedial work', 'group-work', 'role play', 'one-to-one', 'peer learning', 'praise', 'song', 'drama', 'using the resource room', 'use of video and slides'*.

Class discussions and peer learning 23(14%) are used by most teachers. Peer attention is considered as a function for disruptive behaviour among children with disabilities in the general classoom. Children known to have ADHD or EBD respond well to this strategy. However, they may need independent working activities or projects to keep them on task. It is important to underline that in answering this question most teachers only stated the strategies and few explained them. Friendship and social interaction with peers are important to secure personal growth. Some teachers 20(13%) indicated that they group pupils according to their ability, while others gave the importance of group work as follows:

> R159 *'Ability grouping where learners are paired according to their ability, so that they may assist one another'.*

The teacher tends to provide children with opportunities to learn from one another. Such sessions need to be well planned to balance the amount of time the pairs are on task.

Other responses on *'group work'* strategy included:

> R147 *'Encourage friendly relationship among children said to have SEN and 'normal' children'..*
> M75: *'Involve them in group work where they learn from each other which enhances cooperation'.*

It is important for teachers to ensure that the relevant support is sufficient because proximity of the support is not adequate for ensuring successful outcomes for the child. Children said to have SEN need to have expectations made clear and may need more explicit coaching or special cues. Group work may help motivate

social skills, independence and raise standards. This is only possible if pupils are better engaged in their own learning. Children need to see the possibilities for success rather than grouped when teachers have to attend to the academically strong. The question is what happens to the other children who may not be academically strong. It is not clear how the teacher may be able to apply some of these methods without the help of a Learning Support Assistant or Learning Support Teacher in class.

Children who learn in a setting where a resource room is available are required to move classes frequently and therefore have a great need for social interaction and may benefit from group work. However a child with an IEP is likely to benefit in such a resource room. A teacher's attitude is considered central in encouraging as well as facilitating good relationships among children said to have SEN and their peers. However, response *R147* tends to use language suggesting that children said to have SEN are not 'normal'. The deficit view of a child is deeply rooted in the culture of different societies in Kenya which tends to symbolise a medical model which is known not to combine easily with inclusive policies.

Notwithstanding, under 'teach and build on simple concepts', *M64* explained the strategy they use as follows:

> M64   *Use of teaching and learning resources to simplify new concepts, eg. counters in number work, attractive and large pictures to hold learner's attention. Motivating learners through reinforcements eg, allowing learners to play ball when they master a concept, praising them.*

The teacher seems to attempt to fully explain the strategy and it may be asserted that this teacher has some working knowledge of children said to have SEN. The teacher uses what is readily available as resources (simple and local objects like counters and ball) to motivate children. This may also serve to aver how limiting the available resources are to this teacher. It is noticeable that children learn well if there are teaching and learning materials as well as adequate resources.

The following response seems to shed light on the remedial approach:

> R132   *'Remedial teaching, taking them to a resource room where pupils with special needs work with pupils with different*

abilities are mixed and do work together'.

From the above quotation, *R132*, the resource room seems to be a place where all children 'with different abilities' work from. Teachers seem to use the resource room as a source of help for mainstream children whom they may not be able to handle in class. This may be interpreted that the teacher may not be willing, or they are not trained or are inexperienced to deal with the children said to have SEN. Notwithstanding, remedial classes strategy may also be used to provide a child with a different environment which may enable them to calm down. Considering the class size shown in figure 11 and an estimated PTR of 1:46 after FPE this teacher's response tends to divulge an aspect of the impact the class size may have on the remedial teaching strategy. The classrooms are overcrowded but teachers have to continue teaching regardless of the circumstances. Although the government has hired low-paid contract teachers to supplement government salaried teachers to lower the PTR, it has been documented that there is a strong possibility that these teachers are less experienced and less effective.

The question is how they are expected to support children with specific learning difficulties without guidance or support. In the UK, the appointment of a Learning Support Teacher or Learning Support Assistant has been a significant factor in supporting children with specified learning difficulties in the ordinary classroom. At the present time, this is not a resource available to a majority of Kenyan teachers in this study. Drama, song, poetry and stories may be considered as a way of celebrating and enriching the children's art and culture in order to develop their physical, emotional and spiritual as well as intellectual process within the context of a learning community.

> *M94   Dramatization due to their interest in action rather than theory they kind of understand more*

The above teachers' reason for using drama tends show that children said to have SEN have an interest and understand practical and not theoretical aspects.
Other strategies included experiential learning where teachers gave examples as follows:

> U7 *'Inviting guest speakers to talk to children' (U7);*
>
> M94 *'Organising field trips, like nature walk'*

Typically, such forums would promote consistency in experiences for all children. Field trips generally build meaningful relationships, skills awareness and are inclusive community based. They ought to be well planned, stipulating what each child is to look out for. However, this may prove difficult if the teacher has no Learning Support Assistant or Learning Support Teacher.

ICT interventions seem to be one of the least used strategies, with only 1% representation with the consequent response:

> R123   *'Use of video and slides also helps a lot to make them understand but to get them is an uphill task'*

ICT resources facilitate the varying of activities in the classroom.
This would also limit written work especially for children who experience difficulties with writing. However, the teacher stresses the difficulty of getting these resources as 'an uphill task'. Furthermore, this appears to resonate with lack of funds for resources as cited earlier. Therefore, lack of ICT facilities, conducive learning environments or instructional materials seem to restrict the strategies suggested by teachers. Other varied strategies mentioned by teachers included:

> U27   *'Improvising more teaching and learning aids'.*
> U34   *Making handwriting large on the blackboard'.*
> U55   *'Manipulating a variety of objects'.*
> M104   *'Use of concrete tangible objects'.*

From this, it may become apparent that the teachers are aware of strategies that are known to work with children who may be said to have SEN. It is most probable that teachers may be having problems which man that they have to adapt teaching materials or equipment in public primary schools. They may well be aware of effective strategies but reported problems with for example the

assessment service of children said to have SEN; this seems to intensify the teachers' problems of deciding the strategies compatible with the specific learning needs of children said to have SEN. Rationally, it may be said that an interplay of various forces contributes to the teachers' inability to appropriately combine the strategy to the relevant child's learning needs.

The strategies are not seemingly exhaustive enough to include all the children said to have SEN. They tend to focus more on the children with fewer difficulties raising the question of equal access and uncertainty in the inclusionary practices reflected in these schools. The schools emerge as deficient in additional reinforcement strategies to supplement the learning of children said to have SEN. The question is whether teachers have adequate time to benefit from experiences and actively question and interrogate their practices. The question arises whether teachers are able to carry out research or work collaboratively with other teachers in different schools.

Eight teachers 8(5%) mentioned that they use IEP. Intervention efforts focussing on an individual child's strengths, interests and emerging skills are likely to make a child prosper. IEP goals and objectives which address children's individual needs and are useful across teams can enhance learning development. Clear instructions in learning and organizational habits may be required. However, the goals should be developed from a comprehensive assessment process and linked to intervention and evaluation for it to contribute to the individualization of services and improved outcomes for young children. The question arises whether the assessment allows for further involvement of other stakeholders and whether education can ensure that all children receive equitable opportunities and achieve learning outcomes. This is coupled with another question of what happens after the assessment. The interventions do not seem to be mentioned by these teachers.

> *R150*   *'Individualized education program where work in a group is planned according to a learner's ability'.*

> *U32*   *'Working with them from their level preparing individualized education plan, appreciating and acknowledging even the slightest improvement'.*

Team work is a prerequisite too. Cooperation and collaboration of multi-agency staff such as personnel from education, health, social services, psychology and counselling and most crucially parents could be brought together to meet the needs of the child. Planning for a child's individual needs may require a teacher to consider the current capabilities and potential of all pupils in class. This might be difficult if there is no data about the incidence of SEN and can probably impact negatively on planning provision.

On the other hand, two teachers (1%) mentioned the use of rewards (points for behaviour) and praise which may generally be considered as important for reducing distractions and improving focus on academic topics. Praise should be combined with other re-enforcers for a student to perceive intrinsic value of the activity. However, the activity should be equal for all students and match the efforts or ability to complete a task without undermining student performance. Role play has been reported to work for children with behavioural difficulties or additional practice on expected behaviours. However, this activity would require support staff and the question would be how the teacher is able to conduct this activity in the absence of learning materials and resources.

Teachers from the interviews tended to refer to diverse needs as limiting factors. The following responses indicate how teachers from the interviews tend to manage some of the diverse needs (factors) limiting the participation or involvement of children said to have SEN. These included performance, physical and observable problems, behavioural issues, reading and writing, medical and mental problems.

5.6.2 Behavioural difficulties

Teachers need to be prepared to respond effectively to children's behaviour in the classroom. They should have a repertoire of behaviour management strategies for children in order to guide students and to promote learning. It is vital to acknowledge good behaviour since it is likely to have a direct bearing on a child's learning as well as self-esteem. Teachers may also need to have an understanding

of the characteristics of children with behavioural difficulties so that they may receive the proper assessment. This will facilitate their receiving educational and related services to cope in schools, at home and in their communities, sufficiently early so that appropriate interventions can be implemented. Children should be given firm but fair rules and merits. Linked with these rules should be the use of specific and simple language. Rules and routines for classroom behaviour and standards to be upheld may be established. A predictable pattern of expectations may be prepared so that students know what to expect and are aware of consequences of misbehaviour.

Teachers highlighted the following strategies:

R3 *'I try to ensure that there are no behavioural issues, like fighting, in class'*.

M2 *'…. I keep repeating something to them'*.

U2 *'All pupils are encouraged to be well disciplined in order to excel in life and have the right character. This is in terms of talking, playing and handling school property.'*

U2 *'All pupils are encouraged to be well disciplined in order to excel in life and have the right character. This is in terms of talking, playing and handling school property.'*

Positive tactics should be used to re-direct and minimise misbehaviour. Having a plan for each activity would assist the child to improve. The question is whether these teachers have a planned system of responding to behavioural challenges. Teachers in inclusive classrooms would set essential strategies for all students but this does not appear to be the case in this scenario.

However, one of the teacher's responses indicated:

M71 *'God helps me as I go along with the children'*.

The above response may signify a teacher who requires a better understanding of SEN, a high sense of personal teaching efficacy or one overwhelmed by dealing with the diversities.

The general teacher may benefit from the services of a specialist who may be relied on to provide specific programmes. These programmes may help children to have the desire to behave well and make good choices about their behaviour in the future. The parents may also be a good source of insightful information which is likely to have an impact on the learning of the child. However, specific programmes would only be necessary where the teachers have tried and tested different approaches without success for specific children.

Teachers from the interviews also highlighted how they manage reading and writing difficulties.

5.6.3 Reading and writing difficulties

Failure to read and write proficiently in English or Swahili may inhibit full participation in schools, workplace and society with possibilities of limited job opportunities and earning power in Kenya. For children to communicate effectively, a mastery of the two literacy skills is crucial. The ability to read and write is vital to a successful transition through life, while a reading failure may sometimes manifest in aggressive behaviour. Teachers need to be more engaged in the actual learning and interaction with children said to have SEN. They are expected to positively motivate children and create interest for them to enjoy learning and foster imagination, whilst providing them with practice in the skills that would prepare them for life beyond schooling.

Children said to have SEN may develop specific learning difficulties in writing and reading, and it would be important for these to be identified early to ensure the use of appropriate instructions or plans. The question is whether the teachers are aware of the modifications, accommodations or remedies to apply. As discussed in the literature review, no specific method of teaching reading is outlined in the Kenya education policy. Many children from low-income families do not grow up in homes that emphasize the entertainment value of reading, which has upsetting implications for their later reading. Children are not exposed

to cultural practices for learning about reading and writing from their infancy, as in western countries.

On the other hand, and as explained in the literature review, reading habits amongst the majority of Kenyans are still underdeveloped, which is an aspect related to the colonial history and lack of libraries. More positive motivation involving reading would have higher levels of reading achievements. Teachers in this study reported that children said to have SEN tended to have reading, writing and comprehension difficulties. Reading and writing difficulties were also mentioned in the questionnaires by 23(23%) teachers. The following excerpts from interviews further show how teachers manage diversities.

> M2 *'The support I give depends on different cases; for example, pupils at age 5-6 and 6-7 have reading problems and if they do not improve, I refer them to the class teacher. I also refer those with language problems and those who stammer. However, I have others who do not write properly. I isolate the ones whom I can clearly see have problems copying from the blackboard and write on papers next to them and they are able to copy. It is not easy to give remedial work because there are very many in one class.'*

> U1 *'Most of the learning needs are learning difficulties; for example, reading. Some in class 5 and 6 cannot read at all. So, I come down to the level of this child and help them on how to read.'*
> *…Their performance is below the mean score and some of them copy inverted letters like 'b' instead of 'dandy. They are unable to concentrate in class.'*

> U3 *'I have, for example, a boy in class who cannot read or write properly. He scribbles. So, I encourage him to bring his work for marking.'*

> M1 *'...for written work, they are straining to see and they write letters wrongly. What I mean by wrongly is they write the letter 'W' as letter 'M', 'S' as inverted 'S', and 'b' as 'd'.'*

As can be seen from the above quotations, teachers generally report that children have reading difficulties without specifying which ones. More specific judgement would be closely related to an individual child's actual engagement and learning.

Although responses from *M2, U1* and *U3* above seem keen to help the children, they do not mention regular programs or activities known to enhance the cognitive skills of the children. *M2* mentions 'stammering' which is a 'within child' problem, while 'copying from the blackboard' tends to highlight the activities for children with reading difficulties. Responses from *U1* and *U3* tend to encourage these particular children to participate in the activities. On the other hand, *M1* appears to depict a child who tends to find acquiring reading and writing skills particularly challenging. However, the arrangement described seems to represent the same task for the whole child's class group. Establishing different aspects that motivate and engage children to read, whilst providing individualised instructions and more intensive instructions during one-on-one sessions, would raise the expectations of all children.

Comments from *M2* suggest that there are many students in the class and this makes remedial work difficult an issue covered in the questionnaires under class size. However, in order for teachers to engage in more structured reading sessions, more classroom support would be necessary. IEPs help teachers to prioritise individual children's specially designed instructions. It enables the tracking of the child's progress and determining whether the goals are being achieved. However, it may be necessary for the teachers to understand how best each child learns how to read and their learning style since children said to have SEN have unique learning preferences.

By knowing the learning style of the child, a teacher may be able to identify the child's strengths and interests, and these are likely to make the child engage in the learning process making it easier for the teacher to identify the specific difficulties. However, the question is whether teachers have a guideline to identify different areas of specific learning difficulties.

5.6.4 Intellectual impairment

School populations are becoming increasingly complex, highlighting the need to consider and continuously review the access needs of all pupils. This stresses the significance of initiating factors essential to improve access to learning, such as access to information, curriculum and physical environment. Mental health is a complex issue and there are bound to be many areas of confusion, especially in relation to young people with SEN. Identifying mental health problems among pupils with complex needs is said to be often problematic because of a lack of clarity between the characteristics of diagnosed conditions and possible mental health issues.

Young people with profound and multiple learning difficulties are far more likely to develop poor emotional well-being, become depressed, anxious and stressed, as well as have fears or phobias. These are problems likely to be overlooked by anyone preoccupied with looking after their physical health needs. This is especially the case where children have no verbal skills, where signs may not be obvious and mental health problems may present as challenging behaviour. Challenging behaviour may generally be related to some kind of communication idea but this does not rule out a mental health problem. The question is how teachers support children with mental health needs within schools and whether these children have a right to education. This tends to complicate the challenges and opportunities within the inclusion agenda, providing tension for an increasingly diverse population of children with complex learning difficulties.

> M1 *'I as much as possible try and find out the background of these children and then I adapt my teaching to meet their needs. For example, I have a few cases of children with no coherent speech, are 'mentally retarded' and some who are being brought up by their grandmothers after their parents died.'*

The response from *M1* states that they establish the background of the child and adapt their teaching to suit the needs of children with mental health problems. Teachers may be said to be resilient in order to deal with these children without the required guidance and support. Teachers also take the initiative to check the

background of the children. The question is how they accurately identify or address their mental needs. Teachers may need support and greater clarity in the relationship between SEN and mental health. They endeavour to establish the background of the children said to have SEN and 'adapt' their teaching to meet the learning needs.

The response from *R2* seems to suggest that some children may suffer from epilepsy. This implies that children seem to have complex needs which can compound the possibility of placing children at risk of developing mental health problems. This emphasises the fact that more research is desirable and models of effective assessment and intervention are essential for teachers and colleagues to feel supported in this area. Teachers may need to engage in activities known to minimise anxiety and develop appropriate communication strategies which may be shared with parents as well. To include children with mental health problems in the classroom, personalised learning may be inevitable in order to avoid any marginalisation. However, there seems to be inadequacy in the levels of understanding of mental health issues and management in schools. Resources, families, networks (agencies) and expertise are necessary to respond to young people with learning difficulties and related mental health issues.

Given the challenges the teachers seem to contend with in this study, the response discussed in the previous paragraph may signify a teacher who has to continue working despite all odds. There is interplay between teachers' knowledge, and their past experiences which interact with their current observations and interpretations to give shape to their classroom practice. The strategies are professionally recognised as appropriate but are not reasonably reliable to instigate a high order level of cognitive questioning and dialogue in the primary schools. From the teachers' comments above and from what has been reported earlier in terms of learning needs; identification of children said to have SEN; definition of SEN and the continuous professional development available for these teachers, it is reasonable to acknowledge that they are interested in working with children said to have SEN but more training would contribute to the re-structuring of delivering teaching to these children.

From professional understanding, teachers are equally clear about the kind of strategies that they use when a child appears to have SEN. However, the question is what to do if they had a child identified with SEN, and in order to be able to use those strategies effectively what they are actually unsure about is to what children those strategies should be applied. This tends to suggest that their knowledge and understanding of procedures of effective identification of children said to have SEN is perhaps less well refined than it might be, due to: differences to training, lack of appropriate identification techniques, unreliability of psychometric instruments. On the other hand the evidence from the questionnaires does point to a professional understanding of what they should be doing in the case of a child who is said to have extra-curricular needs. The following section provides more strategies suggested by teachers from the interviews:

5.6.5 One-to-one support

M1 *'My best lesson was when I was teaching them daily life activities; like how to dress, wash cups, spoons and plates. The lesson was based on play, where I asked different children to match the items, identify colours and name the different clothing items like dress, shirt, skirt, blouse and socks. The majority of them were able to identify them but they seemed to have a problem with matching. So I gave the few having problems one-to-one support and they were able to match. This left them very happy.'*

Teacher *(M1)* seems to enjoy teaching daily life activities to children said to have SEN who seem to have difficulties in matching colours, and teachers used different approaches to help children match the colours, making them happy to be given one-to-one support. Constant and intense follow ups on a one-to-one basis may enable the child to master the matching skills.

5.6.6 Repetition

Repetition is also mentioned by U51 and R2 when referring to children said to have behavioural difficulties.

M2 *'My best lesson was during a language lesson. I was teaching sounds 'a', 'b', 'c','d'… up to 'z'. Pupils were to say different*

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words starting with the same letter. For example, 'b' for ball. Through repetition and use of different words with the same sound, pupils seemed to understand and pronounce sounds correctly. I realised that this helped the children to write the words more correctly, even for the ones who are normally unable to write these words. This made me happy, and the children too.'

The best lesson for teacher *M2* is language. The teacher seems to stress that children understand how to pronounce and write words with the same sound correctly by repeating them. The teacher is happy when the children achieve in class. This may depict a case where all children are learning in the same context and the teacher takes her own initiative to ensure that the children have achieved. However, children with learning difficulties seem to have challenges in processing information, communicating and reading words. Reading instructions are more effective when matched to the needs of each child in addition to the constant and intense one-to-one approach. More learning support would be required for further follow-up. Repetition is also mentioned by U51 and R2.

5.6.7 Involvement and participation

M2   *'My best lesson was a Kiswahili lesson and I was teaching 'ngeli', 'm-mi' and 'ki-v'. I was using objects in class, like books, pencils, papers and fruits, and wanted the pupils to identify and give the plural words of the different objects brought in class. The pupils would identify the objects, show them to the class and say the plural word. Children who are normally slow enjoyed this lesson and were happy to run and illustrate the object. They thought it was drama and fun and wanted to do it many times.'*

R1   *'This was during a music lesson where I asked even those who do not participate to sing a song to the class. They were happy to sing gospel songs confidently.'*

U3   *'It was a science lesson and we wanted to prove that there is air in soil. So I asked them to go out and put soil in small plastic containers. I then put water in the containers and I could see some children really happy and staring at the bubbles. Among those coming for more water many times were two children who never listen in class and who cannot read. So, I realised that they enjoy practical lessons.'*

U1   *'One of my best lessons was during creative arts, where I asked children to draw any image of something they like. Then I went round observing and asking them questions about their images. They drew different images and they*

were able to interpret their themes and this showed me they were creative. So I was happy and they were happy, too.'

Responses from *M2, R1, U3* and *U1* tend to illustrate that children said to have SEN enjoy learning if they are involved and considered as part of the class. The children also seem to enjoy Kiswahili, music, science and creative arts lessons. Teachers are ready to use simple materials and ideas in class for the children in order for them to participate and find learning fun. Teachers also seem to imply that these children enjoy practical lessons. Children said to have SEN in the above scenarios, appear to be motivated and engaged. Teachers seem to have taken some time to prepare and make their lessons more flexible and observe the children participating during the lessons. However, tasks should present a high level of cognitive challenge to all pupils. Teacher *U1* seems to suggest that children like flexible learning and, apart from involving them, the teacher showed extra interest by asking them to explain their work. It seems that the teachers' interest in their work made them happy.

5.6.8 Use of seating plan

R1   *'Those with poor vision in my class, I ensure they sit in the front and near the chalkboard.'*

The teacher attempts to ensure that the children's challenges are considered when doing the seating plan. However, the child may need on-going support with active adaptations to suit their learning needs. This raises the question of the availability of necessary equipment for the children and the teachers' experience and training to facilitate the right intervention.

5.6.9 Copying from the blackboard

M2   *'After writing work on the board, I go to the children and write on the book of the child to coordinate from their own book and later from the board....I isolate the ones whom I can clearly see have problems copying from the blackboard and write on papers next to them and they are able to copy.'*

The above teacher seems to recognise that there are children said to have SEN in their class but the activities in class do not seem to engage children in learning. The learning is not child-centred and differentiated. The children may feel left out and frustrated, especially if they happen to have difficulties in reading and writing which are likely to lead to bad behaviour in class.

5.6.10 Need of support during P.E.

> *R2*   *'Yes, I support P.E. lessons and any subject with some practical aspects; for example, asking them to wash their face or hands.'*

Similarly, *R2* does not seem to provide enabling environments for the individual children to socialize and interact with others and their environment, especially during Physical Education (P.E) lessons. The teacher seems to overlook the importance of the children's opportunities and experiences during P.E. This may seem to also reflect the attitude of other pupils in the playground towards children said to have SEN.

Most teachers tend to recognise the existence of children said to have SEN in their classes and take the initiative to create positive intentions in the classroom. However, they tend to work individually with no signs of consultation and share responsibilities with one another. Teachers may benefit from training and experience in identifying and incorporating adaptations into more proactive learning activities for different learners and child-centred classroom management. Teachers suggested the following challenges.

5.8 Challenges in meeting diverse needs of children said to have SEN

The teachers in this study illuminated the challenges they experience in the classes. Only 98 teachers' responses were considered in eliciting this theme as explained in section.5.4.1. This theme endeavours to ascertain the implications of some of these challenges from the teachers' perspective in the development of effective learning contexts for all children. The challenges are as follows: poverty was cited by 19(12%) teachers as the highest challenge followed by: 14(14%) absenteeism; 12(12%) socio-economic/political problems; 9(9%) language

barrier; 8(8%) lack of pupils' interest; behaviour; 7(7%) negative attitude from society and lack of parents' support; 5(5%) incomplete homework; 4 (4%) orphans, AIDS and neglected children; 3(3%) medical problems and 2(2%) class and/or grade repetition.
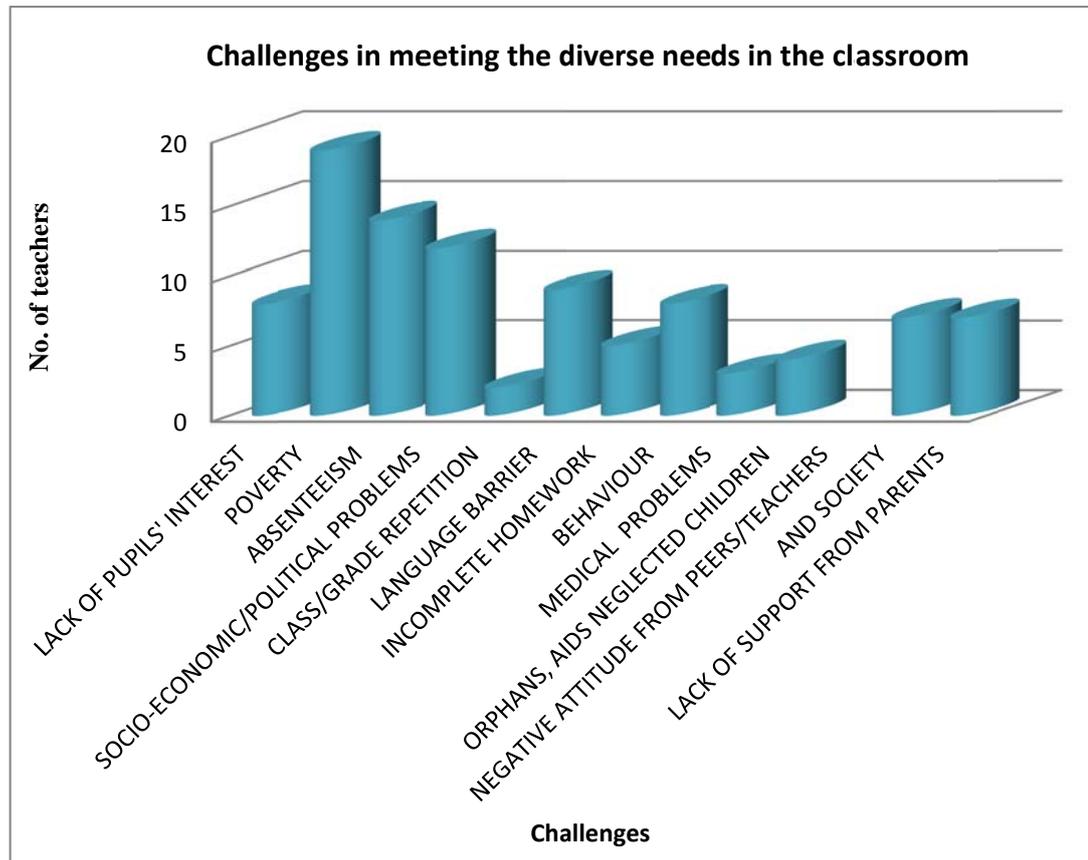
Figure 17: Challenges in meeting the diverse needs in the classroom

Poverty is a controversial phenomenon in Kenya which permeates all spheres of society. It has been documented that 47% of Kenyans live on less than 50 pence a day. This theme highlights the fact that teachers seem to perceive children said to have SEN as poor. The consequences of FPE seem to have escalated the schooling costs in both school materials and opportunity costs. Some of the teachers' responses include:

R129 *'Pupils from poor families lack food and school uniforms, community not ready to support education or learning'*

R119 *'Difficult for hungry pupils to concentrate in class.*

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As in most developing countries, children said to have SEN in Kenya may visibly be a marginalised population and face problems as a result of their condition. Their hardships seem to be acute.

In addition, teachers seem to portray children said to have SEN as highly vulnerable on their way to school. Later in the interview section it will be seen that such children are bullied both in the school playground and out of school.

> U35   *Social economic problems caused by poverty, high cost of living in Kenya, poor planning by govt. over enrolment and lack of enough teachers.'*

> R153   *Inadequate govt. disbursement of funds to purchase all required items.'*

Other socio-economic and political problems cited by teachers included:

> U4   *'Government corruption'.*

> R122   *'Lack of well formulated policies by the govt. Lack of parents' involvement in providing the pupils learning materials'.*

> M62   *'Inaccessible environment- storey building'.*

> R130   *'Taking of drugs like glue due to town influence'.*

In its National goals and SEN policy, the government accepted educational approaches that facilitate the movement towards more inclusive forms of education where all children will be provided with equal access to education. However, the above responses appear to call for more intensive attempts to identify the barriers to learning and development especially for children said to have SEN. The question also arises whether the inclusive policies have been able to adequately protect the individual rights of children said to have SEN.

Teacher *R153* also tend to suggest that there is lack of adequate funding from the government for buying the required learning material. Although government

corruption is mentioned by *U4*, it does not seem to point out a particular aspect. Teacher *R122* also appear to divulge a lack of clear policies to guide them while *M62* stressed inaccessibility to physical facilities.

There are more challenges that may seem to influence children's access to education, for example absenteeism, and teachers' responses include:

M86   *'Absenteeism during extra remedial classes'.*

U30   *'Absenteeism due to lack of food'.*

R118   *'Pupils drop out of school from time to time'.*

R161   *'The SEN has been challenged by lack of materials and resources specially tailored to cater for learning needs. Inadequate or no facilities not enough space. There are not enough grants to purchase materials for achieving daily living skills'.*

Teachers seem to have problems with the inconsistency in the attendance of students. The inconsistencies may also be ascribed to other factors such as gender, parental or societal attitudes and school environment. In terms of gender, boys in Kenya normally get preference to go to school over girls in some societies. Girls are responsible for domestic or agricultural chores, caring for siblings in the case of poor families as the parents go out to work or look for work. Parents may also be reluctant to send their children said to have SEN to school especially if the school environment is prohibitive, the school is far and where the child might be insecure outside of the home. However, teachers' responses raise the question of the role of the head teacher in the provision of adequate support to children said to have SEN. There seems to be deficiency in the provision of basic requirements, adequate learning materials, liaising with students, parents, teachers and the community in general. This raises yet another question of whether children said to have SEN are afforded equal treatment as peers. Another question is also what measures are in place to manage absenteeism.

From the teachers' responses, it appears that students have incomplete homework due to lack of adequate books and other problems at home. From a professional

point of view, teachers may be expected to adjust the homework to suit the needs of the learners, or attempts made to follow up the reason from the parents or guardians. On the other hand, it may seem that homework is textbook based. However, it is also reported that there is a dearth of resources which may hamper a teacher's effort in making adjustments for the child. The responses include:

> M79 *'Because pupils are forced to share books giving homework becomes difficult'.*

> R146 *'Not completing homework may be because of domestic problems'.*

> U45 *'Limited time for preparation of teaching and learning aids'.*

English is the medium of instruction (MOI) while Swahili is the National language. Most urban and municipal schools may use the two languages comfortably; although Swahili is predominantly used. In the rural schools, a combination of vernacular, English and Swahili languages is evident especially in lower classes. Therefore, this is likely to cause problems in primary schools as indicated by some of the teachers' responses which manifest in children in various ways:

> R131 *'Mother tongue interferences. Lack of enough practice'.*

> M87 *'Most children at the coast speak Kiswahili hence no practice in English language'.*

> R135 *'Reading mix-up of phonetics in English and syllables in Kiswahili where pupils don't differentiate between the two languages. Inadequately developed motor skills. Leading to poor arrangement of left to right orientation, may write in the reverse'.*

> R144 *'Hurried preparatory 1 and 2. Some join primary level straight from home'.*

> U58 *'Inadequate Speech Therapists to train in language development'.*

Teachers tend to illustrate the kind of problems children said to have SEN experience in learning the English language. However, this is not only documented as a problem with these children but also as a nationwide problem

which is researched as affecting the reading and writing abilities of children in Kenya.

This problem is likely to be more pronounced in children said to have SEN and especially if they are not well prepared from preparatory (kindergarten) and nursery schools. For example, *R135* seems to suggest that the children may be having specific learning difficulties. This may imply that teachers might not be aware of the children's strengths, interests, skills and readiness. The question is how teachers are expected to choose strategies that address the diverse needs of children said to have SEN when they may not be in a position to identify the child's SEN. Children use both English and Kiswahili and their mother tongue in school. For children said to have communication difficulties, the environment may not be conducive for the child where the big classes prohibit the teacher from providing individual attention.

It may be practicable to suggest that schools need to ensure that teachers differentiate instructions in order to provide opportunities for children said to have SEN to meet the demands of a national curriculum. However, it is important to stress that careful preparation, guidance and sufficient support for staff to continuously develop best instructions in a variety of settings should be considered in order to meet the diverse needs in the classrooms. Notwithstanding, teachers in this study seem to suggest that children said to have SEN have behavioural challenges:

> U40 *'Negative attitude mostly due to pressure of work or pressure to produce good results'.*
>
> U57 *'Most want to do what they want not what you tell them to. Most take years to master a skill'.*
>
> M99 *'Lack of pupil interest'.*

One teacher, *U57,* seems to suggest that students may take many years in one grade.

The question is whether keeping a child in class for many years for them to master a skill is constructive. This may point out the necessity of having a school

transition plan to include a larger variety of settings on SEN or otherwise. Children are also portrayed as having medical challenges, are orphaned and neglected after losing their parents in the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Other children are displaced after tribal clashes. Some of the responses reflecting these challenges are:

U47   *'They have diseases, early intervention not done'*.

M109   *'Most children are poor and cannot afford basic needs, medicine and this affects concentration'*.

U19   *'Orphaned and neglected children due to HIV/AIDS'*.

U13   *'Orphans from tribal clashes.'*

These challenges tend to emphasize how crucial it is for the Kenyan government to focus on strategies to improve the welfare of children said to have SEN. Additionally, the challenges also tend to signify the complexity of inclusion. It may also be apparent that the children in this study have multiple problems which may be a result of the children's interaction with various factors such as the child's intrinsic and extrinsic factors, cognitive, family, school among other activities. A question arises whether it is possible for the child with EBD to be included in a mainstream school without additional training for teachers and parents and without a supportive and responsive environment. However, there may be a need for research to establish what works in the classroom for a range of EBD problems.

The responses from teachers highlighted challenges associated with negative attitudes from the society and lack of parental support. The responses to teachers *R115, M64, M83 and U40* tend to refer to teachers while *U22* and *M109* focus on peers as well.

M64   *'Implementing learning methods, handling of children of different abilities takes a lot of time to teach with inadequate teaching/learning resources'*.

M83   *'Failure of teachers to motivate students, system is exam based only'*.

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U40　　*'Age of the learner reaches saturation before they learn basic skills'.*

R115　*'Large classes, inadequate concentration. Some children have sound disabilities which affect the social life of the children. The cause of the social disabilities include: family break ups, child abuse at home. Due to many children in one class and the above difficulties, the teachers find it very difficult to meet learning needs'.*

U22　　*'Counsel the classmates to accept the child with special needs and if possible try also to assist with my little salary. I do provide especially sanitary towels and food.*

M109　*'The degree of desperation is highly varied between the two and this makes the mainstream children despise the children said to have SEN.'*

The response from *M64* implies that establishing the appropriate learning method and lesson preparation takes time, especially in the absence of adequate teaching and learning resources. From a professional point of view, teachers are supposed to improvise to meet the diverse needs of children in the classroom; it might also be expected that they may need access to specialist advice where necessary. Although the teachers appear to be aware of what to do it may not be evident that they are clear on when and what to individualise. The school does not seem to have strategies in place to minimise barriers. It appears questionable that the IEP's are available to guide the teacher on each of the students' targets and preferred way of learning. It might also be difficult to assess the impact of resources especially if the provision is not matched to the need. Notwithstanding, the question is what to do if the children in class have more complex needs and where they may be making little or no progress.

Response *M83* states that the curriculum is examination orientated and the main concern may be to motivate the students to pass examinations. Teachers appear not to have different ways of differentiating instructions. This response, *M83,* coupled with response *U40* tend to further suggest that the age of the learner may not allow the learner to assimilate or develop basic skills. It seems apparent that

there might be difficulties in assessing the progress of the child and this may also raise the question of what structure is in place to monitor the changes or progress of children said to have SEN. Teacher response *R115* seems to emphasize how large class size and children's challenges impact on their teaching.

They tend to be of the opinion that it might not be viable to meet the learning needs for children said to have SEN in large classes. It may well be possible that the teacher does not feel capable of dealing with the workload and the challenges. The tendency is to question the teacher's ability to make instructional adjustment in order to meet the learning needs of children said to have SEN. It may also be posited that peer students might have a problem accepting children said to have SEN in the classes *U22 and M109.*

It seems that the onus is on the teachers to 'talk the other children into' accepting peers who are seen to have SEN. Research indicates that children are likely to positively respond to their peers who are seen to have SEN if the teachers introduce them in a positive context. Response *U22* emphasises the need for classmates to accept children said to have SEN and understand them. Similarly, a teacher's negative attitude towards children said to have SEN is also likely to signal the development of negative attitude by peers. The negative reactions are likely affect the children and this may result in behavioural problems. The question is what system is in place in the schools to ensure that other children respect differences and accept children said to have SEN. The question may also arise whether this is only within the school environment or even outside. The following responses tend to elucidate the situation within the society and parents of the children said to have SEN.

> M62 *'Stigmatization, negative attitude from parents, communities'.*

> M98 *'Inadequate awareness among community and parents. Poor management and failure by the stakeholders in the education sector'.*

> U57 *'Their disabilities are inadequately understood by society. Have conflicts within themselves'.*

Teachers' responses *M62, M98 and U57* provide some illumination regarding the attitudes of society towards children said to have SEN. Kenyan society seems to be depicted as having negative attitudes, and lacking awareness of the nature of disabilities. The society seems to be prejudiced against children said to have SEN which may relate to cultural, social, economic, political, gender discrimination. Response *U57* seems to highlight self stigma. '…*Have conflicts within themselves'*; thus, implying that they internalise self blame and helplessness.

Teachers also seem to imply that the education sector has failed and is poorly managed. This may also be an indication that the policies related to children said to have SEN and their needs may not be clear enough. The question is how far has the Kenya government initiated projects to create awareness of the nature of difficulties of children seen to have SEN at the national and community level? The teachers also seemed to stress the challenges arising from lack of support from parents as follows:

> *U9*   *'Most feel SEN is a curse and do not want to associate themselves with others'.*

> *M74*   *'Most are ignorant as they seem to have lost hope in their children'.*

> *R115* *'Parents do not value education; they take education of disabled persons as the last option'.*

> R148   *'They are not involved. Most bring pupils to school and that's all. The teacher is left to find out for herself the problems with the child'.*

As depicted by teachers in this study, parents with children said to have SEN may be said to be withdrawn and they look upon their children as a curse. It seems to be the case that some parents may not send their children to school. This appears to place blame on the parents as the cause of disassociating themselves and the child from the society. The implication may be that the parents may choose to stay home with the child to avoid the stigma. Failure to take children to school may be considered as a form of educational exclusion and denial of their human right. The question is to what extent the Kenyan government has alleviated the

barriers such families face and whether these families are accessible or not. However, parents seem to be portrayed as having lost faith in their children, failed to value education for disabled persons and are not involved in school activities. It might be asserted that the parents may feel that education may not able to make a difference in changing the situation they or their children are in. They may also consider the child unable to cope in the school environment. Similarly, they may feel that they do not have the capacity to contribute.

The social status, income and parent's level of education tend to increase parents' engagement in their child's schooling. The question is how the schools expect parents of children said to have SEN to support their children in the absence of basic necessities. Parents may need to double up their roles as housekeeper, breadwinner, carer and teacher. On the other hand the question is what support, guidance and provision is available from the Kenyan government for parents who seem to live in an extreme poverty. More in-depth research highlighting how parental engagement can be facilitated and sustained across different sectors of the society is necessary.

Research focussing on the voice of parents and students seen to have SEN in primary schools would also be a significant contribution to the designing of programmes suitable for different groups in order to include all children said to have SEN and their families. All things being constant, the question is whether children said to have SEN in Kenya are learning under least restrictive settings to enable them to acquire skills which are fundamental for them to enjoy quality education, and a non-segregated and acceptable lifestyle. Teachers' responses from the interviews provided different barriers to learning which included the following:

5.8.1 Barriers to learning

It is vital that children said to have SEN participate equally and are fully included in the classroom. The learning environment should facilitate the access and contribution of all children where they feel valued, safe and secure. It plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. As much as

possible, the system should endeavour to minimise, prevent or remove barriers which may exist or arise and hinder effective learning. A motivating and welcoming learning environment, whether in or outdoors, allows children to play, enjoy, take on challenges, make choices, be adventurous and increase creativity. The availability of learning materials stimulates children's imagination and encourages positive growth and development for children through opportunities to explore and learn.   A rich environment should support children in terms of establishing positive identities.   The physical environment is critical for stimulating children's communication and play. A rich and varied environment facilitates their confidence to explore and learn in secure and safe, yet motivating settings.

5.8.2 Classroom environment

Teachers are responsible for designing classroom spaces that are conducive to students' individual learning styles. The conditions in a classroom environment are likely to affect the learning of children said to have SEN. The classroom may be too bright or too noisy for children within the autistic spectrum, or too dull for children experiencing Attention Deficit Hypersensitive Disorder (ADHD).

Generally, traditional classroom settings may possibly be seen as restrictive for children said to have SEN. Students' attitudes improve when their learning environment exhibits their learning preferences. Comfortable sitting postures are important for children who are physically disadvantaged, safe and secure spaces with appropriate lighting and necessary fixtures enable teachers to engage in educational practices that provide options to accommodate diverse learners. Improving classroom organisation is sometimes included as a feature of school behaviour programmes. In western countries, the impact of quality accommodation and learning environment on pupils is taken seriously (OFSTED, 2005).

Cost-sharing, introduced by the World Bank and IMF Structural Adjustment Programme in the 1980s, required that parents pay for school infrastructure development and maintenance, including the cost of school supplies, uniform,

transport and lunch. It is implied that parents who are living below the poverty line and surviving on less than one US dollar a day are deprived of necessities and this is reflected in most public primary schools.

The following are teachers' definitions of a conducive classroom environment.

M1 *'This is where the child-teacher relationship is cordial. Teaching is child-based and they are allowed to air their own views and participate. Children are given a chance to express themselves without fear. They feel free to relate to the teacher.'*

M2 *'This would be a situation where they enjoy learning with the correct material and feel safe. Safe where there is lack of harassment from others; where children are free to learn without fear.'*

U1 *'This is an environment where each and every child feels appreciated and comfortable. Teaching and learning materials are available.'*

U3 *'This is where all pupils participate fully. They feel fully accepted by teacher'.*

R3 *'Enough facilities where children are able to sit comfortably and should be well lit'.*

R2 *'...with learning aids, low noise levels, safe and secure, near other children, able to communicate and sit comfortably'.*

The above responses, *M1, M2, U1* and *U3,* tend to indicate that these teachers understand the importance of including all children in the classroom and ensuring that they '*participate*', '*air their own views*', '*express... without fear and freely relate to the teacher*', '*feel appreciated, safe, comfortable*' (and have) '*teaching and learning materials*'. They express interest in teaching children said to have SEN. However, the definitions highlighted above did not seem to reflect the environments depicted in the following sections.

5.8.3 Effects of overcrowded classrooms

Teachers' responses from the questionnaires and interviews have already highlighted that there are large class sizes.

Teachers from the interviews explained the effects of overcrowding in different ways:

U3   *'In fact, it is very hard to understand the background of 1,500 children who are admitted in this school. It is not possible to have all the details. As a teacher you need to understand the child more because one is interacting with the child daily... I have 72 children in class'.*

R3   *'... At the moment, some of my classes have 68 wooden forms and 5 pupils sit squeezed at a desk'.*

U2   *'The class sizes are too large for teachers to give any individual attention to weak pupils... The right number would be 40-45, but my class has 88 pupils'.*

M2   *'I enjoy teaching these children but it is too tiresome to give remedial or special attention. There are 38 children in one class and 2 teachers'.*

The response from teacher *U3* appears to stress that the school and class sizes make it difficult for them to understand and interact with the children. Response R3 relates large class size to lack of adequate materials while *U2* associate large class size to lack of individual attention to children. Teacher *R3* also indicates that children *'squeeze at a desk'*. This is likely to cause weariness and discomfort which may manifest in stress and repeated postural change. It may also result in lack of concentration and if not resolved, would negatively affect the behaviour and learning outcomes of the child. *M2* appears to enjoy working with children said to have SEN but even with two teachers in class they find it difficult to provide remedial work or special attention. The question is whether teachers are able to develop supportive relationships with varied activities.

However, a class size of over 30 might prove difficult for teachers to plan varied activities where there are factors affecting quality of accommodation and learning environment. Knowing the child implies that teachers may be aware of the nature of special educational needs and how they arise and the associated demands or challenges. Understand the physical or health impairments and their educational implications might require accommodation and adaptation to assist children said to have SEN in the process of learning. For any academic performance

participation of the children is necessary. However, it is questionable how some of the children depicted in these responses access learning. These responses do not seem to reflect inclusive practices.

Nevertheless, the above teachers tend to appreciate that interacting with the children said to have SEN is important, but they feel that the class size hinders them in providing remedial work and individual attention to the children. Developing supportive relationships with children tends to develop their social, communication and group working skills. Without support programmes may be less sufficient for these children. However, there could be greater opportunities for social inclusion in small classes. Other aspects affecting participation follow.

5.8.4 Lack of Instructional Materials

Availability of teaching materials may be dependent upon the financial support funding from the government and parents. Kenya relies on donors and international agencies for funding and where funds are intermittent, difficulties become more evident. The Head Teacher ensures effective utilisation of any funds. When there is no external funding the parents are expected to contribute. This situation may have an effect on the type of resources used by teachers. The following responses show some of the resources teachers use:

> R1 *'…These are teaching and learning aids such as manila paper, drawings and picture books.'*
>
> R2 *'…I use real objects like plants.'*
>
> R3 *'…These are counters, drawings on manila papers and balls and ropes for P.E.'*
>
> M1 *'…So, I work with basic objects that they can identify, like spoons, bottles and doors, to help them participate'… 'I use letter construction paintings, toys of different shapes, e.g. for girls - toys where they are able to comb or plait hair; boys - cars and different play items. Such lessons are uncontrollable and need maximum close supervision to avoid any fighting for toys.'*

M2	*I use wall charts, flash cards, plasticiser, crayons for colouring picture books and puzzles'….;' They are not free; parents are charged for them and well-wishers occasionally donate.'*
M3	*'…The classes do not have any special facilities or materials for these children.'*
U1	*'I use charts and textbooks. Sometimes, I provide models for specific things like animals or wooden or stone carvings to make pupils visualise.'*
U2	*'Textbooks, rulers, pencils and chalk. The government provides learning and teaching materials.'*
U3	*'I use textbooks, teaching aids like multiplication times table, drawings, charts.'*

The above learning materials presented by teachers appear simplistic and inadequate in terms of supporting the learning of children said to have SEN. The teachers did not mention any computer-aided resources and the materials seem to be under the teachers' custody with no free access to the children and without visual clues about where they can find the resources.

The responses stress the scarcity of learning materials without an alternative in the form of computer-assisted learning. The question is how teachers manage to realise the learning outcomes of these children.

Children are dependent on the teacher for the use of different materials; with three of them relying on textbooks and charts. Visual clues, such as the timetable, IT support, pictures and photographs showing events of the day, reassure children about the days' activities. On the other hand, picture communication, story books, symbols, word processors and games were not listed as resources or learning materials. Only *M1* mentioned flash cards. Response from *M1* adduces that children fight over toys because they are inadequate. It may well be argued that the children who fight over toys might be having difficulties in communicating their needs. As confirmed by *M1*, parents provide learning materials and this might explain the variance in the types of materials being used by these teachers. However, response *U3* states that the government supplies the *'learning and*

teaching materials' but an important question is whether the government can provide equal opportunities for all children to achieve appropriate learning outcomes and adequate learning resources.

5.8.5 Lack of accessible physical resources and safe school environment

Teachers' responses also included issues involving the entire school environment as follows:

> U2 *'The playground is too dusty for these children to play.'*
>
> U3 *'Other things, like improving the access to buildings and toilets.'*
>
> U2 *'Toilets are smelly and need to be improved. Provide enough water for drinking and washing.'*

When children play together they are likely to connect with and understand one another. However, the response above begs the question of whether schools are inclusive. The school infrastructure contributes to the well-being of students and its quality tends to have a strong impact on the perception of their well-being. The school administration may be required to make adaptations and modifications to improve this for children said to have SEN and to improve their accessibility and movement within the school. The question is why this is not possible and who represents the views and opinions of children in the schools? The accessibility problem may probably marginalise children with physical disadvantages to enjoy their rights in the schools. This is also an aspect expressed in the questionnaires responses M62 and R122.

It would be inappropriate to assume that the needs of all children revolve around space or resources and that they are identical. However, the teachers seem to suggest that there are children suffering from epilepsy and they would need space to ensure the safety of the child. One might not also rule out that some children may be more susceptible to different conditions where routine treatment or special attention is required. The question is whether teachers have all the information

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about the conditions and status of these children. There is an additional responsibility of administering medication and dealing with emergencies in case the child suffers epileptic attacks in the classroom.

The question is whether teachers are authorised to perform specific procedures and which school personnel this liability involves. It is crucial for teachers to have information about the health condition of children; this enables them not only to adhere to regulations to protect both the child and the teacher or treatment provider but also to take precautions, prepare for emergencies or make routine plans and procedures for notifying the appropriate authority or parent. Instructional schedules may need to be adjusted for the routine plans to be effected. It would be expected that all the information, especially about the medication on who, when, how to administer and possible side effects, should be in the children's IEP. The question is who is responsible for the provision of the children's background information?

Notwithstanding, teachers in this study seemed to establish the ability of children said to have SEN as follows.

5.9 Abilities of Children said to have SEN

Abilities may not only be related to academic achievement but may also be compared to the development and shaping of the child's total personality. Acquisition of a wide range of skills may enable children to adapt to external changes. Nevertheless, it may be recognised that some children are likely to encounter difficulties which make them unable to achieve like their peers. However, they have a right to education. From the teachers' responses, 135 (85%) teachers indicated that children said to have SEN perform poorly in class while 14 (8%) teachers seemed to maintain that they had similar abilities with their peers. It may be inferred that 85% of teachers base the performance on acquisition of academic skills and achievement. The following figure shows the comments on the abilities of children said to have SEN.

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Figure 18: Abilities for children said to have SEN

Teachers' comments on ability of children said to have SEN in mainstream classes	n=159	Percentage (%)
Negative		
Poor performance in class	68	43%
Behavioural difficulties	15	9%
Reading and Writing Problems	16	10%
Communication problems	16	10
Low Social Interaction	15	9%
Do not enjoy Physical activities	5	3%
Total	**135**	**(85%)**
Positive		
Learn well with play and enjoy practical lessons	4	
Same as others in terms of: Learning, able to memorise,		
Understand faster than other children, understand and answer correctly, able to memorise, same reasoning capacity, ability to follow curriculum	7	
Understands concepts like Maths	1	
Gifted Learners	2	
Total	**14**	**8%**
None in our school	5	3%
No answer	5	3%

Teachers seemed to make general statements as follows: 'poor performance in class' 31(19%), 'slower than others' 15(9%), 'incomplete work' 10(6%), 'low concentration span' 8(5%), problems in 'counting and addition' (Maths) 4(2%), reading and writing 16(10%), communication problems including 'slow in language development' 16(10%) physical activities 5(3%).

U24 *'Poor performance on challenging tasks'.*

R142 *'Some are fast learners others are slow learners'.*

M97 *'Good in handy activities rather than academics'.*

Teachers seem to focus on school achievement and subjects mainly on the curriculum. Most of the above responses do not appear to specify the extent of the cognitive problem. However, they seem to signal that children said to have

SEN may be having reduced abilities in subjects linked to abstract content, language and numbers. Teachers may lack proper information about the potential and capacity of children said to have SEN. The above 85% of teachers seem to be having difficulties in identification, definition and the general concept of learning difficulties. This is despite the government's SEN strategy. On the other hand, 15 (9%) teachers included behavioural problems and 5 out of the 15 teachers referred to 'slow and childish behaviour'. Teachers may be considered to have direct access to pupils on a daily basis and many opportunities to reinforce good-self management routines. The response on behaviour has been covered under section 5.4.1. Alternatively, there may be a possibility that teachers may not be varying their common approaches to balance the problem disorder which is likely to manifest in behavioural problems and students feeling frustrated.

> U51 *'You have to repeat yourself. Learn by repeating concept several times'.*

Teachers seem to require training on enhancing classroom management and skills in different techniques of motivating children with behavioural difficulties. Equally, lack of support from the school administration in providing positive reinforcement seems to be a concern. This is likely to negatively affect these children to the extent of leaving school if not controlled. Although the teachers did not specify the type of behaviour, one teacher specified:

> U14 *'Anti-social behaviour – due to inferiority complex'.*

The teacher seems to posit that children seen to have behavioural difficulties are inferior. It also seems to imply that children said to have SEN are probably not given equal treatment.

It may be practical to question what extended services exist beyond assessment and what school intervention programme exists to provide children who have behavioural difficulties with the necessary skills to self-manage behaviour extremes, anger-related issues and other school difficulties. Despite this, future research should focus on observation of student behaviour in order to produce more objective measures of school and class behaviours.

Social interaction was also mentioned by 15 (9%) teachers and 6(4%) teachers out of the 15 indicated that children said to have SEN have 'low self-esteem' are 'withdrawn', have 'reduced socialisation' 2 (1%) and have a 'negative attitude towards learning' 1(1%). This tends to emphasize the importance of offering support other than the academic curriculum. In addition to having skills to effect behavioural changes, it is implied that children said to have SEN require skills to enable them to feel secure, confident and happy. Consequently, these skills would seemingly be expected to empower them with self-monitoring strategies and problem-solving techniques, resulting in increased levels of self-esteem. This may entail information sharing, training and collaboration between teachers, experts, parents and advocacy groups. The question is whether the Kenyan government (KG) has funds available for training experts and advocacy groups, the schools and empower the parents in order to sustain a positive outcome. It is also questionable how far the government is ready to make the curriculum flexible.

The above problems seem to not only show the diverse needs in the mainstream classes, but they also tend to stress the unique factors of children said to have SEN. Teachers' accounts are often observation based but often expressed in general terms for example, 'poor performance, 'slower than others', 'understand faster than others'. Teachers also appear to judge the ability of children said to have SEN based on their academic achievement which is reflected by the high number of teachers citing poor performance. The question is still whether pupils are accessing the appropriate education.

On the other hand, 14 (8%) teachers' views seem to differ from the others. Two teachers (1%) referred to the children as 'gifted learners'. This appears to be generally a new term and used by few teachers. It may signify that Kenya is embracing the use of new terms in special education, rather than categorising a child based on their difficulties. Notwithstanding, 5(3%) teachers do not seem to recognise children said to have SEN in their schools while 5(3%) did not answer the question. However, it appears unusual that 85% of the teachers are having

difficulties with both the identification question and definition and the general concept of learning difficulties, despite the government's national strategy.

Nevertheless, there seems to be a general recognition by the teachers that there are children said to have SEN in their classes. Teachers' responses are expressed as follows:

U32　*'Gifted children understand faster than other mainstream children'.*

U27　*'Ability to follow same curriculum just like gifted learners'.*

M65　*'Good in doing Arithmetic, poor in reading'.*

It is evident that teachers express different views about SEN. Some teachers do not seem to be familiar with children said to have SEN and others comment that there are no children said to have SEN in their schools. Other teachers use evolving ideas like 'Gifted learners'. The same group of teachers also seems positive about children said to have SEN having similar abilities as those of the other children in the mainstream. Lastly, there are teachers who seem to have low expectations of the children, response *M97*. Although there seems to be a slight shift in the way teachers are referring to children said to have SEN the shift is minimal. Nevertheless, it was inevitable to determine the benefits of mainstream learning.

5.10 Impact of Mainstream Learning

As much as is practically possible, children said to have SEN should learn in the Least Restrictive Environment. This concept stipulates that these children should learn together with peers where the availability of a range of services and placement choices are as close as possible to their normative environment. Teachers' responses highlighted impacts to the children and those to the teacher. The impact on the children is depicted in the following figure while the section on the teachers is summarised therafter.

Teachers pointed out the most common impact on the children is as follows:

From 159 teachers, 41(26%) indicated socialising, 29(18%) develop self esteem and motivation, 27(17%) reduce stigma and acceptance, 23(15%) interaction and moral support, 15(9%) sense of belonging, 14(9%) develop language and communication and 7(4%) improvement of education standards.
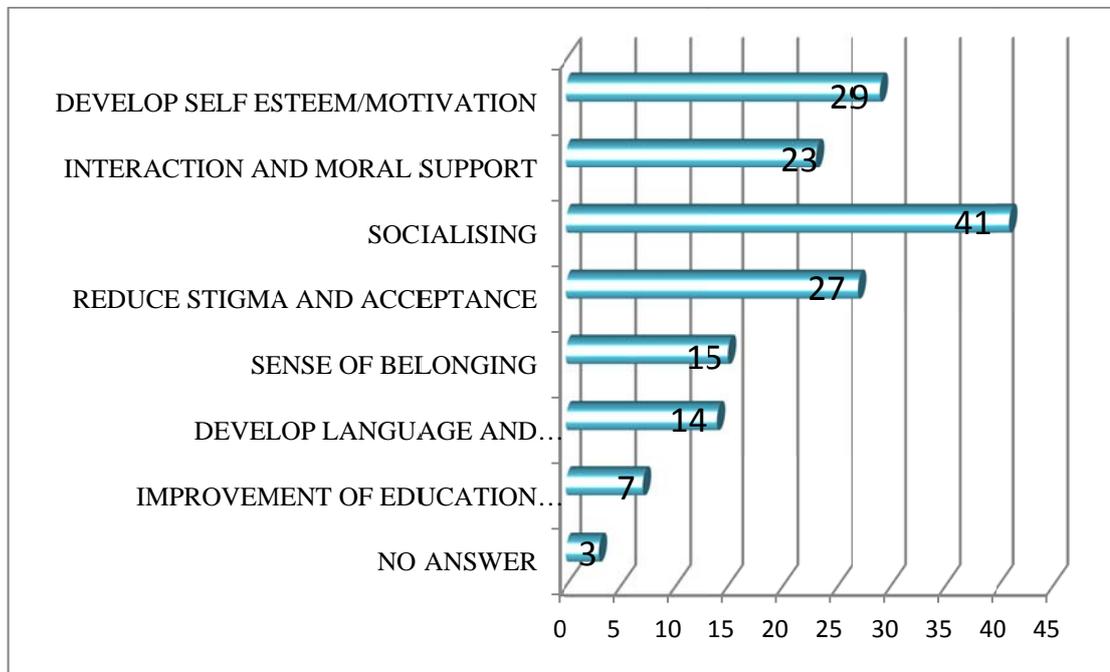
Figure 19: Impacts of mainstream learning

Teachers seemed to imply that children said to have SEN are able to socialise with their peers. It may be implied that schools should not only support a child to achieve academically but also to cater for the social needs. This may also imply that individual differences of children need to be realised and appreciated, but it is crucial to state that some children may also need support for structure and additional provision than others in order to assist and encourage them to socialise. However, some may need more support and additional provision than others; those with physical impairments, low vision, and hearing impairment may require Braille or sign language. Other devices may include computer text enhancement. Teachers may therefore be prepared to gear the child to becoming independent in the school, home and community. Children with physical and sensory impairments have been widely known to respond well to the support from their peers.

31	*'Acquire qualities to fit into society'.*
U24	*'Socialise, build confidence and appreciation of their strong areas and learn from others'.*
U54	*'Mixing well with their fellow students who will appreciate their nature very early'.*

The question is whether the teacher is ready to improvise and explore activities to enhance the children's aspects of socialising. This may imply that the teacher interacts more with the children to celebrate their experiences and diversities. The teacher may also be required to set ground rules to enhance a structure for the child with a particular difficulty in socialising. Similarly, the teacher may be required to work with an expert or specialist like a psychologist or Speech Therapist to identify a programme of support and development for the respective pupils. This may not be possible if devices and other resources are unavailable. The teachers may be required to monitor, assess and evaluate the programme to follow up on the development of the particular child. The question is whether the current curriculum will allow the teacher time for such activities and whether the school has scheduled activities and facilities to facilitate the children's celebration of their diversities.

The teachers questioned appeared positive that mainstream learning enables the children said to have SEN to develop self esteem and motivation.

U3	*'Emotionally feel loved, cared, rehabilitated and secure'*.
R122	*'They can be assisted to carry their daily life activities by the rest. It gives them courage and makes them feel wanted just like the others in the class.'*

Self esteem may be closely linked to a sense of self-worth and teachers seem to imply that it is important for children said to have SEN to feel appreciated. An enriched self esteem may imply greater ability for success whereas low self-esteem may not. This appears to posit that it is necessary for consistent guidelines in establishing placement for an individual. The availability of information on inclusion and the delivery process needs to be investigated further. There is a paucity of research on inclusion and on self esteem of children said to have SEN

in Kenya. This calls for further research where standardised self concept scales would be used. However, schools may be expected to promote positive inclusion where change would be expected to include all aspects of identifying and placing children in the appropriate setting. The question is whether the schools have clear guidelines to promote positive inclusion and what levels of dedication and expectations are required from the teachers in the delivery process to promote positive outcomes.

Teachers in this study seem to maintain that there is reduced stigma in mainstream learning. Lack of information and ignorance about SEN has been researched as sources of discrimination and stigma. Stigma is generally entrenched in the attitudes and beliefs of the society which leads to disrespect. Society perpetuates stigma. However, teachers maintain that they endeavour to assist children in the mainstream to respect one another and work together.

M148   *'It helps to emphasize to the children that disability is not inability. Encourage 'normal' children to work with children said to have SEN and realise that they are all gifted. Help the children recognise and respect that children said to have SEN are just like them. They need to feel loved and do activities just like them but have to do it differently'.*

R126   *Pupils without SEN can help those without e.g guiding the blind. 'Slow learners' can learn from other pupils when it comes to group work'.*

U40   *'Interaction would check stigma and boost self esteem'.*

From the above response it may be concluded that teachers are willing to work with children said to have SEN and seem to make the effort to increase the other children's awareness of their condition. However, teachers appear to continue using the terms, 'normal', 'slow learners' when referring to children who are less disadvantaged which implies that children said to have SEN are still labelled and perceived as having individual limitations. Notwithstanding, teachers may not be able to empower the children said to have SEN to claim their rights. They may need support from the school, society and government. Apparently the schools may need to work in partnerships with the community. The question arises on how the government will include the children said to have SEN in the planning

process and address structured barriers and systemic issues that seem to deny them access to the same level of services and resources. Teachers maintained that children said to have SEN interact and share with the less disadvantaged in class.

> U8   *'Pupils feel accepted; interact with others and this will lead to learning and reduce the feeling of segregation'.*

> U29   *'Learn from others without SEN; help them e.g carry chairs share materials'.*

> M99   *'Enjoy the company and not feel disadvantaged, assist them in performing some duties. Share with them and understand that there is no difference'.*

For teachers to be able to make children said to have SEN participate, learn and interact may be a milestone considering the challenges presented in this study. However proper planning, preparations and support may be seen as inevitable priorities for these teachers to sustain what they seem to have initiated on the SEN front.

> M94   *'Mainstreaming allows those with mental, physical or emotional difficulties to interact under the teacher's guidance. They tend to feel normal and have a sense of belonging. It gives them exposure and creates awareness'.*

> U34   *'They benefit by being taught same syllabuses.*

> M106   *'Children with mild disabilities can be integrated in mainstream classes and benefit from learning together, sharing the physical facilities'.*

> R119   *Able to recognise that they have abilities hence making use of them daily as disability is not inability. Learn from peers and develop awareness'.*

While referring to language and development, teachers had a tendency to generally focus on all children without distinguishing whether children have mild, moderate or severe disabilities. Although these terms do not seem to be defined or developed in Kenya, one teacher used the term 'mild disabilities' *M106* above. The implication would be that some teachers would be aware of these terms, but they may fail to apply them since they tend not to be in daily use in the majority

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of schools in this study. Nevertheless, the general benefits in language and development included communication skills:

> M98　*'By being involved fully in the activities e.g. sports, music, acquisition of living skills e.g. dressing and speech and language development thus enhance communication skills'.*

> M97　*'Interacting with others leads to regular learners' acquisition of good language skills'.*

> U24　*'Language development, exchange skills and knowledge promote competition'.*

Children who have a higher functioning benefit from language development in regular schools while those with developmental abilities are evidenced to acquire general knowledge or comprehension. However the teachers seem to aver that children tend to benefit from auditory comprehension, expressive language and social competence.　This aspect would benefit from research with standardized instruments with regard to each developmental domain.

Education prepares children and young people for sustainable ways of life within sustainable communities and environments. It is probable that developing and expanding the mainstream would provide for children with a wide range of needs. Notwithstanding, teachers in this study stated that mainstream learning improves education standards as per the following responses:

> R139　*'Improving their communication skills attain personal skills. Learn to value education'.*

> U33　*'Able to change behaviour to be responsible in their life'.*

> R152　*'By interacting with other pupils which helps them to learn new things, which they could not have learnt in special classes'.*

> M147　*'Give tasks that are relevant to learners considering age and experience, assess your teaching performance and pupils' progress. Use findings to improve on the weaknesses'.*

In the above section, teachers described the positive impact of mainstream learning.　However, they also tended to include some comments as follows:

U32   *'Mainstream training does not prepare one for SNE. Special syllabus should be introduced with special emphasis on SNE'.*

U14   *'There are special cases of 'mental retardation' that do not fit in mainstream school. In fact they need professional help in special schools.'*

U19   *'Some SEN cases are so challenging they need professional interventions outside the mainstream schools. Others may be medical problems. Some cases need specialists because they are difficult to handle in mainstream'.*

R159   *'Dealing with SNE learners is a difficult task which requires a well trained person with a lot of patience in order to handle them properly.'*

M107   *'SNE is hard work that needs one to dedicate himself/herself otherwise one can easily give up'.*

R106   *'Mainstream curricular should be for preparation to vocational training and the other children should advance to university'.*

Although teachers are positive about mainstream learning figure 16 most teachers *U32, R159 and M107* tend to feel that they do not have specific training to effectively manage differences among the children said to have SEN in their classrooms. Teachers should have confidence in their own abilities and apply their skills to modify the classroom and school environment to overcome barriers. They should be able to plan lessons considering and recognising the strength and weaknesses of the children in their classrooms.

The question is whether they are able to ascertain how the learning of children is affected by their disabilities and adapt the curriculum to suit their diverse needs. Suffice to say, it may also be inferred from responses *R159* and *M107* that SNE needs a positive predisposition from teachers in addition to their normal training. Responses from *U14* and *U19* aver that children with a mental impairment, other challenging cases and those with medical problems can only be taught in special schools. They also signify that these children may need professional and specialist services, which is a positive aspect to show that teachers are aware of the importance of valid interventions for these children. On the other hand,

moving the children to special schools may not be the solution since it depends on whether the school is within the children's locality.

Response *M106* represents a teacher's low expectation of children said to have SEN. There seems to be a belief that children said to have SEN may not be capable of progressing to university education. It also appears to suggest a negative attitude on the diverse needs of learners said to have SEN. This may imply that children said to have SEN are not valued equally like the other children. Similarly, responses from interviews, *R2* and *M2* suggesting that children said to have SEN should not be involved in academic subjects and that they should be educated separately from the typically developing children *U1* and *U3*. Although teacher *R2's response* school may be seen to have successfully trained one of the children who was employed as a butcher, the job may be seen as a low yardstick. The question is whether teachers are ready to take on the challenge of making their classrooms and schools more inclusive and whether there is a shared culture and ethos focussing on positive attitudes towards accommodating learners with diverse needs in schools. Failure to see students as capable and competent learners is likely to hinder their access to the curriculum and to successful inclusive education. On the other hand, getting help and support from colleagues, parents and other stakeholders and the belief that all children have the right to education may assist teachers to engage learners in meaningful activities. The question is whether there is collaborative learning among teachers and other professionals.

It is imperative that schools work towards reducing barriers to learning, participation and resources in order to possibly increase support to children said to have SEN, teachers and establish partnerships with parents and the community. The question is how the schools will provide high quality educational services in order to maximise the growth of children in an inclusive settings and under least restrictive environments.

5.11 Need for whole school policies and procedures

In a whole-school approach, all teachers should be responsible for identifying and assisting students with problems in order to facilitate their personal and social development. It is also essential that teachers are trained, committed and involved in supporting all children, not only in discipline matters but also other social, psychological and biological aspects, or otherwise as may be manifested in various challenges typically associated with children said to have SEN. It is important for the teachers and professionals identifying and working with the child to have a clear understanding of the meaning of identification and the different aspects to consider before a decision is made about a child's challenges in order to validate the concerns. The question is who validates the teachers' concerns before the children are referred to the next stage. The parents' input is vital before and after the child is referred.

Hence, the school administration needs to be well versed with skills, and approaches and/or interventions relevant to children said to have SEN in order to determine shared, consistent approaches to respond positively to the varied challenges and diversities in schools.

5.11.1 Referral system

Teachers' responses highlight some of the procedures they follow after identifying children said to have SEN in the classes:

R1   *'There are groups like Joy Care for disabilities which usually check eye sight. So, I refer the child to the head teacher who then books an appointment for them.'*

M2   *'The support I give depends on different cases; for example, 5-6 and 6-7 year old pupils have reading problems and if they do not improve I refer them to the class teacher. I also refer those with language problems and those who stammer.'*

M1   *'Our school has a special class for these children. After identifying such students, they are referred to the special class where trained special education needs teachers help them.'*

U1   *'If they have a problem with their sight, I ask the parent to take them*

R3   *'There are signals, like tendency to turn to one side, especially for the ones with hearing problems, those straining to see and 'slow learners'. For example, those not hearing I talk to their parents and they take them to EARC (Early Assessment Resource Centre). Organisations like NGO donate equipment, do medical checkups and do further assessments.'*

The schools seem to have a system of referral. Different cases are referred to the head teacher, special needs education teacher, class teacher and parents. The system does not seem to provide a systematic way of referring the children said to have SEN. It appears the teachers decide who to refer the child to. The teachers do not seem to mention whether any observations about the child are made. The observations should provide as much information as possible about the child, including the child's developmental checklist. The child's strengths, capacities and interests, as well as potential areas of need, should be considered as valuable information which could be shared with the families. It could also be used to inform curriculum planning.

Screening and therapeutic services are limited and expensive. The organisations that sponsor these services are documented in the literature review. However, until recently children from the autistic spectrum had not been supported. Only one school has a unit in Nairobi, while another unit is to be opened in January next year with the support of private sector organisations and the Autism Society of Kenya.

5.11.2 Relationship between parents and teachers

It is important to acknowledge that parents have the right to make decisions for their children. The school should provide as much information to the parents as possible in case of concern about a child. Parents would rely on this information to enable them to take an active role while planning for any meeting and to engage in meaningful discussions with the school.

Communicating concerns regarding a child to a parent can be a sensitive and difficult issue and teachers may be required to have appropriate skills to do so.

The school may have to consider any possible support parents would need, remaining sensitive to their reactions. This assumes that there are parents *'who have no knowledge of where to seek help and are poor'* and may have hardly any opportunities to utilise the help actually offered in the form of, for example, special schools and special classes. The question is who determines when further intervention may be required and works together with the families to follow up the referrals. The excerpts below show how teachers relate to parents.

U1   *'I make sure I know the background of the child and identify who to talk to because some children are orphans. In such a case, I inform the guardian and reassure them that I will guide the child and make them feel comfortable in class in order to improve.'*

U3   *'I have, for example, a boy in class who cannot read or write properly. He scribbles. So I encourage him to bring his work for marking. If the situation worsens and there are no improvements, I call the parents. Some parents respond others do not.'*

Different teachers have varied ways of reporting the difficulties they notice in children. *R1* refers eye sight problems to the head teacher, while *R3* and *U1* refer directly to the parents for them to take the children for eye checks. The response from *M1* refers children to the special education needs teacher, while *M2* refers language problems to the class teacher. It is not clear at what stage the referrals are done and what specific difficulties are referred to the head teacher, class teacher, parents or special education needs teacher. However, the response from teacher *U3* implies that parents are informed or involved when the situation does not improve. It would be expected that parents are informed of their children's progress regularly. This is likely to enable them to understand the difficulty the child might be experiencing and support them where necessary. For example, when teacher *U3* was asked what they do if the parents do not respond, the following response ensued:

U3   *'... I use my ability as a teacher and parent to ignore or keep alerting the school.'*

Some parents may choose not to come to school for different reasons. It may be fear of being told that their child has a learning difficulty, since it is a natural instinct for a parent to believe that everything is right with their child. Yet the teacher's response does not seem to suggest the availability of any system in the school to follow up issues of children with learning difficulties. It may also suggest a lack of knowledge on the implications of ignoring such cases but the teacher is keen to follow up the case by repeatedly 'alerting the school'. Teacher *U3* may not seem aware of where else they can get support. The question is whether the school values teachers' opinions and decisions, or empowers teachers about other services where they can get help.

U1 explains that they find out the background of the child and who to talk to. The children's background information (history) does not appear to be easily accessible. The teacher on the other hand seems ready to work with the child until improvement is seen. Such teachers may be said to have high efficacy and may, along with others, need to be encouraged to develop their potential. However, some of the problems need a well-programmed and consistent plan of intervention for the children to improve. For example, the concerns noted by teachers *U1* and *M1* in section 5.7.3 about children writing '*b' as 'd*' and '*W' as 'M' and 'S' as inverted 'S*' among others in this study may also require intervention from special education personnel to establish the severity of the problem. The question is how the severity is determined in these schools. Some teachers highlighted that there is a Guidance and Counselling department which deals with children with disciplinary problems.

5.11.3 Guidance and Counselling policy

A Guidance and Counselling policy should be provided for all children in schools. It involves working to maintain school discipline and good communications between the school and pupils, parents and relevant outside agencies. Kenya introduced a Guidance and Counselling policy after the FPE declaration to enable teachers to cope with the diversities in the classrooms, but this focuses on ways of instilling discipline, replacing the caning and corporal punishment methods used

beforehand. A well-disciplined child is likely to fit into the real world with fewer difficulties. Discipline may be considered as a way of teaching and guiding children, while pointing out unacceptable behaviour. It is crucial for parents to maintain and constantly build on trust for effective and positive discipline of their children. The child should not only be able to respect the rights of parents but also rights of others. Practically, there is evidence for effective discipline in cases where mutual respect is applied in a fair, firm, reasonable and consistent manner. The question is whether there is a coordinated programme to encourage joint efforts between the teachers, children, parents or family members and different multi-disciplinary teams to implement the Guidance and Counselling policy.

Similarly, there could be a problem in the classroom which might involve the wider institution of the school or the children's homes, such as in the case given by *M1* below. Depending on the individual factors, the problem is also likely to affect classroom behaviour which might require the psychologist, medical or other specialist expertise to be involved. However, the teachers and school administration should, using the systems in place, create circumstances which promote the involvement of all teachers.

Teachers highlighted that there is a Guidance and Counselling policy which deals with disciplinary issues. The responses are shown below:

M1   *'There is a Disciplinary Committee under the Guidance and Counselling Department. Each class is represented by one class teacher. This committee deals with disciplinary cases such as truancy. The teacher at classroom level will try and handle any issues but if there is cause for concern and if any issue is persistent, teachers should inform the disciplinary committee, who then informs the deputy head teacher. The Guidance and Counselling Department further investigates the problem and liaises with the District Education Office (DEO). The DEO will then refer the case to the Child Department. Depending on the case (for example, truancy or stealing), children might be referred to an approved school.'*
(The teacher continued to tell the following story)
'A class 7 child, who kept destroying water pipes, was abusive and used to run away from school. It was later found out that there was a family problem and the dad was not supportive because the child was born out of wedlock. The Guidance and Counselling Department referred the child to the DEO and later the child was sent to an approved school

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(Shimo La Tewa) for one year.'

U1   *'My school has a good system of dealing with disciplinary cases. There is a Guidance and Counselling Patron. There are peer groups where children guide and help others to behave well. Peers are pupils identified and recommended by other teachers.'*

U3   *The school also has a Guidance and Counselling policy where the child is referred to a committee, talked to and one committee member takes time to understand the child's behaviour and finds out more about their background.'*

The Guidance and Counselling policy explained above *M1* may be seen as a positive step towards having a common system to foster student development and to enhance school effectiveness in the wake of many changes arising from educational reforms in Kenya.

Seven out of nine teachers are aware of the policy. However, it seems to focus on generalised aspects of disciplinary cases which might not suggest ways of setting limits or boundaries and instilling self control; both crucial for children said to have SEN. The question is whether the school community shares and supports a vision of learning for all students. The policy as explained above *M1* seems to involve only a few class teachers. It also depicts a reactive way of solving problems. The class teacher tends to liaise with the committee when the problem is out of hand. The involvement of other teachers and parents is not clarified.

This still raises the question of the role and effectiveness of the disciplinary committee and their way of monitoring and enhancing discipline in the schools. The boy's behaviour mentioned by *M1* does not seem to have been assessed by the regular teacher, nor the class teachers in charge of guidance and counselling. *'... it was later found out that there was a family problem...'*

Some children's behaviour may be due to emotional problems or reactions to bad experiences. There are also tendencies for children being abused or neglected to demonstrate a change in behaviour; they may become more aggressive, destructive, fearful or withdrawn. This implies that the school may have taken time to investigate the case of this boy. It may have benefited them to consult a

specialist who might be able to identify and help to resolve the causes of behaviour.

The boy recurrently broke water pipes and played truant. The question was whether the school administration had measures and rules in place for reporting and monitoring incidences and absenteeism. School records would be vital to clarify the personal history of the child. On the other hand, there seemed to be no plan aimed at helping the child to modify or remedy his behaviour and no consultation with parents or specialists to assess the difficulties this particular boy could be encountering. It was not clear whether the disciplinary committee was aware of the procedures to follow when disciplining students said to have SEN, and whether they had training in Guidance and Counselling skills. Neither was it clear whether the head teacher had organised teachers and other teams to deal with challenging issues while dealing with problems that have not been solved efficiently. Collaborating with parents, families and the community is a key role of the head teacher. The story seems to emphasize that family support is critical in supporting SEN children. The interests, needs and diversity of the community need to be considered and resources mobilized accordingly. The question is whether the head teacher in the response above *M1* has established any partnerships with the parents, the community or multi-disciplinary teams of qualified personnel.

The responses from teachers *U1* and *U3* tend to highlight different head teachers' styles of leadership and implementation of the guidance and counselling policy. This may highlight the different ways school leaders view and experience their roles. The question is whether it might be possible for the disciplinary committee to extend their services to other issues in the school, apart from discipline. Alternatively, the school administration needs to instigate ways of enhancing high expectations for the children said to have SEN by setting out a school ethos, behavioural plans, involving the parents and other multi-agencies and/or specialists to validate disciplinary issues of children said to have SEN as well as others.

The issue here is whether teachers feel prepared and trained to determine their effective participation in guidance and counselling and other school activities which contribute to the achievement of the school's development

5.11.4 Sexual abuse

Teachers in this study reported that children are sexually abused and they attributed this to the environment of the school. Children who are orphans may also be abused.

> U3 *'Our school has very many problems because of its locality – a slum area. You know, they live in very poor conditions: a lot of drinking, health problems, orphans and the like. There are cases where children are sexually molested (abused) but the Guidance and Counselling Committee works with the head teacher on these issues.'*

From the above *response* it appears that child vulnerability is manifold. It is obvious that child abuse exposes children to the risk of HIV, other sexually transmitted diseases and psychological trauma, amongst other complications. The government has started sex education in schools but there is a need for more safeguarding, especially for the children said to have SEN. Establishing the prevalence rate through research is also important in order to establish the magnitude of this problem.

5.11.5 Attitude of peers and teachers

The head teacher may need to promote the success of all students by taking into consideration the student's disability and how the disability affects behaviour. Awareness of all types of disabilities would contribute to more appropriate intervention strategies. The question is whether the head teachers are aware of the need to change the cultures of schools by working in collaboration with the teachers, parents and community in order to improve schools and to promote inclusive education. The following section highlights peers' and teachers' attitudes towards children said to have SEN.

> R1 *'The head teacher addresses the issues of name-calling at the*

> *assemblies and in classes.'*
>
> M2 *'Discipline is emphasized. This is because this school is in an environment where many children do not go to school and they are badly behaved and there is a lot of peer and society influence.'*
>
> U1 *'Some of these include fighting, use of abusive verbal and vulgar language'.*
>
> R1 **'***Yes, generally it is laughing at them, saying they are not able to catch the ball or run fast.'*

Children said to have SEN need educational skills as well as life and social skills to enable them to adapt to different changes and environments. Similarly, other developing children may need to be prepared to respond positively to other children. Teachers should also show that they accept children said to have SEN. This is because the way they behave towards children said to have SEN may also affect the attitudes of the other children towards them. Teachers need to know the capacity of pupils and how to effectively engage and interact with the others in the class. A negative attitude from a teacher may imply that teachers react inappropriately to children said to have SEN, causing dissatisfaction within the child, which may lead to different types of behaviour likely to affect their learning as well as that of the other children. Formulating ground rules for how children should work together in class, as well as outside, may boost positive interactions and relationships.

Response *R1* mentions that peers tend to laugh at the lack of co-ordination of the children during P.E. Peers do not seem to empathise with the children said to have SEN, which might make friendship and association difficult. Laughing at the children may cause anxiety and fear. On the other hand, research is universal on the benefits of play. This is likely to affect not only the self-esteem of the child being laughed at but also the physical, social, emotional and cognitive skills. Physical skills refer to coordination; social refers to relationship, cooperation and group skills; emotional deals with courage and calming down; and cognitive suggests focus, attention and language among many others. This seems to reflect on the school's culture where children need additional support to interact

positively and gain respect from their peers. This is also likely to affect successful inclusion.

Children said to have SEN seem not to enjoy the benefits associated with play. This section seems to further underscore the need for teachers to spend more time in planning, preparing and using appropriate teaching strategies and methods to enable these children to reach their full potential. More involvement with the parents would also help the teachers understand the challenges of different children said to have SEN. It also tends to identify a lack of social interaction for children said to have SEN. Understanding the individual needs of each child would imply that teachers respond positively which is essential to the development of children's attitudes and may contribute to their personality as well. Teachers may also need to work alongside parents, other professionals, the community and other agencies to help children to develop their unique potentials. However, educators stress that it is critical for teachers to have favourable attitudes towards children said to have SEN and work with the parents. This is a relevant aspect in promoting inclusive education. The following excerpts denote different attitudes from teachers.

> R1 *'Children disadvantaged physically, not like 'normal' children, some disadvantages – could be on bodies or minds.'*

> R2 *'There should be more emphasis on teaching daily living skills, especially cleanliness and toileting.'*

> R3 *'.... Children said to have SEN are taught how to handle or control themselves.'*

> R2 *'Also during P.E. they are unable to move at the same pace as others. They are 'slow learners'. I try and follow the assessment to know about their capability. They gave issues like failure to communicate well, walk well, vision. I take it as my special responsibility to look out for such issues. They take time to understand and spend more time on a task than others.'*

> U3 *'It is funny sometimes when a child answers a question totally different from what I am teaching. It is like the child did not hear the question at all.'*

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> *R1*   *'Yes, I enjoy making friends with them; love them by being close to them and showing closeness. I enjoy the fact that they are able to participate in some subjects like music.'*

> *M1*   *'I enjoy teaching these children but they are challenging. So they make me as a teacher think more deeply about ways of making them enjoy the lesson. One needs special love for kids, effort and energy; also one needs to be tolerant and patient.'*

> *U3*   *'These children seem to be in their own world and they keep me wanting to look for different ways to motivate them.'*

Some of the teachers *R1, M1* and *U3* reported that they enjoy teaching children said to have SEN and are keen to look for different ways to motivate them. They also highlight that teachers take a keen interest in what the children are doing. However, *M1* mentions '*tolerant and patient'* which may raise the question of whether the children are difficult and whether teachers are ready to apply their skills in order to deal with diversities and improve children's learning. Teacher *R1* is happy to see the children participating in music. The responses *R2* and *R3* seem to highlight that more time should be spent on containment and care of the children. This may low expectations of the child, rather than acceptance of the notion of engaging these children in cognitive learning. In most cases, teachers seem to have no structure or guidelines to follow, apart from *R2* who mentions 'assessment' but concurrently tends to look out for the problems 'within the child'. Children may receive support from a closely structured programme.

Teachers *R1* and *R2* seem not to have the correct terminology to use when referring to the SEN children. They seem to refer to the children as different from the others: *R1* '*not like normal'* and *R2* '*slow learners'*. This implies focusing on the '*deficit in the child'* and labelling. Teacher *U3* tends to think that a particular child's answers are '*funny*' and '*the children seem to be in their own world*'. The teacher may need to understand the abilities and capacities of these children and how the learning difficulties manifest in the child. The following section focuses on school support.

5.11.6 Lack of school administration support

The school administration is expected to promote the success of all students by ensuring not only the management, organisation, operations and resources but also the safety and effectiveness of the learning environment. Teachers in various countries are now facing new demands and changes resulting in the introduction of different educational reforms and innovations by the relevant governments. There are also new challenges relating to new policies, curriculum adaptations, introduction of sex education, AIDS/HIV education and SEN, for example, in Kenya. These factors affect and influence teachers' day-to-day activities. Therefore, it is crucial that teachers get the relevant support and recognition from their head teachers when dealing with pupils, parents and other agencies in order for them to be more responsive to changes in the schools. Strong school leadership is generally recognised as a key element in the success and improvement in schools. The question is whether the administrator is prepared to lead in all administrative areas, as well as special education. Teachers underscore some of the areas where they lack support from the administration s follows:

> M1 *'I as much as possible try to find out the background of these children and then I adapt my teaching to meet their needs...it is easy to relate to the children, to their families, because they are from the locality.'*

> R1 *'I would like the school administration to include these children in awards ceremonies and create more awareness to the rest of the school.'*

> M2 *'Classes should have good facilities, enough tables and desks for children, painted walls and a more attractive atmosphere. The administration should get finance to do this.'*

> U1 *'The administration should focus and concentrate on ways of identifying the needs of children said to have SEN and come up with materials to cater for these needs.'*

> R2 *'The school should source more professionals in terms of teachers capable of dealing with children said to have SEN.'*

> R3 *'Include a system where teachers are trained in the use of Braille*

and children provided with hearing aids and teachers participate more in the assessment of the children's needs.'

U2   *'The school should sensitise parents about children's behaviour, especially those tending to break or destroy furniture.'*

U2   *'Paint the blackboards because they are too slippery.'*

M1   *More financial support. I recommend teachers for further specialised training in SEN. ...solicit for funds from organisations to support teachers' courses. Make recommendations to Ministry of Education (MoE) for scholarships.'*

The above responses *M1, R1, M2, R2, U1, U2* and *U3* denote a cross-section of the areas where support from school administration is lacking. Teachers like *M1* take their own initiative to establish the background information of the children said to have SEN in their classes. This seems to depict a lack of systems in the management of personal records of the children. Teachers seem to highlight that they obtain information about the children from the parents who live close to the school. Schools do not seem to have a systematic way of enrolling children said to have SEN. The schools do not seem to celebrate diversity and tend to exclude the children said to have SEN from awards ceremonies *R1,* which may be considered as one of the practical forms of creating awareness of these children and interacting with the typically developing ones. The question is whether the school administration values diversity and how teachers know and meet the individual needs of these children. Responses *M2* and *U2* seem to depict classrooms which were dilapidated. *M1* and *R3* seem to challenge the head teacher to use his position to influence the government to provide more funds for training and resources. Lack of hearing aids seems to suggest excluding children with hearing impairments from learning.

Teacher's response *U1* highlights the importance of a system of providing teachers with resources for teaching children said to have SEN. As reported earlier in this study and in the questionnaires, teachers more often than not seemed to rely on physical symptoms to identify children said to have SEN and this tends to raise the question of whether these children have statements and IEPs. Coupled with the situation depicted by *M2*, *U2* and *U1* under the LRE, the schools do not

seem to set and provide supplementary aids and services when required. The question is whether the head teachers have clear guidance on the appropriate process of identification of children said to have SEN. It is not clear how teachers guarantee these children the opportunity to gain academic skills, as well as non academic skills, under the LRE stipulated in the SEN policy.

The issue is whether the quality assurance or inspectors' department evaluates and monitors the way the curriculum, teaching, funding and state of school premises meet the needs of all children. The following sections provide other forms of support teachers in this study underscored as important in their endeavours in SEN.

5.11.7 Curriculum development

The primary school education curriculum in Kenya has been altered several times since independence in response to the shifting needs of society. Teachers attempt to make adaptations to suit the learning needs of children said to have SEN. Teachers' thoughts about the curriculum are presented below.

R1 *'The government should give the teachers an opportunity to suggest what subjects would be more suitable for these children instead of exposing them to the same academic subjects like other children.'*

M1 *'The syllabus is too wide. Narrow it to avoid overloading teachers. … teachers should be involved more in the early stages of initiating curriculum development because they are the ones who engage with the children learning on a day-to-day basis.'*

M2 *'Craftwork should be re-introduced. These are activities to do with hands. Expose the children to creative work. There should be other things to develop children wholly other than academics, for example: creative arts, psychomotor skills and craftwork.'*

U1 *'A different curriculum should be written for these children and a class should be specifically set up where these children will be getting more attention. This should be an initiative from the government.'*

U2 *'Subjects should be reduced. The syllabus is too large for the teachers to cover in good time.'*

R2   *'This could include basic arithmetic, activities of daily living, vocational training like machine work, tailoring, candle, soap and sweater-making. For example, one of our pupils, a boy, was last year trained to work in butchery at K... shopping centre and he has learnt some of the tasks. In fact, he is now considered as an employee and is being paid wages.'*

R3   *'SEN children should have their own syllabus. They should not have the same syllabus but less challenged. There should be a department dealing with that group. They should be examined differently in a separate environment.'*

Some teachers *R1, M1* and *M2* feel that they should be involved in the development of the primary school education curriculum, since they are in contact with the children on a daily basis. It may be important to involve teachers in the process of curriculum planning since they may have reliable, valid data and are able to make suggestions that are likely to inform the targeted problems. They may be allowed to work as teams in projects that expand their roles. This may imply that the school structure, as well as the education system, might need to generate opportunities for teachers to get involved in decision-making roles. Teachers with high efficacy seem to be keen to participate actively. The question remains as to whether teachers have the ability to interpret and translate the curriculum at the appropriate levels. Teachers also commented that the curriculum includes academic subjects *M2* and that the syllabus is too wide *M1* and *U2* indicating that it should be reduced to avoid overloading *M1* for them to be able to cover all of it in good time *U2*. Teachers seem to suggest that the curriculum is crowded and too strongly tied to examinations. Thus, they may tend to have no room for experimenting or trying out new ideas which would be necessary while attempting to reach all pupils.

Such schools may consider children's diversities as a big problem which makes them busy and does not signify equal opportunities for these children. Another question still lingers as to whether teachers are sufficiently trained to make appropriate accommodations and adaptations to the curriculum in order to ensure access of the curriculum for children said to have SEN. Teachers *R2* and *M2* also seem to suggest subjects that are more hands-on in nature in order to expose the

children to creativity. They seem to have difficulties in addressing and exploring the diversity in their pupils in terms of what they have to teach and how to teach across the curriculum. This is especially the case if they are not well trained and have low efficacy.

Responses *R2* and *M2* suggesting that children said to have SEN should not be involved in academic subjects and that they should be educated separately from the typically developing children *U1* and *U3* may be seen as a negative attitude from teachers and a sign of lowered expectations of the children. Failure to see students as capable and competent learners is likely to hinder their access to the curriculum and to successful inclusive education. It is not altogether clear whether teachers are aware of the education policies and their role in their development and operation. Investment in teacher education may affect pedagogy and the ability of staff and teachers to interpret and translate the curriculum at appropriate levels.

5.11.8 Policy making

As highlighted in the context chapter, Kenya's education system is centralised, hierarchical and bureaucratic and the central government makes most decisions (including policies) which are then implemented by the schools. Teachers are expected to contribute in other areas, including school management, culture, assessments, standards, parent and community partnership, curriculum, resources and different administration processes. Teachers may be considered to know the reality of schools and may connect policy with practice in an effective manner to cause sustained reform. Six teachers referred to the Guidance and Counselling policy, while the other responses were as follows:

M1 *'Teachers to be involved in policy making and be called upon to make recommendations about the curriculum.'*

R1 *'There is nothing in particular.'*

R3 *'Our school's motto is 'Hard Work Pays. The vision is self actualisation and the mission is discipline…'.*

Teachers *M1* above suggests that teachers should be involved in policy making, while *R1* does not seem to be aware whether there is any policy. Response *R3* seems to confuse mission and policy. Nevertheless, it tends to show that some schools have mission and vision statements but they may need to contribute to whole-school approaches.

5.12 Chapter summary

The highlights of this analysis include a range of complex interacting factors that influence teachers' understanding of SEN and complexity of issues Kenya has to deal with. The factors include: teachers' understanding of learning needs of children said to have SEN in primary schools, definition of SEN, kinds of SEN in the classrooms, methods of identifying children said to have SEN in classrooms, managing diversities, teachers' post-service training, teaching strategies, anticipated training, abilities of children said to have SEN, challenges in meeting diverse needs and impact of mainstream learning. The interviews also included factors barriers to learning and need for whole-school policies and procedures.

5.13 Key Findings from the data analysis

Generally speaking, most teachers expressed a willingness to work with children said to have SEN despite some problems which will be incorporated in these findings.

Teachers in this study are considerably less clear about the definition of SEN and they still seem fixated with the content of 'within child' issues. This represents the medical model. They explain SEN in terms of observable characteristics for example, physical disabilities, and behavioural difficulties. The language of 'deficit' is employed.

Few teachers appear to have the vocabulary to describe SEN, and often knowledge of this vocabulary is not accompanied by a deep understanding of it. A few teachers use key terms such as 'IEP', 'Gifted learners', 'mental impairments', 'echolalia (parrot like sound)' while describing children said to have SEN.

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Teachers have difficulties with both the identification question and definition of the general concept of learning difficulties. Some teachers use labelling language while defining children said to have SEN. Although some teachers from the interviews have had SEN training, they had doubts about how to effectively meet the needs of students said to have specific difficulties. Some teachers seem not to highlight the

progress made by children working below age-related expectations.

The idea of an IEP appears to have entered the vocabulary of many teachers, but their comments do not give a clear impression of how they operationally view an IEP, nor of what it was really intended to do. On the other hand, a small number of teachers appeared to be quite clear in their own minds as to what the IEP was. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of procedures of effective identification of children said to have SEN is less well refined, which may be attributed to training, inappropriate instruments, identification techniques or unreliability of psychometric assessment. The assessments do not appear to be accompanied by validated interventions and including best predictors for children that are likely to affect performance in the area of concern. Lack of quality assessments hinders the teachers and schools from providing responses to a wide range of diverse students. From the interviews conducted, teachers find it problematic to group children with the same difficulties because the children are not assessed to ascertain what their problems are. Not all teachers have an understanding of the impact of the difficulties children said to have SEN have to

contend with.

The majority of teachers in this study have not acquired advanced specialist knowledge in terms of SEN, and it is equally clear that a number of teachers do not have advanced specialist qualifications in SEN. Despite continuing training of teachers in the pedagogy of SEN, this training appears to be inadequate. Teachers claim that the pre-service training does not provide general information about the nature or causes of disabilities and their associated characteristics of disabilities, nor how to accommodate children with disabilities in the classroom. Teachers are

unaware of the consequences of different aspects that may hinder the learning process of children said to have SEN. However, the evidence from the questionnaires does point to a professional understanding of what teachers should be doing in the case of a child who needs extracurricular help. They are able to provide a range of different strategies which can be used in different circumstances but they are not sure of the extent to which they should be implementing these, nor with which children.

Most teachers are not exposed to ICT use in their own classroom learning experiences. Administrative and strong network of support is insufficient to augment teachers' sense of vocation, enthusiasm, self-efficacy and motivation which is fundamental to push the quality of education for children said to have SEN forward. A Teaching Assistant or Learning Support Teacher is not a source available to a majority of Kenyan teachers in this study.

The most common kinds of SEN are physical disabilities, learning difficulties, and those characterized by EBD, cognitive as well as mental health problems in that order; while the abilities of the same children are typified by generally poor performance, poor in reading and writing, communication problems and EBD. National examinations are used as a measure of students' performance without the selection of a specific and satisfactory intervention being mentioned to improve the performance of children said to have SEN. This leaves the teachers to apply subjective identification practices, resulting in a large number of low achievers being identified as having 'poor performance', reading and writing and EBD problems in terms of ability. From the interviews, there is a lack of clarity with regard to good practice in the identification and management of mental health issues. This makes it difficult for teachers to ensure coherent planning to meet the complex needs of these children. There is no co-ordinated referral system. The system seems to differ from one teacher to another and is tacit.

The curriculum tends to focus on the cognitive and not the affective domain. However, it is based on normative standards where teachers consider all pupils as

capable, which may pose difficulties where support is required. Teachers from the interviews lack the appropriate pedagogical skills to enhance their ability to interpret and translate the curriculum for children said to have SEN at appropriate levels. However, the curriculum does not include diversified pathways for these children.

Teachers' responses to the questionnaires revealed that differentiated instructions, which focus on the fact that all learners are unique in their ways of learning based on the most suitable methods and materials for each learner in a specific area in the curriculum, are not common practice in Kenya. Some teachers have a low sense of self efficacy and this makes it difficult for them to embrace the diversities of children said to have SEN, use more adaptive instructional techniques, create an enriched atmosphere and enhance learning experiences. As described in the interviews, teachers apply different approaches but they tend to have the same task or exercise for all children. The approaches do not include differentiated strategies to adapt lessons and plan effectively to meet the diverse learning abilities of children said to have SEN. The use of differentiated learning for children is not stressed to facilitate inclusive education. Children who are not making adequate progress are made to repeat classes or grades. Children with cognitive problems were denoted as those who never attended nursery school as opposed to children said to have SEN.

Teachers feel the government does not provide adequate support and fails to disburse adequate funds while the community does not support the children said to have SEN, while parents are stigmatized by the society, unable to support their children in school, lack information about assessment services and are not interested in the education of their children. The teachers interviewed reported that schools do not have an effective record keeping and information management system to enable them access the background information on children said to have SEN.

The schools emerge as deficient in additional reinforcement strategies to supplement the learning of children said to have SEN. The central role of the school is not developed to sustain an increasingly diverse range of learners. From the interviews, teachers do not have a planned system of responding to behavioural challenges. Children said to have SEN go for special instruction where they have to leave class to go to the resource room. It was not clear from the teachers whether the time in the resource room equals the same total schooling time for the rest of the children. From the interviews, teachers have no support to develop and monitor learning plans for individuals and groups of students said to have SEN. There are no appointed schol representatives to ensure that children benefit from their academic and social experiences in order to make substantial contributions in determining additional provision for the children, even if at the most basic level.

Apart from pre-service training, there is no institutionalised training where teachers attend regular training within schools, which calls for sharing more experiences, expertise and practical knowledge as well as developing networks with universities and other organisations to continuously promote competencies, skills and professional development. Training is not linked to an overall resource and support network across the whole school. Similarly, it is not lucid how training arrangements relate to the efficacy of what teachers subsequently do in school. According to the interviews conducted, schools do not promote an atmosphere that nurtures an ethos enabling teachers to be actively involved in upgrading their performance and to contribute to the achievement of the goals of different school operations.

Teachers identified factors such as class size, inadequate resources, and lack of adequate teacher preparation as factors that would affect the success of the education of children said to have SEN. The resources available to teachers for children said to have SEN are limited, but resources to teach generally are also limited. Teachers also emphasized an increased work load rather than issues affecting the actual provision for children said to have SEN. The programme of

inclusion has not influenced the thinking of primary school teachers. Neither do teachers understand the patterns of provision, nor how these are constructed in the classrooms.   Views expressed during the interviews also make it clear that classroom practices depicted by teachers do not reflect inclusive education. This is hampered by poor classroom organisation, lack of appropriate teaching materials, furniture, and safe and secure spaces to enable teachers engage in educational practices that provide options to accommodate children said to have SEN. Teaching and learning processes do not provide equal opportunities for all children. Teachers highlighted the fact that there were obstacles such as lack of Braille for children with visual impairments, lack of hearing aids and lack of training in sign language. Teachers have a low expectation of children said to have SEN, as evidenced when they indicated that these children can benefit from vocational training but not university level education.

In their interviews, teachers highlighted that there is no plan to modify, accommodate and remedy the reading of children said to have SEN, nor is there a regular programme to enhance their cognitive skills and motivate, engage and provide individualised instructions and intensified one-to-one support in order to raise the expectations of the children in reading. This is limited by the fact that teachers are not exposed to the cognitive aspect of reading to gain a complete understanding of the development of children's reading skills. There is also no scheduled time for reading.

The structures in schools are not adapted and modified to benefit children said to have SEN to a point where classroom climate is welcoming and psychologically as well as physically safe. Teachers stressed the fact that these children walk to school and there is no transport support, no access to buildings and they also lack basic provisions, such as food and medical provision and are neglected. From the interviews, there is no continuum of alternative placement consistent with LRE. Teachers are willing to help children and to contact parents but the failure on the part of schools to instigate ways of changing the culture, establishing close links with the parents, health personnel, SEN specialists, community and other disabled

persons' organisations acts as an impediment. There are gaps in collaborative planning among teachers and other professionals, general and special educators, families and the community.

Teachers in this study shared helpful viewpoints on their understandings of SEN in public primary schools in Kenya, which may be considered useful in the refinement of teaching children said to have SEN as the country works towards improving the implementation of the inclusive concept.

From the interviews teachers do not have a planned system of responding to behavioural challenges. School funds are inadequate to reach the education goals set for children said to have SEN, nor are they fairly distribute to cater for the variation in children's needs.

The following chapter draws together the findings of this study, relating to the research questions and to empirical work reported by researchers in different countries, as well as Kenya.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to draw together and discuss the findings obtained from all aspects of the present research to provide some illumination of the progress being made to Kenya's stated goals for the provision of quality primary education and meeting children's special educational needs. Clearly the size of the sample as described and the constrained physical distribution of the schools included in the work are limitations to the use of the data in a generalised sense. However, in the context of national provision for teacher preparation and further training, as well as what is known of the resource base of schools in urban and rural settings, the themes that emerge are valuable as indicators of the possible directions for future policy development and resource enhancement when money is available. The discussion also contextualises outcomes by reference to the issues raised in the literature review in order to address the research questions set out in Chapter 1; importantly, how current primary school teachers view the professional tasks associated with SEN in the public primary schools in Kenya and illuminate the challenges to effective classroom practice.

Kenya has been making attempts towards incorporating quality education for all (EFA) since independence (Somerset, 2009; Oketch and Rolleston, 2007; Sifuna, 2007, Eshiwani, 1993). However, the country has a myriad of challenges associated with Free Primary Education (FPE) as well as with SNE; leaving the country with yet more questions on how to change the general practices in education and SEN in particular. As indicated under section 3.1, there is paucity of in-country research on SEN in Kenya as well as in other sub-Saharan countries, which until recently have been relying on scholars and consultants from universities, think tanks and aid agencies of Northern hemisphere countries—especially for research and demonstration programmes in primary education

(Ouma, 2009; Maclure, 2006; Mutua, 2001; Abosi, 2000, Association for the development of Education in Africa (ADEA), 1998; Kisanji, 1995).

The Kenyan context presents challenges to the establishment of universal primary education that are due in part to the diverse geographical and climatic conditions within the country – spanning the range of conditions from rich farming country to the arid lands where subsistence farming requires the cooperation of children as well as parents. Whilst the Australian 'outback' education programmes deliver personalised education to isolated families using sophisticated distance learning technologies, the economic conditions in Kenya render this impossible at the present time. This implies that whilst urban and the relatively better off rural areas are able to benefit from the programme of national educational reform, substantial areas of the country are neither able to attract well qualified teachers nor maintain and resource small local schools. For such teachers, access to continuing professional development opportunities which exist through the university departments of education in the cities and towns is inhibited by both distance and cost.

Developing conceptions of 'disability', special educational needs would not be expected to be well developed and would in all probability reflect local, traditional community perspectives on children who are, or appear to be 'different'. Whilst this research does not begin with this as a proposition, it is of interest to explore the spectrum of views teachers may exhibit in relation to SEN /SNE and where the primary focus of 'explanation' appears to be situated.

6.2 Definition of SNE in Kenya

The term Special Needs Education (SNE) is used in Kenya and the policy defines this term as:

> *'Education which provides appropriate modification in curriculum delivery methods, educational resources, medium of communication or the learning environment in order to cater for individual differences in learning'* (MoE, 2009, p6).

This study focuses on how teachers view SNE in public primary schools in Kenya. It has been noted earlier that following Independence, Kenya declared a

campaign for Universal Primary Education as a long term objective in 1963 (Oketch and Rolleston, 2007, Sifuna, 2007). Under British rule, education had neither been free nor widely available to the indigenous Kenyan people. Issues of wider access and improved quality have subsequently dominated the Kenya education discourse for over half a century (Somerset, 2009). Public initiatives in respect of children with disabilities emerged at the latter end of this period and essentially through the work of the Task Force on Special Needs Education (Kochung Report, 2003). The report indicated that urgent attention was necessary to the direction and provisions of education of children said to have Special Educational Needs. The first SEN / SNE policy was launched in 2009. Chapter Three discussed the efforts that Kenya has made to respond to the challenges of meeting the educational needs of every child and the acceptance of the inclusivity principles enshrined in the Salamanca Statement which has become the basis of its SNE policy. During the intervening period, additional efforts have been made to improve the quality of provision for children with learning difficulties, which include the further development of diagnostic services, improved teacher knowledge and capacity building in schools and local communities.

As in all countries, progress from policy to practice occurs over time. In the UK for example, following the Warnock Committee Report (1978) and the subsequent legislative arrangements within the 1981 Education Act, professional development activities identified teacher attitudes to and conceptions of SEN as significant targets for in-service education and training as well as an advisory Code relating to the management of SEN in all State-funded schools. Of significance in the latter was the orderly manner in which early identification and subsequent educational action was to be achieved. Whilst subsequent changes to the Code clarified the roles and purposes of professionals within and external to schools, the central concern remains the early identification of children's learning needs as the precursor to appropriate action.

In the Kenyan context, the sophistication of such an approach remains in the future, but the present research took as central, to progress in the provision of effective education, the extent to which teachers seemed confident of their ability

to spot the signs of a learning disability, and provide learning environments which indicted a more or less secure grasp of possible determining factors.

These core research questions will be discussed below by reference to the outcomes of the analysis of the questionnaire enquiry and personal interviews.

6.3 Themes Overview

The main themes from the data analysis chapter are listed below and an explanation on the amalgamation is seen under section 5.2.1.

Figure 20: Combined Themes from Data Analysis

1. Teachers understanding about teaching SEN in public primary schools.
2. Managing diverse needs in the Classroom.
3. Challenges in meeting the diverse needs of children said to have SEN.
4. Additional Professional Development.
5. Need for Whole-School Policies and Procedures.
6. Impacts of mainstream learning.

The following section underscores the outcomes from the research questions and the data used.

Policies outcomes:

- Need for whole school policy.
- Teachers' understanding about teaching SEN in primary schools (mainly provided eclectic evidence).
- Teachers are not aware of SNE policy.

Inclusion outcomes:

- Impacts of mainstream learning.
- Challenges in meeting diverse need of children said to have SEN.
- Barriers to creating a rich learning environment.

Teaching Approaches outcomes:

- Factors that prevent participation or involvement of children said to have SEN in classroom tasks.

- Managing diverse needs in the classroom.

Training teachers' SNE outcomes:

- Additional professional development.

- Supporting teachers to provide more engaging and effective learning instruction.

The main themes from the data analysis provided answers to the research questions as indicated below:

6.4 Research Questions

1. What SNE policies does the Kenyan government espouse?

A documentary analysis approach was chosen as an appropriate method. The outcomes showed that:

- ✓ Teachers are aware of the Guidance and Counselling policy for the whole school but not specifically for SNE policy.
- ✓ Kenyan schools are still practising integration not inclusion.
- ✓ Whole-school approaches are not in operation in schools.
- ✓ The medical model is still prominent but with little or no guidance to schools on how to identify children said to have SEN.
- ✓ SEN terminologies are not defined.

2. What strategies do teachers use in order to meet the SEN of pupils?

Questionnaires and interviews were used, with the following outcomes:

- ♦ Teachers use different strategies but with the same exercise for all students (not differentiated). These strategies included:
- ♦ One-to-one support, class discussion, peer learning, group work, reward and praise for hard work, drama, song, poetry and stories, use of seating plan, copying from the blackboard, repetition, interaction and pairing.

3. What are teachers' views about inclusion?

Questionnaires and interviews were used, with the following views expressed:

- Typically developing (TD) children positively associate with the children said to have SEN.

- Children come from poor socio-economic backgrounds which affect children in different ways.

- There is a lack of supportive Kenyan government policies.

- Most classrooms are overcrowded.

- There is evidence of a lack of materials and learning resources, as well as a lack of access to buildings and the playground for children with physical disadvantages.

- Negative attitudes exist from parents and the community, including a culture of drug taking and sexual abuse.

4. What SNE training is accessible to teachers?

Questionnaires and interviews were used, with the following training opportunities identified by the teachers:

- Short Term: Post-Service Training (SNE) - including certificate courses (8 teachers), Autism courses (2 teachers), Sign language courses (1 teacher) and 2 other unspecified courses.

- Long Term: Post Training (SNE) – at Masters Level (2 teachers), at Degree level (4 teachers) and at Diploma level (6 teachers), along with 1 teacher undertaking Distance Learning training.

- Anticipated Training:

  Nine (9) teachers anticipated other training in the form of Teaching English Language; Teaching Reading and Writing; Teaching Kiswahili, Teaching English, Sign Language; and courses relating to teaching the visually, hearing, mentally impaired and physically impaired and seminars on any other new developments.

♦ Other Courses:

Course	Teachers		Teachers
HIV/AIDS	22	Certificate in Guidance and Counselling (20 teachers),	20
School based Teacher Development	14	Basic Computer Training, First Aid Training, First Aid and Life Skills,	10
Certificate in Early Childhood Education	10	Key Resource Teachers' Course	9
Train Teachers Seminar	10	Kiswahili Seminar	6
English Seminar	4	Science Seminar, Creative Arts and Library Education	2
Parent Empowerment programme	1		
No training	24		

In this study, letter U stands for urban schools, M for municipal and R for rural schools.

6.5 Research Question One

What SNE policies does the Kenyan government espouse?

6.5.1 Review of SNE policy analysis

This research question was answered from the teachers' and the documentary analysis carried out on the SNE policy in chapter three.

The responses from the interviews showed that six out of nine teachers were aware of Guidance and Counselling (GC) and not SNE policy. The GC policy was linked to discipline and not SEN. However, the responses given by teachers when they were asked what whole-school policies their schools had on SNE are as follows:

R1   *'There is nothing in particular'*

M1   *'Teachers to be involved in policy making and be called upon to make recommendations about the curriculum'*

The response from *M1* above shows that teachers are not involved in the policy and curriculum process. This is confirmed by the Voluntary Service Organisation (VSO, 2002) that fundamental groups such as teachers and their organisations have mostly not been consulted or encouraged to participate. Teachers' professional perspective and experiences are significant in decision making since it is possible for them to play the role of change agents in schools (VSO, 2002). Subsequently, the UNESCO (1994) Salamanca Statement Framework for Action on Special Needs Education specified that different peoples' efforts are needed to ensure the success of a favourable setting for achieving equal opportunity and full participation in inclusive schools.

Rose (2001) argues that the provision of classroom and curriculum is an important factor in facilitating the achievement of inclusion and to shifting from the *'within-child'* model. Development of strategies and classroom practices should supersede the emphasis on the difficulties faced by the children. Changing classroom practices would enhance the learning of both the children said to have SEN and those without. This would imply shifting the focus from the 'defects' of the children towards a whole-school approach where (Ainscow, 1997; Ainscow and Hart,1992) teaching practices and learning styles would be reviewed. Therefore, teachers' contributions are important in setting up policies of equal opportunities and participation in inclusive schools.

The whole-school approach would imply that teachers would have to work more closely with the Kenyan government, head teachers, children, parents, different professionals, multi-agencies, and not least communities (Forlin, 2010) towards the achievement of educational reforms highlighted in the policy. All schools are expected to develop their own strategic plans based on the charter from the ministry and generate their own vision (MoE, 2007). The schools should have a shared belief to improve the whole-school approach, where all work together. This ensures that all in school contribute towards the vision thus reducing the possibility of children being excluded. Ultimately, the vision would facilitate the generation of working practices and this would influence the culture of the organisation. This may facilitate the integration of social, emotional, cognitive

and environment factors (Walters, 2012). However, further research is necessary on how to deliver improvements and change management in public schools.

Schools may require a system of leadership which helps teachers to have shared guidance, goals, communication and collaboration in order to build on their capacities for different roles for them to contribute to the change process.

From the documentary analysis of the SNE policy in chapter three, the following were pertinent points to consider: definition of integration mentions 'least restrictive environment' without giving the meaning for it; while Kenya claims to practice inclusion (Kenya SNE Policy, MoE, 2009, p16) after The Education Act (Kenya) – Cap 211 (revised 1980) which stated that '*no pupil shall be refused admission to, or excluded from the school on any grounds of sex, race, or colour or on other reasonable grounds.*' As Alquraini (2011) and Yell (2006) emphasise, the LRE principle should be followed to maximise the potential of exceptional individuals. Understanding what LRE means is crucial for all stakeholders to ensure that the environment meets the diverse needs of the children said to have SNE as much as possible. Thus the child is able to appreciate the environment rather than the other way round where the children have to adapt to the environment in school. From the questionnaire and interview findings, the Kenyan education system follows an integration approach not inclusive. This is proven by the inaccessible buildings, lack of facilities and the focus on 'within-child' factor as shown in some of the excerpts.

Include more professionals and agencies in schools to deal with children matters, like psychologists, physiotherapists, SEN Representatives or officers in schools, teaching assistants, interim counsellors to work with teachers, community representatives, carers, parents, health workers.

The Kenyan government may need to review the current SNE policy against the practices in schools and the international conventions in order to refocus on issues and standards other than enrolment.

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Realistic performance indicators in terms of what is achievable within the short, middle and long term against the finance and resources available may improve accountability instead of having the MoE responsible for almost everything on the policy.

The referral and provision of children said to have SEN need refining where contacts, services, processes and systems for the parents and schools are made distinct to ensure accessibility and availability of services for all children. A national calendar may be necessary for events for children said to have SEN in order for them to participate in different arena to ensure that the nation celebrates diversity, publicize student's performance and provide media programmes where they participate may improve public awareness.

The school inspection and quality department may require an inspection standards programme that covers all aspects of quality education for children said to have SEN and instigate ways of detecting shortcomings at provincial and district level. Issues may include: development of the curriculum, assessment, identification, funding, pedagogy, conducive learning environment, compliance with Health and Safety issues, accessibility, advocacy and progress of children said to have SEN. This may require teachers' input.

Emotional behavioural difficulties (EBD) and other special educational needs (SEN) listed on page 14 of the Kenya SNE policy are not defined and the continuum of SEN not explained. The planned time for evaluation is five years, but it might be necessary to embed the results for on-going reviews. This is reflected in the way many teachers defined SEN. They had varied definitions which give room for labelling. It is vital that the definitions and/or explanations of more SEN terminologies not least characteristics be made available to schools and other stakeholders; especially those in the education departments. This is valuable information for the preparation of guidelines or manuals or even publicity materials.

In order to define SEN terminologies, schools may need to collate information on different characteristics relevant to making a guide or index for identification of children said to have SEN. Literature, resource books, guidelines and manuals may need to be prepared for teachers on teaching children with learning difficulties commencing early child learning level.

Initiate a behavioural plan which is consistently and firmly followed for children said to have SEN, including ground rules even in early learning to ensure continuity and improved identification.

The impact of educational policies on children said to have SEN should be an important factor in policy making.   From the policy issues identified, the intention is there, but there is no guidance to schools to identify or assess such children, or in relation to which child to refer and to whom.   The actual infrastructure of external school support is lacking. For example, a newly formed Autism unit opened in Nairobi but not in other towns. The Kenyan government should be committed to sustain it in future.   There are no definite national statistics that indicate the prevalence of some conditions relating to learning difficulties included in the SNE policy. For example: 'Learning Disabilities, Gifted and talented, Emotional and Behavioural Disorder (EBD), Dyslexia, Autism, and Down Syndrome (MoE, 2009 p14). The prevalence and incidence levels of learning difficulties are not set and this makes it difficult for the government to determine the extent to which to set targets on those children at high or low risk of any form of SEN. Failure to have these definitions has implications on identification, assessment, national planning and provision. Charema (2007) asserts that lack of prevalence data restricts the ability of communities to define the extent of childhood disabilities in the population and consequently their responsibility to establish the required interventions and support.

The 2009 Kenya census does not include a break-down of the list of continuum of SEN. There are generalisations like: General, visual, hearing, speech, physical, self-care, mental and other. This impinges on planning since every child is unique.

Data is also required in order to monitor children's progress, evaluate the impact of interventions and review the effectiveness of polices and processes and plan new initiatives. Furthermore, the Warnock Committee (1978) surmise that about twenty percent of the school population might have special educational needs at some time during their school career. Perhaps this would be a good way of making estimates regarding children said to have SEN in schools in Kenya, given the high enrolment in primary schools after free primary education (FPE). For financial equity to be achieved the annual KES 1,067 - 2,000 disbursed to schools for each pupil should be increased to counterbalance disparities in the funding. The Kenyan government needs to sustain a high revenue capacity to be able to initiate and maintain additional programmes for children said to have SEN beyond the regular minimum levels.

Connections between policy on SEN and other equity issues need to be strengthened. According to Unterhalter (2012) there should be links between policy on SEN and other equity and rights issues of the child. Insufficient information leads to unclear policies on assessment, identification, as well as lack of Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Parents as well as children's entitlements are not clear. The assessment process has been reported by different researchers as 'fragmented' Mukuria and Korir (2006), with faulty equipment and inaccurate results (Kiarie, 2006; Muga, 2003) and does not have the capacity to assess learning disabilities and impaired intelligence (Mutua and Dimitrov, 2002). Similarly, the assessment procedure is normative and focuses on academics rather than the child's progress. Fletcher, Morris and Lyon (2006) highlight that Ipsative assessment relates to the progress of the individual child and facilitates monitoring and evaluation where both practitioners and researchers can contribute to the improvement of the assessment process.

The definition of inclusion is ambiguous and this creates doubts whether integration and inclusion are understood at the ministry level and whether the responsibilities on the implementation of SEN are clear. The MoE does not provide the budget allocation for SEN. This also does not show the extent to

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which the government is ready to spend for the education of children said to have SEN. Targets are rather generalised and not tagged to measurable objectives to facilitate on-going monitoring. There is a paucity of research on SEN which is crucial to highlight experiences of parents and children and a shared understanding among different researchers and stakeholders on innovative ways to support the education of children said to have SEN. The curriculum of SNE is mostly designed by the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) and focuses on children with visual, hearing and intellectual impairments.

SEN policies may need to be linked to other equity and rights issues of the child.

6.5.2 Guidance and Counselling Policy (GC)

The evidence from teachers shows that most teachers are aware of the GC policy which they linked to discipline as indicated by the response from teacher *M2*. Although this is a whole-school policy, as indicated by *M2* it is not mentioned in relation to SEN. However, it relates to children's behaviour (discipline) which is vital to enable effective teaching and learning in schools. Teaching and learning is referred to as the main focus for the mission of schools in the 21st Century (Martin, 2002). Lack of discipline in class may lead to disruptions which may reduce the learning time and affect the performance of students. Some of these excerpts signify that discipline refers or relates to behavioural difficulties. These are some of the ways teachers identify children said to have SEN.

Evidence from the literature review stresses the importance the Kenyan government attaches to GC for the typically developing (TD) students and not for those said to have SEN in Kenya. Wamochu, Karugu and Nwoye (2008); (Kendal and O'Gara, 2007) posit that the guidelines for GC for children said to have SEN is important but has not yet been launched. It is also included by the MoE (2009 page 36-37). To have a separate GC programme for them, but to ensure they, according to the LRE requirements, are educated together with their TD peers to the maximum extent possible regardless of the nature and severity of their difficulties. One of the teacher's responses provided the story on a class seven child *M1*. It would be expected that the GC committee and/or responsible class

teacher should anticipate problems and organise solutions before the problems escalate. However, this may imply lack of training and skills in GS for both the teachers and head teachers as avowed by (Njoka, 2007).

The role of the GC committee, class teacher as well as the head teacher in this instance is not clear. The evidence from teacher *M1* above does not suggest what strategy to use to support children said to have SEN. Learners with EBD are researched to externalize or internalize. (Evans and Lunt, 2002). The boy had an underlying problem which was not noticed. This stresses the importance of the involvement of children, school teachers, administrators, parents and other agencies in working out a strategy to support children said to have 'EBD', or other social, emotional and behavioural difficulties or other difficulties. This seems to resonate with what has been evidenced in research that children said to have 'EBD' are found as the most difficult group by teachers and other professionals working in schools (Evans and Lunt, 2002; Forlin, Hattie and Douglas, 1996). Teachers in this study seem to confirm these research findings as well.

Therefore, the role of the wider environment is crucial in setting improvement programmes for children said to have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and different studies have discussed the shift to a 'Whole-school Approach' (Evans, Harden and Thomas, 2004). Guidance and Counselling policy may need to be split into different disciplines and allow teachers to take up different roles apart from discipline. Other aspects like attendance, absenteeism, progress, social inclusion, I.E.P follow up to collect enough data to create portfolios for children said to have SEN which can form the basis for certificates.

6.5.3 Referrals

In a number of cases, teachers report children with referrals to: the head teacher or resource teacher. The respondents' evidence includes positive remarks about the system of referral in terms of the teachers being aware of whom to contact when children seem to have a problem. However, it is not clear what happens when the6children are taken to the class of the trained special education teacher and the

length of time they remain in that class. It is also not clear what referral criteria is used by all teachers. However, while some teachers use the correct terms to describe children said to have SEN more than half of the group focus on '*within-the child*' factors to identify children said to have SEN which is also a similar feature from the interviews.

7.6   Research Question Two

What strategies do teachers use in order to meet the SEN of pupils?

There are a range of pedagogic strategies with direct relevance and practice that have not inevitably been developed or are not supported by appropriate resources for use in the classrooms mentioned in this study.   Evidence from the teachers who were interviewed provided the following common teaching strategies: one-to-one, repetition, involvement and participation, interaction and pairing, use of seating plan, copying from the blackboard.

6.6.1   One-to-one support

M1 indicates that the teacher managed to work alone in the classroom and at the same time assist children who seemed to have problems catching up with an exercise. This depicts what teachers in Kenya have to contend with in the classrooms. This teacher is happy because the children were able to successfully complete their exercises as intended. Learning outcomes usually include the kind of evidence teachers use to judge the effectiveness of their teaching. Although it was a basic lesson, the outcomes made the teacher happy.

However, the one-to-one strategy has also been criticized for building strong relationships between the key support and the child where the child becomes overly dependent on the particular key support teacher. This is especially where the child is removed from class for a long time mainly in cases of disruptive behaviour. This may not be considered as inclusion. Schools need to be careful on how they use additional classroom support. Although I support MacBeath, et al (2004), this does not appear to be a common phenomenon with teachers in this study.

6.6.4 Repetition and copying from the chalkboard

Repetition and copying from the chalkboard are forms of direct instruction teaching. In direct instruction teaching, teachers are in command (De Bettencourt, 1999). Research evidence shows that this is an effective means of teaching factual content although inadequate evidence exists to show that this instruction transfers to higher order cognitive skills such as reasoning and problem-solving (Palinscar, 1998). Problem solving and transferring ability are some of the problems underscored in cognitive structures. De Bettencourt (1999) stresses that children should be guided to individually construct their experiences by interpreting them in particular contexts However, the strategies do not satisfactorily suggest problem solving and transfer of ability for children said to have SEN. It is not clear what individual experiences or skills the child would benefit from or construct from the way different teachers have responded. This is also applicable to Gifted and talented children.

6.6.5 Group Work

Teachers also provided the use of group work, pair and class discussions as strategies they use in class as per the following evidence:

Teachers *R3, M75 and R159* show that they encourage learners to work together to learn and assist one another in order to enhance their social skills. However, feedback giving is not one of the common aspects evidenced in the responses. Group discussions need to be structured with strategies or plans for particular tasks with anticipated learning outcomes for all learners. These learners would be having diverse problems like comprehension, summarizing, multiplication, and reading from a given worksheet. Structured group discussions enhance comprehension skills, relationship and quality of interaction among children and teachers as well as the nature of learning (Palinscar, 1998). However, the group and class discussions evidenced by teachers fail to show adequate elements of structure. Notwithstanding, some teachers endeavour to organise groups depending on the children's ability.

Children in heterogeneous groups are able to extend their contribution to the discussion by building upon their ideas. This is possible through the feedback given from the teachers. Consequently, students taught by teachers said to be more skilful in providing feedback may facilitate children to build on their ideas. On the other hand, teachers not skilled in providing feedback may be less effective in scaffolding children's contributions to the discussion. Palinscar (1998) supports that working in groups enables learners to structure and draw knowledge in multiple ways.

6.6.6 Peer Learning

Peer tutoring, co-operative learning, grouping arrangements and effective instructional behaviour are included as individualized instructions. However, it would help if whole-class teaching facilitates scaffolding small group discussions relating to children's life experiences. Preparing beforehand enables teachers to actively engage children said to have SEN especially in problem-solving classroom activities. As stressed by Debettencourt (1999) and Palinscar (1998), there is a need to structure group activities to enhance shared responsibilities among learners. An ethos for preparing beforehand would not only engage children but also facilitate verbal interactions which are necessary to provide mechanisms of high order thinking. This may ensure that teachers not only socialise learners into new ways of dealing with peers but facilitate shared ownership of learning where teachers think about subject matter and child-centred learning. Children said to have SEN need to be engaged in outcome-based activities, share norms while they interact and develop abilities when they are together. Research also stresses that children develop abilities while working together (Debettencourt, 1999; Palinscar, 1998).

Although teachers in this study use peer learning, the learning objectives and outcomes are not clear. For effective peer learning, tutoring skills are necessary. Tutors may be able to work with more children if they use audio prompting devices in educational settings. It is possible to supplement teacher-led instructions and provide learners with repeated practice on new content. While not participating in whole-class or small-group instructions, the teacher may set up

peer tutoring stations where some learners could work from. The audio prompting device provides immediate feedback to tutees even when tutors do not know the answer. This has also been reported to be effective in improving reading. It should help every child to develop his/her potential interest and abilities.

6.6.7 Reward and praising hard work

A decision is important on whether the purpose of the intervention is extrinsic or intrinsic. Positive behaviour support is necessary when the intervention is extrinsic. Verbal and tangible rewards should be used to modify or maintain the behaviour. If behaviour does not have an obvious extrinsic function the teacher should continue observing the behaviour without extrinsic influence. Where the purpose of an undesirable behaviour appears intrinsic, then the student must be encouraged to learn a different behaviour and the rationale for that behaviour. Teachers need to determine whether the rewards lead to intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, where the intervention leads to intrinsic motivation, such research should be shared with other teachers, in order to reinforce the effectiveness of the rewards. Some activities used in other countries include a variety of activities and rewards such as tokens, computer games, sensory simulation, and play time. The classrooms in this study show a dearth of resources. It would imply that teachers need to know the preferred learning style of the children or what the child finds reinforcing. These teachers are using whatever resources are available to them in a given context. There are instances in this study when teachers have had to use their own resources to help children.

More collaborations among teachers to share experiences starting from classroom level, prepare lesson templates and simple materials for children said to have SEN for example worksheets, picture work and drawings using manila paper, preparing pupils' profiles. This way, teachers may gain a sense of doing much more for the students. They may focus on topics, styles, approaches and ways of varying presentations in classes where children have varying cognitive levels. Teachers may gain an opportunity to theorise their practice while undertaking teacher-directed approaches within their schools or with others. This may create a sense

of belonging and improve professional learning and create a research culture. However, teachers need to be empowered to create knowledge within their own schools or within a certain zone.

Different teachers in this study have mentioned that behaviour is a major problem. This may be suggested because behaviour appears in most of the themes from the questionnaire. This may also be assumed as the reason for some of these strategies to lean towards behaviour and reinforcements. From the teachers who were interviewed, behaviour was suggested as one of the factors that prevent the participation or involvement of children said to have SEN in classroom tasks. So, having a behavioural management structure is vital.

6.6.8 Drama, song, poetry and stories

Some teachers who filled in the questionnaire stated that they use drama, song, poetry and stories. It was not possible to establish the emphasis on learning in these examples. However, it would be possible to use movement with learners with verbal skills and those with no physical impairments; for example, when acting in a play or reciting a poem, writing as well as telling stories; when celebrating diversity or performing other activities in class or outside class. It is difficult to use the strategy with learners with varying physical impairment who may not only require additional attention but also effort to follow psychomotor strategies even when it appears to be easy. This may imply that teachers need strategies which will facilitate or encourage the students to be more independent in the future rather than relying on teacher-led strategies.

Benett and Wolery (2011) argue that children with an autistic spectrum disorder may enjoy using a musical instrument, singing or computer game. This still emphasises the need for a variety of resources, but not necessarily expensive. However, Lane et al. (2006) confirm that paying and /or attracting children's attention has contributed in meeting the needs of students with EBD, especially in the areas of reading and writing. Debettencourt (1999) emphasises the need for teacher training programmes is to '*rethink their practices and revamp their strategies*' in order to provide teachers with necessary skills to meet the

instructional needs of culturally and diverse children said to have SEN in the future (Ibid, 1999 p28). Differentiated settings are responsive to the needs of all learners. Teachers evince that they had difficulties in preparing differentiated plans and teaching in order to meet the needs of all learners.

Response *M64* highlights that time as well as teaching resources are inadequate for them to differentiate. *M2* evinces that the teacher is using the same activity for all students while trying to help those who have problems copying from the blackboard. Similarly, *M4* and *M1* have activities to motivate learners but not enough evidence to indicate extra or individualized instructional strategies. Response *R115* depicts a teacher who does not feel qualified enough to deal with the children said to have SEN or to differentiate. The central focus is to promote the progress of students with diverse needs by having appropriately challenging tasks and/ or activities (Debettencourt, 1999; Scruggs and Mastropieri, 1996; Schumm and Vaughn, 1991).

The evidence from teacher *U3* suggests that there is lack of clarity and awareness of differentiation practice to the extent that this teacher may be said to be less aware of the child's learning style. Notwithstanding, the evidence from this section, R115, M64, M2, M1 and U3 above conform to the fact that teachers who lack good differentiation practices in their own experiences of learning and who fail to get a good understanding and clarity from their practising teachers are unlikely to make out what it is and how to achieve it. I concur with Evans and Waring (2008) and Darling-Hammond (2006) that teachers should focus on the needs of individual learners and devise ways of overcoming any possible barriers to learning. This emphasises the need for collaboration among teachers in order to share practices and the need to understand the unique needs of each child.

6.6.9 Information Communication Technology (ICT)

Few teachers are aware that using ICT is helpful in schools. The data from the short-term training courses showed that 10 (6%) teachers had attended the Computer Basic Skills course. The teacher's response *R3* confirms that the use of ICT in class is helpful but it is not easy to obtain the facilities. Like Kessy,

Kaemba and Gachoka (2006) the evidence from the teachers in this study confirms that there are challenges associated with the use of ICT in schools. Use of ICT in class has not been mentioned by the researchers. However, Kessy, Kaemba and Gachoka (2006) adduce that most African countries face challenges in using ICT in classrooms including the ratio of one computer to 150 students. The use of ICT in most rural schools is rare. It is most probable that *R123* teacher's school has good collaboration programmes with the parents, community or other stakeholders and is in proximity to the national electricity grid.

During the inaugural speech of the newly elected President Uhuru Kenyatta on 09 April 2013 in Nairobi, he emphasised the importance of early exposure to technology and declared that children joining standard (class) one in 2014 will receive a lap top (National Television (NTV, Kenya, 2013). This may be considered as an overwhelming challenge as well as a remarkable milestone to the country given the ICT divide and other problems as reported by (Kessy, Kaemba and Gachoka, 2006) and extent of teachers' training raised within this study. It may also signify the need for teachers to redefine their skills and develop qualities to augment inventive ways of teaching and collaborating in order to improve practices and outcomes for all children including those said to have SEN. Therefore schools need to be primed to facilitate pupils and/or students acquisition of high level knowledge and skills in order to cope with the versatile work place (Carnoy and Castells, 2001).

ICT training may be covered along with SEN at pre-service training as well as Child Development for the newly trained teachers to obtain skills in causes and associated manifestation of SEN in children.

6.6.10 Individual Education Plan (IEP)

There was evidence of lack of expertise on the part of some teachers with regard to Individual Education Plans (IEP) for students. From the interview data teachers did not make reference to IEP while from the questionnaires teachers 8(5%) mentioned IEP. Evidence from the two teachers above *R150* and *U32* fail to

mention any targets to work with the children who already have IEP, for example in the following excerpts:

R150	*'Individualized education program where work in a group is planned according to a learner's ability'.*
U32	*'Working with them from their level preparing individualized education plan appreciating and acknowledging even the slightest improvement'.*

.'

So it is not clear whether these teachers who seem aware of the IEP plans use them appropriately. From response *U32* the system of target setting is not clear from the teachers in this study. This is also one of the elements missing from the SNE policy. Waite, Lawson and Bromfield (2009) emphasize that targets should be meaningful when learners are involved in the target setting process for them to realise their usefulness and the essence of working towards them as well as the arising achievement. This does not appear to be the case depicted by the teachers in this study.

6.6.11 Resource Room

As mentioned in the literature review section 3.2.9, Kenya has special units attached to mainstream primary schools where a trained SEN teacher is in charge (Lynch, 2011; Muuya, 2002).

A resource teacher in the special unit is specified as one:

'who has received training in special needs education and is deployed to advise and assist learners with special needs and disabilities, teachers and other service providers in one or more institutions' (MoE, 2009 p5).

Lynch (2011) confirms that the teachers normally possess a Diploma in Special Education. Some teachers in this study refer children with a continuum of learning difficulties to the SEN teacher. The criterion for referrals is ambiguous but teachers *R132* and *M1* above underscore that they refer children for remedial teaching. Although the role of the SEN teacher is not obvious from the teachers' evidence, the resource room teacher does not have specialist skills which may be vital for a heterogeneous class of children said to have SEN. This also implies a

lot of support from the administrator in terms of: criteria for duration in the room and release back to the regular classroom, safety, resources, efficiency, individualized instructional plans, quality control, comfort and respecting the unique personalities and strengths and weaknesses of children said to have SEN.

The evidence from the teachers depicts a different picture. Subsequently teachers' responses did not have a nuance of whether the children are released back to the regular classroom and after how long. When children are sent to the resource room after teachers have tried other strategies or interventions unsuccessfully, they are better placed to benefit. The modus operandi of the resource room is a possible area for future research.

Re-organization of the resource rooms to include a variety of resources and professionals to 'pool' their expertise and devise different ways to adapt to diverse needs of children said to have SEN may be necessary. The use of ICT would be practical. For example the use of word-processing programs, Widget software used for writing with Symbols 2000, Board makers or interactive whiteboards for interaction. Physical Education assessments and adapted instruments may facilitate children to participate in particular games and activities.

Introducing music therapy sessions, sensory rooms (where applicable), Arts, drama, painting, carving, sculpturing may facilitate children to express themselves and communicate in different ways. This may provide opportunities for teachers to learn the children's individual strengths and diverse needs and improve ways of matching instructional strategies to individual goals within particular classroom contents. This may support children said to have SEN in experiencing success in their days in school.

6.6.12 Physical Education (P.E.) Support

Teacher *R2* is hesitant to appropriately support the child for P.E. and is unsure of the assessment guidelines given to understand the 'capability' of the child. Teacher *R2* is hesitant to appropriately support the child for P.E. and is unsure of

the assessment guidelines given to understand the 'capability' of the child. Notwithstanding, this could be proof from the literature review that some assessments may not be accurate (Muga, 2003). It is reasonable for the teacher to express their fears. This shows that they have a duty of care for the child but they do not have the expertise to encourage the children said to have SEN to participate in P.E. The above two examples also suggest some extreme cases teachers have to deal with which may cause a lot of strain and responsibility. In the absence of expert resources it implies that the child is excluded from participating in PE and interacting with other children.

Depending on the level of severity the teacher may work alone, but needs to ensure compliance with health and safety, access rules and the rule on Least Restrictive Environment. Teachers may be able to support physically disadvantaged children for P.E. in activities which are less restrictive. For example, by adapting and changing or modifying the activity. The use of a lighter ball, bats or interactive games are all possibilities. However, the SNE policy stipulates that the MoE shall '*facilitate provision of adequate support staff in SNE such as physiotherapists…*' (MoE, 2009, p29). These services do not seem to be forthcoming from the evidence provided by *R2*. This is against the country's definition of inclusion which states that everyone '*can have the opportunity to interact, play, learn…*' (MoE, 2009, p5).

Consequently, the right of the child to play is also denied. This may be considered as social exclusion. This is also against the Convention on the Rights of the Child, (1989) (Article 13) and The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons (1975) which the Kenyan government is a member of. These two conventions emphasize that the members agreed to recognise that the same rights apply to all children irrespective of their impairments. There is a need to review the SNE policy against the practices and the goals underpinning the relevant agreements relating to the rights of the child in the schools and compare them with practical inclusive schools. On the other hand, the evidence of the Olympics Paralympic Games 2012 in London is something remarkable to continually refer to and use as a source of inspiration to children said to have physical difficulties

as well as creating awareness to the schools about the 'capability' of these children. However, it is vital for children to develop their '*psychomotor, affective and cognitive domains*' (Qi and Ha, 2012 p258). Assessments should provide specific guidelines to empower teachers so that risks of injury are reduced and to motivate children said to have SEN to participate. *R2* attributes the child's condition to his cognitive and not physical ability. There is a need for more teachers to understand the developmental process of children.

Include more professionals and agencies in schools to deal with children matters, like psychologists, physiotherapists, SEN Representatives or officers in schools, teaching assistants, interim counsellors to work with teachers, community representatives, carers, parents, health workers.

6.7   Research Question Three

What are teachers' views about inclusion?

There are variances in educational opportunities for children based on their individual cultural, economic, health or difficulty circumstances and not least the structure, policy and support in their home countries. Kenya's efforts towards inclusive education and the role of the British colonial inheritance have been noted in chapter two (2.1.14) of this study.   However, the concept of inclusion has not been fully embraced in Kenya (Wamae and Kang'ethe- Kamau, 2004). The version of inclusion presented within Kenyan government documents, especially the SNE policy, has involved a role for mainstream schools with a special unit attached to it. On this premise the belief in Kenya is that education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more just society. This context may be seen in the light of Kenya's link with the United Nations. Kenya follows the agenda of Education for All (EFA).

Kenya's commitment to inclusion is shown by the ratification of the United Nations Education Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 1994) agreement. In Kenya, inclusion is defined as:

> '*a philosophy which focuses on the process of adjusting the home, the school and the society so that all the individuals, regardless of their differences can have the opportunity to interact, play, work*

and experience the feeling of belonging and experiment to develop
*in accordance with their potentialities and difficulti*es (MoE, 2009, p5)

However, in recent years the concept of educational inclusion has extended to incorporate broader issues of social inclusion which was the theme of the 48th International Conference on Education (UNESCO, 2008) and it has been embraced by many developing governments (including Kenya) as a strategy for achieving access and equity in education for all (Peters, 2003). The definition states that:

> '*Inclusive education is an ongoing process aimed at offering quality education for all, while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities* (UNESCO, 1994 p ix)

Florian and Rouse (2009) assert that there are diverse and complex ways of interpreting inclusive education, which is evolving depending on a county's context and historical experiences. Inclusive schooling is considered as the means of developing classrooms that cater for all children. The principle of inclusion seeks to achieve education for all by restructuring schools as institutions that include everybody (Eleweke and Rodda, 2002). On the other hand, Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) posit that inclusion is complicated and covers social, cultural, political aspects of an individual and how they impact on education. On this premise, this research question seeks to establish the teachers' views about inclusion in general. Teachers' views were more discernible from different themes and sub-themes than others from both the questionnaires and interviews. I am not claiming that I examined equally all the themes but I only highlighted where the teachers views were more pertinent. For example when teachers were referring to the issues below:

Impacts of mainstream learning, abilities of children said to have SEN, challenges in meeting diverse needs of children said to have SEN and barriers to creating a rich learning environment.

6.7.1 Impacts of mainstream learning

Generally, teachers in this study held positive attitudes towards the general concept of inclusion. They felt that children said to have SEN benefit from being

in mainstream learning. Some of the benefits are depicted in figure 12. They included, socialising, developing self-esteem, reduced stigma and acceptance, interaction, sense of belonging and development in language and communication. However, a few teachers were of the opinion that this did not improve the children's education standards. The teachers are determined about enabling the typically developing (TD) children to accept those said to have SEN which is a positive aspect. However, teachers continue using labels like 'normal' which denotes the 'within-child' model discussed earlier in this chapter. Most of the positive aspects are to do with social skills and association which are important aspects for the children to improve their communication skills. However, the education aspect of children said to have SEN is not suggested. Teachers place higher priority on the social and emotional domain in the classroom than on their intellectual or academic activities. However, this conforms to studies carried out in Africa about SEN (Muuya, 2002; Avoke, 2001; Ndururumo, 2001; Obiakor, 1998, and Kisanji, 1995) which show the impact of colonial legacy on the provision of education.   The education outcome for children said to have SEN is not highlighted but rather a traditional, 'daily life activities' *R122* notion is stressed by some teachers. As discussed in chapter two, (2.1.13.1), the colonial legacy depicted rather conventional, rehabilitative and conditional aims for special education; which reflect similar approaches common in the UK before the Warnock Report (Croll and Moses, 2003).

 Mukhopadhyay, Johnson and Abosi (2012); (Ruijs, Peetsma and van der Veen, 2010) reported that TD children in inclusive schools had more positive attitudes towards children said to have SEN and had more contact with them. However, empirical evidence would establish whether this attitude is only applied to their classmates or whether it can be generalised to other individuals with difficulties as well.   This would be a good atmosphere to build effective peer (buddy) relationships or systems. On the other hand, inclusive education should not only emphasize the presence of children said to have SEN in regular schools, but it should also focus on broader ways of changing the schools to support diversity requirements. The response *U34* shows that the teacher is not aware of what inclusion entails. Recognising the individual characteristics is not enough. This is

due to the fact that inclusivity involves recognising the characteristics and making some response to them as part of the general system of education (Norwich and Nash, 2011). Experience is an important part of training and it would be beneficial to identify training needs and tailor them to personal circumstances after the process of inclusion has begun.

Some teachers attempt to relate the integration to giving 'age'-related tasks *M147*. They also use the right terminology 'mild' difficulties *M106*. This implies that these teachers are aware of what is expected of these children or they are ready to work differently from the others. This is indicated by the excerpts below: Teacher *M106* specifies that they are ready to work with children said to have mild difficulties while *M147* is ready to not only give tasks relevant to the child's age but also to assess their performance and the child's progress. Notwithstanding, there is no available published data on how children said to have SEN perform in National examinations or class work so it is difficult to determine how often teachers do this. However, this implies that some teachers may have high confidence or self-efficacy on how to deal with children said to have SEN.

Although this relates to only two teachers, it conforms to a review carried out by Soodak, Podell and Lehman (1998) which concluded that teachers who have a high sense of personal efficacy are more willing to take responsibility for meeting the needs of students with learning problems in their class. They apply differentiated instructional practices and are most likely to be receptive to inclusion while those with a low sense of teaching efficacy are likely to be negative. The review concludes that inclusive programmes can be effective but that there is no evidence to indicate that complete inclusion is superior to special education for children with mild disabilities. A study to establish teachers' practices in class would be necessary to illuminate how this impacts on their competences. The schools (education systems) need to focus on different ways of eliminating barriers to learning and participation faced by children said to have SEN.

On the other hand, some teachers did not feel well trained for the job. They felt some cases need professional help and they should be in a special school. For example, '*special cases of 'mental retardation' U32*. They are also of the opinion that some 'SEN' cases are challenging and need '*professional intervention' U14. A well trained person with a lot of patience is required R159,* 'SNE is hard work' *M107* and '*mainstream curricular should be in preparation for vocational training' R106.* These excerpts suggest that teachers have both a perceived lack of knowledge as well as skills shortfall. The Kenyan government needs to invest in provision of training for inclusion as well as SEN where teachers are exposed to structured field work experiences involving working directly with pupils with significant SEN and disabilities. However, it is essential that teachers be supported in gaining confidence in addressing SEN. Teachers need greater understanding of the conditions which must be created to enhance successful inclusion within mainstream schools (Mpofu, 2003; Rose and Howley, 2001; Giangreco, 1997). They also need a change in attitude and knowledge of the diversities manifested in children said to have SEN.

The teachers above feel that children said to have SEN should not be in a mainstream school since there are cases of 'mental retardation' *U14* and they are 'difficult to handle'*U19.* However, it is understood that people who have intellectual difficulties and multiple difficulties present great challenges to not only families but also to professionals as well as the individual themselves. The challenges may appear to be overwhelming to those who do not have skills, experience of how to respond or have intervention instructions. However, it would be constructive if teachers are willing to learn and have an understanding of the intellectual difficulties while changing their attitudes. This, on the other hand would depend on the teacher's belief or culture about '*disabilities*' as discussed under section 2.1.13.2.

Therefore, the school has a role to play in creating more awareness to the teachers about the continuum of SEN, nature and characteristics through collaboration programmes with the SEN trained teachers, external professionals and parents. Notwithstanding, some teachers also have low expectations of the children said to

have SEN *R106* and categorise then by comparing them with the TD children said to have SEN as not likely to make it to university.

This still depicts the structure of the education system, where only those who pass examinations progress to university. The progress of the children said to have SEN is subdued when they fail to proceed to secondary schools and do not have a choice on other trajectories to continue with their learning.

The EFA initiative stresses on the right to education which also implies assurance to other rights including equality of opportunities, participation and non-discrimination. This is contrary to the tenets of inclusion. Children said to have SEN have a right to education and it means that they should be educated together in school and community, in spite of their society, culture or personal characteristics. However, although the Kenyan government has invested in the training of teachers in the past, a lot more needs to be done especially in the change of attitude before the country realises successful inclusion. However, all teachers should accept responsibility for the education of all pupils. Garner (2000) argues that the structure and content of initial teacher training should include the current state of knowledge, understanding and practical skills in the management of pupils said to have SEN. It is important that teachers are supported to gain understanding, knowledge, and practical skills in the management of pupils said to have SEN in order to support and sustain inclusion.

6.7.2 Abilities of children said to have SEN

Some teachers were positive in that they considered the children said to have SEN to have the same ability as the TD students. Successful inclusion depends on positive attitudes of not only the teachers, but also the head teacher towards working with children said to have SEN and those with additional learning needs in order to support inclusive practices (Mukhopadhyay, Johnson and Abosi, 2012; Kugelmass and Ainscow, 2004). Equally, children said to have cognitive, emotional and behavioural difficulties require continuity in learning and having a special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) in the management structure of a school has been documented as essential for guiding change for inclusion

(Kugelmass and Ainscow, 2004). Teachers support learners with specific learning difficulties (reading). This conforms to a study by Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) in a review of several studies on teachers' perceptions on inclusion of students with learning difficulties in the regular classroom. It was recognised that teachers in mainstream schools should embrace a change of attitude towards pupils with SEN and for schools to reconsider some of their existing practices (Mpofu, 2003; Rose, 2001).

6.7.3 Reading and Writing Difficulties

Children with learning difficulties may struggle not only with organising and recalling information but also with how to use strategies to support their comprehension *R133* and *U1* above). On the other hand, children who have severe speech and physical impairments often have difficulty acquiring literacy skills. Teachers' evidence suggested that children said to have SEN had reading and writing difficulties. This corresponds to the literature review (Glennerster, et al., 2011, Clegg and Afitska, 2011, Glennerster, et al., 2011; Uwezo, 2010. Onsomu, 2005). Like Commeyras 2007) it also stresses on the fact that no specific method of teaching reading is outlined in the Kenya education policy (MoE, 2006). Applying code language compounds the problem (Clegg and Afitska, 2011); *(R135)*.

However, the Kenyan government started a significant project (Leonard Cheshire International) in the Western Province which highlights the promotion of inclusive education through a community-based rehabilitation programme (Rieser, 2008). Considering that it is the only project of its kind in Kenya and there are more than 18,000 primary schools, it would be plausible to develop other interventions to collaborate with the results from this project to improve special education in Kenya.

6.7.4 Reading Intervention

Research in Kenya has identified necessary elements for reading success. However, the MoE needs to identify and publish the necessary components for reading success. It is important to recognize what leads to later reading success of

children said to have SEN especially those with learning difficulties and the specific areas in which they may subsequently need targeted interventions in order to achieve basic skills (Chard et al., 2009). Students said to have learning difficulties have problems with early phonological skills such as their ability to hear, distinguish and combine individual sounds and match those sounds with the graphical representations in text (Stebbins, et al 2012). Delays in basic phonological skills change into difficulties in decoding words fluently, which also negatively impacts general text comprehension (Torgesen, 2004). Considering that these learners struggle with basic reading concepts, it is vital to underscore what research reports as effective methods of teaching learners with learning difficulties. While I agree with the literature review research (Torgesen, 2004) that one of the most researched teaching methods is direct instruction and repetition, the vital reading skills (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and text comprehension) should form the teaching framework and should be taught in an orderly and precise manner (Stebbins et al., 2012).

Subsequently, skills need scaffolding where responsive adaptations are tailored based on a learner's existing understanding. Phonemic awareness refers to a child's ability to hear and manipulate individual speech sounds in spoken language and reorganize them to form other words (Chard et al., 2009). Children said to have SEN may require more support in reading and playing time with appropriate and relevant resources. Multiple perspectives about the child should be considered, examined, validated and recorded in order to provide a holistic view of the child's strengths and diverse individual needs to facilitate teachers to make an informed decision before any referrals. Remedial programmes may be necessary to improve comprehension in reading where content may be related to real-life situations.

Florian and Linkelater (2010) argue that it does not matter whether teachers have any knowledge and skills to work with students in mainstream schools and with children who are considered as '*less able'* (Florian and Linklater Ibid, p369), what matters is how the teachers apply their skills. Consequently, since teachers are at the focal point of the learning process it may be authentic to emphasize that

learning depends on the quality of the teacher although this depends on the level of finance and resources and knowledge to deal with learners when they experience difficulties (Bray, 2007). On the other hand, teachers should be able to effectively work with the innovation. Therefore, there is no tailor made approach (Rose and Howley, 2007). For example, although copying from the blackboard is a direct teaching technique, the teacher makes an effort to support all in class to participate in the lesson. However, they are using the same exercise for the whole class even when using group work strategies.

A flexible curriculum which may help in improving the areas of weaknesses while setting up strategies to overcome the difficulties of children said to have SEN may be necessary instead of the traditional textbook prescribed for the class. Making use of ICT may develop the tactile skills. There may be a combination of extra-curricular activities such as drawing, drama, painting, music, debates, craft and other cultural activities may form an essential part of the curriculum. Teachers in this study also suggested challenges as follows:

6.7.5 Challenges in meeting the diverse needs of children said to have SEN

To reiterate, inclusion is a multi-faceted and a value-driven concept. It covers socio-economic, cultural, institutional and individual factors that affect people's ability to participate within a particular context. This society includes school, home and community. It is therefore fundamental to consider the different meanings and the impacts of inclusion in relation to local and national cultures and political values of a particular country. There is a shared assumption that inclusion facilitates the identification, understanding and overcoming barriers to children's educational experiences. Teachers in this study illuminate some of these experiences. The challenges teachers included were as follows and these were also represented in the questionnaire Table 16.

▪ **Poverty,**	▪ **Incomplete homework**
▪ **Absenteeism,**	▪ **AIDS orphans and neglected children**
▪ **Socio-economic/political problems**	▪ **Sexual abuse**
▪ **Language barrier,**	▪ **Medical problems**
▪ **Lack of pupils' interest**	▪ **Class and/or grade repetition**
▪ **Behaviour**	▪ **Overcrowded classes**
▪ **Negative attitude from society**	
▪ **Lack of parents' support**	

6.7.5.1 Poverty

The poverty problem in Kenya has been discussed in both chapters one and two of this study. To reiterate, some of the inequalities highlighted include: lack of basic provisions, health and water, ethnicity rifts, gender, cultural and other social issues. Teachers exemplify the challenges associated with poverty. Access and participation are highlighted as the key issues in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Schools systems are working towards becoming more inclusive to facilitate the learning of all children. From the teachers' excerpts, poverty is a delimiting factor for children said to have SEN who have been referred to as poor, hungry, and have medical problems which affect their learning. However, the other elements in this theme have been discussed: behaviour (EBD) (section 7.3.1 and 7.3.2) and language (under reading difficulties).

It was important for me to consider the various challenges separately instead of generalising them under socio-economic/political problems to highlight the varied responses from teachers. Teachers need support to be able to work with children said to have SEN in order to meet their diverse needs. Although teachers' positive attitudes would be beneficial in the these cases: *R119, M109, M86, U30, M99, R129 and R130, s*ome of the children's diverse needs go beyond the teacher's call of duty. Teachers have to assume different roles which may include counselling and welfare without the appropriate training or knowledge of where to refer these children for suitable professional help. Schools need to support such children and raise expectations and standards for the children. It is therefore

important for teachers and head teachers to work as a team to decide how best to appropriately meet the diverse needs of the learners. Working as a team enables teachers to share ideas, experiences, skills and this way improve on their individual practices. Similarly, it is important for teachers to access the child's background information because this will assist them to prepare a profile for each child. Full participation implies equality of opportunity. However, as indicated in this study, most teachers responded that they did not have information on the children.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) (2009) highlights that the Early Assessment Resource Centres (EARC) collect data that the central Kenyan government and other research bodies rely on. However, this information does not seem to be shared with the schools and different researchers in the literature review exemplify the situation further. The assessment situation is discussed by different researchers in the literature review (Gona, et al. (2010); Mukuria and Korir, 2006; Muga, 2003). Gona et al (2010) emphasised that there is no intervention in the schools and no assistance for children said to have disabilities in some districts; while Mukuria and Korir (2006) argued that the assessment for '*SEN learners especially those with EBD is inadequate and fragmented*' (Ibid 2006 p50). (Muga, 2003) avows that the screening and therapeutic services for '*disabled*' children are relatively sparse and expensive. It is also researched that lack of proper assessment results in two thirds (2/3) of these children being incorrectly assessed and only a few receive formal education (Mukuria and Korir, 2006; Muga, 2003).

The Kenyan government needs to invest in systems of early identification and intervention. Early intervention will imply dealing with any pending problems early enough before they become serious. This also helps schools to prepare comprehensive lists of children who are enrolled by sharing data with the medical, EARC, children, legal and local administration departments. Intensive training is required for those involved in routine screening before thorough techniques are introduced. Normally teachers who are trained in SEN will be found in the EARC assessing and some are expected to teach (Lynch et al., 2011). Training more SEN

teachers would release the itinerant teachers to do their job on a full-time basis instead of teaching and conducting training simultaneously and only training teachers to work in the assessment centres. Subsequently, these teachers also need high level training for them to fulfil their advisory role in assessment centres.

The children mentioned by *R119, M109, M86, U30, M99, R130 and R129* are susceptible to different unpleasant social behaviour. For example *'taking drugs'* - *R130*. These children need protection and need to associate with constant support to enable them to be rehabilitated. This way they are able to rely on that constant help. They also require support in class and constant physical presence to ensure that they remain on task. For teachers without specialist support, being expected to deal with the welfare of children with drug and welfare problems would be a heavy burden. If budgets allow the MoE should consider training in-class support staff to alleviate some of these problems.

The Children Act (2001) of Kenya stipulates that all children have a right to education and their welfare should be safeguarded. The children depicted in the above excerpts not only need food, medicine, uniforms but they are also excluded from learning especially when they are absent *'due to lack of food'U30* or when *'it is difficult for hungry pupils to concentrate in class'R119*. They need provisions, basic needs and shelter. The local administration needs to be authorised to deal with such issues and liaise with the respective Kenyan government department. The SNE policy states that:

> *'The Ministry of Education in collaboration with stakeholders shall:*
> *Provide a learning environment that is free from violence, sexual*
> *harassment and abuse, drug and substance abu*se' (MoE, 2009 p24)

Considering the responses from teachers the above provision has not been feasible. A contact representative should be appointed from the community to liaise with the school and in school these children also need a contact person whom they can contact and feel secure with in addition to the class teacher.

On the other hand, the neglect of poverty issues was also reported in the UK two decades after the Warnock report; where the government was criticised for

neglecting the poverty problem (Croll and Moses, 2003; Department of Education and Employment (DfEE), 1998). The neglect of poverty and other social factors as contributors to the educational difficulties experienced by children are still evident in Kenyan government policy documents dealing with special educational needs. So the situation needs to be addressed to avoid further reduction access and participation gaps in the education of children said to have SEN.

However, it is recognised that the inclusion framework consists of different national and international contexts and it is not feasible for me to compare the north to the south (Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou, 2011). However, the above example from the north serves to demonstrate that any change, not least educational, takes time, but it has to be combined with consistent educational research, which can impact and relate to policy.   Similarly, this also stresses that teachers' perceptions, school circumstances as well as strict policy initiatives play a central role in terms of contributing to the changing educational circumstances. Quality teacher training is also necessary to continue improving the learning outcome of all children including those said to have SEN.

The Kenyan government signed Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 signifying its commitment to the right of every child to access education (MoE, 2009). Other International Conventions include: the Rights of the Child (1989), Dakar Framework for Action adopted in 2000 (Sifuna, 2007). However, the scenario depicted in the above excerpts under poverty suggests a violation of the rights of these children. Although the Kenyan government has set up on-going poverty reduction strategies the problem has not been alleviated. Each particular child's problem presented above would be disturbing, not least depressing, distressing and manifest in different ways. For example, if a child has communication problems it might appear as if they have no interest in learning. This would be the case if a teacher does not have any knowledge on SEN.

 Hence it is important for the teachers to understand all kinds and characteristics of SEN and how to meet the diverse needs. As mentioned earlier, teachers used different terms to refer to children said to have SEN where most of the terms

focussed on the child's 'deficit' 'within-child' factors. For example; terminologies like *'slow learners' U47, 'mentally handicapped, physically handicapped' U45, 'Not normal' like other children needs assistance' (U9), 'They are brutal, slow learners. They do not obey instructions', 156 'Hectic due to adolescence stage, jumping brain where a kid rushes to answer a question wrongly, retardation (slowness in learning)' M109, '…Stammering…' M2. '...mentally retarded...'difficulties and 'mild mental retardation'*, in most cases these children fail to be recognised as having a disability (Kiarie, 2006 p51). Inclusion has not been associated with a medical or deficit model which emphasizes on the barriers shaped by society, but an interactive model which deliberates the interactions between the learner and the environment (Pearson, 2009).

With the medical model the child is expected to adjust to the environment and not the environment adjusting to accommodate the child. Similarly, schools in this study expect children said to have SEN to adapt to the schools without any changes being made by the school to accommodate the child. So the schools are not inclusive. The child's welfare and right for basic needs are denied which is against the tenets of inclusion. The Kenyan government (Children) departments may need to work with the schools to ensure that these children get their provisions and are safeguarded. It would be practical to attach a qualified SEN official to work with the schools in order to highlight some of the challenges affecting children said to have SEN.

6.7.5.2 Socio-economic/political problems

Teachers highlighted some of the following challenges which would also be associated with poverty:

'Lack of well formulated policies by the govt. Lack of parents' involvement in providing the pupils learning materials.'

Lack of adequate funding, misappropriation of public funds and displacing members of the public compound the effects of poverty and the related education, health and welfare issues linked with it *U13, U30, U47, U19, M47, U3, U2 and*

R1. There are also affirmations from research that the majority of the disabled people in Kenya remain 'illiterate' and only get to the basic level in primary schooling (Nkinyangi and Mbindyo, 1982 as quoted in Opini, 2010), p274). Research evidence also confirms that most live in rural areas and are from low socio-economic backgrounds (Opini, 2010, Gona, et al., 2010, Muga, 2003). However, his study indicates that there are also children said to have SEN in urban areas *R119, M109, M86, U30, M99, R130, R12, R153, U4, U13, U35 and R122* and this arguably agrees with Ingstad and Gunt (2007) who stressed that the socio-economic status of children said to have SEN in urban areas is worse than in rural areas. However, this calls for further research especially on the experiences of children said to have SEN. Teachers also have highlighted aspects like Kenyan government corruption and poor planning which is a controversial debate in Kenya.

Although Fast Track report documented the relatively well-integrated expenditure planning system (Thomson, Woods, O'Brien and Onsomu, 2009), fiduciary issues continue to raise concerns in all sectors in Kenya. It is hoped that with the United Nations criminalization of corruption, (United Nations Convention against Corruption, 2002) the Kenyan government will reinforce the rule of law and institutional justice and reinvigorate prevention measures both in public and private sectors while intensifying preventive policies, safeguards as well as transparency in financing of election campaigns. It is also hoped that there will be more accountability where funds and/or donations are allocated fairly to all departments. It is also important that the children said to have SEN are empowered and represented on issues on Human Rights and educating them is their right and the government's obligation.

6.7.5.3   Absenteeism

On the other hand, over time, politically instigated violence has resulted in the displacement of children, for example the post election violence after the last parliamentary election in 2007. There is a need for teachers to be ready to work with different professionals and other agencies in order to meet the diverse learning needs of each child within the context in which those difficulties arise or

develop. These clashes resulted in cases of over three months of absenteeism. Absenteeism in Kenya was reported at 70.1% in chapter two and teachers have raised this issue in different responses, for example *M86, U30.* The most recurrent reasons given for absenteeism include sickness (88.8%) work at home (27.7%) and lack of school fees (16.5%) (Association of East African Education Assessment Newsletter (AAEA, 2010).

However, in the marginalized regions, the Kenyan government developed Mobile schools to improve this problem (Sifuna, 2005). Research supports that girls are more affected by the rate of absenteeism than boys. Some societies believe that the girls should perform the gender roles where marriage is emphasized (Emenyonu, 2004; Mutua and Elhoweris, 2002 and Woolman, 2001). Schools need a well stipulated system of following up on absenteeism which students, teachers and parents are aware of.

6.7.5.4 Homework

Teacher *M79* stresses that children rely on text-books for homework. The teacher does not mention worksheets, mind maps, quizzes, crosswords or any other ways of presenting the homework differently. The teacher may not have other resources but as a trained teacher adapting strategies to suit the learners would be beneficial. Teacher *R146* may have to organise to have the remedial work ready in class for this child who misses out and agree a time with him while also establishing the reason for absenteeism. All teachers should work towards assisting children find fun in learning by knowing and adopting the age-appropriate approaches to apply with each individual student. However, the government also needs to invest in training the teachers to adopt a 'reservoir' of strategies to use in improving the learning outcome of children which will also determine their future. Teachers responded that they have inadequate time to work with the children said to have SEN. They also are pressurised to produce good examination results. Some teachers give excuses for their negative attitude. These are some of the prejudices teachers provided:

The prejudices are centred on lack of time *U45* and curriculum *M83* and negative attitude *U40.* The implication is that children said to have SEN have poor performance. There are similar responses throughout this study.

6.7.5.5 HIV/AIDS

Research evidence stresses that education has been found to be an effective weapon for the fight against HIV/AIDS (World Bank, 2003). It is important that children are aware of the causes and effects of the disease. HIV/AIDS education has been introduced in Kenyan primary schools. Such evaluations are important to facilitate revision and delivery of the curriculum to vulnerable children. There is no data available to evaluate the impact on this education on the orphaned and neglected children.

The orphaned too need to be assessed, safeguarded and provided for. This was also a suggestion given by Kendall and O'gara (2007). Teachers also need to have the knowledge on how to meet the needs of these children and be aware of where to get help. A school psychologist may be necessary to handle some of the matters which teachers have no experience with. Existing school data should inform other departments and vice versa so it is vital for the school to keep records. For example U47 '*responds that early intervention is not done'*. It is important for children departments, health (medical) and the relevant Kenyan government ministry to share information about these children. The SNE policy document stipulates that:

They should feel safe in schools but constant professional psychological guidance and support in addition to medical and other provisions would be their preference. Representatives at the community and school level would nip some of the problems in the bud and improve the flow of information to the school or to the relevant departments and track their background and progress.

6.7.5.6   Sexual Abuse

Teachers highlighted that children said to have SEN are vulnerable and are sexually abused.   The following excerpt presents a scenario showing the role of the school and the influence of the society in such matters.   Schools have a responsibility for the safe custody of all children.   However, some matters as mentioned earlier may be burdensome to the teachers. This stresses the importance of the entire school community collaboration.   The Guidance and Counselling (GC) policy is reported to be in place which is positive. It also highlights the need to build capacity on the GC skills to ensure interventions for all diversities in school. One of the teachers *M109* in this study, while explaining the types of SEN they have in the classrooms suggested that girls reach adolescence age while in primary school.

This stressed on the urgency of having a system in schools to empower vulnerable children.   However, the schools should co-ordinate with other social agencies capable of alleviating such inequalities or uphold social inclusion.   This case symbolizes social exclusion. It also stresses on the importance of having law enforcing agents to ensure following up on the offenders. Researchers confirmed that there are such incidences especially with children said to have SEN (Ingstad and Gunt, 2007; Plummer, and Njuguna, 2009; Lalor, 2004). Therefore inclusion cannot be considered in school situations only. It sits within a political and social context. Wider considerations of the purposes and priorities need to be restructured. All cases reported from school even when they are mere suspicions should be treated in confidence to encourage teachers and students to come forward and expose such malpractices.

6.7.5.7   Parents' Attitudes

Inclusive schools need to celebrate diversity to ensure that children said to have SEN are recognised, respected and appreciated in school, community and at home.   Just like the TD, they may be asked to do things together under the guidance of teachers.   For example, have a role in the school, like leading the assembly of their class, preparing for an exhibition to display their talent and

generally participate in all school activities without being discriminated against. This depends on the school's ethos. The tasks or activities need not be based upon academic performance only.

The head teacher should collaborate with the parents because they know their children better and it would be good to involve them to suggest activities which may involve the whole school or other external stakeholders. This may include doing presentations in the national Television networks or programmes. However, this depends on the disposition of the teacher. On the other hand some parents live in poverty especially those with children with physical difficulties (Ingstad and Gunt, 2007). They may have to be always taking care of the children and this may restrict their movement within the home.

U9 'Most feel SEN is a curse and do not want to associate themselves with others. *They '…might have lost hope…' M74.*

 In some African societies, people expect their children to provide and support them in old age. So, having a child with disabilities is considered as having an uncertain future. This is supported by Gona (2010) and Hartley, et al., (2011). On the other hand, some teachers *U9* suggested that some parents consider having a children said to have SEN as a 'curse' which also conforms to researchers (Gona, et al., 2010; Ingstad and Gunt, 2007). This may indicate the extent of the poverty levels especially when no support is forthcoming (KBS, 2003). This points to how Kenyan government policies accumulate and multiply the effects of poverty and the associated health and welfare issues that go with it (MacBeath et al., 2004 p38).

Research evidence has also established that parents do not hide their children; it is because they choose to be with their children at home rather than them going to school to be treated with no respect or where there are no suitable facilities (Ingstad and Grunt, 2007).   This is confirmed by some of the teachers' responses below. Schools need to structure how to work with the parents to ensure that all children are respected, access and participate in learning.   The Kenyan government needs to establish support centres for different categories of SEN at points of contact for parents with children who are said to have SEN. These

forums would be good networking for parents to share and exchange experiences and ideas. Parents may not value education if they consider there is no different trajectory for their children after school and that they are sending their children to school where they are not likely to benefit from the curriculum.

Availability is often associated with the ability of parents to identify their impairment, seek advice and pay for the limited specialised services. Those in the rural areas need accessible services closer to their districts. Alternatively, transport facilities may be provided for those in rural areas. Policy emphasises the importance of the parent in assessment but the role of school is not indicated. The school needs to collaborate with the parents because the parent knows the child better and both of them may learn from one another. The inclusion of children said to have SEN especially those with disabilities needs to be brought to the attention of teachers and TD children as much as possible in order for them to develop positive attitudes.   Workshops and other forms of professional development would be helpful for inculcating an 'inclusion culture'. Teachers should also be willing to make adaptations to meet the learning needs of children said to have SEN.

 Other barriers included:

6.7.5.8   Lack of accessible buildings and playgrounds

These aspects relate to the physical access of children said to have SEN. This may be interpreted to relate to pupils with physical difficulties. There is a need for adaptation of buildings to provide a suitable environment for pupils with difficulties as well as those with sensory impairments. Inclusion will not be achieved without considerable capital investment in buildings and resources (Armstrong, Armstrong and Spendagou, 2011).   The needs of the physically disadvantaged are not reflected in the building codes, physical planning and standards in Kenya (Ingstad and Gunt, 2007), even at the institutions of higher learning (Opini, 2011).

There is no inclusion when children are secluded in various ways. They are denied the right to play and associate with others (as discussed under the P.E. section

above). The lack of toilet use is degrading. The Kenyan government through the SNE policy stipulates that the Ministry of Education (in collaboration with stakeholders) shall:

'…*ensure appropriate modification of tuition, boarding and sanitation to respond to the needs of learners with special needs and disabilities*' (MoE, 2009, p 25)

The Children Act (2001) and (People with Disability Act (PWD, 2003) already exist but enforcing the implications of the Acts is a major problem (Opini, 2011), leaving the children vulnerable which does not suggest inclusive principles. Architectural and other barriers slow down the process of inclusion. Building codes implementation should be reinforced for all buildings to enable free access to children said to have SEN.

6.7.5.9   Classroom Environment

Responses from teachers *M1, M2, U1 and R2* responses indicated that they were aware of what a conducive classroom environment is. They used statements like where there is '… *cordial relationship*, free *participation…*' *M1*. '*Where children '...enjoy learning*, *feel safe, no harassment, no fear...*' *M2*.   Where a child '*will...feel appreciated and comfortable...Teaching and learning materials available*' …' *U1*.

Teachers appreciate the implications of the lack of a conducive classroom environment

R2   '*A spacious class, not over crowded. This would ensure that those with epilepsy are not hurt during attacks. '… Learning aids, noise level, safe and secure, near other children, able to communicate and sit comfortabl*y.'

Re-organising, re-arranging the class does not necessarily involve capital unless the facilities are damaged beyond repair. Teachers may involve children in a lesson and re-arrange the class. They can also give a new look by re-painting the classes themselves in one of the lessons. Or as an exercise over the weekend and invite other classes. Having the children's work displayed on the walls would be a motivating factor and a change to the environment. However, from researchers in the literature review, the classrooms are depicted as 'crammed' (Pontefract and

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Hardman, 2005). So it might be difficult to redecorate the classroom. They need to consider children said to have SEN. It is important for teachers to plan the instructional environment and be fair to all and re-design the class according to the learning needs and diversities of each child. Sound may affect achievement if the decibel levels are high and influence interaction, concentration, focus and performance. However, some children may need noise to concentrate (Burke and Burke-Samida, 2004).

Basic factors such as effect of lighting, seating arrangements, comfortable chairs and desks (adapted to suit a child's diversities) would improve their experience in class. However, in other countries classes have work stations for each child in order to accommodate the environmental learning preferences. Children should be given an opportunity to work in formal areas where each has a desk, chair and/or table. Children said to have sensory difficulties may prefer learning in an informal area where items like couches, rugs, soft chairs would be preferable. Similarly, children in the Autism spectrum prefer their own stations. In view of the research findings under absenteeism it may be possible that slight changes in the classroom may improve the attendance, and not least performance of some students. Health and safety prevention issues need to be considered in the schools as well.

Involving the community to assist in tasks like painting and other school activities, sharing with other African countries in the South (SACMEQ), while reviewing and observing established safety measures in schools provided by organisations like World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNICEF may provide affordable ways of improving the general outlook of the public primary schools.

6.7.5.10 Lack of physical resources and learning materials

Teachers' responses highlighted the lack of facilities and learning materials in various themes in this study. The learning resources and materials vary from one school to another even with the Kenyan government providing the basic materials as stated by (*U2*). However the resources shown by *(M2)* are different from the rest of the schools. Where parents are able to afford, the resources vary, otherwise

schools get basic materials and teachers have to improvise as shown under the teaching approaches theme. There does not seem to be any allowance or recourse considered for Kenyan governmental support where parents income is low. Although schools are given autonomy *(M2)* they still have to find '*well wishers* to '*occasionally donate*'. The Kenyan government '*provides learning and teaching materials*' (U2). The materials mentioned by *(M2)* seem varied, activity orientated and interactive, not least simple and interesting for the learner and teacher to use. The basic materials provided by the Kenyan government are restrictive for the teacher to adopt varied instructional approaches appropriate to meet the diverse needs of all learners, not least those said to have SEN.

The parent's income has proven to influence the provision of physical and learning resources. This may reinforce differences in social class and related underachievement (Ball, 1993). This also reflects on the custom since the colonial times when parents used to pool resources through the 'harambee' effort. The consequences have been highlighted in this study. For the Kenyan government to ensure that there is social inclusion and that all children are fairly treated, and included under all circumstances in inclusive education, constant dynamic monitoring and evaluation processes need to be in place. This involves a lot of reflection and accountability on head teachers, teachers, administrators, children and parents, not least all actors to record, keep track under all circumstances in order to make changes that inform and change practice.

Notwithstanding this stresses a recurring pattern as discussed under FPE initiatives. The Kenyan government has been improving the textbook issue and children are now able to share at least one book among three pupils. The Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP) (2005) has been making improvements on the provision of books with considerable donor assistance (SACMEQ, 2010) (section 2.1.8). However, there is a need to consider different local materials that could be used in class, like using plastic materials rather than the wooden desks which are susceptible to damage and are bulky. They are also uncomfortable and unhealthy for children said to have SEN. The teaching resources also need to be improved to include a range of materials to enable

teachers to use a variety of teaching approaches to meet the diverse learning needs in the classroom.

6.7.5.11   Overcrowded classrooms

Teachers' responses about class size show that 75% of teachers had more than 31 pupils in class. They also highlighted classroom size using some of the following excerpts:

U3   *'In fact it is very hard to understand the background of 1,500 children who are admitted in this school. It is not possible to have all the details. As a teacher you need to understand the child more because one is interacting with the child daily'…. 'I have 72 children in class.'*

U2   *'The class sizes are too large for teachers to give any individual attention to weak pupils'… 'The right number would be 40-45, but my class has 88 pupils.'*

The Kenyan government is continually making efforts to provide universal primary education UPE) through different initiatives. The cost sharing scheme introduced by IMF and World Bank followed by other Structural Adjustments in 1989 to assist the Kenyan government to spend proportionately on other sectors like agriculture development and small-scale industries seemed to reverse the scenario in primary education. The parental levies became compulsory, school building levies increased (Okello and Rolleston, 2007; Somerset, 2009; Sifuna, 2000).   Enrolment rose by 22% from 5.9 to 7.2 million implying a gross enrolment rate of 104%. However, although the Kenyan government seemed to achieve UPE, it did not (Sifuna, 2005). The scenario depicted overcrowded classrooms, lack of materials and teachers, high teacher – pupil ratio, class repetitions and a high rate of pupils leaving school due to failure of paying the school fees (Somerset, 2009; Abagi and Odipo 1997).   This state happened between 1990 and 2000 at a time when the GDP of Kenya was between GDP '1.4% and 2.7%' (MoEST, 2009). Some of these consequences are still suggested by some teachers in this study.

Different arguments have been put across about class size. It is argued that in larger classes teachers are thinly spread across students and that better quality of support is available to students in smaller than in larger classes (Pedder, 2006). It is possible to monitor and provide appropriate feedback when classes are smaller. Teachers may be able to develop better knowledge of their students. However, this implies that social interaction between the children is hampered. This, I would argue depends on the context of the school because other activities could be planned where students of the same school interact.

Although Blatchford et al. (2003) support the hypothesis that small classes provide the best conditions for effective teaching and learning, there is no straight answer to support the hypothesis that only small classes support learning. They point out that there are benefits for large as well as small classes because this depends on the strategies and knowledge teachers adopt for promoting high quality learning for all pupils.

Referring to the illustrations provided by teachers in this study, small class size would be easier for the teacher to improvise but it might not be possible for teachers to buy materials as shown in this sub-theme, *U2 88* pupils and *U3 72* pupils. I also concur with Blatchford et al. (2003) that it depends on the strategies and knowledge teachers adopt. However, with support in class, interactive, activity orientated materials and resources to write and draw on, this would be possible. Some teachers have been working with minimal resources. So teachers need a variety of resources to promote high quality learning.

In the past, Kenya has continued to support policies geared towards achieving FPE without achieving intended success. Reports on the FPE 2003 declaration have reflected a scenario not very different from the previous initiatives. The country reports a general enrolment rate of 91.6%, completion rate of 76.7% with a total of 82 million pupils in primary schools (International Monetary Fund; 2010; Ministry of State for Planning, National Development and Vision (MOSPNDV, 2010). However, enrolling pupils in schools is a positive aspect towards achieving UPE but the question of whether, how and what they are

learning is imminent. This study, through exploring how teachers view SEN in public primary schools in Kenya, has also illuminated the answer to this question in relation to children said to have SEN to a great extent.

Commenting on FPE initiatives and cost sharing Abagi and Odipo (1997) argued that the Kenyan government continuously initiated policies which resulted in public educational opportunities; while Sifuna (2005) commented that they represented an appropriate example of how manipulative the Kenyan government can be when drawing policies to benefit the poor. In addition this may be seen as neglect of poverty and other social factors which have been evident in the Kenyan government policy documents since the colonial times. The pupils who suffered most were those from marginal families who were not well represented in the history of education arena (Sifuna, 2003). The illustrations from the teachers in this study and researchers in Kenya and other countries reflect that the neglect of poverty and other social factors have been evident in Kenyan government policy documents since the colonial times and has continued to affect the education of children in primary schools especially those said to have SEN.

The meaning of inclusive education is situated by post-colonial social identities and policies for economic development that are financed by international organisations and should be contextualised within the regional and national regions. Some policies reflect national and political values while others relate to globalized policies which are driven by competitiveness in the market.

It is fundamental for policy makers in Kenya to recognize how damaging the effect of class-related constraints on performance of schools serving areas of low socio-economic status is. The strengths and weaknesses of the various approaches to inclusion in Kenya should be used as a learning point so that comparisons and contrasts can be drawn in future. Kenya may compare and contrast with other countries within the African region like South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, Malawi, Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, and Tanzania which are at different levels of inclusion. However, the picture depicted in this study does not represent inclusive education.

Kenya links inclusion (EFA) to human rights. In this view moving towards the social model rather than the medical model underscored in this study would imply working towards inclusion. The social model is key to promoting advocacy systems that uphold the voice and collective action of the individual. On the other hand, the social model is considered to exclude the language referring to difficulties and 'deficits' and to embrace external and social issues on barriers to learning and participation. Therefore it has significant implications for inclusive education to move forward which is not yet in practice in Kenya. The difficult problems of marginalization and poverty are deep seated. Monitoring and evaluation processes should be considered vital to consistently inform change and change practice.

6.8   Research Question Four

What SEN training do teachers have access to?

This theme underscores the training teachers have access to on SEN. The assumption made was that all teachers in the primary schools were trained teachers and had attended pre-service training. The questions on training were from the questionnaires and interviews and these included:

Questionnaire:

Q.20. List any short term or long term course you have attended since you completed your teacher training?

The combined data in answer to this question is found in section 7.4. It illustrates short term and long term courses teachers have attended. Only courses relating to SNE were discussed.

Interview:

Q.8   What extra training does your school organise/offer to facilitate continuous professional

development (CPD) in SEN?

This answer was raised by teachers from the interviews.

Q.9. If you were to go back to a teacher training college, what are some of the subjects you

would wish to be trained in to adequately meet the learning needs of children said to have SEN?

6.8.1 Additional Professional Development

Teachers in this study expressed that they are interested in their continuing professional development (CPD) in SNE through some of the following excerpts taken from the answers provided when teachers were asked about what training the school organises.

Teachers pay for their tuition unless the Kenyan government or other agencies are organising the course. The general impression is that the school organises very few courses. Four teachers out of five as seen above responded negatively as follows: '*None is offered. We are only informed that the K.I.SE. is offering a course …' R3*. *R1* clarifies that '*The school does not facilitate any training. Individual teachers identify courses they would like to attend and apply...' U2* also explains that '*There are many courses as long as one has expressed the wish to take part…*' Although this teacher did not mention SEN, some schools have more chances of attending as many courses as they wish. However, these are not government initiated. This is unfair to those teachers who would like to attend courses but have no funding, which is the case shown by *M1'… but this depends on whether one has the money to pay tuition fees' and M2* who would like to ' *… move on to Degree course in Early Child Development, but I cannot afford it'*.

What most teachers are calling for is more training to help them develop strategies which are responsive to the identified learning difficulties and this training could be state sponsored or on the local governance level. For some teachers, even a small amount to contribute may not be affordable because of financial and economic problems. Other mechanisms need to be established to assist these teachers.

Consequently, teacher *R3* also clarifies that there is no institutionalised training sharing more experiences, expertise and practical knowledge. '*The school does*

not facilitate any training. Individual teachers identify courses they would like to attend and apply…'

The implication is that there are no standards in enhancing teacher skills. This is unlikely to prepare teachers for imminent changes in the future which is also likely to have a 'knock-on' effect on the students' outcome. In some countries the number of teaching days per year is set for all teachers and it is up to the schools to work out how the teachers will achieve this target. The target areas are also stipulated depending on the school's areas of improvement in relation to the national goals. Subsequently, the teachers above also elucidate that there is no in-service training (INSET).

Research evidence avows that professional development is key to the success of inclusion. Therefore, the government of Kenya needs to invest in teachers who *'were too often left to fall back on common sense or instinct' (Macbeath, et al., 2004 p 37).*

Evidence from teachers in this study echo and confirm the above quote:

> U51   *'You have to repeat yourself. Learn by repeating concept severally.'*
>
> M107   *'SNE is hard work that needs one to dedicate himself and/or /herself otherwise one can easily give up.'*
>
> R159   *'Dealing with SNE learners is a difficult task which requires a well trained person with a lot of patience in order to handle them properly.'*
>
> M71   *'God helps me as I go along with the childre*n.'

The above excerpts explain how challenging some teachers find teaching children said to have SEN in the public primary schools in this study. Although trained teachers would be expected to be innovative some of the scenarios reported in this study might be restricting especially where teachers may not have the qualifications to provide the appropriate support; for example, in matters of Orphans and AIDS and other medical and emotional problems, Sex Abuse, Drug taking, poverty and other socio-economic factors discussed under the challenges in answering question two above.

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Therefore teachers need to be able to cope with their work which is becoming more demanding, increasingly complex and dynamic in the 21st Century. This implies that teachers need to change to measure up to these demands. They need a repertoire of instructional methods for them to expand their pedagogical strategies which will enable them to integrate pupil-centred and small group strategies consistent with current theories of learning (Altrichter et al., 1993). The following are excerpts showing the short and long term courses teachers have attended since they left pre-service training:

6.8.2 Short-term courses

Under the short-term courses, 13 teachers (8%) attended SEN related courses. These courses included:

- Certificate in SEN - 8 teachers , Autism – 2, Unspecified – 2, Sign Language – 1

Teachers also gave other training they had attended while on the job. These details are provided under section 7.4 but for the purpose of answering this research question, the data was not included. Only courses on SNE were discussed.

6.8.3 Long-term courses

On the other hand, 13 teachers out of (n=28) attended long term courses as follows:

- 2 teachers attended a Masters Degree course in SEN
- 4 teachers Degree in SEN
- 6 teachers Diploma in SEN
- 1 Distance Learning.

This portrays a relatively small proportion of training compared to the other courses shown in combined training (figures seven (7) and eight (8) in the

questionnaire). There is no specialist training and continuous professional development.

However, through the SNE policy, the MoE stresses the commitment to '... *equal access to quality and relevant education and training opportunities to ALL Kenyans* (MoE, 2009 p13).

This does not appear to be reflected in the additional SNE training presented above. Teachers acclaim that the pre-service training provides them with no general information about the nature and causes of disabilities and associated manifestations and how to accommodate children said to have SEN in the classroom. The literature review also confirms that the SNE for primary school teachers is taught by KISE where teachers attend training over the school holidays and others may attend on a full time basis to obtain a Diploma in SNE. However, the teachers have to pay for themselves. More research is required to compare the training modules in the different training institutions.

> U32 *'Mainstream training does not prepare one for SNE. Special syllabus should be introduced with special emphasis on SNE.'*

There is a need to include SEN modules in pre-service training, not least to prepare teachers with what to expect and how to embed best practice while working with children said to have SEN as well as raising high standards (MoE, 2009 p 28 strategy 2). Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) shall expand the teacher training curriculum to include a component of special needs to develop their capacity to support children with special needs in regular schools. Most teachers in this study had insufficient knowledge and expertise in addressing the learning needs of children said to have SEN. There are different excerpts in this study on how teachers define and refer to children said to have SEN and which prove that more training and support in embracing SEN is required:

> M2 '*I identify them by behaviour. They do not like others. I keep repeating*
> *something to* them. They harass others, do not concentrate, nor listen,

they lack interest.'

> U2 '*Slow learners whose background I endeavour to find out. Through their appearance, shaggy, lateness absenteeism, truancy, lack basic needs and do not have the basic requirements.*'

Research supports that professional development is the foundation of the development of inclusive education (Pearson, 2009). Equally, Warnock advanced the contextual moving away from the medical model to ecological model where learning is construed within those areas of life including the classroom for some children with learning difficulties who do not

respond well.

> M1 '…*for written work, they are straining to see and they write letters wrongly. What I mean by wrongly is they write the letter 'W' as letter 'M', 'S' as inverted 'S' and 'b' as 'd'.*'

Teachers indicate a readiness to work one-to-one with children and there is evidence to confirm that such children are content to be with these teachers. Nevertheless, in classes of over 50 children it is extremely difficult for one teacher, unsupported, to find time to work in a developed way in order for children to benefit. In the longer term and as part of future development it would be important for resources to be developed to provide additional help to teachers within the classroom. Collaborating is important and should be considered in different contexts; either at home, at school or in the community, district, region or otherwise. Teachers need to collaborate with one another to inform their practices, contribute to their CPD, improve their teaching and be able to make changes which enable them to improvise different approaches to meet the diverse needs of children said to have SEN. They too should find out how to improve their approaches by undertaking research projects which would help them to reflect on their practice. Teachers are also expected to change their practice after CPD (Guskey, 2002; Hargreaves, 1999).

Therefore they should broaden their horizons to be able to contribute to projects meant to spearhead any reforms. For example, developing pathways for children said to have SEN. This way their enthusiasm is contained within the schools. The head teacher should work with the teachers to achieve the vision of the school and to set high standards and develop whole school policy (Hargreaves, 1999). Whole school policy not supported by appropriate resources for use in the classroom may not be as effective as it might be. The school would then collaborate with the community for joint activities, events, projects to improve the school and the area in general. The head teacher also needs to collaborate with other local school agencies, primary schools, secondary schools and the community at large for expertise to enhance learning opportunities for the teachers which will eventually help the children.

Defining the successes of children said to have SEN in broader terms than academic achievement and working out ways of exempting them in some examinations may improve participation. Schools may need to allow different forms of schooling which provide conditions where each child feels safe, accepted and valued. This would enhance a new attitude towards differences and different abilities. Whole school approaches with distinct and applicable ethos may be necessary to celebrate diversity in schools.

Teachers are said to have some knowledge which can make the education service more effective Guskey (2002; Hargreaves, 1999) but ensuring that all teachers and schools have an opportunity to develop this knowledge is a major undertaking. Creation of educational knowledge may be specifically explicit and valuable when schools engage in school-based initial teacher training and school-based research. This would imply that administrators are knowledgeable enough to encourage and support teachers to initiate the process (es). Such processes are fundamental to enhance practice, research-evidence and raise the standards in schools.

6.8.4 Anticipated Continuous Professional Development

The anticipated training is underscored from the interviews. Research evidence from the literature review has underscored the commitment of the Kenyan government to the achievement of Universal Primary Education (UPE), the different international conventions and agreements it has ratified and the attempts towards achieving this goal. Some of these have already been mentioned under 7.7.1.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) has also underscored that:

> *'The Special Needs Education (SNE) policy in Kenya is committed to the provision of equal access to quality and relevant education and training opportunities to ALL Kenyans'* (MoE, 2009 p13)

Other aspects relating to the SNE policy have been highlighted in chapter three.

The possibility of re-organising the special class to a learning centre and to include more staff from different disciplines should be explored. Professional development is believed to broaden knowledge, skills and improve teachers' effectiveness with students. However, teachers should be practical about what they want to achieve (Guskey, 2002). The following is a list of what teachers anticipated to achieve in SEN CPD in this research.

♦ English Language

♦ Teaching how to read and write

♦ Kiswahili and English

♦ Hearing impairment, hyperactive and 'slow learners'.

♦ Handling visually, mentally 'retarded' and physically impaired

♦ Deaf and how they communicate

♦ Seminar on new things to keep abreast with SEN

The following are some of the reasons teachers gave for suggesting the above training are:

> *M2* '*I would like to get more training in English language especially how to teach Reading and Writing to children in their early years of school: class one to three. I find this is what hinders the education of most childr*en.'

> *U2* '*Kiswahili and English. These affect the day-to-day lives of all people and makes communication easy. They are major subjects and they keep changing…*'

> U1 *'I would like to do a course on how to teach Reading. This is because children are not able to read at their relative age.'*

Some teachers in this study are interested in making changes in the way children learn; *(M2)* would like to make a difference in the way children 'learn English Language' and in so doing improve their 'reading and writing …', *U2* recognises the importance of communicating in the two main languages in Kenya . '… they *affect day-day lives...make communication easy ... keep changing'*. *U1* Would like to contribute to the reading skills to enable children said to have SEN *'read at their relative age'* R3 would like to understand *'those with hearing problems, Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) and those with learning difficulties'*. *(M1)* is willing to gain more knowledge on *'the visually impaired, intellectually impaired and those with physical difficulties'*. R2 would like to *'specialise in the deaf and learn the sign language'* while U3 would like to *'stay up to date with SEN developments'*.

The anticipated training relates to the problems identified in this study. Teachers in this study are interested in improving the learning outcomes of children said to have SEN. The anticipated training is bound to produce results that these teachers find useful in helping children said to have SEN achieve desired learning outcomes. Therefore, it is important for any professional development training to show a demonstrable outcome. This is what motivates teachers to change their practices (Guskey, 2002).

I found these excerpts from various teachers in this study interesting:

M147 *'Give tasks that are relevant to learners: considering age and experience, assess your teaching performance and pupils' progress'. Use findings to improve on the weaknesses'.*

U1 *'One of my best lessons was during creative arts, where I asked children to draw any image of something they like. Then I went round observing and asking them questions about their images. They drew different images and they were able to interpret their themes and this showed me they were creative. So I was happy and they were happy, too.'*

R139   *'Improve their communication skills, attain personal skills, learn to value education.'*

Africa is said to have a severe shortage of suitably qualified and experienced teachers (UNESCO, 2008). Michaelowa (2001) suggests that initial teacher education, training and experience has a significant impact on achievement. Evaluation of existing teacher in-service programmes and the challenge of training new and existing teachers for Education for All (EFA) has led to calls for more school-based teacher education and professional development (Lewin and Stuart 2003; Hargreaves, 1999). The training however needs to be systematic and on-going and professional development should be based on the need, weaknesses and competences of teachers' pedagogical skills to improve on the learning outcome of pupils. For training to impact positively on outcomes for disadvantaged learners it needs to be consistent with the demands of the curriculum. It must focus on improved pedagogical practices including the use of 'structured pedagogy'; strategies to promote inclusion (Polat, 2011), effective teaching of language and literacy in multilingual settings (Clegg and Afitska 2010); effective use of ICTs to support learning; (Rubagiza, Were and Sutherland 2010).

For the Kenyan government to sustain a qualified teaching force or specialist expertise and professional development, there is a need for the government to encourage and support teachers to train in one of the core or foundation modules in SEN within a certain time after their pre-service training and also support teachers after training to ensure they get fundamental foundation and support to progress in their career.

Teachers could have a minimum number of training days in a year on topics initiated by regional and national inspectors of schools depending on school contexts and needs. This may also include different ways of communicating with children said to have SEN to include Braille and Sign Language.

Head teachers may need to collaborate with other head teachers for INSET projects and also collaborate with teachers, community, parents and pupils in revising the values and school ethos while raising high expectations of all children.

6.9   National Imperatives

The Kenyan government is committed to achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2015 (MoE, 2005).   It aims at providing quality education that is accessible and relevant to the lives of all children including those with Special Needs.   Special Needs Education (SNE) is considered a vital sub sector for speeding up the attainment of Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) (MoE, 2005). Kenya has pursued this objective through different Free Primary Education (FPE) initiatives without achieving intended outcomes (Somerset, 2011; Sifuna, 2007).   The initiatives were marked by tensions due to expansion in access and containment of costs thereof. These costs may be attributed to budget constraints within a country which relies on donor funding for massive projects especially in public ventures.   Although each of the initiatives (1974, 1979 and 2003) resulted in high enrolments they conversely led to high expenditure which had a knock on effect on the costs of maintaining schools.   Parents who could not afford to keep their children in school withdrew them from school; while others went back to school after their parents could afford to pay the arrears.   It took some parents some time to get their children back to school. This implied that these children had missed out on learning time and they inevitably left school indefinitely.

The Kenyan government failed to respond with the necessary quality and development to get the children back to school; yet the Kenyan government's objective which was well known after independence was to offer equal opportunity and social justice for its entire citizens by eradicating poverty, ignorance and disease (Oketch and Rolleston, 2007; Eshiwani, 1993). This has not been feasible as evidenced by different researchers in Kenya and teachers in this study.   These challenges highlight some of the historical socio-political tensions

that have continued to exist in the education discourse in Kenya since its colonial past. Access, cost and quality in education continue to be greatly sidelined in educational policy. Under the SNE policy analysis the need to consider the relationship in different aspects (access, cost and quality) was highlighted. This conforms to other research (Somerset, 2009, 2011, Oketch, 2007, Sifuna, 2003, Eshiwani, 1993).

The cost-sharing programme of 1988 which was also a part of the IMF sponsored Structural Adjustment Programme, resulted in a steady decline in the primary school enrolment rate which continued for more than 10 years. It has been pointed out that this programme had reverse effects on quality where responsibility shifted to the parents in terms of provision of textbooks and other learning materials. Consequently, many pupils whose parents could not afford this had to leave school. Furthermore, this does not reflect elements of inclusive education. Although this does not point out children said to have SEN, the consequences of such initiatives are more conspicuous on the children who are key in this study. Somerset (2009) and Sifuna (2003) avow that the children most affected by school fees paying issues are those from poor and marginalized families and this is also evidenced in this study.

The final initiative was when the Kenyan government declared free primary education in 2003. The enrolments in primary schools have continued to rise with some of the consequences reflected in this study. However, the government is focusing on achieving universal primary education and is working towards inclusive education in order to achieve the MDG goals by 2015.

6.10 Implications for policy and practice

The Kenyan government is committed to the provision of quality education, training and research for all Kenyans. In recent years, there have been different reforms in the education sector in order to achieve the international commitments such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and Education for All (EFA) by 2015. The Kenya Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 – A policy Framework for Education Training and Research of the Ministry of Education (p49), stressed that

the fundamental aim of the government is to provide education and training to all Kenyans. The Kenya Vision 2030 of the Ministry of State for Planning National Development (MOSPNDV, 2010 p 88) (the first Medium Term Plan (2008-2012) report stressed that the aim is to assist persons with special needs to realise their full potential by provision of appropriate educational facilities, materials, equipment and trained teachers, professional and support staff to address their needs at all levels. The issue of integrating students said to have special educational needs (SEN) at post primary, secondary and university levels has not been adequately addressed (Ibid p86).

However, there are variances noted between the data provided on SNE from different sources including this one, from the Kenya SNE policy (MoE, 2009, p23) and from MoE (2007). This is an element that needs further research. There is need for the Kenyan government to collect data on children said to have SEN and to synchronise with all government agencies, not least in planning, education, health and at schools at all levels. This would contribute to the efficiency of existing programmes and guide a wide range of studies in order to explore the future and promote broad debates on these bases to guide education policy and decision making. Although Kenya is well-located in East Africa and naturally endowed in agriculture and tourism, especially when there are no political instabilities and intermittent spells of drought, it is has to deal with a myriad of problems engulfing the social, political, economic and environmental arenas amidst poor infrastructure and governance which incapacitates institutional management.

However, it has ratified different agreements which call for quality education. Therefore, it still needs to train teachers so that they are well prepared, committed, motivated to not only improve the learning of children said to have SEN but to contribute through research and collaboration towards improving the learning outcomes of children at the primary schools and raise the standards in this schools. Enhancing access and quality will have knock-on effects by enabling enrolled children to have higher rates of attendance and completion, better learning outcomes and increasing rates of transition to the next level of education

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and to meaningful pathways. Findings from this study show that there is still a need for the Kenyan government to improve the quality of education which implies that schools should work in the best interest of children said to have SEN to provide accessible, safe, and protective schools that are adequately staffed with trained teachers, other professional staff, equipped with adequate resources and appropriate conditions for learning.

Teachers' practices and the policy underscoring SEN in Kenya (MoE, 2009) seem to be variable. The practices denote integration whilst the policies include nuances of inclusive education. There is no inclusivity without accessible buildings, provision of basic necessities to children, proper sanitation, playgrounds not least resources and materials for learning. Since inclusive education is based on diversity and not homogeneity it should focus on the individual needs of children said to have SEN, which could thrive from the cultural, social origins of the child and personal conditions in terms of motivation, skills and interest that take place in the learning process of each unique child.

Therefore education that values and respects differences should be developed where each child's unique diversities are considered to enrich the teaching and learning experiences and not obstacles. This requires greater flexibility. For example, diversification of the curriculum to ensure all achieve basic skills through varied routes depending on learning situations, hours, materials and teaching strategies that are equivalent in quality.

Similarly, from international development the importance of effective training of teachers, effective coordination of SNE policy within the school, a clear sense of the need for an action plan developed at school level which can respond to the needs of identifying children whose learning difficulties are in various levels of severity has not been developed. A conception of learning difficulties should be developed where difficulties are placed within the environmental context and transactions within the home, school and society should be adapted (Tikly, 2011). This implies a shift from the 'within-child' conception of learning difficulties and SEN to a more obvious within context explanation. This was evident when

teachers referred to some of the children's backgrounds in the questionnaires and interviews. They are creating a tenuous link between the children's learning prior to school and the consequences of growing up in very poor homes. Therefore, effective teaching strategies and an individualized approach are critical in SEN. Placement decisions should be made by determining the best option that will support the effective instructional practices required for a particular child to achieve individual objective goals.

International development review stresses the importance of first of all effective training of teachers, effective coordination of SEN policy within the school, a clear sense of the need for an action plan developed at school level which is able to respond to the needs of identifying children whose learning difficulties are at various levels of severity. There is importance in developing a conception of learning difficulties which places these difficulties within the ecological context where learning occurs.

Meeting SEN in schools is not as simple as it seems with lack of resources, inaccessible buildings, overcrowding, hungry and deprived children in addition to other socio-economic and political problems the nature of the experiences of many children. As a result of being orphaned the importance of finding a proper place to live and receiving proper counselling is a necessary pre-requisite. The situation regarding orphans who are more than 1,380,000 presents a very big challenge to the school system (UNAIDS, 2011). Historically such children may have been taken up by grandparents or other relatives and many are neglected or abused. Apart from physical harm these children show a psycho-social effect which is profound, none of which predisposes children to effective learning. A core foundation for learning is that a child experiences a safe place to live where their emotional needs can be understood and responded to effectively.

Parents with children said to have SEN need to be supported to cope with the social and emotional problems between home and school (Tikly, 2011). Parents know their child better, so their advice can be relied on. They need support in terms of accessing the relevant and expert help (Gona, et al. 2011). In a context

where parents are supportive and the majority of the children are typically developing (TD), teaches are able to cope with children who may be having behavioural or emotional problems. This would be different if the children have a high level of needs. From the literature review and the policy issues identified in Kenya, the intention is there to meet the diverse needs of children said to have SEN in mainstream schools, but there is no guidance to schools either to identify such children or in relation to when or to whom they may refer.

The actual infrastructure of external school support is lacking. For example, the newly formed Autism unit in Kenya needs a combination of learning opportunities. Changes in the teacher preparation programme may be imperative since teachers in this study need to be supported to create a school and classroom climate for every pupil to benefit through exchanging experiences. Teachers would be required to learn or practice child development issues by having time (experience) with children said to have SEN within localities of their training institution (Befring, 1997).

6.11 Conclusion

This study has shed light on a number of aspects about how teachers view SEN in public primary schools in Kenya. The study was carried out in 27 primary schools in Kenya with 159 teachers. As stated in the contextual chapter all teachers are provided for by the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC), a Ministry of Education department. Teachers are recruited under the same set of rules or transferred from one school to another. Teachers in Kenya follow the same pre-service training for two years before they qualify. Most of the schools in this study have similar setups, facilities and problems.

The schools also follow the same curriculum and a common examination, Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE), is administered to all before joining secondary school. Although the purpose of this study was not to generalise the results, it is most likely that the research question answers can apply to other similar schools in the country.

The aim of my study was to explore how teachers view SEN in public primary schools in Kenya. The most important aspect in this study is the way children said to have SEN are taught. Although the teaching mainly focuses on the typically developing students (TD) there are teachers who despite the limiting working conditions are ready to use whatever resources within their contexts to support children said to have SEN. They have also attempted to apply different methods but with a shortfall in differentiating strategies to satisfactorily meet the individual needs of each child.

It is crucial that the focus on children said to have SEN be built on an individual child's existing personal strengths and resources. A learning educational model should seek to understand what the child can achieve, rather than analysing the weaknesses. Special education is a development-oriented field that contributes to a more complete learning process with a broader social context. All humans have equal value and every child should be cared for, and receive relevant education for a life of dignity.

Notwithstanding, all children are able to learn as long as they are provided with an appropriate environment, a well-prepared teacher, time, space and informative and/or technological resources. School differences were marked by variables linked to children's backgrounds; although these need to be 'unpicked' rather than generalised. Schools have a specific responsibility to ameliorate initial differences and environmental factors. These differences between schools increasingly depend on the characteristics of internal processes and with the ethos within which each school operates. These factors are subject to change by the schools themselves or by policy and political and institutional actors. Interestingly, the study highlighted the relationship between social and environmental factors and student achievement. Schools are relatively stable and can remain stable for long periods if conditions are kept relatively stable. The tribal clashes disrupted the stability of the schools nationwide.

What is accomplished at the beginning of schooling is a good forward planner of success or failure during the school years. Children with the same family

backgrounds and conditions are likely to do better or worse in the other stages of schooling, based on the success or failure at the beginning of the process. Therefore, children said to have SEN can learn if learning conditions are suitable and tasks adapted to the children's capabilities for learning can take place.

6.12 Contribution

This study made contributions in comprehending the position SEN plays in the working lives of many teachers and the need for developing the policy into practice. This may relate to applying an undifferentiated model of school or curriculum and SEN identification practices across a diverse country, teacher supply and teacher expertise. It may also involve resourcing the universal primary education initiative and making more explicit the Kenyan government policy on inclusiveness and SEN/SNE in particular. It is plausible to work with the Government in its endeavours to expand staff development opportunities in relation to the curriculum and in respect of teaching strategies to be used with identified cases of SEN, developing an operationally clearer system of accountability and quality control.

The implications for practice in this work are evident and relate to the further development of ideas around SEN in Information Technology Education (ITE) courses, the decentralisation of teacher training and professional development where all outlying areas would benefit. This may also imply initiatives like working on a model based on strategic satellite centres across the country. This study provides empirical evidence that is relevant to the on-going debate on achieving universal primary education through EFA in order to achieve the MDG in 2015. Within the Kenyan context, my research contributes to the way researchers perceive qualitative research. Quantitative surveys are mostly used in education research in Kenya.

On the other hand and as stated at different points in this study, there is dearth of documented research on SEN currently accessible internationally; this is with an exception to recent upcoming publications from a few African countries like

South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Botswana, Lesotho and Malawi. This study may be considered as an addition to the literature on SNE within this region as well as one underscoring the importance in developing a conception of learning difficulties which places these difficulties within the ecological context where learning occurs rather than 'within-the-child' and the implication of this to teaching practices and education policies. Nevertheless, this study has used a research approach which has illuminated the reality of how teachers understand SEN, how they define SEN, identify, teach children said to have SEN, different kinds of SEN, challenges as well as barriers and effects of mainstream learning. Other significant factors pertain to the practices in the 27 public primary schools in different settings in Kenya. Objective data was secured which can be evaluated by others. This may include: writers, teachers, educators, researchers and the government in order to determine the learning situation in which they are to be used.

This study offered significant leverage for changing local education initiatives on SNE. It highlighted nationally situated issues and concerns and teachers views. It provides educational researchers with a set of theoretical tools and framework for analysing the global context of their own research contributions to the world. Much of the available research and scholarships in education relate to levels of comparative and international education as a field, globalization and its dynamics. This study emphasizes on the theoretical paradigms and methodologies of SNE. The field of research needs to become transparent and an obvious part of everyday lives and practices of our educational communities. An audit trail which has been provided for all the entire research process entailing: research process, methods and methodology and analysis have been articulated.

The documentary analysis (DA) of the SNE policy may be regarded as significant data to be used as a suggestive guide in formulating certain objectives of education. Teachers may need to know the definitions, procedures, strategies put in place to enhance the learning of children said to have SEN. The analysis may also be used to improve teaching practices if content is made known to the

teachers. It assists the readers to determine the extent to which they will accept the findings and enables researchers to evaluate any assumptions. The DA delineates the different networks that have shaped the SEN structure and concerns to the process of policy analysis. This may encourage the teachers to participate in class, critique and pursue similar work. The DA is oriented towards an analysis that reaches beyond the classroom and underscores relationship between teachers, students, parents and community including the government. This makes the teachers in this study to contribute to the literature in a meaningful way.

Most of the education research studies in Kenya cover the typically developing (TD) children. Studies that cover special education issues include: (Opini, 2010; Mukuria and Korir, 2006; Wamae and Kang'ethe-Kamau, 2004; Wamochu, Karugu and Nwoye 2004; Mutua and Elhoweris, 2002; Muuya, 2002; Mutua, 2000 and Abilla, 1988). These relate to (in no particular order): parents, secondary schools, guidance and counselling, poverty, disability and legal issues, or cover one condition like hearing, mental or visual impairment, head teachers' views; mental impairment or emotional and behavioural disorder (EBD). This study is an attempt to elucidate educational practices within the local context which none of the above researchers has done.

The richness of data provided by the interviews can be effectively used to examine several topics and explore new areas of concern. In conducting this study, the skills in designing the research have facilitated the collection of rich data about the problems and advances knowledge that may be considered relevant to both the SEN discipline and the teaching profession. Much of the SNE research is published with imprints from the northern countries. This is an original empirical research conducted by a national in the same nation of professional affiliation. It accentuates the need for teachers to become familiar with education problems in their locality and combine with other existing educational studies for them to view their problems more clearly. On the other hand, it is imperative for the country to look to other nations' problems to contextualize its own and to be able to respond to the emerging national pressures and to raise standards in SNE.

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This study provides empirical evidence that is relevant to the on-going debate on achieving universal primary education through EFA in order to achieve the MDG in 2015. Within the Kenyan context, my research contributes to the way researchers perceive qualitative research. Quantitative surveys are mostly used in education research in Kenya, so this study makes a significant contribution in highlighting the advantages of the use of qualitative methodology. Moreover reliability, authenticity and ethical issues as discussed in chapter four reduced elements of bias and reliance on data from various sources to confirm or disprove emerging findings was crucial. The rich description of data rendered the findings credible.

This study offered significant leverage for changing local education initiatives on SNE. It highlighted nationally situated issues and concerns and teachers' views. It provides educational researchers with a set of theoretical tools and framework for analysing the global context of their own research contributions to the world. Much of the available research and scholarships in education relate to levels of comparative and international education as a field, globalization and its dynamics. This study emphasizes the theoretical paradigms and methodologies of SNE. The field of research needs to become a transparent part of the everyday lives and practices of our educational communities. An audit trail has been provided for the entire research process, entailing research methods and methodology, process, strategy, philosophical stance, epistemology, ontology and paradigm have been articulated and data analysis.

Much SNE research is published with imprints from northern countries. This is an original empirical research conducted by a Kenyan national in the same nation of professional affiliation. It accentuates the need for teachers to become familiar with education problems in their locality and combines with other existing educational studies for them to view their problems more clearly. On the other hand, it is imperative for the country to look to other nations' problems as a way

of contextualizing its own in order to be better able to respond to emerging national pressures and to raise standards in SNE.

6.13 Limitations of the study

I could have conducted observations in the classrooms but it was necessary to understand how teachers view special educational needs (SEN) in order to gain a deeper insight into the nature of SEN in Kenya. Teachers' complexities may be considered unique and specific to the individual teachers at different circumstances at any particular time (Creswell, 2007). Asking for specific data about SEN or prompting the teachers with a set of types of needs would have provided more data on a large number of pupils. This would have been possible if specific data on SEN were available. Few teachers volunteered to have the interviews recorded.

It is important to emphasize that schools did not have a list or information on the children said to have SEN. In fact, the first time the government gave specifications on SEN was during the 2009 census; which included: 'General, Visual, Hearing, Physical/Self Care, Mental and Other' (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS, 2011) as indicated in chapter two (Table 1). Therefore there might have possibly been a tendency for the teachers to typify some cases where the questions were too general. A study where deeper insights are drawn from classroom observations would be worthwhile. However, it was vital to explore how teachers view SEN in public primary schools at this stage in order not to make any assumptions.

The study did not cover some of the provinces which would have involved more than two days travel to distribute the questionnaire. With more time and funds allowing a similar research could be feasible.

Questionnaires are generally thought to be a relatively expensive method of data collection. This was certainly the case to a self-funded student and given the postal system in Kenya is slow. I relied on the honesty of the teachers. However, open-ended questions cannot be relied on to examine complex social

relationships. As explained in chapter four (4), questionnaires did not allow probing, prompting and clarification of questions.

The reports from different settings (urban, municipal and rural) were not specifically compared when reporting the findings because I set about the whole study with an aim to exploring how teachers view SEN in public primary schools. However, this could form a basis for future research. In view of that, the research has a clear aim. By objectively carrying out the interviews, transcribing and analysing them and also distributing the questionnaires analysing as well as describing all the stages in the analysis plus interpretations with my supervisor, I made every attempt to ensure that the findings are objective, free from bias and will hold out to critical scrutiny by others. This is the first study to explore how teachers view SEN in public primary schools in Kenya.

Lack of current online data or none at all from the Ministry of Education and lack of a research database made the searching for literature on Kenyan education issues difficult. Some education articles were found in medical journals and they did not necessarily provide up-to-date information. This resulted in the reliance on international and other countries' articles or international organisations.

More collaborations among teachers to share experiences starting from classroom level, prepare lesson templates and simple materials for children said to have SEN for example worksheets, picture work and drawings using manila paper, preparing pupils' profiles. This way, teachers may gain a sense of doing much more for the students. They may focus on topics, styles, approaches and ways of varying presentations in classes where children have varying cognitive levels. Teachers may gain an opportunity to theorise their practice while undertaking teacher-directed approaches within their schools or with others. This may create a sense of belonging and improve professional learning and create a research culture. However, teachers need to be empowered to create knowledge within their own schools or within a certain zone. Peer observation among teachers encourages preparedness and reflection on practices and may reduce the sense of feeling

inadequate to work with children said to have SEN. This would imply constant teacher training.

In particular, the extent of real changes in the educational needs of children include changes in teachers' perceptions, changes in curriculum and pedagogy in schools, changes in procedures for identifying special educational needs and the interplay between these and educational policies.

6.14   Further Research Work

 I would like to propose further research work which I envision will add value to SEN in Kenya:
Further research could be carried out in classrooms to observe how teachers practice the approaches they have suggested in this study. I would also interview the children to evaluate the teaching of SEN which could illuminate more ways of collaboration among the teachers.

To carry out a study with the head teachers and Ministry of Education authorities about exploring and familiarising with the curriculum for children said to have SEN. Studies with the parents would draw on what is already researched but it would be to explore their connection between the school and government. Also research can be carried out on modules and delivery of content in SEN teacher training institutions.

Building on this study, similar research in private schools could compare the resources and strategies with the possibility of initiating a partnership and collaboration among the teachers.
Also future research can conduct a similar study in the provinces not included in this study and research the process of identification, assessment and provision for children said to have SEN in schools.

However, the Kenyan government needs to invest in teacher training because a change in teachers' attitudes and beliefs is realised after the training manifests in improvements in student learning.

'Demonstrable results in terms of student learning outcomes are the key
to the endurance of any change in instructional practice' (Guskey, 2002 p 384).

7. REFERENCES

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APPENDICES

BRUNEL UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF SPORT AND EDUCATION
UXBRIDGE MIDDLESEX
UB8 3PH

Lucy Mwangi
P O Box 005 26694 Nairobi
Telephone No: 0733707804
+44 7961836061

BRUNEL UNIVERSITY, LONDON
School of Sports and Education
Uxbridge
UB8 3PH

EXPLORING HOW THE BASIC LEARNING NEEDS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ARE BEING MET IN MAINSTREAM PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA

N.B. This data will be anonymous and confidential

QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of School: .....STAf [redacted] ...

1. How long have you been teaching in this school? Please tick

		✓	
0-4 years	5-9 years	10-14 years	Over 15 years

2. What is your teaching background? Please state schools and age range in which you have taught.

Qualifications	Schools	Age Range
P1	Staf [redacted]	6 — 13yrs
Degree (ECD)	Stal [redacted]	6 - 9yrs

1

3. What classes do you teach now?   Please specify subjects taught as well.

Classes

6 AND 7

Subjects taught

SOCIAL STUDIES AND ENGLISH.

4. How many pupils are in each of the classes that you teach?

			✓
1 – 10	11- 20	21- 30	Over 31

5. What would you consider to be the most important learning needs of children at primary school level?

Teaching and learning Materials (eg) text books.

6. Which difficulties do you experience in trying to meet the most important learning needs of your pupils? Please specify these difficulties.

Dealing with the Large number of pupils in the classroom when it Comes to sharing of text books and giving take away (Homework)

2

7. In your opinion, what would you say are the causes of these difficulties?

Free Primary Education and poor economic status of the parents.

8. How would you explain the term Special Educational Needs?

This are children with Special Learning dyficulties.

9. What kinds of Special Educational Needs do the children in your class have?

P (ii) Poor eye sight
(2) Hearing problems.

10. What are the methods of identifying these pupils in your class?

(1) Observation.
(2) Enquiring from parent and guardian.

11. Give three different examples that compare each of these children's ability to that of the other mainstream children in your class:

(i) Slow in reading
(ii) The handwriting is big and poor
(iii) Posture while listening

(iii)(iv) Poor Performance.
(v) Extroverts
(vi) Inactive in games and Sports
(iii)(vii)

12. What subjects would you say the SEN children that you teach enjoy most?

They Enjoy English Most.

13. What are the barriers that make it difficult for you to accommodate individual learning needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs in your class?

- The Large number of pupils in the Class.
- Lack of adequate time.
- Lack of required learning and teaching material

14. Explain three learning strategies you consider useful on a day-to-day basis in order to meet the educational needs of the SEN children in your class?

(i) Involve the pupils in day to day activities through practical work.

(ii) Involve them in games and Sports where they appreciates each others physical ability.

(iii) Involve them in group work where they learn from each other which enhances co-operation

15. How are the parents involved in the learning of their Special Educational Needs children?

- Providing for materials needed in teaching and learning
- Taking the children to EARC for assessment.

16. Please give three examples of how you liaise with other groups that work with children with Special Educational Needs?

(i) We liase with the provincial hospital where the children are examined.

(ii) EARC - taken for assessment. Tak A-They advice on medical checkup.

(iii) I also liase with other teachers for advice and

17. In Kenya, education is considered the most important tool to uplift citizens regardless of their exceptionalities. Describe three resources that your school provides to improve learning environment in the classes you teach:

(i) Text books - Course books for the work to be covered in that year.

(ii) Physical facilities - they include desks,

5

Chairs and rooms.

(ii) Charts and models.

(iii) Resource Persons.

(iv) They provide transport to for educational trips.

18. Describe three measures that the Government provides to support teachers to carry out their roles successfully:

(i) Pay the teachers Salaries

(ii) Insets and Seminars and for refresher Courses.

(iii) Provides Some text books, exercise books, and Stationary

19. Describe three measures that the Community provides to support your school to improve the learning environment in the classes you teach:

(i) Preparing teaching and Learning materials from Locally available materials.

(ii) Employing extra teachers as the ones employed by the government are not enough.

6

(iii) Building of more classroom to ease congestion.

(iv) Help/Assist in solving disciplinary chases.

20. List any short or long term course you have attended since you completed your teacher training?

Key Resource Teacher in English 2yrs (6 months)

Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood (4 years)

21. Give three suggestions on how to best improve the design and delivery of basic learning needs:

(i) Reduce the pupils in the classes to at least 30 a number that the teacher can manage comfortably.

(ii) More time should be added in each activity are noting in mind that children are of different abilities and others need special attention.

(iii) Separate the children with special needs from the others so that the educator can give them special care.

23. In what three ways might pupils with Special Educational Needs benefit from mainstream school learning?

(i) It will enhance Interaction and the other learners will appreciate them

(ii) It boosts their moral.

(iii) It prepares the child to learn on how to deal with future challenges in life

Please comment on any aspects of your SEN work

Thank you very much for finding time to fill in this questionnaire.

<div align="right">
Lucy Mwangi

9 Carlton Avenue West

Wembley

Middlesex

HA0 3RE
</div>

Date: …………

Head Teacher

Primary School

Dear Sir

PhD RESEARCH PROJECT

My name is Lucy Mwangi and I am a Kenyan teacher. Currently I am pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Education Research at Brunel University, West London. I am conducting a research on establishing how the learning needs of children said to have SEN are being met in public primary schools in Kenya.

I am conducting a survey, and I intend to use a questionnaire together with follow-up interviews. I wish to interview and record conversations from teachers who volunteer and I expect to spend at least 30 - 40 minutes interviewing, whilst the questionnaire is likely to take 40 minutes to fill in.

The purpose for writing this letter is to request you to allow me access to your school in order to distribute the questionnaires and carry out the interviews. A letter from the university and Ministry of Education is attached and permission has been granted to carry out this research.

I appreciate that you have a busy schedule and hope that you will be able to spare some time to discuss my research project at length once I am in Kenya. I would also appreciate the opportunity to meet with the teachers in order to explain my research topic to them and seek their consent while requesting volunteers.

I will contact you by telephone or e-mail, when I arrive in Kenya.

Below please find my Supervisor's address at the University:

Professor Mike Watts, Telephone No. +44 01895-274, Mike.Watt@brunel.ac.uk

Please feel free to contact him at any time.

I promise that all our discussions and information will be considered confidential and only used for the purposes of this research. The name of your school will not be disclosed and this is voluntary.

Yours faithfully

Lucy Mwangi
PhD (Education Research) Student – Brunel University
 lucywmwangi@yahoo.com

APPENDIX 3: INTRODUCTION LETTER FROM BRUNEL UNIVERSITY

Head of School of Sport & Education
Professor Susan Capel

Brunel
UNIVERSITY
WEST LONDON

Halsbury Building,
Brunel University, Uxbridge,
Middlesex, UB8 3PH, UK
Telephone +44 (0)1895 267156
Fax +44 (0)1895 269805
Web www.brunel.ac.uk

January 8th 2009

To whom this may concern

Re: Ms Lucy Mwangi

This is a letter of introduction to Ms Lucy Mwangi who is conducting field work towards the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) through the School of Sport and Education at Brunel University, London. Lucy is gathering perspectives from teachers in Kenya on provision in schools for children with special educational needs. She is working within my supervision, and I would be most grateful if you are able to help her with this and support her research.

Many thanks in advance for your help.
Yours sincerely,

Professor Michael Watts
Subject Leader, Education

APPENDIX 4

Appendix 4: Letter to Ministry of Education

<div align="right">

P O BOX 6742-00200

NAIROBI

Tel: 0738798965

lucywmwangi@yahoo.com

23 January 2009

</div>

The Permanent Secretary
Research and Human Resource Department
Ministry of Education
Jogoo House (Building B)
P O Box 30298
NAIROBI

Dear Sir

Application for Access to Primary Schools for Research

I am a student at Brunel University of West London and wish to conduct research in public primary schools in different provinces in the country. This information will contribute towards the reward of a degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Special Education.

In this research project, I wish to understand the teachers' views about Special Education in public primary schools. This research is voluntary and does not involve any children. Questionnaires and interviews will be used to collect data from the teachers. Teachers who volunteer for the research and are willing to participate in the interviews will be recorded and the recordings will be played or read back for them to confirm that is a true record of the session.

The data collected will be treated in a professional and confidential manner. The research is self-funded and is intended for personal professional interests only. However, the research findings will be shared with the Ministry of Education upon completion.

I hereby request you to allow me to distribute questionnaires to a few primary schools to cover a cross section of schools in Nairobi, Rift Valley, Coast, Eastern and Central Provinces. Attached please find copy of a letter from Brunel University and the questionnaire and interview questions I intend to use to collect data.

My supervisor is Professor Mike Watts, Brunel University and may be contacted on Telephone No: +441895274000. Please feel free to contact him at any time,

Yours faithfully

Lucy Mwangi

Enclosures (3).

Appendix 5: Permission to access schools

Ministry of Education

Jogoo House "B", Harambee Avenue

P.O. Box 30040, Nairobi

Tel. 318581

Telegrams: "EDUCATION"

Website: www.education.go.ke

15 February 2009

Our Ref: Reg/GOK/MOE

Your Ref: Reg/PhD/UK/601

Primary Head teachers

Thro'

District Education Officers

PhD Research Project

This serves to introduce Miss Lucy W. Mwangi who is conducting an educational research on special needs education in public primary schools relating to teachers' views on the children's 'earning.

Permission is granted to Miss Mwangi to visit any of the listed schools on the attached list since they are more accessible by public transport.

Thank you for your cooperation in assisting her to carry out this research.

Abdi O.G.

Regional Director - Research Department

Appendix 6a: LETTER TO DIRECTORATE OF CITY EDUCATION

<div align="right">

P O BOX 6742-00200
NAIROBI
Tel: 0738798965
lucywmwangi@yahoo.com
23February 2009

</div>

The Director
City Education
City Hall Annex
Nairobi

Dear Sir

Application for collecting data from teachers in primary schools

I am a student at Brunel University of West London and wish to conduct research in Primary schools in Nairobi. This information will contribute towards the reward of a degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

My study focuses on how teachers meet the learning needs of children with Special Educational Needs. I am using a questionnaire to be able to gather data on the teachers' perspective and also conducting interviews for the teachers who volunteer.

I hereby request you to allow me to distribute questionnaires to a few primary schools to cover the Nairobi province if possible, different areas like Westlands, Eastlands, Eastleigh, Muthaiga, City Centre, Kibera, Mukuru Kayaba, Mathare and Kangemi. The schools from these areas may provide a cross section of the province but I am open to any other school you wish to recommend.

Attached please find a copy of a letter from Brunel University and the questionnaire and interview questions I intend to use to collect data.

My supervisor is Professor Mike Watts, Brunel University, and Telephone No. +440819527400. Please feel free to contact him at any time.

I look forward to your assistance in this matter.

Yours faithfully

Lucy Mwangi

Enclosures (3).

APPENDIX 6: APPROVAL LETTER FROM THE DIRECTORATE OF CITY EDUCATION

CITY COUNCIL OF NAIROBI

TELEGRAM "SCHOOLING"
TELEPHONE: 221166/224281
EXT: 2426 /2590

CTY HALL ANNEXE
P.O. BOX 30298 GPO
NAIROBI

CITY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

GL/NC/141/VOL III39

25th February, 2009

Ms. Lucy Mwangi
Brunel Univesity
West London

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your request for permission to collect data in some primary schools in Nairobi on 23rd February, 2009.

Authority has been granted to you to gather data on **" teacher's perspectives in meeting the needs of children with Special Education Needs."** In Westlands, Nile Road, St.Teresa's, Muthaiga, Mathari, Kilimani, Catholic Parochial, Jacaranda, City, Kibera, Mukuru Kaiyaba and Milimani Primary Schools in Nairobi.

You are also advised to liaise with the headteachers of the above schools and to submit a copy of the research report upon completion.

CITY EDUCATION OFFICE
P. O. Box 30298

NAIROBI KENYA

TABITHA T. KAMAU
Ag. CHIEF ADVISOR TO SCHOOLS
FOR: DIRECTOR OF CITY EDUCATION
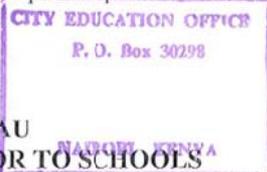
APPENDIX 7: RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS' BRIEFING SHEET

The research study topic is "Exploring how the learning needs of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are met in public primary schools in Kenya"
This research project aims to investigate how teachers perceive special education and the learning of children said to have special educational needs in public primary schools. My aim is to understand the views of teachers.

 In order to carry out this research a questionnaire and face-to-face interviews will be conducted. I would like to record the interview sessions, but   remember this is voluntary. The recorded interview sessions will be played back to you to enable them confirm that it forms a true record of what they said. and they will be asked to sign It would still be possible to participate in an interview where no recording will be done, which means that I will write down all the answers. This will then be read back to you which means you will be able to see, change and sign to confirm that that is a true record of what transpired. Please feel free to complete the separate sheet attached to this briefing sheet as a sign that you have consented or not consented to participate in this research.

All information gathered will be treated with utmost confidentiality, and professionalism and your names will not be disclosed. Your participation in this interview is voluntary and you can decline to answer particular questions, withdraw from interview at any time and, if you are not happy, request that the information is not included in the study.

This study is for my personal professional interest and is self-funded. It is towards obtaining a Doctor of Philosophy degree. Please feel free to contact me in case you have further enquiries. My contact telephone number is 0733707804 and E: Mail address lucywmwangi@yahoo.com.

APPENDIX 8 CONSENT FORM

Please complete all the sections in this form by ticking the appropriate box

	YES	**NO**

I have read the Research Briefing Sheet?   ☐ ☐

I understand that all information gathered will be held in
strict confidence. I am also aware that I may withdraw from   ☐ ☐
this study at any stage.

I have been able to ask any questions I have about the study   ☐ ☐

All the questions I had have been satisfactorily answered   ☐ ☐

I am happy to participate in this research   ☐ ☐

Signed (Research participant):

……………………………………………………………………………………………

Name in capital letters:

…………………………………………………………………………………………….

Date: …………………………………………………………………………………..

Witnessed by:

I am satisfied that the above named person has given consent

Witness: …………………………………………………………………………..

Name: ………………………………………………………….............................

Date…………………………………………………………………………………

APPENDIX 9: SAMPLE OF A TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW

Q.1. What do you understand by the term children with Special Educational Needs? (SEN)

'These are different needs from others in the mainstream. Abilities are lacking, e.g. sight, hearing and class performance'.

Q2. **How do you identify children said to have SEN in the classes you teach?**

'Their performance is below the mean score and some of them copy inverted letters like: 'b' instead of 'd'' and they are unable to concentrate in class'.

Q. What do you do in such cases?

'I make sure I know the background of the child and identify who to talk to because some children are orphans. In such a case, I inform the guardian and reassure them that I will guide the child and make them feel comfortable in class in order to improve'.

Q. ***In your answer, you mentioned that you make the child or children feel comfortable. Would you like to explain how you do this?***

'I ensure the child plays, works well with the others in class'.

Q. 3. What would you say you enjoy about teaching children said to have SEN?

I enjoy teaching these children although it is challenging, but I enjoy helping them to realise their strong points and improve on them'.

Q.4. How do you support children said to have SEN to meet their learning needs?

'Most of the learning needs are learning difficulties, for example reading. Some in class 5 and 6 cannot read at all. So, I come down to the level of this child and help them on how to read. If they have a problem with their sight, I ask the parent to take them to have their eyes checked'.

Q. 5 **Please describe and explain one of the best lessons you have had in a class where there are children said to have SEN?**

'One of my best lessons was during Creative Arts, where I asked children to draw any image of something they like. Then I went round observing and asking the questions about their images. They interpreted their themes and this showed me they were creative. So, I was happy and they were happy too'.

Q6. In your opinion, what do you consider to be a conducive learning classroom environment for children said to have SEN.

'This is an environment where each and every child feels appreciated and comfortable. Teaching and learning materials are available. Teachers should present books, charts and other stationery like pens and papers'.

Q7. What are the resources that you use in your class in order to ensure that all pupils participate in learning?

'I use charts and textbooks. Sometimes I provide models for specific things like animals or wooden or stone carvings to make pupils visualize'.

Q.8 What extra training does your school organise/offer to facilitate continuous professional development in SEN?

'The school sometimes has workshops on Guidance and Counselling'.

Q.9. If you were to go back to a teachers' training college, what are some of the subjects you would wish to be trained in to adequately meet the learning needs of children said to have SEN?

I would like to do a course on how to teach Reading. This is because children are not able to read their relative age and I would like to make them read past their age'.

Q.10 What whole-school SEN Policy does your school have?

'My school has a good system of dealing with disciplinary cases. There is a Guidance and Counselling Patron. There are peer groups where children guide and help others to behave well. Peers are pupils identified and recommended by other teachers'.

Q. Would you please explain a little more on what you mean by 'to behave well'?

'This would mean any 'abnormal' behaviour, I mean behaving different from others and in a way teacher did not expect'.

Q. 11. What changes would you like your school administration to facilitate to improve the learning of children said to have SEN?

'The administration should focus and concentrate on ways identifying the needs of children with Special Educational Needs and come up with materials to cater for these needs. The school should source more professionals in terms of teachers capable of dealing with children with SEN'

.Q.12. What suggestions would you like to make to improve the design and delivery of the primary school curriculum to children said to have SEN?

'A different curriculum should be written for these children and a class should be specifically set up where these children will be getting more attention. This should be an initiative from the government'.   *-2 -*

Appendix 10:   Interview Schedule

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE/GUIDELINE

1. What do you understand by the term children with 'Special Educational Needs' (SEN)?

2. How do you identify children with SEN in the classes you teach?

3. What do you enjoy about teaching children with SEN?

4. How do you support SEN children to meet their learning needs?

5. Please describe and explain one of the best lessons you have had in a class where there are children with SEN?

6. In your opinion, what do you consider to be a conducive learning classroom environment for children with SEN.

7. What are the resources that you use in your class in order to ensure that all pupils participate in learning?

8. What extra training does your school organise/offer to facilitate continuous professional development in SEN?

9. If you were to go back to a teachers' training college, what are some of the subjects you would wish to be trained in to adequately meet the learning needs of children with SEN?

10. What Whole-School SEN Policy does your school have?

11. What changes would you like your school administration to facilitate to improve the learning of children with SEN?

12. What suggestions would you like to make to improve the design and delivery of the primary school curriculum to children with SEN?

Appendix 11: An example of coding interview data

No.	Relevant Text (Data immersion)	Coding
1.	'Their performance is below the mean score and some of them copy inverted letters; 'b' instead of 'd' and they are unable to concentrate in class'.	• The performance of children with SEN is poor and they have poor concentration and are unable to write letters appropriately.
2.	'I make sure I know the background of the child and identify who to talk to because some children are orphans. In such a case, I inform the guardian and reassure them that I will guide the child and make them feel comfortable in class in order to improve'.	• Teachers take their own initiative to establish children's backgrounds and deal with the parents. • The children are orphans.
3.	'Slow learners whose background I endeavour to find out through their appearance, shaggy clothes, lateness, absenteeism, truancy and lack of basic needs and writing materials'.	• Children suspected to have SEN are untidy, miss school and lack necessities and writing materials'
4.	In fact it is very hard to understand the background of 1,500 children who are admitted in this school. It is not possible to have all the details'.	• Teachers take their own initiative to establish children's background. The number of children makes it difficult to get all the details.
5.	'I as much possible try and find out the background of these children and then I adapt my teaching to meet their needs; for example I have a few cases of children with no grandmother after their parents died'.	• Teachers take their own initiative to establish children's background. • Teachers have no support on how to teach children said to have SEN. • Children are orphans.

Appendix 12: An example of generating themes from interview data

No.	Creating categories	Sub-themes	Theme
1	1. Lack of training 2. Challenges working with children	Challenges in working with children	
2.	1. Lack of support from school administration. 2. Lack of systems to identify children 3. Challenges working with children.	Administrative issues.	**Challenges teachers face**
3.	1.Lack of support from school administration 2. Challenges working with children	Administrative issues Challenges working with children.	
4.	1. Teacher' difficulties in identifying children. 2. Children difficulties. 3. Lack of support from school administration	Administrative issues Challenges working with children	
5.	1. Lack of training 2. Lack of systems to identify children 3. Children difficulties.	Administrative issues Systems failure	

Appendix 13: Microsoft Excel spreadsheet screen print for questionnaires data

NUMBER URBAN	CURRENT SCHOOL	TEACHING PERIOD	NO OF PUPILS IN CLASS	MOST IMPORTANT LEARNING NEEDS	DIFFICULTIES	CAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTIES
1	ORANGE	0-4	21-30	COMMUNICATE	EXPRESSION	ENVIRONMENT
				CONCENTRATION	PARENTS NOT SUPPORTIVE	INADEQUATE EXPOSURE
				INDEPENDENCE	INADEQUATE WILL	EDUCATION LEVEL OF PARENTS
						(leads to parent withdrawal from child)
2	BAHARINI	0-4	OVER 31	GUIDANCE	HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT	POVERTY
				COUNSELLING	POOR & HARSH B/GROUNDS	SINGLE PARENTING
3	WALIDI	10-14	OVER 31	PLAYING MATERIALS	INADEQUATE FUNDS	PARENTS AND COMMUNITY CANNOT PROVIDE
				WALL CHARTS	PLAYING GROUNDS	funds to the children and school
				MODELLING CLAY	INADEQUATE STORAGE	
				EDUCATIONAL TOURS	POOR COMMUNICATION	
					from parents	
4	RAHA	0-4	OVER 31	SUFFICIENT NO. OF TEACHERS	COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC HARDSHIP	GOVT CORRUPTION
				PERMANENT, WELL DESIGNED CLASSROOMS	PARENTS POVERTY	POVERTY
				ENOUGH BOOKS & INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS		
5	OSIEPNA	10-14	OVER 31	INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS	INADEQUATE PARENT SUPPORT	PARENTS HAVE NO INTEREST IN EDUCATION
				FEEDING PROGRAMME	POOR BACKGROUNDS	and its benefits to their children
				GUIDANCE & COUNSELLING DEPT	INADEQUATE PUPILS INTEREST	POVERTY
						NO MOTIVATION FROM PARENTS OR SOCIETY
6	ORANGE	5-9	OVER 31	PROPER LEARNING ENVIRONMENT	LARGE CLASSES - OVER 50 PUPILS	GOVT POLICY OF FREE EDUCATION has brought
				RELEVANT TEXTBOOKS	makes the teachers work difficult as not	about large classes
				BALANCED DIET & GOOD HEALTH CARE	all learners are reached	POVERTY
					SOME LEARNERS NOT HEALTHY	
7	DIANI KUCHA	0-4	OVER 31	TO BE RESPONSIBLE	INADEQUATE LEARNING RESOURES	INSUFFICIENT FUNDS
				CHANGE OF BEHAVIOUR	TRUANCY	PEER GROUP INFLUENCE

Appendix 14

Mapping Key Relevant Clusters in questionnaires

Key Words , statements, phrases	•Key Themes
Learning needs, SEN definitions, most common kinds of SEN, methods of identification	• Teachers' understanding about SEN
Pre-service training, Post-service training (Long term)	• Additional Professional Development
Teaching strategies, abilities of chlildlren said to have SEN	• Managing Diverse Needs in the classroom
Difficulties inb meeting individual needs of children said to have SEN, causes of difficulties and barries in accomodating individual learning needs in class	• Challenges of mainstream learning
Benefits of mainstreaming	• Impacts of mainstream learning

Appendix 15: Limiting factors teachers use to identify children said to have SEN

- **SEN children have physical disadvantages on the body or minds**
- **SEN children have learning difficulties**
- **Visual and hearing impairments**
- **SEN children take time to understand**
- **SEN children are hyperactive**
- **SEN children have sight difficulties'**
- **SEN children need extra time to understand**
- **SEN children with hearing impairments and tend to tilt their heads to one side**
- **SEN children have learning difficulties**
- **SEN children are below average**
- **SEN children suffer from low performance and abilities**
- **SEN children are hyperactive**
- **SEN children have aggressive behaviour**
- **SEN children have poor performance**
- **SEN children are said to give wrong answers in class**
- **SEN children need support during practical lessons like P.E.**
- **SEN children have difficulties ordering and pronouncing numbers**

Appendix 16: Kenya Population figure for those under age 15

Forty-Three Percent of the Total Population Is Under Age 15

This pyramid illustrates the age-sex structure of the population. It is wider at the base because there are more people in the younger age groups than in the older age groups for both sexes. More than two out of five people are under age 15.

Kenya Population Data Sheet (KPDS) (2011, p2)