

**INFLUENCE OF HOME AND SCHOOL RELATED FACTORS IN  
MITIGATING READING DISABILITIES AMONG CLASS FOUR  
LEARNERS IN THARAKA-NITHI COUNTY, KENYA**

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**DECLARATION**

**By the candidate**

I confirm that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented in any other university for certification. The thesis has been complemented by referenced sources duly acknowledged. Where text, data, graphics, pictures or tables have been borrowed from other sources including the internet, these are specifically accredited through referencing in accordance with the anti-plagiarism regulations.

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**DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my family

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**ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

FPE	-Free Primary Education
LD	-Learning difficulties
LD	-Learning disabilities
MOE	-Ministry of Education
NAEP	-National Assessment of Education Progress
NICHHD	-National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
NRP	-National Reading Panel
RD	- Reading Disabilities
SNE	-Special Needs Education
UNESCO	-United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization.
UPE	-Universal Primary Education

**ABSTRACT**

Reading is one of the basic skills that children should master during their first school years. The skills enable them to assimilate new knowledge and skills in future. This study was aimed at establishing the extent to which home and school related factors contribute to mitigating reading disabilities in primary schools in Kenya. It investigated the extent to which teachers are aware of the characteristics of reading disabilities (RD). Simple random sampling was used to select 4 primary schools from each zone, making a total of 8 schools. From each school, 4 learners were randomly selected from the list of those with RD. A total of 32 learners was sampled for the study. 8 teachers who are in charge of class four were also included in the study, making a total of 16 teachers. 32 Parents of learners with RD were included as well. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze quantitative data from the questionnaires for learners and teachers. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically in line with the study objectives. The study established that in Tharaka Nithi County, learners with a reading disability demonstrated difficulties in reading skills that were unexpected in relation to age, cognitive ability, quantity and quality of instruction and intervention. The study further established that teachers were aware of and employed the various methods of teaching reading in English but do not provide basic prerequisite activities that would prepare and aid learners when reading English. The study established that in primary schools in Tharaka Nithi, the teachers made adjustments to their instructions, the environment, curriculum topics and materials to accommodate students' diversity and to help all students achieve objectives. Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concludes that; the teachers were able to identify some of the characteristics of the learners with reading disabilities in primary schools. The study further concludes that the parents too had a role to play in the learning of the children with learning disabilities as the success of these learners was greatly determined by the parent's actions, as well as their active involvement in their learning activities as well as school activities. the researcher made the following recommendations; The ministry of education, through the KICD should revise the teacher training curriculum, so as to include the methods of identifying the learners with reading disabilities as well as other emerging special needs. The Kenyan Government through Kenya institute of special education should also organize on job trainings and seminars for the teachers already in practice on matters pertaining to the reading disabilities, to equip all the teachers with the relevant adequate knowledge to handle the learners. The schools should be given adequate funding to purchase adequate learning materials for all the learners, and specifically those that have learning disabilities. The schools should also organize seminars for the parents as well as parent's meetings and insist to them on the needs to get involved in their children education, even while at home.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter looked at the background to the study which discusses the importance of acquiring reading skills at a global, regional and national level. It further looked at the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, study objectives research questions, significance of the study, limitations and delimitations, assumptions of the study, theoretical and conceptual framework and finally operational definition of terms.

#### **1.2 Background to the Study**

Without the ability to read, academic and occupational opportunities for children are limited. Evidence presented to the sub-committee on the Education reform of the House of Representatives, US, indicated that above 75% of students who withdrew from school cited to have reading difficulties in reading, (Lyon 2001). One of the most powerful predictors of success in schools and life is the ability to read the English language is. In addition, personal independence is dependent on at least functional literacy. Difficulties in reading limits academic progress as proficiency in other subjects depends on the ability to read. In grade 4 (Or Kenyan Standard four), learners are expected to be able to read effectively to ensure learning of other subjects successfully. Most jobs in our society also require minimal reading skills. Half of the students identified as learning-disabled exhibited problems in reading (Bender, 2008, Lerner & Kline, 2006). Therefore, reading disabilities (RD) need to be addressed at the level of grade 4 as it may continue up to adulthood.

In Uganda, the UWEZO report launched at Makerere University in Kampala indicated that some children in grade 3 could hardly read the grade 2 work (Uwezo, 2014). The development of reading skills establishes a significant academic footing for all educational-based learning. Inept reading skills results in numerous difficulties for individuals in the job market after school. The present study aimed to establish the situation of RD in Tharaka Nithi County and offer relevant recommendations.

According to the latest Uwezo Kenya Report (2012), only 15 percent out of the 348,384 learners of class three interviewed in East Africa could understand class 2 reading and maths test. The report also stated that regardless of the convention that learners understanding peaks with progress to upper classes, at least 29 percent of standard 7 learners still experienced challenges in reading and understanding an English test meant for standard 2 learners. The findings of Uwezo Kenya Report (2012), established that the primary school children lacked basic literacy and numeracy skills across the region and as the previous findings in Uwezo report (2011), nothing had improved. It was against this backdrop that this study sought to investigate the extent to which home and school related factors contributed to remediation of RD in Kenyan Primary schools.

The Kenyan syllabus for primary school's states; as part of its objectives, that at the end of three years the children should acquire reading skills to enable them read and understand instructions. They are supposed to be able to read for information and for pleasure. On the other hand, learners in class four were expected to be able to read effectively to ensure learning of other subjects successfully. Non-readers in class 4 would

benefit from basic academic skills if accorded appropriate remediation and especially if teachers were aware that class four and above is a crucial stage where learners should read by themselves and use the skills to comprehend (Runo, 2010). Half of the students identified with learning disabilities (LD) exhibited problems in reading (Bender, 2008, Lerner & Kline, 2006). Most recently, the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) report, (2011) indicated that by fourth grade, one third of the learners did not attain basic reading skills. Therefore, enhancing reading early in children's school years has long-term advantage to the individual as well as society. Hence the choice of class 4 to establish to what extent what is expected of learners at this level was real on the ground in Maara Sub-County of Tharaka Nithi County.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Reading is a complex behaviour comprising of a number of skills lack of which lead to reading failure hence affecting other academic subjects, (Salvia & Snnseldyke, 2007). Becoming a skilled reader is very important in the society and one who is not skilled in reading is at a greatly disadvantaged, both in school and at the workstation (Kirk, Gallagher & Anastasion, 2003). Reading skills are normally taught during the first three years of primary education (Paananen, 2009). Therefore, it is expected that by the time a learner is in class four, he or she must be a competent reader. Children who have poor reading skill are highly likely to repeat a class in school, dropout of schools, enter the juvenile justice system or become parents at teenage. For unknown reasons, even after teaching of learners, unfortunate a large number (17.6%) is not able to read competently at higher class levels, (Lerner, 2006)

This study aimed at identifying whether such a situation applies to learners in Kenyan primary schools. The home attitude is very significant important for a child's growth in all facets of life including education. It plays a role on learners' reading ability, (Paananen, 2009). This study aimed to establish the level to which home and school related factors contributed to the enhancement of reading skills and mitigating reading disabilities among class four learners in Maara Sub-County of Tharaka Nithi County.

#### **1.4 Aim of the Study**

This study was designed to examine the effectiveness of home and school related factors in remediation of reading disabilities among class four learners in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.

#### **1.5 Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study were to;

- i. Establish the extent to which teachers are aware of the characteristics of learners with RD
- ii. Establish the extent to which teacher related factors contribute to the remediation of reading disabilities among learners
- iii. Determine the extent to which school related factors contribute to the remediation of RD among learners.
- iv. Explore how far home-based factors contribute to the remedy of reading disabilities among learners in schools.

## **1.6 Research questions**

- i. To what extent are teachers aware of the characteristics of learners with reading disabilities?
- ii. To what extent do teacher related factors contribute to remediation of reading disabilities?
- iii. To what extent are school related factors contribute to remediation of reading disabilities?
- iv. To what extent do home related factors contribute to the remediation of reading disabilities among learners?

## **1.7 Assumptions of the Study**

The study assumed that teachers teaching English in primary schools were not fully exposed to the characteristics of learners reading disabilities among the learners. Teachers were not aware of the reading approaches and instructional techniques available for teaching learners with reading problems. Lack of reading materials and other learning resources in school and at home adversely affected the child reading ability and level. Reading remediation by regular teachers in Kenya was not fully effective in ameliorating reading disabilities. The home environment adversely contributed to the improvement in a child's reading skills from pre-school through primary school.

## **1.8 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

### **1.8.1. Limitations**

The study was restricted to learners with RD in public primary schools only at the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. The study findings are based on the data collected from the respondents, and thus

the researcher did not go to confirm what the respondents said. The focused of the study was on one sub-county in the target county and thus generalization of these results to the entire Tharaka Nithi County should be made with caution.

### **1.8.2 Delimitations**

The study was confined to 32 grade four learners and 16 teachers from 8 schools in the sub-county. The study focused on one teacher for English and the class teacher as well as two parents of the learners with reading difficulties from each of the sampled schools. A list of schools from the sub county education office was used to select the sample schools. The other delimitation was that the study only covered reading difficulties in English language.

### **1.9 Significance of the Study**

This study provides information on the extent to which teachers were aware of characteristics of RD among learners as well as the extent to which home related and school related factors contribute to the remediation of RD among learners in Kenya. The information collected and the recommendations made from this research may be beneficial to teachers, curriculum developers and policy makers for planning and teaching of reading so as to assist learners who may have challenge in reading. The study may enlighten the parents on the ways to improve reading in their children to enhance academic performance. Parents may benefit directly from the improvement that their children will make on successful remediation of reading disabilities. Finally, it's expected that the finding of this study will not only be useful to teachers but also to the curriculum

developers in evaluation of the reading curriculum and the allocation of time for each reading lesson.

### **1.10 Theoretical Framework**

The PASS theory of cognitive processes as analyzed by Alexander Luria, (1973) was the basis of the theoretical framework of this study. PASS is an acronym for Planning, Attention, Simultaneous and Successive (Goldstein, Princiotta & Naglieri, 2015). The theory provides a remediation curriculum known as pass reading enhancement program (PREP) which is designed to advance the planning, attention and information processing strategies that underlying reading, which was the basis of this study. Planning refers to the mental process by which the child determines, selects and uses efficient solutions to problems (Luria, 1973). In this study, for remediation to be effective, planning is inevitable. Planning has been applied in selection or development of strategies required to accomplish tasks for which a solution is needed. In this study planning was involved in arrangement of information into holistic patterns. It involves the same kind of process as did the comprehension of the meaning of a word, sentence or a paragraph (Kendeon & Papadopolous, 2002).

Attention is defined as a mental process that is closely related to orienting response (Goldstein, Princiotta & Naglieri, 2015). The longer attention is required, the more the activity can vigilance. Reading being a meaning-making activity involves an interaction between the text and the reader (Grabe & Stoller, 2001). Therefore, readers construct meaning from text using use mental activities. According to Luria, successive processing

usually involves the serial organization of sounds and movement in order and therefore is integral to early reading. For instance, working with sounds in sequence enhances reading competence. Reading failure is the result of a deficit in the sequencing of information (Successive processing).

Poor readers seem to have difficulty in the successive processing skills including random word sequences or series, sentence repetition and speech rate. What is important is the type of tasks and situations that must be carefully considered during the designing of a remedial program to enhance cognitive strategies that may be lacking in a child. Skills such as word decoding and spelling and where the mainstreaming of the exact sequence of letters in the word is crucial for reading (Hayward Das & Janzen, 2007).

Simultaneous processing is essential for organizing information into groups or a coherent whole. Among the functional units of the PASS theory, particular attention in relation to reading development and reading disabilities has been paid to simultaneous processing components. This concurs with the critical component skills that advocates for proficient reading such as phonological coding. These skills are essential for appropriate remedying in reading.

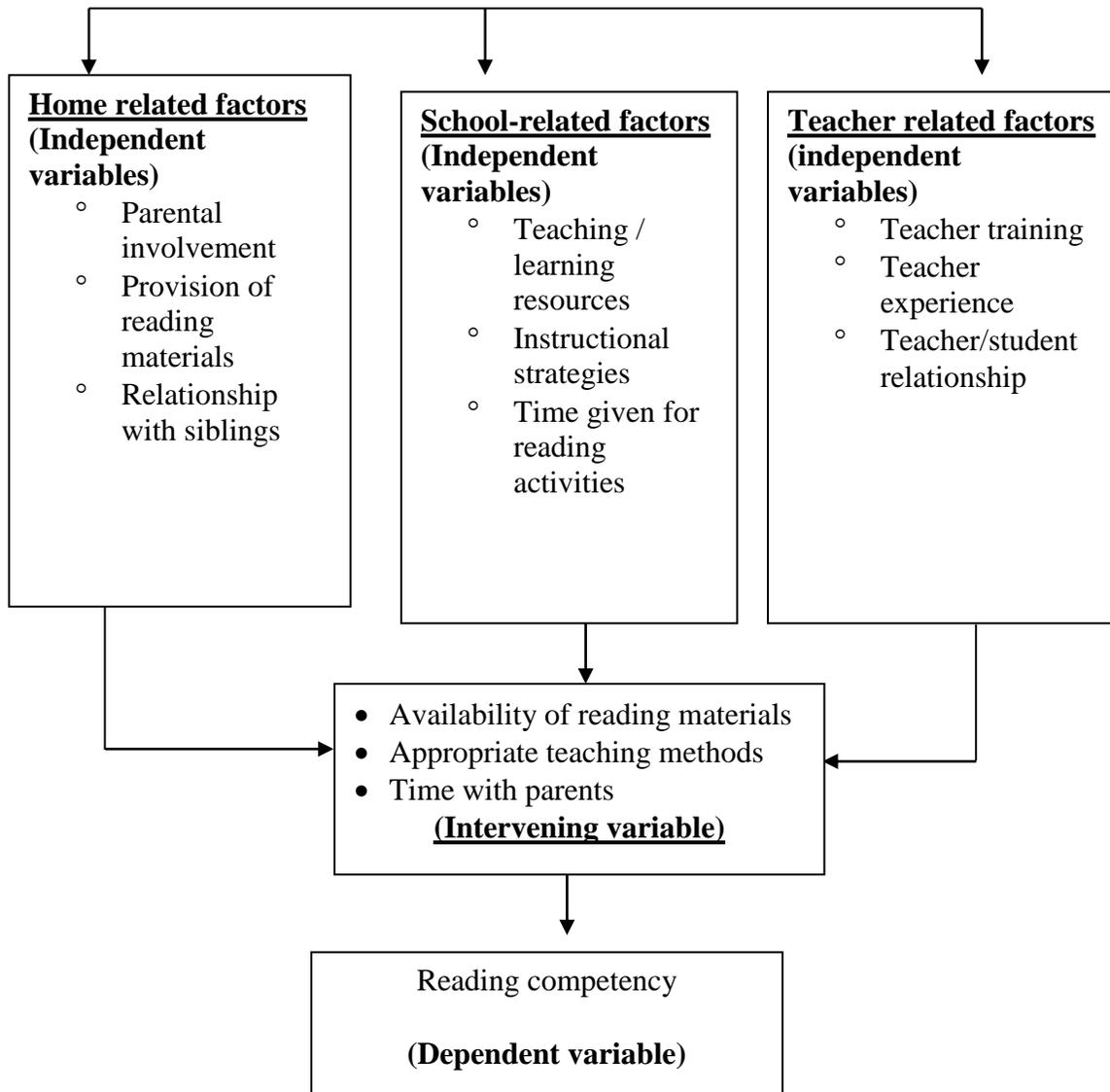
In this study, PASS theory was applicable since the study established that the teachers could identify some of the characteristics of the learners with reading, planning was needed and was essential on matters of teacher training and experience on reading disabilities which was found to have an influence on the teaching and learning of learners

with reading disabilities. Through planning, as was advocated by PASS theory, some schools made planning and adjustments to their instructions, curriculum topics, the environment and materials to accommodate students' and it proved effective in improving the learning of the affected learners. Thus, the theory helped address the research gaps, especially in establishing that the schools that had well planned instruction systems, were able to accommodate the learners with reading difficulties.

### **1.11 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of this study indicated that reading disabilities might result from external factors. These include factors related to the home environment such as parental involvement, provision of reading materials; school related and teacher related factors such as provision for teaching and learning materials, instructional strategies used, time given for the reading activities, the qualification of teachers as well as their relationship with the learners. The theoretical framework has been applied on this study to model how the independent variable (Home, School and Teacher related factors) have been applied to remedy of reading disabilities among the learners. The PASS theory which was the basis of this study, expounds on the remediation curriculum developed to advance the planning, attention and information processing strategies that enhance reading. Thus, the theory models the association of individual independent variables with the dependent variable (remedy to reading disabilities).

**Figure 1.1 Conceptual framework on remediation of reading disabilities**



**Source: Researcher's own conceptualization of the research problem**

### 1.12 Operational Definition of Terms

**Intervene** - In this study, intervention is to take part in something so as to deter or change a result or course of events

**Literacy** - In this study, literacy is applied as the capacity of a learner to read, write, speak, listen, use numeracy and technology, at an extent that allows people to express and understand ideas as well as opinions.

**Phonemic Awareness** - In this study, this is described as the ability to hear, recognize, and change individual sounds-phonemes--in spoken words.

**Proficiency** - In this study, proficiency is the ability of a learner to speak or perform in a language.

**Reading** - In this study, it is an active process of constructing meanings of words.

**Reading difficulties** - In this study, children who have a specific reading problem may fall behind their peers in literacy skills development.

**Remediation** - In this study, remediation is applied as a word for fixing things that aren't right.

### 1.13 Conclusion

This chapter has presented an introduction to the study, and previous studies that have reviewed the reading difficulties in learners, at different levels of education. The chapter also outlines the significance of this study to stakeholders such as teachers, learners, parents and policy maker in education. The next chapter presents a review of literature related to this study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Chapter two provides an analysis of literature relevant to this study. The literature was presented in this chapter is in relation to the objectives in chapter one. The following areas were focused on; context of remedying reading disabilities in schools, teachers and the awareness of the characteristics of reading disabilities, the extent to which teacher related, school related and home related factors contributed to the remediation of RD.

#### **2.2 Context of Remediating Reading Disabilities in Primary School's Education**

Learning to read is the foundation for learning and academic achievement later in someone's life hence one of the greatest accomplishments in childhood. Therefore, it is unsurprising that it has elicited heated and unsettled debates for several years among instructors on the best approach to help children learn to read (Paris, 2005). The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2003), reported that 37 percent of fourth graders in the United States of America (USA) read below the basic proficiency level with only 31% showing enough reading proficiency.

In Minesota, approximately 30 percent of all students in Austin Public Schools (APS) read below grade level (Raskin, 2004). Therefore, a collaboration of administrators and educators within the APS formulated a robust action plan in the 2004-2005 school year to increase the number of students' reading competency at scores level from approximately 70 percent to 80-85 percent.

In Zambia, unsatisfactory levels of reading ability among school children, have been a critical concern (Kachenga, 2008). A study carried out by Matafwali (2005) established that 49.1 percent of the learners were not able read words at all whereas 57.5 percent of the children could not read any single sentence. The ability to read is one of the most significant ingredient for one to attain academic excellence. The situation is not much different in Kenya, despite the government significant strides to enhance literacy through provision of textbook, and the free primary education. Reading skills are normally taught in the first three (3) years of primary education to give children the ability to understand taught concepts in other academic subjects as they progress in their education (Paananen et al, 2009). In other words, if one is to gain more knowledge, the ability to read becomes a core utility. This is because the increasing technicalization of society has led increased demands for literacy (Chall & Stahl, 2008).

According to Torgesen and Wagner (2007) teaching of children with reading disabilities using systematic and explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and grapheme-phoneme correspondence achieves far more successful than programs that do not use this approach. In Kenya, a survey conducted by Mberia, (2002) on reading in English in lower primary level in Gatundu found that teachers were aware of and employed the various methods of teaching reading in English but did not provide basic prerequisite activities that would prepare and aid learners when reading English. Many of them lack a firm grounding in phonics and phonics generalization (Moat, 2010). It is vital to note that usual class teaching is not adequate for poor readers and specialists are needed to help the learners

(Brooks, 2007; Singleton, 2009). This study therefore established the activities teachers of English engage learners with reading difficulties in to enhance reading remediation.

In another recent research conducted by Gathumbi (2009) it was established that lack of English literacy at primary school inadequately prepared learners to cope with life beyond the classroom. In Nairobi slums, teachers could easily identify poor readers and explain factors contributing to poor reading (Arasa, 2004). Despite this, the Nyeri and Nairobi primary schools (2006) result analysis reports, as cited by Runo (2010), confirm that English performance was low (Ministry of Education, 2008). The poor performance in English at Primary level could be attributed to reading failure since the reading competency is needed so as to read and understand examination questions as well as comprehend the answer required by the questions. The study by Runo, (2010) did not cover school related factors and their contribution to the acquisition of reading skills as well as remediation RD. Therefore, the current study intended to address this gap.

### **2.3 Teachers and Awareness of Characteristics of Reading Disabilities in Schools**

Smith, Pollawat, Patt and Dowdy, (2001) notes that an understanding of the features of children with learning challenges is imperative in developing pre-referral intervention in identifying effective accommodations and intervention strategies. A person with learning problems demonstrates unexpected reading difficulties in relation to cognitive ability, age, quality and quantity of remediation. The reading challenges did not occur as a result of general developmental retardation or sensory damage (Lumberg & Hoiem, 2001; Mather & Goldstein, (2001). In this study, the reading disability, as cited by Runo, (2010)

was defined as severe or significant discrepancies between potential and present achievements, for example, a child being delayed in development or acquisition of reading skills more than two years as compared to his/her age mates. It was clear that reading experiences have a significant impact on students' lives.

Children with poor reading skill lack phonemic awareness and sensitivity to the sounds of language. They are not conversant with the alphabetic letters and may not comprehend the purpose of print. In addition, these learners have insufficient oral language and verbal skills with meager vocabulary. Hence majority of the learners who struggle learning to read are insensitive to the phonemic sounds of language and words (Tangel & Straywitz, 2003). Unfortunately, if the awareness is not provided before fourth grade only 10 to 15 % are can be helped (Kirk et al, 2003). Poor academic performance can be attributed to lack of reading skills since reading is the basic skill for all academic subjects. Significantly slow rate of learning letter-names, sound and sight words is a high risk for developing later reading difficulties. Regardless of the vast problems faced by children with RD in primary schools in Kenya, the universal consensus amongst researchers is that the children can improve, with application of an appropriate remedy.

Some of the challenges experienced by instructor while teaching reading skills include inadequate materials, and time to teach reading skills and mother tongue interference (Runo, 2010). Additionally, Lerner (2006) points out that other challenges include low self -esteem and poor social associations among learners which are carried forward into adolescence stage. During this stage these learners challenges can transform into learned

helplessness, low confidence in their ability to learn, demotivation to succeed, attention deficiency and maladaptive behavior which negatively affects secondary school student's achievement. Majority of the student with these challenges drop out of school while others are frequently absent.

Recently, the American Academy of special Education Professionals Educator's Diagnostic Manual of Disabilities and Disorders (2007) has reported other characteristics of learner with RD. Children with RD demonstrate expressive or receptive language challenge or difficulties with comprehension. Also, at risk students show several usual features of RD like challenges with spelling, rhyming, remembering sight words for reading and spelling, mixing of sounds in words and syllables, confusion of sound and letters as well as not achieving the reading fluency benchmarks.

Other common characteristics of at-risk students in learning to read are mixing up sounds and syllables while pronouncing length words (bisghetti, aminal, hangaberg), unable to memorize their personal address or phone numbers, difficulties in articulation of R's and L's and at time S-SH-CH resulting in a slight lisp, letters mixing when writing such as m-w, b-b-p-q, or n-u, numbers mixing up when writing such as 9-6, 3-E, choppy and slow reading, incorrect reading such as guessing based on shape, pictures or context clues, skipping or misreading of prepositions (at, to, of), incompleteness of suffixes (jog for jogged, sing for singing) and forgetting homonyms (they're, their and there) (Matafwali, 2005; Mubanga, 2010; Mwanamukubi, 2013). It is against this backdrop that this research aimed to establish to what extent teachers are aware of the characteristics of

RD, its remediation and to what extent they contribute to the acquisition of adequate reading skills in Tharaka Nithi County.

#### **2.4 Teacher Related Factors and the Remedial of Reading Disabilities in Schools**

In Kenya, teaching of reading skills in English is not common because English is considered as a competing tool used to pass exams and gain employment (Commeyras & Inyega, 2007). Therefore, English is viewed in very pragmatic aspects. During instruction, teachers switch between English, mother-tongue and Kiswahili to explain challenging concepts which result in disabling of any reading culture (Muthwii, 2004). A study by Abuyeka, (2006) asserts that the approach by which an educator delivers a subject significantly impacts the attitudes of the students' towards that particular subject.

Runo, (2010) had the opinion that the major cause of RD in Kenyan schools is due to lack of fully qualified teachers who can teach phonics effectively and also due to the diversified ethnic groups in the country, but did not offer remediation strategies to the existing RD. The researcher focused on establishing whether the teachers teaching English in Tharaka Nithi County are qualified to teach and remediate standard four learners with reading problems. Teachers are the cornerstone to effective learning of reading skills. They require professional training encompassing the primary teacher education and continual professional development. Further, they need to be well supported and develop a positive relationship with the learners.

Naoreen, Arshad and Aslam (2011) conducted a study on the effects of work-related training of teacher on students' learning performance at Faisalabad in Pakistan. The study was conducted among 4th grade learners and their educators in 48 schools. The study reported that the training imparted teachers in 24 schools whereas the remainder 24 were not. Thirty-five students were sampled from the schools upon which performance test was issued. The findings indicated that trained educators were significantly better than untrained teachers.

Akinsulu (2010) performed a study to determine the number of skilled instructors and its association with students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Local Government Areas (LGA) of Osun State, Nigeria. The study employed a descriptive survey using questionnaire and unstructured. The sample size of the study comprised of 290 public secondary schools. The study results indicated that instructors experience, qualifications, and teacher–student ratio were significantly with the learners' academic acuity.

Effective teaching is dependent on both the quality of the resource, teacher skills (Gauther & Lawson, 2004). It also relies on availability and adequacy of instructional materials which motivates pupils and encourages them to study lesson by giving them access to information. Etsy (ibid) reported that the use of concrete instruction resources can result in meaningful application of notational systems and enhance student concept understanding.

According to a consistent finding of National Reading Panel (NRP), (2000), teacher education is of great importance. As Hall & Harding (2003) reported, numerous curriculum packages and strategies have worked and failed at different measure but difference is made by the teacher's skillset. The NRP, (2000) indicated that in-service professional training resulted in better learners' success (P17). Slavin et al, (2008) conducted a study which found that elaborate professional advancement of teachers can produce significant positive impacts on the learning capacity of students. As expected, the Rose report (2009) firstly recommendation that further investment should be done to train specialist teachers to help students with literacy challenges. Studies have further showed that children who master the child-symbol system of English read well than children who lack mastery of the skill (Lyon, 2003; NRP, 2000). However, some educators lack thorough understanding of phonics and phonics generalization (Moats, 2010). Some teachers forget learning phonics instruction and many receive inadequate phonics education during their training. This brought out the dire need for the current research to assess the level to which teacher related factors supported remediation of reading disabilities in Tharaka Nithi County and offer relevant recommendations that would assist.

Children with RD perform poorly in reading texts since their mother tongue is substantially different from the medium of instruction (Labour, 2003). Therefore English teachers should be able to notice when a learner reading difficulties problems occurs as a result of linguistic clashes. Critical observation of a child's progress in learning to speak, and eventually in learning to read should be the most effective tool for sporting potential

issues since most reading difficulties elapse over time. To assess or teach reading skills effectively, it is helpful to understand the theoretical underpinnings of how the reading process works. For instance, the reading process described by Chall, (1996); Adams, (1990) and Ehn, (1995) provide a rich content for assessing reading skills and making instructional recommendations in areas of concepts about print, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension and vocabulary developments as well as spelling. It is well established that most learners who struggle with reading have difficulty with phonological training in order for the orthographic processor and meaning processor to receive the sounds that correspond to letters and letter combinations. It is also essential for teachers of English to recognize that reading capability of learner is influenced by many factors including giving learners regular and intensive reading opportunities, frequent exposure to spelling-sound relationships as well as using reading to get meaning from print. Hence the teacher and student should be closer and free with each other to achieve this.

Eivers, Close, Shiel, Millar, Clerkin, Gilleece and Kiniry (2010) conducted a national study to assess mathematics and English reading skills in Irish primary schools in 2009. The sample size of the study comprised of 4,000 second and 4,000 sixth grade learners (Eivers et al., 2010). Questionnaires were used to collect contextual data from the learners, parents, class instructors and head of schools. The study reported that some classroom and teacher features were significantly associated with learners' achievement. The factors included teaching experience, additional teaching qualification, and teacher's confidence in their capability to teach mathematics and English reading. The school level

factors that were associated with high performance on both dependent variables were high attendance rates, enrolment of learners with high social economic status, and less learners being in need of language learning support.

A study conducted by Runo (2010) to identify reading difficulties and educator-related struggles in instruction of reading skills to fifth grade learners in Kenya established that the students who had low scores in passage reading and wordlist equally performed poorly in other academic disciplines. The finding was in agreement with the study conceptual framework which expounded both external and internal aspects influences reading proficiency among learners, hence low academic achievements. Further, the study concluded that there training of the primary school teachers on the approaches to identify reading challenges in children so that to eliminate continued academic failure of learners.

Teachers should provide remediation that help learn to understand the connections between the 44 phonemic sounds of English language and the 26 alphabetical letters. It is worthwhile for instructor to be aware that later reading fluency are dependent on phonemic awareness and knowledge of the names of letters. The learners should be educated that speech can be segmented into small sounds (phonemes) and the segmented units can be represented in printed forms (phonics). This study is set to explore the extent to which teachers' experience contribute to remediation of reading difficulties bearing in mind that remediation is not instruction.

## **2.5 School Related Factors and Remediation of Reading Disabilities**

De Bortoli and Thomson (2010) conducted a research study on contextual attributed influenced the performance of Australian's indigenous learners. The report included findings of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) among Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) together with partner countries in the years of 2000-2003 and 2006. The population that was considered for the study was between 15 years and 16 years old in academic institutions. The sample size of the study comprised of 493 native students in 2000, 815 students in 2003 and 1080 students in 2006 (De Bortoli & Thomson, 2010). Beside other variable, their study aimed to assess the impact of various attributes on learning capacity of the students including home environment, availability of educational resources at home, attitudes of the learners, engagement, beliefs and motivations, students' learning approaches and preferences. Among their key findings, it was note that reading performance of the indigenous students was significantly affected by home educational resources, engagement in reading and academic self-concept. De Bortoli and Thomson (2010) carried out a robust longitudinal study measuring a wide range of variables. Nevertheless, the study was nonspecific to reading literacy and did not assess the contextual factors that influence learning of lower grade students. Reading literacy skills are actively taught and acquired at lower grade levels which impacts future education and academic performance in upper grades.

A study conducted in Botswana by Abosi (2007) relates reading problems to poor school reforms, poor classroom management, lack of effective teachers in school negative

attitude among teachers and lack of student motivation. Adaptation developed in the learning environments can significantly lessen the difficulties learners encounter. Teachers are required to make adjust their instructions, the surrounding, syllabus subjects and materials to accommodate students' diversity and enable students accomplish learning goals, hence read effectively. Runo, (2010) states that reading disabilities in schools is an issue that should be given greater attention by teachers, parents and the society at large because when learners fall out of the school system due to failure to read, they are not only a problem to their parents but to the whole society.

A study by Arasa, (2004) highlights some factors causing poor reading among learners in the slums of Nairobi. They include unavailability of reading materials due to lack of funds, lack of parental engagement in their children school work as well as incompetence of educator in teaching of reading skills. The present study therefore sought to explore the availability of teaching and learning resources (material and human) to remediate reading difficulties among standard four learners in Tharaka Nithi county and offer relevant recommendations because lack of poor quality of primary education weakens children competence throughout their lifetime which denies them the ability to cope with circumstances that require reading, writing and arithmetic (UNESCO, 2006).

Both slow and fast learners are a common in classroom environment. This is a situation characterized by some learners who are good in reading whereas others are incompetent readers. In such circumstances, the teacher has a role to use methods of teaching that will help the poor readers to improve their reading capabilities. According to 'No child left

behind Act' of (2001, PL 107-110) the expectation is that effective instructional strategies can compensate for students' reading disability. Unfortunately, majority of the educators teaching English don't have sufficient knowledge on the approaches to facilitate such learners with special reading needs. Consequently, despite the fact that teacher can recognize that some learners have weak reading skill they cannot provide to help the learner to improve (Kalindi, 2005). The researcher sought to establish to what extent methods used to remediate reading disabilities in Maara Sub-county of Tharaka Nithi County contributed to the improvement of reading problems in schools.

Due to recent extensive research (National Reading Panel, 2000; put reading first, 2001) the key achievements of an effective reading program based on scientific research are readily discernible. For instance, the direct instructional approach in Reading mastery emphasizes learning specific skills and the method of teaching is characterized by teacher modeling or demonstration of important skills; frequent student response; appropriate, direct feedback to students (including correction); adequate provisions for practice; and student mastery. Reading mastery is fast-paced, providing immediate feedback and correction procedures for various student errors. Use of evidence-based methods has been effective to improve reading skills, even among learners who usually struggled to achieve reading skills. For instance, Nugent, (2010) reported that learner from the travelling communities complete over an year's improvement in reading literacy in a three-month remediation session, whereas Kennedy, (2010) indicated that learners from resource limited schools made very encouraging improvement when their instructors engaged in focused professional development.

Another consistent finding reported that reading training in small group and individual teaching is better for struggling readers than in bigger groups (Scammaca et al, 2007; Euridice Network, 2011). Euridice concluded that vigorous teaching of small group or individual student by a reading specialist is vital when remedying reading deficiencies (p14). Teaching reading literacy has been reported to be effective when the group comprises three learners (Vaughn et al, 2000). It has also been recommended that small clusters can be as successful effective as a one-to-one model, if the educator is exceedingly competent (Vaughn et al, 2000). On the other hand, Singleton (2009) suggests that instructions on reading skills can be successful in groups comprised of up to five learners, even when the instructor is not a teacher by profession but adequately trained to teach reading skills. In addition, peer tuition delivered in class, is also a successful approach especially with teenagers as emphasized by Slavin et al, (2008). It therefore vital for this study to establish the instructional strategies teachers use in remediating RD among standard four learners in Tharaka Nithi county and offer relevant suggestions to improve reading abilities.

The number of teaching sessions for improving RD is vital to achieve educational fulfillment. Scammaca et al, (2007) and Lingard (2005) recommends daily teaching sessions. Solity and his colleagues suggest that rather than consolidating the practice of new skills a single block of time, it should be distributed over time (Solity et al, 2000). Thus, daily 10 minutes long practice sessions are considered more effective than one hour long practice. Rose (2009), also contends with model of “little and often, (P14)”. This would be very appropriate for remediation as well. In fact, short intensive interventions,

may offer the best effective strategy for training on reading literacy (Vaughn et al, 2000; Brooks, (2007). Singleton (2009) and Truch (2003) reports that the degree of concepts retention and understanding may deteriorate rapidly after the initial 12 hours of intensive strategies (P50). This supports that robust remediation may offer successful effects within moderately brief time intervals. The issue in the current study is to find out if teachers of English have time for these remediation strategies.

O'Connor and Geiger (2009) conducted a mixed-methods descriptive design study to assess the challenges encountered by primary school instructors of English as second or other language students in South Africa in Western Cape Town. The sample size of the study included 100 educators from grade 1, 2 or 3 teachers among twenty one schools (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009). They data was collected using self-administered questionnaire and focus groups discussion. Some of the key challenges highlighted by the study included large classes, large proportions of English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) learners, scarcity of isiXhosa speaking educators, learners' academic and socio-emotional challenges and a lack of parent interest in their children's learning.

## **2.6 Home Related Factors and Remediation of Reading Disabilities in Schools**

Effective parental participation in a child educational process refers to active continued involvement of a parent or primary caretakers in the education of their child. Early experiences in listening talking and learning about the world provide the foundation for reading and writing. Parents and teachers can exploit many opportunities in a child daily life at home or school to stimulate natural language (Learner et al, 2003). There are many

ways to involve parents. Daily Nation of October (2005) suggested some activities that benefit students from increased involvement such as talking to the child about their day, reading together and encouraging the child to work hard among others. It is also essential that books, stories and poems become an integral part of a child's life both at home and in school.

Children benefit greatly from sharing books and hearing stories (Richek et al 2002). Parents can participate in training of their children at home by reading with them, catching up on school events and assisting with assignment. It has been reported that parents are the most significant partners in a child's learning and schools can gain significantly by leveraging on their input (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005). Various educators report that they feel unprepared to successfully involve parents however some studies have shown that secondary school homework that require parent-learner collaboration returns greater levels of reading achievements (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005).

Additional recent reviews have shown that parent-child reading activities result in significant improvement in child's language and reading skills from pre-school through high school (Clark, 2007; Ikunyua, 2012). One of the means to integrate parents' participation in training of children's reading literacy is to educate parents on implementation of effective reading interventions leading to improved reading proficiency among their children. In socio-economically disadvantaged feel be not be able to actively participate in children reading exercises due to their own inadequacies in reading competence. A portion of parents may have negative school experiences which

may not make them comfortable while association with teachers. These issues are may be solved and are worth remediation since they may negatively hinder progress on literacy skills of their child's (Hall & Harching, 2003). It was vital therefore for the research to establish to what extent teachers of English of Tharaka Nithi involved parents to offer remedy to children with RD and advise accordingly. Involvement is taken to mean the degree in which parents are committed to a "collaborative, supportive relationship," with the child and teachers at school.

William and Rask (2003), did a study in the United Kingdom which aimed to investigate if preschool experiences enabled children develop literacy skills and other aspects that impacted their learning of literacy skills. The sample of study included 4 classes of 6-year-olds learners. Two children were interviewed in each class as well as their parents and teacher (William & Rask, 2003). The findings of the study showed that early literacy experiences in the home created a concrete foundation for effective learning in school. The interviewed teachers indicated that experiences actively encouraged by interested and supportive adults create a positive foundation for effective learning of literacy skills in school. The meaningful concept taught through play engagement enabled the children to develop metacognitive awareness which enables acquiring of literacy skills. In conclusion, William and Rask (2003) conclude home environment had considerable influence on literacy development among the interviewed pupils. The home environment steadily starts literacy exercises activities in play settings. Additionally, these learners chose to do extra writing and reading exercises than their peers because of prior

motivation by their successes and were aware that literacy was a significant way of communication and searching for information.

A study carried out by Eivers et al (2010) among primary schools in Ireland associated lower pupil performance with familial low socioeconomic status (SES), parental joblessness, membership of the traveler community, native language is not English or Irish, living in a lone-parent household, or being part of size of large family. Home reading activities that were positively associated to literacy performance included parents reading for enjoyment, the availability of educational resources such as books, parental confidence in their capacity to help their child with reading or mathematics assignments and pupils spending less time on internet during school days or playing computer games. The studies reviewed above show that social economic status of the learner, home literacy and experiences and parents education level impact development of literacy skills which includes reading literacy among learners. Nevertheless, there is paucity of literature on similar studies done in Africa and precisely, Kenya. There lacks empirical evidence that the findings in those countries can be applied in Kenya.

Paananen, et. al, (2009) reported that pupil's reading ability can be either positively or negatively influenced by home environment. There are many home related factors that cause reading difficulties including mother-tongue interference, lack of motivation, unavailability of reading materials, parents' illiteracy and poverty related difficulties (e.g. lack of proper furniture for studies and poor nutrition), poor lighting system, minimal support by parents and the community at large. Reading should be fostered by providing

books with topics that interest that the learners are interested child. This will ensure success in reading. Scholars such as Leaner (2000) and Dickinson and Neyman (2006), argue that exposure of children to books in their early years enable them to read easily. There may be lack of exposure to books among many learners in Kenyan primary schools. The researcher aimed to establish the exposure of reading materials in Tharaka Nithi County and their contribution to the remedy of reading disabilities. Where applicable use of the television creatively can be a good medium of learning, hence learning to read if a child is facilitated to properly use it. It is not time wastage as many teachers and parents may think. For instance, a child may learn to focus, concentrate, listen carefully, improve vocabulary and see how parts come together to make a whole (A publication of the national information centre for children and youths with disabilities 4<sup>th</sup> edition, February 2004).

## **2.6 Summary and Research Gaps**

The review of related literature suggests that reading disabilities is a problem that is widespread and should be given the attention it deserves. Relevant literature reviewed has been focused on the context of remediating reading disabilities in primary schools. Other areas reviewed include the extent to which school and home related factors contribute to remedy reading disabilities in schools, teachers and awareness of the characteristics of RD, and finally the extent to which teacher related features contribute to the remedy of RD. Literature reviewed in this study confirms that there are numerous reading difficulties. in this regard, the Ministry of Education (MOE) should adequately support teaching and remediation of reading through provision of a wide array of favourable

conditions such as teachers trained to teach reading in English as well as relevant teaching and learning resources. Parents need to be enlightened on their roles as far as enhancement of reading at home is required. Without such provisions and of high quality, then remediation of reading disabilities and difficulties and the mastery of reading in general would be hindered. In the final analysis the education scheme would not provide equip learners with the much needed academic and effective literacy skills. Literature reviewed in this chapter guided the development of research methodology in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter reviewed literature in relation to the study in order to guide the development of the research methodology which is given in this chapter. The methodology discussed in this chapter is based on the procedures and methods that was applied for answering the research questions in chapter one. The chapter is based on the following sub-topics; research design, variables, study location, population, sample size and sampling technique, research tool, piloting of research instruments, validity and reliability of the research tool, procedure for data collection and data analysis as well as logistical and ethical considerations.

#### **3.2 Research Design and Locale**

The study adopted a descriptive survey design and used both quantitative and qualitative methods. The survey design was useful in capturing information and describing the characteristics of a larger population using a sample. It also attempted to describe correct current conditions in any given areas of study (Wimmer et al, 2006). The purpose of the design is to collect data at a specific time and provide a description of the nature of the prevailing status (Orodho, 2002; Kombo 2002). This mixed method design, presents methods for gathering, analyzing and linking both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study (Cresswell, 2005). The combination of both forms of data provided a better understanding of the variables under study. The study collected qualitative data by use of questionnaires for teachers and interviews for parents. The data was analyzed

thematically according to the objectives of the study. Themes are main subjects that come up in a discussion (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Quantitative data was collected by use of questionnaires and checklists. The data was presented as frequencies and percentages. Through statistics some facts were expressed more meaningfully in numbers than they could otherwise be stated. This approach was more appropriate in this study for gathering quantitative information, (Oyiedele, 2003).

### **3.2.1 Variables**

The study considered the independent and dependent variables.

#### **Independent variables**

In this study independent variables included; teacher factors, school related factors and, home based related factors that could be used to remediate reading disabilities.

#### **Dependent variables**

A dependent variable is an attribute that is dependent on or influenced by the independent variable (Cresswell, 2005). The dependent variable in this study was reading competency.

### **3.2.2 Location of the Study**

The study was conducted in Maara Sub-County of Tharaka Nithi County, shown in appendix VI. Maara sub-county was selected from the four sub-counties that make up Tharaka Nithi County namely Chuka, Tharaka North, Maara and Tharaka South. Maara was selected because of a recorded low (below average) performance of learners in English subject. Further, Maara sub-county had a lower mean score in English, than other sub counties in Tharaka Nithi County, for three consecutive years. Further, the researcher

established a large number of learners in upper primary who had difficulties in reading English.

### 3.2.3 Composition of the Study Sites

In Maara sub-county, there are 129 primary schools (96 public and 33 private) spread out in five educational zones namely; Mitheru, Muthambi, Chogoria, Ganga and Kiera. Only two zones were selected for the study. One zone from each of the two divisions was selected for the study. The number and names of primary schools in the two zones are shown in table 3.1 below.

**Table 3.1 Composition of the study sites**

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Name of school</b>	<b>Public/Private</b>	<b>Enrolment</b>
<b>Kiera</b>	Kianjuki primary school	Public	21
	Kirindini primary school	Public	24
	Mekorani primary school	Public	30
	Kiairugu primary school	Public	14
	Egakiramba primary school	Public	45
	Kabui primary school	Public	14
	Kiurani primary school	Public	54
	Iruri primary school	Public	15
	Nguruki primary school	Public	56
	Maguma primary school	Public	27
	Iruma primary school	Public	95
	Mautini primary school	Public	49
	Ndintune primary school	Public	23
	Kabaikubu primary school	Public	25
	Makengi primary school	Public	22
	Kithitu primary school	Public	27
	Kanini primary school	Public	29
	Karumbi primary school	Public	8
	Kieni primary school	Public	26
	Kaare primary school	Public	24
Kiairugu academy primary school	Private	7	

	Rev G.K Bundi primary school	Private	7
	St. Alphonsious primary school	Private	13
	Baraka Academy primary school	Private	2
	Betitel Digital Academy primary school	Private	6
	St. Cecilia Academy primary school	Private	10
	J.KC ademy primary school	Private	21
<b>Muthambi</b>	Mururi boarding	Public	45
	Ikindu primary school	Public	17
	Iriga DEB primary school	Public	23
	Ntakani primary school	Public	19
	Willies primary school	Public	26
	Muraga primary school	Public	10
	Ntatua primary school	Public	12
	Rurea primary school	Public	8
	Kajiunduthi primary school	Public	16
	Marima primary school	Public	13
	Nkundi primary school	Public	23
	Muthambi primary school	Public	36
	Mutiiguru primary school	Public	16
	Kanoro primary school	Public	34
	Kagongo primary school	Public	7
	Muraga boarding primary school	Public	20
	Itara primary school	Public	19
	Mumbuni primary school	Public	42
	Gituja primary school	Public	11
	Maatha primary school	Public	22
	Kariani primary school	Public	13
	Karigini primary school	Public	21
	Hely Academy primary school	Private	25
	St. Charles Lwanga primary school	Private	18
	Kajiambaki primary school	Public	10
<b>Total</b>			1210

### 3.3 Target population

The targeted population in this study included: learners in class four in the 52 primary schools in Kiera and Muthambi zones, teachers of English and teachers in charge of class four. Broken down into numbers, categories of this population comprised

- i. 1210 learners in class four in 52 primary schools in Kiera and Muthambi zones in the sub-county
- ii. 52 teachers of English in the 52 primary schools
- iii. 52 teachers in charge of class four in the 52 schools in the two zones under study
- iv. 1210 parents with learners in the 52 primary schools in the two zones under study.

The 52 teachers of English and the 52 teachers in charge of class four (43 in public and 9 in private) were those directly involved in face-to-face teaching of reading to the 1210 learners in the 52 primary schools in the target area of study. The 1210 parents were those directly involved in the care of the learners before going in the morning, for those in day schools, and after they had come home from school in the late afternoon.

**Table 3.2 below represents the performance of English in zones**

<b>Division</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Performance in English</b>
Muthammbi	Mitheru	48.85
	Muthambi	55.40
Mwimbi	Chogoria	61.70
	Ganga	50.40
	Kiera	36.03

### **3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size Determination**

Ideally, the inquiry ought to include all the 2524 information resource persons as follows; all the 1210 learners in class four in the 52 schools, all the 52 teachers of English in the 52 schools, all the 52 teachers in charge of class four and who taught the class and all the 1210 parents who took care of the learners out of the school hours. However, available resources and time are not always enough to allow the researcher to use the whole

population in the study, (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2008). Secondly, not all the learners in the area of study had reading disabilities and reading difficulties. Thus, the researcher obtained measures from a sample of the learners with reading problems, their parents and the 52 teachers of English as well as the 52 teachers who were in charge of class four. Purposive sampling was used to select the learners with RD, teachers who taught English in class four, teachers in charge of class four and parents of the learners with RD. Specific informants in the 8 schools sampled out of 52 were targeted for purposes of representativeness, four categories from this population were selected:

- i. 32 learners
- ii. 8 teachers of English
- iii. 8 teachers in charge of class four
- iv. 32 parents of the learners with reading problems

It is important to note that the 32 learners were randomly sampled from a population of learners with reading problems in class four.

Stratified random sampling and simple random sampling were used to arrive at the sample of learners in the study. Stratified random sampling involved dividing the study population into homogenous sub-groups and then taking simple random sampling in each sub-group (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). In this study, the class four learners with reading problems were stratified as a sub-group with certain homogeneity due to their reading failure. Simple random sampling was used to select 4 learners per school from the class of those with RD if they were more than 4. Purposive sampling was used to select the 8

teachers who taught English in class four, and the 8 teachers in charge of class four in the sampled schools, as well as the parents of the 32 learners sampled for the study.

### **3.5 Research Instruments**

The tool for data collection consisted of teachers' and learners' questionnaires, checklist on learners reading errors and interview schedule for parents. The researcher formulated both instruments from the general knowledge and from the findings of previous studies, as were reviewed in the literature reviewed.

#### **3.5.1 Questionnaires**

The teacher questionnaire (Appendix I) was divided into five sections. Section A comprised demographic information where the teacher indicated their gender, their professional background, area of specialization, age bracket and years of teaching experience in English in upper and lower primary school. Section B sought to find out information on the extent of teacher awareness of characteristics of reading disabilities among learners in schools, Section C sought to find out the teacher related factors contributing to the remedial of reading disabilities, Section D sought information on school related factors contributing to the remedy of reading disabilities among learners in schools while Section E sought to find out home based factors contribute to the remedy of reading disabilities among learners in schools.

### **3.5.2 Checklist**

The checklist on learners reading errors (Appendix II) were filled by the teachers of English. It was applied in rating the individual learner's reading problems and contribute to the teachers' awareness on the characteristics of learners with RD.

### **3.5.3 Interview Schedule**

The interview schedule for parents (Appendix III) was used to establish to what extent home related factors contributed to the remediation of RD among learners.

## **3.6 Pilot Study**

A pilot study was done to assess the suitability of the research instrument in one of the schools in Muthambi zone, Maara Sub County. The researcher piloted the Questionnaires, the interviews and the checklist. Educators, parents and learners in the primary school were recruited in the piloting. The sample was convenient in terms of time and resources. The instruments were tested for the extent to which they would facilitate eliciting information that was relevant to the research questions. Piloting is important as it helps to identify ambiguity of items and vague questions for improvement (Murray, 2003).

### **3.6.1 Validity**

A research tool validity is referred to as the degree to which it can accurately measure what it is intended. A research tool is described as valid if it measures what it is designed to measure (Orodho, 2008). This study ensured validity of the instruments used by

varying the questions asked from the learners, teachers and parents. To ensure content and construct validity, the instruments were subjected to criticism by supervisors who are experts in the areas of study. A consensus between the supervisor and the researcher was arrived, on the best tools to collect data with, for a particular group of respondents.

### **3.6.2 Reliability**

Reliability of research tool describes the extent to which it collects reproducible results after replicated trials (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2008). Reliability of the instrument was tested using Spearman Brown prophesy formula by split half technique. The researcher divided the data collected from the piloting instruments into two equal groups. Then spearman brown prophesy formula was applied to calculate the correlation between the two sets of the instruments. From the findings, a correlation of 0.899 for the two forms was obtained and thus the instrument were deemed reliable since a correlation coefficient of at least 0.7 and above is adequately high to confirm the reliability of the instrument.

### **3.7 Data Collection**

The researcher first obtained an introductory letter from Kenyatta University. The researcher then applied for a research permit from the National Commission for Science Technology and Innovations. The researcher then visited the County education office where she presented the permits. The researcher was thus allowed to go collect the data. The researcher then visited the targeted schools. Data was collected directly from the teachers of English and learners with reading difficulties with the help of the class teachers who were expected to be conversant with the relevant respondents. The

respondents filled in the questionnaires. The researcher then collected the completed forms. The teachers teaching English assisted in checking the errors of the learners in the study. The researcher then interviewed the parents of the learners with reading difficulties. The interview questions were guided by the interview schedule. The teachers in charge of class four assisted in administering the learners' questionnaire by interpreting it to the learners depending on their reading abilities. Data collection was carried out for a period of two months, during the time when the school was in session.

### **3.8 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The collected data was reviewed for missing or inaccurate data after which it was cleaned, coded and exported to Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21 for analysis. As reported by Martin and Acuna (2002), SPSS has demonstrated efficiency in analysis of huge dataset that require significant statistical computations intended for social sciences. Quantitative analysis involved analyzing numerals with regard to specific aspects of a phenomenon. Descriptive statistics in form of frequency counts and percentages was used to analyze the quantitative data. Qualitative data collected through interview was analysed and discussed thematically.

### **3.9 Logistical Consideration and Ethical Consideration**

#### **3.9.1 Logistical Consideration**

The researcher obtained a research permit from the National Commission for Science Technology and Innovations. The school names were provided by the Sub-County

Education Office where the actual study was undertaken. At the school level, the headteachers gave consent for the learners to participate in the study.

### **3.9.2 Ethical Consideration**

The researcher endeavoured maintain the privacy of the respondents by protecting their persons information. No private information of respondents was disclosed to a third party. The respondent was assured that none of their personal information would be exposed in written or other means. With regard to confidentiality, it was ensured that the information given by respondents was only applied for the intended stated objectives and that the information was not shared with third party. The researcher described to the respondents the nature and the purpose of the research. The researcher explained to the respondents the procedure followed during the data collection so that they can contribute voluntarily.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter entails presentation and interpretation of the analyzed results for the study. The chapter presents the results and discussion of the respondent's demographic data that includes gender, age and academic qualifications as well as the study objectives that were described in chapter one and reviewed in chapter two.

#### 4.2 Demographic Data of Respondents

The demographic information provides a social background about the population, and helps clustering of the overall population into meaningful social subgroups. Demographic information of study subjects helps the researcher to understand sample characteristics and determine if samples is representative of the target populations. In this study, gender, age and academic qualification of the respondents were investigated.

##### 4.2.1 Gender of the Respondents

The gender of the respondents was obtained and the findings are presented in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Gender of the Respondents**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Female	35	47
Male	40	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

The study established that the most (53%) of the respondents were male whereas 47% of the respondents were female. This implies that gender was fairly distributed across the

study population, with a slight disparity in favour of males, as a disparity of less than 10% is deemed acceptable (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

#### 4.2.2 Academic Qualification

The study further sought to find out the academic qualifications of the teachers and the findings obtained are presented on the Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2. Academic Qualification**

<b>Academic Qualification</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
P1 certificate	4	25
S1 certificate	0	0
Diploma in Education	3	19
Bachelor's degree	7	44
Master's degree	2	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

The results showed that 44% of the study participants had a bachelor's degree, while 25% of the respondents had a P1 certificate. The study further established that 19% had a diploma in education, while 12% of the respondents had a master's degree. In general, the study indicated that all the respondents had undergone some professional training and met minimum qualification for teaching in a primary school in Kenya. This was so because of the government efforts to post trained teachers to the primary schools all over the country, to enhance professionalism.

### 4.2.3 Age of the Respondents

The study established the age of the respondents and the results are presented in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3. Age of the Respondents**

<b>Age of the respondents</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Below 30 years	3	19
31-40 years	10	62
41-50 years	2	13
51 years and above	1	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

The study showed that the majority (62%) of the respondents were aged between 31 and 40 years, while 19% were aged below 30 years. Only 6 % of the respondents were aged above 50 years.

### 4.3 Extent of Teacher Awareness of Characteristics of Reading Disabilities among Learners in Schools

The first aim of the study was to establish extent of teacher awareness of characteristics of reading disabilities among learners in schools. A 5 point Likert scale presents the findings of this study, with; S.D=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, U.D= Undecided, A=Agree, S.A= Strongly Agree, WA =Weighted mean.

**Table 4.4. Extent of Teacher Awareness of Characteristics of Reading Disabilities among Learners in Schools**

<b>Extent of Teacher Awareness of Characteristics of Reading Disabilities</b>	<b>SA 5</b>	<b>A 4</b>	<b>U 3</b>	<b>D 2</b>	<b>SD 1</b>	<b>WA</b>
A learner with a reading difficulty shows deficiencies in reading literacy that are unanticipated with regard to age, cognitive ability, quality and quantity of intervention and instruction.	16.7	50	0	16.7	16.7	3.2
The reading deficits do not occur as result of generalized developmental delay or sensory loss	16.7	66.7	0	16.7	0	3.8
A child being delayed in development or acquisition of reading skills more than two years as compared to his/her age mates	50	16.7	0	16.7	16.7	3.7
Many learners who have difficulty learning to read are not sensitive to the phonemic sounds of language and words	16.7	83.3	0	0	0	4.2
Children with RD also show expressive or receptive language difficulties or difficulties with comprehension	16.7	66.7	0	0	16.7	3.7
At risk learners show several common features such as difficulty with rhyming and spelling, difficulty in memorizing sight words for reading and spelling, mixing up the sounds in words and syllables, sound and letter confusion and not reaching reading proficiency benchmarks.	66.7	16.7	0	16.7	0	4.3
Difficulties memorizing their Names, admission numbers or the alphabet, articulation difficulties with L's and R's is a critical sign of learners with reading disabilities	16.7	66.6	0	16.7	0	3.8
Deficiency in English literacy at primary school left learners poor prepared to handle life outside the classroom	50	16.7	0	16.7	16.6	3.7
Other common characteristics of at-risk students in learning to read are; mixing up the sounds and syllables when saying long words	16.7	83.3	0	0	0	4.2

The findings on Table 4.4 revealed that in primary schools in Tharaka Nithi county, learners with a limited reading skill demonstrated deficit in reading literacy that were not expected with regard to cognitive ability, age, quality and quantity of instruction and remediation, as was shown by a weighted mean of 3.3. The situation is not different from the case I United States of America where the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2003), reported that 37 percent of US fourth graders read below basic proficiency level, and only 31 percent read with enough proficiency to draw inferential and literary meaning from text.

The study further established that the reading difficulties identified among the pupils were not the result of universal developmental retardation or sensory damage in the learners, as was revealed by a weighted mean of 3.8. The findings are similar to the findings in a study conducted by Matafwali (2005) established that 49.1percent of the learners could not read words at all and 57.5 percent of children could not read any single sentence. The research established that some of the children were being delayed in development and acquisition of reading skills more than two years as compared to their age mates, as was revealed by a weighted mean of 3.7. Without the read literacy, individual have limited opportunities for academic and occupational success. In a testimony provided to the sub-committee on the Education reform of the US House of representatives, over 75% of students who drop out of school report having difficulties reading, (Lyon 2001).

The study further established that most of the learners in class 4 who have difficulty learning to read are not sensitive to the phonemic sounds of language and words and this was showed by a weighted mean of 4.2. Becoming a skilled reader is very important in the society and one who is not skilled in reading is at a great disadvantage, both in school and at the workplace (Kirk,Gallagher & Anastasion, 2003).

The study further established that children with Reading Disabilities showed expressive or receptive language difficulties and this was indicated by a mean of 3.7. Non-readers in class 4 may benefit in basic academic skills if given proper remediation and especially if teachers are aware that class four and above is a crucial stage where learners should read by themselves and use the skills in reading to comprehend other academic skills, (Runo, 2010).

The study established that learners at risk displayed numerous universal characteristics such as difficulty with rhyming and spelling, poor memory of sight words for spelling and reading, mixing up the sounds in words and syllables, sound and letter confusion and poor performance in reading fluency benchmarks, and this was indicated by a mean of 4.3. These findings are similar to a study by Mberia, (2002) on a survey of reading in English in lower primary classes of Gatundu in Rural Thika who established that teachers were aware of and employed the various methods of teaching reading in English but did not provide basic prerequisite activities that would prepare and aid learners when reading English. Therefore, in some instances, the teachers were also contributing to the poor performance of the learners in primary schools.

Learners who experience problems memorizing their own names, admission numbers or the alphabet, articulation difficulties with R's and L's is a critical sign of learners with reading disabilities, as was revealed by mean of 3.8. The reading disability, as cited by Runo, (2010) is defined as severe or significant discrepancies between potential and present achievements, for example, a child being delayed in development or acquisition of reading skills more than two years as compared to his/her age mates. Inadequacy in English literacy at primary school left learners ill-prepared to face life outside the classrooms as this was indicated by a weighted mean of 3.7. the study further established that other common characteristics of at-risk students in learning to read are; mixing up the sounds and syllables when saying long words, as was revealed by a weighted mean of 4.2.

#### **4.4 Teacher Related Factors Contributing to the Remedial of Reading Disabilities among Learners in Schools.**

Secondly, the study aimed to establish the teacher related factors contributing to the remedial of reading disabilities among learners in schools. A 5 point Likert scale presents the findings of this study, with; S.D=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, U.D= Undecided, A=Agree, S.A= Strongly Agree, WA =Weighted mean.

**Table 4.5. Teacher Related Factors Contributing to the Remedial of Reading Disabilities**

<b>Teacher Related Factors</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>WA</b>
	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	
The manner in which a teacher presents a subject greatly influences students' attitudes towards that particular subject.	0	66.7	0	33.3	0	3.3
That teachers are aware of and employ the various methods of teaching reading in English but do not provide basic prerequisite activities	83.3	0	0	16.7	0	4.5
Teachers could easily identify poor readers and explain factors contributing to poor reading abilities	50	16.7	0	16.7	16.7	3.7
The poor performance in English at Primary level could be attributed to reading failure since the reading skill is needed to read and interpret examination questions and even comprehend what the questions require for an answer.	50	16.7	0	16.7	16.7	3.7
Teachers should professionally trained through initial teacher curriculum and continued professional courses, adequately supported and develop positive relationship with the learners.	16.7	66.6	0	16.7	0	3.8
Various curriculum strategies and packages both failed and worked; what seem critical is the competency of the educator	16.7	66.7	0	0	16.7	3.7
Some teachers do not remember learning phonics instruction themselves and many did not receive adequate phonics instruction during their training.	16.7	70	0	0	13.3	3.8
Investing in the special training of educators to help learners with literacy disabilities	16.7	83.3	0	0	0	4.2
Normal class training is not adequate and specialists are needed, while many teachers lack a firm grounding in phonics and phonics	50	33.3	0	16.7	0	4.2

The manner in which a teacher presents a subject greatly influenced students' attitudes towards that particular subject, as was revealed by a weighted mean of 3.3. A study by Abuyeka, (2006) asserts that the manner in which a teacher presents a subject greatly influences students' attitudes towards that particular subject. The study further established that teachers were aware of and employed the various methods of teaching reading in English but do not provide basic prerequisite activities that would prepare and aid learners when reading English, as was indicated by a mean of 4.5. Teachers could easily identify poor readers and explain factors contributing to poor reading abilities and this was revealed by a weighted mean obtained of 3.7. Runo, (2010) had the opinion that the major cause of RD in Kenyan schools is due to lack of fully qualified teachers who can teach phonics effectively and also due to the diversified ethnic groups in the country, but did not offer remediation strategies to the existing RD.

The study further established that the poor performance in English at Primary level could be attributed to reading failure since the reading skill is needed to read and interpret examination questions and even comprehend what the questions require for an answer, as this was revealed by a mean obtained of 3.7. To assess or teach reading skills effectively, it is helpful to understand the theoretical underpinnings of how the reading process works. For instance, the reading process described by Chall, (1996); Adams, (1990) and Ehn, (1995) provide a rich content for assessing reading skills and making instructional recommendations in areas of concepts about print, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension and vocabulary developments as well as spelling.

Teachers should be professionally educated in the regular teachers' curriculum and additional professional courses. They also need sufficient support and foster conducive relationship with the learners, to enable them handle the learners with reading and learning disabilities as was revealed by a weighted mean of 3.8. According to a consistent finding of National Reading Panel (NRP), (2000), teacher education is of great importance. Numerous curriculum strategies and packages have both worked and to failed; what seems to make the difference is the skills of the educators (Hall & Harding, 2003).

The study further established that many curriculum approaches applied by the teachers in Tharaka Nithi have been found both to work and to fail and thus are highly dependent on the skills of the teacher, and this was revealed by a weighted mean of 3.7. It has been indicated that in-service professional training achieves higher learners' success (The NRP, 2000). Further, Slavin et al, (2008) indicated that quality professional training of educators produces significant outcomes. Not surprisingly, the primary recommendation from the Rose report, (2009) was that additional investment should be made in the training of specialist educators to assist positive outcomes.

Some teachers did not remember learning phonics instruction and many did not receive adequate phonics instruction during their teacher training and thus were inadequately prepared to handle the students with related disabilities, as was revealed by a weighted mean of 3.8. The study established that the teachers recommended extra investment in the training of specialist educators to help learners with literacy challenges, as was revealed

by a weighted mean of 4.2. The study further established that ordinary class teaching was not enough and specialists were required, while many teachers lacked a firm grounding in phonics and phonics generalization, as was revealed by a weighted mean of 4.2. However, many teachers lack a firm grounding in phonics and phonics generalization (Moats, 2010) some teachers do not remember learning phonics instruction themselves and many did not receive adequate phonics instruction during their training.

#### **4.5 School Related Factors Contributing to the Remedy of Reading Disabilities Among Learners in Schools.**

Further, the study established the School Related Factors Contributing to the Remedy of Reading Disabilities Among Learners in Schools. A 5 point Likert scale presents the findings of this study, with; S.A= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U.D= Undecided, D=Disagree, S.D=Strongly Disagree, WA =Weighted mean.

**Table 4.6. School Related Factors Contributing to the Remedy of Reading Disabilities Among Learners in Schools**

<b>School Related Factors</b>	<b>SA 5</b>	<b>A 4</b>	<b>U 3</b>	<b>D 2</b>	<b>SD 1</b>	<b>W A</b>
Teachers are required to make adjustments to their instructions, the surrounding, syllabus structure and materials to embrace learners' diversity and to assist all students accomplish their, hence read effectively.	13.2	69.8	0	4.7	10.4	3.7
Poor school reforms, poor classroom management, lack of effective teachers in school negative attitude among teachers and lack of student motivation	10.9	53.7	0	16.1	13.5	3.2
Kenyan schools lack fully qualified teachers who can teach phonics effectively and also due to the diversified ethnic groups in the country	18.4	4.8	0	56.4	17.4	2.4
Children with LD are performing poorly on reading texts because their home language differs substantially from the language of instruction	11.2	63.3	0	9.1	13.5	3.4
Assessing reading skills and making instructional recommendations in areas of concepts about print, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension and vocabulary developments as well as spelling	9.2	68.9	0	9.1	9.9	3.5
Reading ability is determined by multiple factors such as giving learners frequent and intensive opportunities to read, exposing them to frequent, regular spelling-sound relationships and using reading to obtain meaning from print	19.4	64.2	0	10.5	3.8	3.8
Teachers of English therefore should be able to recognize when a child's reading problems are the result of linguistic clashes	11.7	66.2	0	14.8	5.3	3.6
Teachers should provide instruction on remediation that help children learn the connections between the 44 sounds of English language (phonemes) and the 26 letters of the alphabet	13.2	66.4	0	6.3	12.2	3.6

The study established that in primary schools in Tharaka Nithi, the teachers made adjustments to their instructions, the surrounding, syllabus contents and materials to make room for learners' diversity and to facilitate all students reach their targets, hence read effectively, and foster better understanding, as was revealed by a majority of (69.8%) of the respondents who agreed and a weighted mean of 3.7. A study conducted in Botswana by Abosi (2007) relates reading problems to poor school reforms, poor classroom management, lack of effective teachers in school negative attitude among teachers and lack of student motivation. Adaptation made in the learning environments can significantly minimize the challenges learned experience.

The study further established that poor school reforms, poor classroom management, lack of effective teachers in school negative attitude among teachers and lack of student motivation were some of the factors that affected the learners reading disability in primary schools in Tharaka Nithi county as was indicated by a weighted mean of 3.2. It has been indicated that practice of new skills should be done over time blocks rather than being massed into a single timeframe (Solity et al, 2000). Therefore, 10 minutes session of daily practice throughout the week is more successful than one hour of practice taught in one session.

The study further established that Kenyan schools did not lack fully qualified teachers who can teach phonics effectively as was revealed by the majority (56.4%) of the respondents who disagreed and a weighted mean of 2.4. Unfortunately, most of the teachers teaching English do not have adequate knowledge on how to help such learners

with special needs. As a result, even when the teacher knows that a particular learner is a poor reader, she is not in a position to help (Kalindi, 2005).

The study further established that Children with Learning Disabilities were performing poorly on reading texts because their home language differed substantially from the language of instruction, and this was revealed by a weighted mean obtained of 3.4. as cited by Runo, (2010) is defined as severe or significant discrepancies between potential and present achievements, for example, a child being delayed in development or acquisition of reading skills more than two years as compared to his/her age mates.

Assessing reading skills and making instructional recommendations in areas of concepts about print, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension and vocabulary developments as well as spelling were instrumental in enhancing the abilities of the learners to read, and this was revealed by a weighted mean of 3.5. Despite the enormous problem's children with RD face, the general consensus among researchers is that they can improve. However, if the awareness is not made until fourth grade only 10 to 15 % are helped (Kirk et al, 2003).

The study further established that a learner reading ability was determined by multiple factors such as giving learners frequent and intensive opportunities to read, exposing them to frequent, regular spelling-sound relationships and using reading to obtain meaning from print, as was revealed by a weighted mean of 3.8. Nugent, (2010) reported that children from the travelling communities compensated over an year's progress in

reading literacy over a three-month remediation session whereas Kennedy, (2010) indicated that students from schools with disadvantaged status made great progress when their educators involved in focused professional development.

The study further established that teachers of English were not able to recognize when a child's reading problems are the result of linguistic clashes within the classrooms, as was revealed by a weighted mean of 3.6. A study by Arasa, (2004) highlights some factors causing poor reading among learners in the slums of Nairobi. They include lack of reading materials due to poverty, lack of parental involvement and interest in their children school work as well as incompetence of teachers in teaching or reading.

The study further established that teachers should provide instruction on remediation that help children learn the connections between sounds of English language (phonemes) and the letters of the alphabet as was agreed by the majority (66.4%) of the respondents and a weighted mean of 3.6. Hence many children who have difficulty learning to read are not sensitive to the phonemic sounds of language and words, Tangel & Straywitz, (2003). Since reading is the basic skill for all academic subjects, failure in school can be traced to inadequate reading skills.

#### **4.6 Home Based Factors Contribute to the Remedy of Reading Disabilities Among Learners in Schools.**

##### **4.6.1 Teachers Responses**

The study further sought to establish Home Based Factors Contribute to the Remedy of Reading Disabilities Among Learners in Schools. A 5 point Likert scale presents the

findings of this study, with; S.A= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U.D= Undecided, D=Disagree, S.D=Strongly Disagree, WA =Weighted mean.

**Table 4.7. Teacher’s responses on Home Based Factors Contribute to the Remedy of Reading Disabilities among Learners in Schools.**

**Teachers responses**

<b>Home Based Factors</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>WA</b>
	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	
Productive engagement can be referred to as the active ongoing participation of a parent or primary caretakers in the education of their child	16.8	56.8	0	10.7	11.8	3.4
Talking to the child about their day, reading together and encouraging the child to work hard among others	18.1	63.4	0	1.7	12.5	3.8
Parents can use the many opportunities in the daily life of a child at home or in school to provide natural language stimulation	10.1	54.4	0	9.4	14.1	3.1
The most important partners in a child’s education are parents and schools can benefit by capitalizing on their support	15.8	63.7	0	5.0	10.5	3.5
Reading exercises results in a significant improvement in child’s language and reading literacy from pre-school through high school	12.2	72.7	0	1.1	9.4	3.7
Educating of parents to help their children to carryout effective reading approaches	19.1	66.2	0	7.9	4.9	3.8
Some parents may have school experiences which may make them uncomfortable while associating with teachers	10.9	2.9	0	66.9	18.4	2.1

The study established that Successful parent involvement is the active ongoing participation of a parent or primary caretakers in the education of his/her child, as was agreed upon by the majority (56.8%) of the respondents. Daily Nation of October (2005) suggested some activities that benefit students from increased involvement such as talking to the child about their day, reading together and encouraging the child to work hard among others. It is also essential that books, stories and poems become an integral part of a child's life both at home and in school.

The research further established that talking to the child about their day, reading together and encouraging the child to work hard among others improves their reading abilities by a big margin, as the majority (63.4%) of the respondents revealed. These findings agree with the results of other researchers like Leaner (2000) & Dickinson and Neyman (2006), who indicate that early exposure of children to books learn to read more easily. There could be lack of this exposure among many learners in Kenyan primary schools.

Further, the study showed that the majority (54.4%) of the respondents agreed that parents exploit the many opportunities in the daily life of a child in school or at home to promote natural language stimulation. Children benefit greatly from sharing books and hearing stories (Richek et al 2002). Parents can show engagement at home by reading with their children, helping with assignment & discussing school events.

The study further established that parents are the most vital associates in a child's education and schools can benefit by capitalizing on their support, as was revealed by

63.7% of the respondents. The majority (72.7%) of the respondents revealed that reading exercises can result in significant enhancement of a child's language and reading literacy from pre-school through high school. Additional agreeing finding is that for poor readers, small group settings and individual tuition is more effective than larger groups, (Scammaca et al, 2007; Euridice Network, 2011). Euridice concluded that individual or small group intense instruction offered by reading specialists is important when remediating reading challenges (p14).

More so, the study showed that the majority (66.2%) of the respondents opined that the education sector should educate parents to help children to implement effective reading solutions. Parents and teachers can take the exploit many opportunities in the daily life of a child in school or at home to promote natural language stimulation (Lerner et al, 2003).

#### **4.6.2: Parents Responses**

The results revealed that majority of the parents did not help their children in doing their homework. Most of the parents said that they had a lot of work to do at home thus did not get time to help them, others claimed that they cannot read and understand the assignments thus could not help them do their homework.

Most of the parents indicated that they had more than three children at home and at school, and they all had to be catered for. The study further established that most of the parents were not buying story books for their children, and thus they did not have extra

materials to be reading at home. This could have impacted on the learners poor reading skills, as they did not get enough material to practice reading with. However, some parents indicated that they provided their children with old newspapers and magazines, where the children could practice reading with. Further, the study showed that the majority of the parents encouraged their children to take advantage of the books at school, and the conducive learning environment to read and learn and acquire skills, the resources and conditions at home. the study further established that most of the parents encouraged their children to work hard and perform well. Most of the parents promised rewards to the children if they performed well, or improved in their studies. This encouraged the children to work hard in schools.

The findings obtained in this study present empirical finding on home and school related factors and the extent to which they contributed to the remedy of reading disabilities. The study also established ways of preventing further development of RD among learners in primary schools in Kenya. This chapter has presented the demographic characteristics of the respondents whom this data came from. This information helps create a mental picture of the nature and characteristics of the data obtained. The chapter also presented the findings as per the study objectives. These included the degree to which teachers were aware of characteristics of RD among learners, the extent to which teacher related factors contribute to the remedial of reading disabilities among learners in school's school related factors contribute to the remedy of RD among learners in schools, and home-based factors contribute to the remedy of reading disabilities among learners in schools.

These findings have been presented independently by use of frequencies, percentages and weighted means.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The main findings and the conclusions of this study are summarized in this chapter. Also, the recommendations of the study and suggestions for more research are presented in this chapter. These are based on the objectives described in chapter one.

#### **5.2 Summaries of the Main Findings**

The study identified school and home related features and the extent to which they contribute to the remedy of reading disabilities. The first objective of the study was to establish the Extent of Teacher Awareness of Characteristics of Reading Disabilities among Learners in Schools. The study established that in Tharaka Nithi county, learners with reading Deficiencies showed challenges in reading literacy that were not expected in relation to cognitive ability, age, quality and quantity of instruction and intervention. The study further established that the reading difficulties identified among the pupils did occur as a result of generalized developmental delay or sensory loss in the learners, as was revealed by a weighted mean of 3.8. The study further indicated that most of the learners in class 4 who have difficulty learning to read are not sensitive to the phonemic sounds of language and words and this was showed by a weighted mean of 4.2. The study established that learners at risk displayed several mutual characteristics like difficulty with rhyming and spelling word, poor memory of sight words for reading and spelling, mixing up the sounds in words and syllables, sound and letter confusion, not achieving reading fluency benchmarks, and this was indicated by a mean of 4.3. The study established that other common characteristics of at-risk students in learning to read are;

mixing up the sounds and syllables when pronouncing lengthy words, as was revealed by a weighted mean of 4.2.

The second aim of the study established the Teacher Related Factors Contributing to the Remedial of Reading Disabilities among Learners in Schools. The study further established that teachers were aware of and employed the various methods of teaching reading in English but do not provide basic prerequisite activities that would prepare and aid learners when reading English, as was indicated by a mean of 4.5. Teachers could easily identify poor readers and explain factors contributing to poor reading abilities and this was revealed by a weighted mean obtained of 3.7. Teachers require professional training in initial teacher education and continued professional development, adequately supported and have positive relationship with the learners, to enable them handle the learners with reading and learning disabilities as was revealed by a weighted mean of 3.8. Further, the study established that ordinary class teaching was not enough and specialists were required, while many teachers lacked a firm grounding in phonics and phonics generalization, as was revealed by a weighted mean of 4.2.

The third study objective established the School Related Factors Contributing to the Remedy of Reading Disabilities among Learners in Schools. The study established that in primary schools in Tharaka Nithi, the teachers made adjustments to their instructions, the surrounding, syllabus topics and materials to accommodate students' diversity and to assist all students achieve their targets, hence read effectively, and foster better understanding, as was revealed by a majority of (69.8%) of the respondents who agreed

and a weighted mean of 3.7. The study further established that Kenyan schools did not lack fully qualified teachers who can teach phonics effectively as indicated by the majority (56.4%) of the respondents who disagreed and a weighted mean of 2.4. The study further established that Children with Learning Disabilities performed poorly on reading texts because the language of instruction differed substantially with their home language, and this was revealed by a weighted mean obtained of 3.4. The study further indicated that teachers should provide instruction on remediation that help children learn the relationship between the letters of the alphabet and sounds of English language (phonemes) was agreed by the majority (66.4%) of the respondents and a weighted mean of 3.6.

The fourth study objective established the Home Based Factors Contribute to the Remedy of Reading Disabilities among Learners in Schools. The study established that successful parent involvement is the active ongoing engagement of a parent or primary caretakers in the education of their child, as was agreed upon by the majority (56.8%) of the respondents. Additionally, the study established that the majority (54.4%) of the respondents agreed that parents can make use of many opportunities in the daily life of a child in school or at home to promote natural language stimulation. The study further established that parents were the most important partners in a child's education and schools can benefit from capitalizing on their support, as was revealed by 63.7% of the respondents. The majority (72.7%) of the respondents revealed that reading exercises can result in significant improvement in child's language and reading literacy from pre-school through high school.

### **5.3 Conclusion of the Study**

According to this study finding, the researcher concludes that the teachers were able to identify some of the characteristics of the learners with reading disabilities in primary schools. However, the teachers were not able to identify all the cases of the learners with reading disabilities, and that not all the teachers in the schools were able to understand these learning disabilities as they had diverse characteristics. The study established that the teacher training and experience on matters related to reading disabilities had an influence on the teaching and learning of learners with reading disabilities, as they could identify the learners and the types of challenges they had. This improved their overall influence.

Different schools applied different remedies to the learners with reading disabilities, where some of the methods applied were effective. Some schools used made adjustments to their instructions, the environment, curriculum topics and materials to accommodate students' and it proved effective in improving the learning of the affected learners. The study further concludes that the parents too had a role to play in the learning of the children with learning disabilities as the success of these learners was greatly determined by the parent's actions, as well as their active involvement in their learning activities as well as school activities.

### **5.4 Recommendations of the Study**

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher makes the following recommendations;

#### **5.4.1 Policy Recommendations**

- i. The ministry of education, through the Kenya institute of curriculum development (KICD) should revise the teacher training curriculum, so as to include the methods of identifying the learners with reading disabilities as well as other emerging special needs. This will equip them with adequate skills to identify them, and effectively handle them, despite their challenges.
- ii. The Kenyan Government through Kenya institute of special education should also organize on job trainings and seminars for the teachers already in practice on matters pertaining to the reading disabilities, to equip all the teachers with the relevant adequate knowledge to handle the learners.
- iii. The schools should be given adequate funding to purchase adequate learning materials for all the learners, and specifically those that have learning disabilities. This will enable them learn with ease as they will be in possession of textbooks and thus can learn and read at their own pace.
- iv. The schools should also organize seminars for the parents as well as parent's meetings and insist to them on the needs to get involved in their children education, even while at home. This will thus create a conducive home environment for the learners and thus better learning and improved performance.

#### **5.4.2 Suggestions for Further Research**

Further studies are suggested on the following areas

1. An evaluation of literacy and numeracy competency on the learners with intellectual challenges in integrated programs in Tharaka Nithi county

2. Influence of the assessment methods applied in assessing the learners with disabilities in Tharaka Nithi county
3. Specific challenges facing the schools carrying out inclusion programmes in Tharaka Nithi county

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I: TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

This information is to be derived from teachers teaching English to standard four learners and will be treated with confidentiality.

#### Section A: Individual Teacher's Details

Please provide the required information by filling in the answers to questions below

1. The person completing this questionnaire is

Male  Female

2. There are certificate awards which you received during your educational careers eg P1 S1,

Dip-Ed, BeD or any other relevant one

Fill in all those certificates which you were awarded

Certificate Awarded	Year awarded	Awarding institution
P1	_____	_____
Diploma	_____	_____
ATS 4-1	_____	_____
BED	_____	_____

3. Area of specialization \_\_\_\_\_

4. Your age bracket

Below 30  31-40  41-50  50 and above

5. Show years of teaching experience in English in upper primary and lower primary

Upper primary Std 6-8  Below 5 years  6-10 years  Over 10 years

Upper primary Std 4-5  Below 5 years  6-10 years  Over 10 years

Lower primary Std 1-3  Below 5 years  6-10 years  Over 10 years

#### Section B: Extent of Teacher Awareness of Characteristics of Reading Disabilities among Learners in Schools

Please rate the extent of your involvement in the following statements on Extent of Teacher Awareness of Characteristics of Reading Disabilities among Learners in

Schools. Where S.A= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U.D= Undecided, D=Disagree, S.D=Strongly Disagree,

<b>Extent of Teacher Awareness of Characteristics of Reading Disabilities</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
A learner with a reading disability demonstrates difficulties in reading skills that are unexpected in relation to age, cognitive ability, quantity and quality of instruction and intervention.					
The reading difficulties are not the result of generalized developmental delay or sensory impairment					
A child being delayed in development or acquisition of reading skills more than two years as compared to his/her age mates					
Many learners who have difficulty learning to read are not sensitive to the phonemic sounds of language and words					
Children with RD also show expressive or receptive language difficulties or difficulties with comprehension					
At risk learners display many common characteristics such as difficulty with rhyming, trouble spelling, difficulty memorizing sight words for reading and spelling, mixing up the sounds in syllables and words, sound and letter confusion and not meeting reading fluency benchmarks.					
Trouble memorizing their own Names, admission numbers or the alphabet , articulation difficulties					

with R's and L's is a critical sign of learners with reading disabilities					
Inadequacy in English literacy at primary school left learners ill-prepared to face life outside the classroom					
Other common characteristics of at-risk students in learning to read are; mixing up the sounds and syllables when saying long words					

### **Section C: Teacher Related Factors Contributing to the Remedial of Reading Disabilities**

Please rate the extent of your involvement in the following statements on Teacher Related Factors Contributing to the Remedial of Reading Disabilities. Where S.A= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U.D= Undecided, D=Disagree, S.D=Strongly Disagree,

<b>Teacher Related Factors</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
The manner in which a teacher presents a subject greatly influences students' attitudes towards that particular subject.					
That teachers are aware of and employ the various methods of teaching reading in English but do not provide basic prerequisite activities					
Teachers could easily identify poor readers and explain factors contributing to poor reading abilities					
The poor performance in English at Primary level could be attributed to reading failure since the reading skill is needed to read and interpret					

examination questions and even comprehend what the questions require for an answer.					
Teachers need to be professionally trained (initial teacher education and continuing professional development), well supported and to have positive relationship with the learners.					
Many curriculum approaches and packages have been found both to work and to fail; what seem critical is the skills of the teacher					
Some teachers do not remember learning phonics instruction themselves and many did not receive adequate phonics instruction during their training.					
Further investment in the training of specialist teachers to assist students with literacy difficulties					
Ordinary class teaching is not enough and specialists are required, while many teachers lack a firm grounding in phonics and phonics					

**Section D: School Related Factors Contributing to the Remedy of Reading Disabilities Among Learners in Schools.**

Please rate the extent of your involvement in the following statements on School Related Factors Contributing to the Remedy of Reading Disabilities Among Learners in Schools. Where S.A= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U.D= Undecided, D=Disagree, S.D=Strongly Disagree,

<b>School Related Factors</b>	<b>SA</b> <b>5</b>	<b>A</b> <b>4</b>	<b>U</b> <b>3</b>	<b>D</b> <b>2</b>	<b>SD</b> <b>1</b>
Teachers made adjustments to their instructions, the environment, curriculum topics and materials to accommodate students' diversity and to help all students achieve objectives, hence read					

effectively.					
Poor school reforms, poor classroom management, lack of effective teachers in school negative attitude among teachers and lack of student motivation					
Kenyan schools lack fully qualified teachers who can teach phonics effectively and also due to the diversified ethnic groups in the country					
Children with LD are performing poorly on reading texts because their home language differs substantially from the language of instruction					
Assessing reading skills and making instructional recommendations in areas of concepts about print, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension and vocabulary developments as well as spelling					
Reading ability is determined by multiple factors such as giving learners frequent and intensive opportunities to read, exposing them to frequent, regular spelling-sound relationships and using reading to obtain meaning from print					
Teachers of English therefore should be able to recognize when a child's reading problems are the result of linguistic clashes					
Teachers should provide instruction on remediation that help children learn the connections between the 44 sounds of English language (phonemes) and the 26 letters of the alphabet					

**Section E: Home Based Factors Contribute to the Remedy of Reading Disabilities Among Learners in Schools.**

Please rate the extent of your involvement in the following statements on Home Based Factors Contribute to the Remedy of Reading Disabilities Among Learners in Schools.

Where S.A= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U.D= Undecided, D=Disagree, S.D=Strongly Disagree,

<b>Home Based Factors</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Successful parent involvement can be defined as the active ongoing participation of a parent or primary caretakers in the education of his/her child					
talking to the child about their day, reading together and encouraging the child to work hard among others					
parents can take the advantage of many opportunities in the daily life of a child in school or at home to provide natural language stimulation					
Parents are the most important partners in a child's education and schools can reap dividends by capitalizing on their support					
reading activities produce a significant improvement in child's language and reading skills from pre-school through high school					
Training of parents to tutor/help their children to implement effective reading interventions					
Some parents have memories of school which may make them uncomfortable relating to teachers					

**APPENDIX II: CHECKLIST FOR TEACHERS TO FILL ON LEARNERS'  
READING ERRORS**

1. A list of 20 basic sight words

the	that	at	more	your
of	with	had	us	many
and	for	not	will	out
to	this	well	can	so
in	by	but	them	from

2. Oral reading errors

- a) The boy went into the burning building
- b) The children sat down at the table to eat lunch
- c) Now I recognize you name
- d) The pot is lost
- e) Mary often looked at the clock
- f) Everyone was cheering because I was a baseball hero
- g) It was an octopus

Mark for

- Omissions
- Insertions
- Substitutions
- Mispronunciation
- Reversals

3. Checklist for word recognition and phonics sounds

## Consonant –vowel-consonant combinations

fan	did	kid	nip
sun	bid	van	lad
tin	red	cap	pan
pet	pat	hid	cot
mom	put	gum	dot

**APPENDIX III: PARENTS' INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

1. Do you help your child with homework at home?

Yes  No

2. How many children do you have at home/school?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you provide story book for your child to read at home?

Yes  No

4. What other reading materials do you provide your child with at home?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you encourage your child to read at school / at home?

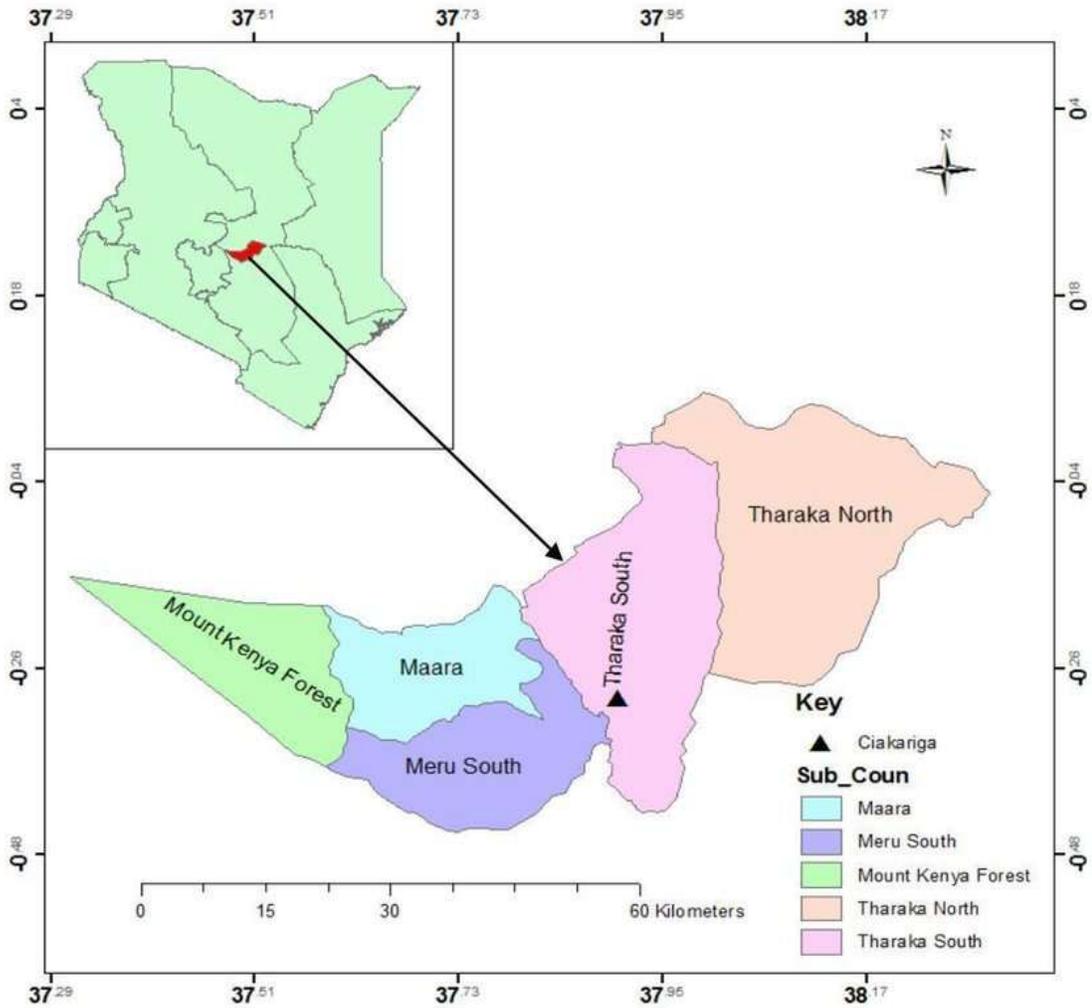
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you reward (by way of motivation) your child at home?

\_\_\_\_\_



### APPENDIX V: MAP OF THARAKA NITHI COUNTY



**APPENDIX VI: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,  
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION**

Telephone: +254-20-2215471,  
224E349, 3310571, 2219400  
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249  
Email: [dg@nacosti.go.ke](mailto:dg@nacosti.go.ke)  
Website: [www.nacosti.go.ke](http://www.nacosti.go.ke)  
When replying please quote

NACOSTI, Upper Kabete  
Off Waiyaki Way  
P.O. Box 30623-00100  
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref No. **NACOSTI/P/19/65225/29454**

Date: **7<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

Linet Mbiro Njeru  
Kenyatta University  
P.O. Box 43844-00100  
**NAIROBI.**

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *“Home and school related factors and their effectiveness in overcoming reading disabilities among class four learners in Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya.”* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Tharaka Nithi County** for the period ending **7<sup>th</sup> May, 2020**.

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Tharaka Nithi County** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit a **copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.

  
**DR. STEPHEN K. KIBIRU, PhD.**  
**FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO**

Copy to:

The County Commissioner  
Tharaka Nithi County.

The County Director of Education  
Tharaka Nithi County.

**APPENDIX VII: RESEARCH PERMIT**

**THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:**

**MS. LINET MBIRO NJERU**  
**of KENYATTA UNIVERSITY, 18-60408**  
**NAIROBI, has been permitted to conduct**  
**research in Tharaka-Nithi County**

**on the topic: HOME AND SCHOOL**  
**RELATED FACTORS AND THEIR**  
**EFFECTIVENESS IN OVERCOMING**  
**READING DISABILITIES AMONG CLASS**  
**FOUR LEARNERS IN THARAKA-NITHI**  
**COUNTY, KENYA**

**for the period ending:**  
**7th May, 2020**

.....  
**Applicant's**  
**Signature**

**Permit No : NACOSTI/P/19/65225/29454**  
**Date Of Issue : 7th May, 2019**  
**Fee Received :Ksh 2000**



**Director General**  
**National Commission for Science,**  
**Technology & Innovation**