

**LEVEL OF PREPAREDNESS OF PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN IMPLEMENTING
CURRICULUM OF MENTALLY CHALLENGED LEARNERS IN EMBU WEST
DISTRICT, EMBU COUNTY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the level of preparedness of primary schools in implementing the curriculum for the mentally challenged learners in Embu County. It was guided by four specific objectives: To establish effect of learning resources; the influence of physical facilities; teachers' opinions on the suitability of resources in the instruction; effect of curriculum used in special schools and special units on primary schools' level of preparedness. The study was expected to provide insight to the government through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology on the level preparedness of primary schools in implementing the curriculum for the mentally challenged learners. It made suggestions to the government on the suitable curriculum by identifying the strengths and constraints in the implementation process. It also formed a basis for further research. The study was limited by financial constraints. It was guided by Jerome Bruner (2005) theory of Constructivism and Discovery Learning.. Literature review focused on Meaning of Special Education; study objectives and; Gaps identified. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The target population was 45 headteachers and 66 teachers in 45 special schools, and Questionnaires used to collect data. Piloting was done in four schools not part of the sample. Reliability coefficient of 0.7 was obtained while validity obtained by seeking expert advice. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as means, percentages, and standard deviation, and presented using tables, pie charts and bar graphs. The study revealed that learning resources affects the implementation of curriculum in special schools as was found in the responses of a majority of teachers (56.7). Physical resources were found to be adequate as was rated average as confirmed by 56.7% headteachers who rated it average. The teaching resources were found to be suitable as confirmed by 44% of the teachers who rated it high and 33.3% who rated it as very high. The curriculum used in special schools was found to be relevant in aiding primary school teachers' level of preparedness in implementation of the curriculum of the mentally challenged learners in special schools. This is as per the positive response of 44% of the teachers who rated it average and 23% who rated it as high. Similarly, Most headteachers (56%) rated it as average while 27% rated it as very high. It was revealed that most parents follow up on their children's progress, for example, majority of teachers (90%) and headteachers (63%) agreed that parents follow up on their children's progress, but at low the frequency as revealed by 51.9% teachers and 68.4% headteachers who indicated less often to parental follow-up. The study recommended that the government, through the Kenya Institute of Curriculum should revise the special needs education curriculum, making it as practical as possible and more learner-friendly by including a wide range of activities especially for the severe and profound learners and involving teachers in its preparation. Regular workshops and seminars should also be organized for teachers. The government should also provide adequate physical and learning facilities. Parents should also be sensitized on the importance of following up on their children's progress in school. It therefore suggested that further research be conducted in the private institutions as well so as to give a wider picture of what is going on in special needs education institutions.