

Sociocultural Factors as a Determinant of Parental Negligence in the Education of Children with Physical Disabilities in Tiko

Ambei Ruhama Faizefu

Faculty of Education, The University of Buea.



Article's History

Submitted: 30th November 2023

Accepted: 12th December 2023

Published: 16th December 2023

Abstract

Aim: Education is one of the basic human rights. The right to education has been enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). The rights of PWD are a growing phenomenon Worldwide. Learners who are physically disabled have constraints in attaining their academic endeavors, which would enable them to be self-reliant. The objective of this study was to examine sociocultural factors as a determinant of parental negligence in the education of children with physical disabilities in Tiko Municipality.

Methods: The study was guided by Bowlby Attachment theory. The study population included children who were physically disabled below twenty-five years of age. The study used descriptive research design. The starting point was interviews with 10 teachers and 20 individuals who were physically disabled in a school. One hundred children who were physically disabled were finally selected, 40 female learners in school were selected using purposive sampling procedure and 60 males out of school were selected using snowball sampling procedure until saturation. Qualitative data was analyzed through ethnographic methods of thematic analysis. The data was presented using texts and verbatim quotations. Quantitative data was coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 and was presented in the form of tables and charts.

Results: The findings showed that, children with physical disabilities had negative attitude towards their own education. Due to financial constraints in most of the families of children with physical disabilities and the fact that their education was more expensive than their able bodied siblings, they were left at home while others went to school. Children with physical disabilities who were orphaned had no one to take them to school. It was also realized that social barriers such as community perception as well as physical barriers posed many difficulties in accessing education by children with physical disabilities.

Recommendation: The study recommends that children with physical disabilities should be exposed to role models with physical disabilities who have gone through education and are successful enough to be emulated.

INTRODUCTION

According to Mohit, Pillai and Rungta (2006) education is one of the basic human rights to all, including physically disabled. This right has been enshrined in the universal declaration of human rights (1948) and was clearly stipulated in article 26 of (2003) of the Education Act of Kenya which emphasized the right to education for everyone. The Dakar framework for action on Education for All (2000), re-affirmed the goal of EFA as laid down by Jomte in and facilitated towards specific Education for All by 2015. This is also stipulated in the Millennium Development Goal number two (2) and three (3) respectively. The Millennium Development goal number two is to achieve universal primary education by ensuring that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. Goal number three is to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education and at all levels of education not later than 2015. This transits to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDS) which is an intergovernmental set of aspiration Goals with 169 targets that while acting as the post 2015 Development Agenda (successor to the Millennium Development Goals), builds on the principles agreed upon which includes Education for All.

Statistics by the United Nations (2002) indicate that out of the estimated world population of 6 million people, 1 million suffer moderate to severe forms of physically disability. It believed that, people with physical disabilities are considered socially and physically less capable of performing activities as compared to able bodied persons, in many cultures, attitudes towards a disability may include religious acceptance, people may also believe that a disability is caused by factors such as the influence of past lives, mystical intervention or the past sins committed by parents (Thomas & Thomas, 2000). The World Report on Disability (WHO, 2011) states that the correlation between low educational outcomes and disability is stronger than for any other marginalizing characteristic. Both social and physical barriers are factors that prevent girls with disabilities from obtaining the benefits of education (Rossou, 2000). According to Nyarko (2003), persistence of certain cultural, legal and institutional barriers makes people with disabilities the victims of two-fold discrimination; as women and as persons with disabilities. Girls and women of all ages with any form of disability are among the more vulnerable and marginalized of society.

The stigma about disability in Africa is partly due to cultural beliefs and misconceptions about the causes of disabilities (Randiki, 2003). Children with physical disabilities have been commonly considered a punishment from God, in Africa (Nicole, 2010). In most cultures, children with physical disabilities are seen as cursed or possessed by evil spirits. They are considered not to be in need of any education (Randiki, 2003).

Contextually, Law No 83/013 of 21st July 1983 and its decree of application Law No 90/156 of 26th November 1990 provides general dispositions and practical modalities for the protection of persons with disabilities. Though not mentioned in clear terms, these laws all reflect inclusive practices that are cherished the world over. For example, article 30, 5, 6 and 9 of this law states “families should provide their children with disabilities access to regular schools. In addition, an age waver should be granted persons with disabilities to be admitted into various educational institutions on the request of children with disabilities (CWD) and their guardians and the state should bear part of the charge by admitting them to educational institutions”. Article 9 of this law emphasizes that building plans should comprise necessary facilities that could ease access to public buildings by persons with impairments.

According to Beiter (2005) on disabilities in Cameroon focuses specifically on education. Articles 35 and 7 state that, pupils/students with disabilities should be allowed to repeat a class two times when failure is a result of their handicap. While fixing the quotas of educational assistance in kind and cash, Article 6 insists that such aid could cover complete or partial school fee requirements. While giving subventions to schools engaged in the educations of CWD, Article 4 states that qualified personnel could be posted to these schools by the state. In which case, adolescents admitted in mainstream schools would be able to benefit from pedagogic support and follow-up by teachers. This emphasizes the need for training of many more teachers so as to imbibe them with inclusive teaching strategies that could be used in an inclusive set up.

The concluding remark to be made here is that in as much as these laws may sound so good, their application is still daunting. Laws are only theory, their practice renders them visible and the dream of all stakeholders in the inclusive set up is to see the laws more in application than simply on paper. In effect, the laws should be made into a policy. One of the challenges of the application of these laws remains the lack of qualified personnel given that the schools of education engaged in teacher training do not provide student teachers with skills/courses in IE. Only the Higher Teacher Training College Bambili and the university of Buea that have initiated programs that handle students with disabilities but these efforts are still quite to be felt by the larger students' population with students with disabilities in the university of Buea.

Statement of the Problem

Research on Education For All (EFA) show that children with disabilities fall within the group of the most marginalized when it comes to educational opportunity at all. They have been insignificant in the realization of EFA and there is lack of recorded statistics showing the trend of their education. Under the Salamanca statement, children with disabilities were to be mainstreamed in National Education For All (EFA) plans, even though no much progress has been achieved by 2015. This could have been due to social, cultural and economic disadvantages which make accessing education and employment problematic. Despite the global goal of universal primary education, physically disabled are constrained with many challenges in accessing education. One of the issues that could be affecting the education of children with physical disabilities is social, culture and economic discrimination. Despite the fact that the government has implemented the Free Primary Education to all, the challenges faced by physically disabled students have turned out to be persistent and very complex. This could have been due to constraints placed on them by traditional gender roles and the social discrimination generated by their disability.

There exists scanty documented information on the attitude of females with physical disabilities towards education, the household factors that influence their access to education and the community's attitude towards provision of educational services to children with physical disabilities. With such little information, it is not clear how intervention measures can be put in place to empower the children to be self-reliant. In Cameroon, available records from the only special school for the physically disabled show that for every group of learners registered, very few disabled children complete their primary education as compared to their counterparts. This could be due to prejudices associated with disabilities; some children with physical disabilities may adopt negative attitudes leading to further difficulties in accessing education. Some parents may also sideline these children and give priority to able bodied ones. However, little has been

done to determine the socio-cultural factors, yet this knowledge is important for the design of proper strategies to help the children with disabilities access to education. Hence, this study seeks to examine socio-cultural factors as a determinant of parental negligence in the education of children with physical disabilities in the Tiko Municipality. The study sought to examine socio-cultural factors as a determinant of parental negligence in the education of children with physical disabilities in the Tiko Municipality.

Significance of the Study

It will contribute towards providing valuable information about the challenges and prospects of inclusive education of students with disabilities, increasing the awareness of the community about the particular areas for intervention. The study will provide the schools with a practical and context appropriate action plan in order to improve its inclusive policies and practices for the maximum benefit of students with disabilities. The study will add to the body of knowledge of the transformation of the tertiary institutions into fully inclusive institutions, which might at the same time foster a change of attitude from one model of thinking to another. The study could also serve as a source for other researchers conducting studies about other categories of disabilities and levels of inclusive schooling.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Parental Neglect

According to Korean Child Welfare Act (2001) neglect is defined as abandoning a child who needs protection/care from a protector or act of neglect that pretermits fundamental protection/nurture and treatment including the necessities of life (Ahn & Kang, 2003). In specific, neglect means the failure of a parent or other caregivers who have responsibility for a child to provide necessary clothing, shelter, food, medical care or supervision to the extent that the child's safety, health, and well-being are endangered (Children's Bureau, 2019). The above formal definitions of neglect are seemed to connote the protector's intentionality. However, as considering the current socio-economic changes such as the increase of double-income households or breakdown of a family which could lead to unintended parent's absence, it would also make children perceive themselves as being neglected.

Welch and Bonner (2013) specifically categorized parental neglect into 3 types; (1) Care Neglect (Deprivation of Needs), (2) Supervisory/Environmental Neglect, and (3) Medical Neglect. Care neglect (deprivation of needs) means that a victim child is denied from basic food, clothing, and shelter or was abandoned without any supplies of such resources (Welch et al., 2013). Supervisory/Environmental neglect indicates improper supervision by a caregiver who is responsible for a child; examples of improper supervisions could be defined as unintentional drowning in any body of water such as pools, lakes, and bathtubs; electrocution; poisoning; burns; or unintentional gunshot (Welch et al., 2013). Medical neglect includes cases that a child is denied from psychiatric care or medical and the need for the care that could lead to the child's death (Welch et al., 2013).

Causes of Parental Neglect

Child neglect can happen for a number of reasons. There is no unique theoretical model for explaining this phenomenon. Various theoretical formulations and models can be found in the

literature that attempt to explain the neglect and abuse of children. Blumenthal (2015) summarizes all the theoretical models in three different causal neglect models: a model of parental deficit, an environmental deficit model and an ecological-transactional model. In the parental deficit model, the starting point is that individuals (parents, guardians), and not communities, are primarily responsible for ensuring child welfare and that the cause of child neglect is inadequate parenting (Cameron, 2007). Parental characteristics (psychopathology, cognitive distortions or experience inappropriate care) are the major causal factors for child neglect. This model does not take in consideration the social and economic circumstances that can affect parenting, as well as recognition and sustention of neglect (Smith & Fong, 2004). The standing point of environmental deficit model is that material deprivation is the primary cause of child neglect.

The model emerged from sociological theories of explaining the causes and effects of intergenerational poverty. In this model, poverty induces stress that makes parents unable to materially and emotionally satisfy the needs of the child. In an ecological-transactional model, the cause of neglect is in the interaction of family characteristics and environmental factors. In this model, the focus was on the level of stress as well as stress coping mechanisms. When stress in the family exceeds the coping mechanisms, neglect may occur. Causes of neglect can be seen through the risk factors and protective factors related to the development of the child. When a child is exposed to risk factors combined with limited protective factors, it increases possibility to experience abuse or neglect (Lamont & Price-Robertson, 2013). The presence of risk factors does not mean that these factors also cause abuse or neglect of children.

Negative attitudes and beliefs towards individuals with disabilities

Beliefs and prejudices constitute barriers when the school, teachers and the community do not see the value of educating children with disabilities and when family members have low expectations of their children with disabilities. A good majority of people still believe that a disability is retribution for past wrong deeds committed. The low parent motivation to educate a child with disability is a major obstacle to active involvement by the parents. The main problems encountered by parents in educating their children with disabilities are stigmatization, negative attitudes from members of the society and parental ignorance (Mwangi & Orodho, 2014). Such a child is a shame to the whole family, hence their rejection by the family or the community. Children who are met by these beliefs and attitudes can hardly develop to their full potential. They get less attention, less stimulation, less education, less medical care, less upbringing and sometimes less nourishment than other children (Kenya Society for the Physically Handicapped, 1999).

From a cultural point of view, therefore, there are many specific circumstances that have influenced the living conditions of persons with disabilities, including people's attitudes towards them. Ignorance, neglect, superstition and fear are social factors that have exacerbated isolation of persons with disabilities. Attitudes towards individuals with disabilities in African countries have both positive and negative aspects and are often associated with beliefs about the causes of disability. Attitudes and cultural prejudices towards disability and persons with disabilities still continue to interfere with efforts aimed at educating children with disabilities (African Child Policy Forum, 2011).

Discrimination

Discrimination on the basis of disability is defined in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as any distinction, exclusion or restriction based on disability which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis, with others of all human rights (United Nations, 2006). Discrimination may manifest itself in the form of cultural prejudice, socio-economic activities and practices, legislation and administrative practices as well as environments that are inaccessible to individuals with disabilities. Discrimination may result from stigma against a person with a disability, a family member or someone associated with a person with a disability (United Nations-DSPD, 2016). Stigma and discrimination may lead to persons with disabilities facing exclusion and dehumanizing treatment. For individuals with disabilities and their families, stigma can often result in diminished status in the society (United Nations, 2016). Children with disabilities face extreme disparities and daunting challenges to the enjoyment of academic, social, and community participation. These forms of discrimination have the potential of keeping their parents away from actively getting involved in their education. Stigma can lead to discrimination against a person with a disability, a family member or someone associated with a person with a disability. As a result of stigma and discrimination, persons with disabilities may face exclusion and negative treatment in many aspects of their lives such as educational institutions.

High poverty levels

Parents of children with disabilities are challenged in their efforts to raise and educate their children. Poverty and disability strongly correlates, for example, poverty may increase the likelihood of a disability and may also be a consequence of disability. Poverty is considered as both a cause and consequence of disability and is one of the main barriers to education for children with disabilities in Kenya (Global Campaign for Education, 2015). Children with disabilities may have extra expenses associated with their education which includes the need for educational assessment, support and care, assistive technology, transportation and medical costs. The additional burden placed on families of children with disabilities exacerbates the impact of economic poverty. Parental beliefs about the potential benefits of schooling impact their decisions about assessment and school enrollment (Mutua & Dimitrov, 2012).

Theoretical Review

Attachment Theory

According to attachment theory by Bowlby (1988), in order to survive safely in the surrounding environment, a child especially in the early stages of development process chooses an adult (usually parents) who is sensitive and consistently responds to the child's demand, and the child develops a strong emotional bond with the adult, and attachment relationships to maintain proximity to the caregivers, when stressed, ill, or afraid. This theory suggests the importance of parental child-rearing attitude especially in early childhood. It equally explains the relationship between parental neglect and developmental problems in a child. Differences in sensitivity of care or child-rearing attitude by parents are proposed to be associated with individual differences in attachment (Scharfe, 2017). In other words, the child's behavioral development directly depends on the attachment or relationships with the parents, and it considerably affects personality, cognitive ability, and social development throughout a lifetime; from early childhood and

adolescence to adulthood. In addition to the attachment theory by Bowlby (1988), the security theory by Ainsworth (1970) explains the importance of maternal role. According to security theory, when young children are in a state of an unfamiliar environment, they need a secure dependence on their parents as a prerequisite.

According to developmental theory, the parenting styles and the corresponding child behavioral strategies will change as the child grows up and develops. Giudice (2009) presented that in the time of infants and toddlers, they rely solely on parental care for survival; in the time of lower elementary school years, they depend on parental care to develop social competence in social areas which are rapidly expanded to peers, schools, and other adults. Developmental theory indicates that parental care, supervision or attention to their child especially in early childhood has a significant impact on social development in the child. Furthermore, a child's self-recognition and expectation on parental role or attitude could flexibly change according to their developmental stages. That is, in the process of developmental stages, a lack of parental appropriate attitude and proper concern could disturb or delay the behavioral development at the childhood which is the most important period in human life.

Empirical Review

According to a study Akpoto (2023) on parental socio-cultural background as predictors of child abuse in Delta State, Nigeria. The study examined the connection between parental socio-cultural belief and child abuse. Using a correlational research design, a total of 500 participants were enlisted from Delta State, Nigeria for the study. The participants were asked to answer a self-constructed questionnaire. The data were analyzed with independent samples t-test, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Pearson's correlation coefficient (PPMCC). The result showed that male and female parents did not differ in the abuse of their children ($p > 0.05$ level of significance; $d = .002$, for physical abuse; $.003$ for sexual abuse; and $.001$ for child neglect). Also, there was no statistically significant difference in child abuse based on parents' marital status ($p > 0.05$ level of significance; $d = .01$, for physical abuse; $.01$ for sexual abuse; and $.01$ for child neglect). Although a relationship existed between the cultural belief, religious belief and child abuse, the relationship was not moderated by gender and parents' marital status.

Another study by Staal, Hermanns, Schrijvers and van Stel (2013) on risk assessment of parents' concerns at 18 months in preventive child health care predicted child abuse and neglect. Child abuse & neglect, 37(7), 475-484 assessed parental neglect and child abuse in child development in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State. Specifically, the study was designed to examine parental responsibility towards their child, examine areas of child neglect and abuse, identify factors associated with parental neglect and child abuse and suggest social work intervention techniques in ameliorating parental neglect and child abuse in the study area. Purposive sampling technique was used to get information from 50 respondents. Collected data was analyzed using percentage, mean score and regression analysis. Findings showed that the areas of parental responsibilities were: provision of food, clothing, healthcare and shelter, counseling in sex, career and friends, training to instill moral values. Areas of child neglects and abuse are street hawking, maltreatment, use of internet without guidance and lack of proper supervision. Factors associated with parental neglect and abuses are polygamy and joblessness on the part of parents. Social work intervention techniques are provision of rehabilitation centres for neglected and abused children. The study

recommends that the media should promote programmes that deal on childcare and the dangers of child neglect.

METHODS

Study Design

The study used descriptive research design which was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. In this study, descriptive study was used to provide information on the attitudes of children with disabilities on education, the household factors that hinder their access to education and the community's attitude towards education of children with physical disabilities.

Sampling and Sampling Procedure

A total of 100 children with physical disabilities were enrolled in the study. Purposive sampling procedure was used to reach 40 females with physical disabilities in school which was the entire population of females with physical disabilities in the upper primary in the school. The other 60 males with physical disabilities who were out of school and were sampled through snowball which is the easiest way of reaching hidden population which are difficult to access. The study employed saturation concept on finding the respondents with physical disabilities who were out of school as recommended by Griffin and Hauser (1993). Ten (10) opinion leaders were purposively sampled, these included two (2) area administrators, chief and assistant chief, (5) religious leaders, two were from the main churches that sponsor special schools, two were from the churches where majority of the respondents attended and one was from the nearest church to the school, and three (3) education officers who were in charge of special education in the area. Twenty (20) teachers were purposively sampled out of twenty-three, three teachers who were not in school during the research period did not participate. Twenty (20) parents of females with physical disabilities were sampled through purposive sampling and only real parents were selected excluding care takers who were not biological parents. The total number of respondents was one hundred and fifty.

Instruments of Data Collection

Questionnaires were administered to 100 responders who are physically disabled and 20 teachers in a school for physically disabled. These were expected to provide information on the attitude of children who are physically disabled and on the socio-cultural factors that affect their education. An interview schedules was also used to explore respondents' perspective on a particular idea, program or situation associated with their experiences and expectations.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data was analyzed using ethnographic methods of thematic analysis to determine the themes, trends and opinions expected within the contexts of the information obtained. This study used the six phases which included familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes among codes, reviewing themes, defining, naming themes and production of final report. Themes coded according to the attitude of children with disabilities attitude towards education included, role models, employment opportunities, and other peoples' attitudes. Themes that emerged from household factors included, financial implications, family cohesion and orphan hood and the themes that emerged from the community's attitude included, discrimination, stigmatization and rejection. Considering the range and diversity of participants, experiences and perceptions verbatim quotations were included to show feelings, attitudes and perceptions of the

participants. Quantitative data was coded and analyzed using statistical package for social scientists which presented descriptive statistics through tabular descriptions.

FINDINGS

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

A total of 100 respondents who are physically disabled were involved in the study. Data collected revealed that 44% of the respondents were aged between 12-14. Those between the ages of 15-17 were 37%, while those aged 18 and above were 19%. Among the respondents who were out of school, a small portion of 5% had never been to any school while 55% had been to school 5% of them were once in regular schools while 50% percent were once in special schools but had dropped out at some stage before completing primary education. The occupational status of those with physical disabilities who were out of school included; 30% doing small businesses, 15% were just at home, 5% were beggars, 8% were working as house helps, while 2% were working as commercial workers.

Religious affiliation of the respondents showed that majority 97% were Christians while a paltry 3% were Muslims. A moderate number of Christians, 30%, belonged to the Catholic denomination, while 67% were Protestants. The demographic analysis shows that majority of them with physical disabilities attend primary school when they are over fifteen years of age. It also shows that very few with physical disabilities attend regular schools. This could be attributed to inaccessible infrastructure or the attitude of able bodied people towards them. It was also evident that majority of the respondents with physical disabilities who were out of school had once been in school but had dropped out before completing their primary education, due to various challenges associated with their disability.

Attitude of Respondents towards Education

The study sought to find out the attitude of respondents towards education. The issues that were investigated included their understanding of the importance of education, academic performance of people with physical disabilities, reasons for dropping out of school and the career choice of females with physical disabilities.

Table 1: Responses on whether education is important

Age	Yes	No	Total
12-14	43	1	44
15-17	34	1	35
18 & above	17	4	21
Total	94	6	100

Most of the respondents were aware of the importance of education but due to various challenges experienced as a result of their disability, they felt that education was not beneficial to them. For example, quite a large number, (85%), mentioned the rigid and inaccessible curriculum. They do the same examinations as their able bodied peers without the consideration that some of them write using their mouth or leg instead of hands. During the interview schedule with the respondents with physical disabilities, a large number of them mentioned examinations at the end of every term as a factor that hinders their enthusiasm for learning as most of them do not perform well in the exams due to various challenges associated with their disability.

Academic Performance of children with Physical Disabilities

This section sought to investigate the academic performance of children with physical disabilities and the teachers were the main sources of information.

Table 2: Academic performance of children with physical disabilities

Performance	Frequency	Percent
Above average	0	0
Average	5	25
Below average	15	75
Total	20	100

The result presented above indicates that majority of the respondents perform below average. Analysis of the interview with the teachers revealed that parents or guardians of children with physical disabilities took the children education for granted. The children were taken to school several weeks later after schools had opened. The children were then left until the end of term without being visited. According to the teachers, parents felt that leaving the children in school was a burden taken away from them by the teachers. This was confirmed by one parent who had this to say, when asked why her daughter reported to school late:

“My husband took another wife and abandoned me with four children. I am not employed anywhere and can afford to employ a maid to take care of my daughter while am away. Locking my daughter alone in the house from morning to evening as I look for what we can eat pains me so much that I would rather bring her to school where she can stay with the teachers and other children with the same condition as hers. She even says she is happier while in school”

This is similar to the interview where, many parents prioritize taking their able bodied children to school first and only considered taking those with physical disabilities to school later if finances were still available. However, for the parents, school attendance was not for academic gain but to get relieved from the burden of taking care of the children. The girls therefore did not strive to work hard in school giving excuses that they were taken to school late, leading to low academic performance.

Interviews with children with physical disabilities about the state of their performance partly supported the teachers’ view that the parents did not take their daughters’ education seriously. Majority of the respondents confirmed that they were taken to school several weeks later after schools had opened. They were not given enough shopping, no pocket money and no visitation until the schools closed. This affects their emotional and psychological wellbeing which in turn affects their performance. Several issues were raised during the interview that hinders their academic performance. Sexual abuse was among the factors mentioned. One girl narrated how she was repeatedly sexually abused by an uncle and was threatened not to reveal the experience.

Reasons for Dropping out of School

A majority (95%) of respondents with physical disabilities who were out of school had once been in school but dropped out before completion of primary education. This study investigated the reasons for their dropping out of school of which the results are presented in table 3.

Table 3: Reasons for dropping out of school

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Disability	6	10
Illness	2	3.3
Lack of fees	3	5
Infrastructure	3	5
Underachievement	32	53.3
Lack of interest	2	3.3
Pregnancy	6	10
Distance	3	5
Combined	3	5
Total	60	100

The most frequent barrier mentioned by children with physical disabilities that contributed to their dropping out of school was under achievement in their academic performance. Interview with teachers of pupils with physical disabilities revealed several issues as the barriers to the children academic achievement. According to the teachers, people with physical disabilities were likely to have other hidden disabilities that affect their intellectual functioning.

Irrelevant, overloaded and expensive content of the curriculum was raised as another factor for dismal academic performance by the females with physical disabilities. Rigid assessment procedures, based on the mean score competition which does not consider learners with physical disabilities, was a major cause of many females dropping out of school. Moreover, when they were made to repeat more than once, they felt defeated and opted out.

Family Income

Family income plays an important role in children's education. It emerged that education for females with physical disabilities is more expensive than that of able bodied girls and it was therefore important to find out the source of income of parents or caretakers of girls with physical disabilities.

Table 4: Source of income

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Permanent employment	2	10
Business	8	40
Farming	5	25
Casual work	5	2
Total	20	100

Interview with the parents of the girls revealed that the cost of educating children with physical disability is higher than that of educating a non-disabled child. The parents therefore opted to take the able bodied females to school and left the others with physical disability to stay at home. Other factors were related to the direct and indirect costs of sending them with physical disabilities to school which were overwhelming, especially when coupled with the overall poverty of the family and employment prospects available. Despite the government's effort to provide Free Primary Education (FPE), parents of children with physical disabilities have a lot of other direct costs such

as the provision of assistive devices, transportation to school and medical expenses to meet. All these are constraints to enrolling and keeping children with physical disabilities in school. The effect of school fees payment was a significant factor that made children with physical disabilities drop out of school. According to a principal of a special school visited, most of the parents only pay school fees on admission and after the fees has accumulated for more than one year, they withdraw the learners from school.

Parents' Level of Education

Table 5: Parent's level of Education

Level of Education	Frequency	Percent
Completed primary education	5	25
Dropped out	6	30
Complete secondary	2	10
Dropped from secondary	3	15
Complete university	1	5
Total	20	100

It was evident that most parents were aware of the benefits of sending their children with physical disabilities to school. However, when situations that prevented them from educating all their children arose then children with physical disabilities were usually the ones not enrolled in the schools. It also emerged that some parents of children with physical disabilities repeated the same mistakes their own parents made when they were young. Their intention was to send their daughters into early marriages immediately when they felt they were old enough to be married. Some of the parents, especially those with very little or no education, believed that their daughters would not make it in academics even if given a chance. One of the parents who had never been to school had this to say.

The females with physical disabilities are therefore taken to schools but are withdrawn as soon as they mature in order to prepare them for marriage. It was also revealed by the parents that some parents with very little or no education still hold on to the belief that there are men who do not want educated wives who may challenge their authority. When such men want to marry their daughters, such parents pull the girls out of school. Such parents also believed that marriage would solve some of the family's financial problems. For example, their physically challenged daughter will no longer be their responsibility. It was made clear that such traditional beliefs still prevail in society. The attitude that it is more beneficial to formally educate a boy than a girl with physical disability was therefore confirmed. Findings with regard to the impact of parents' education on schooling of children show that the children of more educated parents are more likely to be enrolled and more likely to progress further with education than those whose parents are not educated.

Interviews held with the children with physical disabilities who were out of school revealed that none of them had parents with education beyond primary level. It was revealed that girls are more likely to drop out of school than boys and pupils whose mothers have not attained any level of education will most likely dropout of school. High academic attainment of a mother and a father "I have been able to take good care of my family through business and I believe that with or without education, my daughter can make it in life. When a girl stays for so long in pursuit of education, she ends up not getting a husband, men fear marrying educated ladies"

DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that, children with physical disabilities attitudes towards their education are highly influenced by the attitude of their socio-cultural factors. The majority of children with physical disabilities perceive education as important only to the able-bodied individuals. This could be attributed to lack of role models who have gone through education and are in good employment. Due to various challenges experienced as a result of their disability, they feel that education is not beneficial to them, hence the negative attitude towards their own education. Majority of children with physical challenges have no hope of gainful employment after their education. This results in low self-esteem. The girls meet a lot of discrimination against various resources which leads to hopelessness and lack of enthusiasm in education. Due to low expectations from girls with physical challenges by their teachers and parents, the girls also expect very little from themselves. As they observe other people's attitude towards their education, they lose hope and render themselves unfit educationally. Some of the socio-cultural factors that influence access to education of children with physical challenges included large families that are not able to provide for educational needs of all their children. When faced with economic hardships, given that the direct and indirect costs of sending girls with physical challenges to school is higher than that of taking the non-disabled girls to school, the parents opt to take boys and the able bodied girls to school leaving the physically challenged girls to remain at home.

When the costs of taking children to school become overwhelming to poverty stricken families, the children with physical challenges are sometimes used to work as house helps to help raise school fees for their able bodied siblings. Majority of girls with physical challenges lack family cohesiveness which leads to lack of motivation, effort and zeal towards their academics as they have no one to impress. Children with physical challenges whose parents are educated are more likely to access education than those whose parents have little or no education.

Society generally believes that disabilities are caused by witchcraft, curses or wrongs done by the children's parents. Economically, empowered relatives easily accept to help their poor relatives by paying school fees for their able bodied children but not to those with disabilities. Sexual harassment to girls with physical disabilities is downplayed. However, sexual harassment of such girls by males in the community including family members, teachers, and boys usually have drastic effect on the girls' education. As a result of lack of acceptance into regular schools, most of the girls with physical challenges attend special boarding schools far away from their homes and due to long distances and transportation problems; they opt to drop out of school. All the schools for the physically challenged are still registered as schools for the physically handicapped. This label illustrates a deeply rooted stigmatization and discrimination of people with disabilities in society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers and parents of children with physical disabilities should collaborate with other stakeholders in education need to recognize the challenges faced by children with physical disabilities in accessing education and provide strategies to meet and overcome the challenges. Children with physical disabilities should have more opportunities to observe role models with physical disabilities in good careers; this would motivate them to work hard to emulate the role models.

Schools should implement flexible alternatives of school fees payments such as inform of agricultural produce or provision of labor for the school fees. The government should establish special boarding schools for females with physical disabilities in every county which are currently missing in Cameroon. The government should be able to identify and support learners with disabilities who are orphaned. The government should formulate and enforce laws to protect females who are physically disabled from practices that threaten their wellbeing. The government should collaborate with policy formulators to find means of implementing the policies that would make all regular schools accessible to all learners with physical disabilities so that all learners can attend schools that are closer to their homes. This would make it possible for females with physical disabilities to attend any school that is closer to their homes without difficulties.

Implications for Education and Contributions to Psychological Knowledge

Negative attitude of children with physical disabilities towards their education is highly influenced by the attitudes of people around them, lack of role models who are in gainful employment, rigid assessment procedures that make them dropout of school, inaccessibility to existing infrastructure in learning institutions and lack of confidence in social settings due to stigmatization and discrimination, impacts negatively on the children with disabilities attitude towards their own education. The children with physical disabilities therefore believe that education is important only to able bodied individuals but not for them.

Socio-cultural factors that influence access to education by children with physical disabilities results from socio-cultural factors such as inability to pay for the cost of education for females with disability as their education is costlier as compared to their able bodied peers. Children with physical disabilities from higher socioeconomic income are more likely to access education than those from low socioeconomic income. Children with physical disabilities from families with conflicts tend to drop out of school earlier than those with physical disabilities from intact families. Physical disability coupled with orphanhood make the children with physical disabilities face a lot of challenges that hinder them from accessing education.

Children with physical disabilities whose parents have higher education are more likely to access education than those whose parents have little or no education. Due to long distance to schools, females with physical disabilities are more likely to drop out of school than males with physical disabilities. Community's attitude towards education of children with physical disabilities revealed that children with physical disabilities are less valued than those without physical disabilities. Attitudes and practices embedded in cultural beliefs, taboos, rites of passage and religion create obstacles that are insurmountable to participation of females with physical disabilities in social and cultural activities which eventually hinder their access to education.

REFERENCES

- Ainsworth, M. D. S. (1969). Individual Differences in Strange-Situational Behaviour of One-Year-Olds.
- American Association of University Women (2013). *How Schools should change Girls*. (The A.A.U.W. Report). New York. Marlow.
- Also P.R. Fitzsimons A. Annette & Lennon, K. (2002). *Theorizing Gender*. Maldon, Massi, Blackwell.

- Asch, A., Rossou, H., & Jefferies, T. (2001). *Beyond Pedestals; The lives of girls and Women with disabilities. Double jeopardy: Addressing gender equity in special education*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Baker, D.L., Miller, E. & Dang, M.T. (2010). Developing culturally responsive approaches with Southeast Asian American families experiencing developmental disabilities. *Pediatrics*. 126(3) 146-150.
- Bigge, J. L., Best, S.J. & Heller, K.W (2001). *Teaching individuals with physical, health or multiple disabilities*. Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle.
- Bickman, L., & Rog, D. (2008). *The Sage handbook of applied social research methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Beiter, K. D. (2005). *The protection of the right to education by international law: Including a systematic analysis of article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (Vol. 82). Brill.
- Cameron, D. (2007). *The myth of Mars and Venus*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Chege, F. and N. Sifuria (2006). *Girls and Women's Education in Kenya*. Gender Perspectives and Trends; Nairobi: UNESCO.
- Coteridge, P. (2000). *Disability and culture, selected readings in community based rehabilitation*. Bangalore: National Printing Press.
- Deabster, K. (2003). *Seen but not heard; Girls Educational Barriers in Secondary Schools in Western Kenya*. Nairobi Bureau City Research: Kenyatta University.
- Dakar Framework for Education for All (2000). *Aiming to meet Learning Needs of All Children* (Global Monitoring Report) Dakar: Senegal.
- Dimitrov, S., & Haas, H. (2012). Information rate of OFDM-based optical wireless communication systems with nonlinear distortion. *Journal of Lightwave Technology*, 31(6), 918-929.
- Eileen, K. (2004). *Girls Education in Africa*. The World Bank Press. Washington D.C.
- Eshiwani, G. et al., (1988). *Education in A Semi-Arid Area*. Nairobi Bureau for Educational Research. Kenyatta University.
- FAWE (2009). *Girls and African Education, Research and Action to keep girls in school*. Nairobi.
- Fitzsimons, A. & Lennon, K. (2002). Social construction of gender difference. NY: New York. Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE, 2004). *Review of National Educational Policies and Plans for Potential for Scaling up Good Practices in Girls Education*. Nairobi: FAWE
- Fenstermaker, S. & West, C. (2002). *Gender inequality. Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge.
- Frankline, P. (2000). *Impact of Disability on the family and participation in the community*. Bangalore: National Printing Press.
- Heller, K.W., Forney, P.E., Alberto, P.A., Schwartzman, M.N., & Goeckel, T.M. (2000). *Meeting physical and health needs of children with disabilities*.

- Johnson, R.B., & Christensen, L.B. (2014). (5th edition). Educational research methods: *Quantitative, qualitative and mixed approaches*. Los Angeles, C.A: Sage.
- John –Stainer & Mahn, H (1996). *Socio-cultural Approaches to learning and development*: SAGE Publications, London.
- Juma, M.N. (1994). *Determinant of female participation in primary education. A study of Kwale and Taita Taveta Districts*. Unpublished Doctor of Philosophy Thesis. Kenyatta University.
- Jurasek, G. (2000). A positive Spirit. Exceptional parent. *Journal of Education* 30 (5), 40-45.
- Mohit, A., Pillai, M., & Rungta, P. (2006). *Rights of the Disabled* (p. 13). New Delhi: National Human Rights Commission.
- Mukobe, J. (2013). Economic empowerment of persons with disabilities through inclusive social protection and poverty reduction. In sixth conference of state parties of the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities at the United Nations Headquarters, New York.
- Mwangi, Orodho & (2014). Challenges facing implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools in Nyeri County. *Journal of Education and practice*, 5(16), 118-124.
- Staal, I. I., Hermanns, J. M., Schrijvers, A. J., & van Stel, H. F. (2013). Risk assessment of parents' concerns at 18 months in preventive child health care predicted child abuse and neglect. *Child abuse & neglect*, 37(7), 475-484.
- Smith, M., & Fong, R. (2004). *Children of neglect: When no one cares*. Routledge