THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF CHILD ABUSE IN SELECTED RESIDENTIAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR STUDENTS WITH EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS IN THIKA DISTRICT, KENYA

BY
GICHUKE VIRGINIA WAMBUI
E55/10682/2004

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the Degree of Master of Education (Special Needs Education) in the School of Education of Kenyatta University

MAY 2010

Gichuke, Virginia
The Nature and Extent of Child Abuse in
DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

Signature .................................. Date 5/5/2010

Gichuke Virginia Wambui
Kenyatta University
Reg No. E55/10682/04

This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as university supervisors

Signature .................................. Date 6/5/2010

Dr. Michael Njenga Njoroge
Department of Special Needs Education
Kenyatta University

Signature .................................. Date 5/5/2010

Dr. Samson Rosana Ondigi
Department of Educational Communication Technology
Kenyatta University
DEDICATION

To my dear husband Delaide and our children William and Martin.
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I would not forget my husband Delaide for being there for me all the time. Special mention goes to my beloved children William and Martin for typing this work and sacrificing too much for mum.

Finally, all honour and glory go to God for His providence.
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<td>Action Aid International Uganda</td>
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<td>ANPPCAN</td>
<td>African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G / C</td>
<td>Guidance and Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.O.D</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
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<td>NAEYC</td>
<td>National Association for the Education of Young Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSPCC</td>
<td>National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children</td>
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<td>P.H</td>
<td>Physically Handicapped</td>
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<td>U.N</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>V.I</td>
<td>Visually Impaired</td>
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<td>W.H.O</td>
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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to investigate the nature and extent of child abuse in Thika High School for the Visually Impaired (VI) and Joytown Secondary School for the Physically Handicapped (PH) in Thika District. The study intended to answer the following questions: What was the nature and extent of physical, sexual and verbal abuse of children with exceptional needs? Who were the major perpetrators of such abuse? Was there gender disparity in such abuse? The study adopted a descriptive survey design and employed both qualitative and quantitative methods in data collection. The population of the study was 361 learners of which 143 Form 2 and Form 3 students participated in the study. Eighteen teachers from both schools were also involved. Data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings of the study were presented in frequency tables, percentages, bar-graphs, and pie-charts. The results indicated that 74% of the students in Thika High School for the VI had been beaten as compared to 29% in the case of Joytown School for PH. Thika High School for the VI reported 15% cases of touching of breasts as compared to 5% in Joytown School for PH. The study revealed that 64% of the respondents had been or were being verbally abused at school, 9% of the students reported to have been involved in forced sex. The most common perpetrators of beating and insulting abuse were female teachers. With regards to touching abuse, the most common perpetrators were fellow students at 13% followed by male teachers at 8%. Perpetrators of sexual abuse were largely fellow students at 7% followed by male teachers at 6%. Notable gender differences were observed. Boys were more likely to report that someone had beaten them, forced them to have sex and touched them other body parts, while girls were more likely to report that the perpetrator had touched their breasts. Eighty two percent of the respondents strongly agreed that children should be taught how to protect themselves from those who abuse them at school. Recommendations were based on the students’ views about reporting of abuse cases, incorporating child abuse in teachers’ and students’ curricula and prosecution of offenders.
1.0 Introduction

Child abuse is known to exist in schools, here in Kenya and elsewhere in the world. As it is a major cause of trauma in children, child abuse is a problem that requires the attention of educationists. Children with severe exceptional needs are highly vulnerable to child abuse as they depend heavily on adults for their daily upkeep. This study investigated the nature and extent of child abuse in selected residential secondary schools for students with exceptional needs in Thika District. In particular, it zeroed in to physical, sexual and verbal abuse since child abuse is a relatively wide area. This chapter covers the following subtopics; background to the problem, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objective of the study, limitations of the study, assumptions of the study, theoretical and conceptual framework as well as the operational definition of terms.

1.1 Background of the problem

Maltreatment of children has been justified for many centuries by the belief that severe physical punishment was necessary either to maintain discipline, to transmit educational ideas, to please certain gods or to expel evil spirits (Radbill, 1974). Children throughout time and in most cultures have lived in a world which has supported in law and custom some level of violence against children. The rationale for that violence has often "made sense" within the context of that culture or time and has not been defined as harmful to the child (Mayhall & Norgard, 1983).

The maltreatment of children is worsened by the presence of a disability. Specific groups of children are more prone to abuse than others. These include children who are deformed or handicapped since in most cases they are considered a burden or an ill omen (UNICEF, 1986; Mucai-Kattambo, 1992). Before the 17th century, persons with disabilities were considered worthless, most of them were killed at birth and those that survived were neglected and mistreated. In the mid 18th century, disabled persons were
institutionalized for protection but these institutions subsequently degenerated into asylums leading to their closure (Kirk, Gallagher & Anastasiow, 2003).

According to World Health Organisation, sexually harassing behaviour by student and staff, takes place in schools and universities. WHO (2002) asserts that for many young women, the most common place where sexual coercion and harassment are experienced is in the schools. Panos (2003), reports that sexual bullying is common in mixed-sex comprehensive schools in United Kingdom. Bullying is a common phenomenon in schools in Canada though the country has anti-bullying programs in schools (Kalinowski, 2006). Taylor (1981) reported of a residential special school in California where “Confrontational Therapy” was used on autistic children in the 1970s despite corporal punishment being outlawed in California.

Research shows that sexual abuse of girls by older male pupils and male teachers is accepted, along with corporal punishment, verbal abuse and bullying, as an inevitable part of much school life in Africa (Leach, 2003). The reluctance of education authorities to address the issue and to prosecute perpetrators allows abuse to flourish unchecked. Notable among these countries is South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana. In South Africa, 1.6% of the women reported having been raped before the age of 15 years and named their teachers as the rapists in 1998 (Leach, 2003; Panos, 2003).

In Kenya, child abuse is not uncommon, going by the reports in the media. A memorable episode is that of St. Kizito High School in Meru on 14th July 1991 where 19 girls were killed and 71 reported raped by their male counterparts, (Riithi, 1991). Corporal punishment had been in use in Kenyan schools until the year 2000, when it was abolished. However this abusive practice remains alive and well in Kenyan schools (Johnston, 2002). A survey carried out in 2002 in Nairobi upper primary schools revealed that 80% of the 1146 pupils (boys and girls) had been or were being verbally abused at school. Sixty had been or were being physically abused at school and nearly 50% had been or were being sexually abused at school (unwanted sexual touch), while 10% claimed to have been forced into sexual intercourse by either their peers or by their
teachers (Johnston, 2002). It is within this background that this study investigated the
nature and extent of abuse in two selected residential secondary schools for children with
exceptional needs in Thika District.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Child abuse is taking place in Kenya today. Evidence can partly be adduced from print
and electronic media reports. Yet a large number of child abuse cases go unreported
(ANPPCAN, 2001; Mwiti, 1997). The increase in the number of people infected with
HIV/AIDS and the myth that AIDS can be cured by having sex with a virgin, has in turn
added to the number of children who are sexually molested today (AAIU, 2004). On the
other hand, the breakup of social structures of the family due to urbanization has led to
more and more children being assaulted physically by their parents as well as by
strangers. When such atrocities are adversely committed in society, the weak and
vulnerable members suffer most. Children with disabilities are four times more likely to
be sexually, physically and emotionally abused and neglected than their able bodied peers
due to their inability to defend themselves or disclose the abuse to parents or caregivers
(NSPCC, 2003).

Research has proved that abuse of children in regular schools in Kenya is rampant
(Johnston, 2002). Lack of data from residential schools for students with exceptional
needs is no proof that abuse is absent in these institutions. On the contrary, the opposite
could be true since Ruto (2009) has proven evidence that boarding schools are sites of
violence. It is for this reason that researcher was prompted to investigate the nature and
extent of child abuse in selected residential secondary schools for students with
exceptional needs.

1.3 Purpose of study

Based on the problem already stated, the main purpose of this study was to find out the
nature and extent of physical, sexual and verbal abuse of learners with exceptional needs
in selected residential secondary schools for children with exceptional needs in Thika
District. Since residential institutions sometimes socialize students to accept the status quo, this study could help the students provide information which could be otherwise difficult to get. The information from the study is intended to inform intervention measures towards reducing cases of abuse to students with exceptional needs in selected residential secondary schools.

1.4 Objectives of the study

Specifically the major objectives of the study are:

1. To establish the nature of physical, sexual and verbal abuse on learners with exceptional needs in selected residential secondary schools.
2. To establish the extent of physical, sexual and verbal abuse on learners with exceptional needs in selected residential secondary schools.
3. To find out the major perpetrators of physical, sexual and verbal abuse on learners with exceptional needs in selected residential secondary schools.
4. To determine the gender parity/disparity in physical, sexual and verbal abuse on learners with exceptional needs in selected residential secondary schools.
5. To find out the measures that could be taken to curb child abuse in selected residential secondary schools for learners with exceptional needs.

1.5 Research questions

The proposed study is guided by the following research questions based on the objectives of the study:

1. What is the nature of physical, sexual and verbal abuse experienced by learners with exceptional needs in selected residential secondary schools?
2. What is the extent of physical, sexual and verbal abuse on learners with exceptional needs in selected residential secondary schools?
3. Who are the major perpetrators of physical, sexual and verbal abuse on learners with exceptional needs in selected residential secondary schools?
4. What is the extent of gender parity/disparity in physical, sexual and verbal abuse on learners with exceptional needs in selected residential secondary schools?
5. What are the measures that could be taken to curb child abuse in selected residential secondary schools for learners with exceptional needs?

1.6 **Significance of the study**

The findings of the proposed study may be beneficial to the public who may be sensitized to have a better understanding of the maltreatment children in residential special schools undergo and maybe develop intervention measures. In particular, parents of children in residential schools for children with exceptional needs could be sensitized to push for appropriate policies, through PTAs, to curb child abuse in these schools. Further, the study findings could also be useful to the government, through the Ministry of Education and in liaison with the Kenya Institute of Education, to develop an appropriate curriculum component of child abuse to be incorporated at all levels of teacher training in this country. The law enforcement organs can be sensitized to be more vigilant in dealing with child abuse in schools and the larger community and hopefully come up with measures of arresting and prosecuting child abusers according to the laws.

1.7 **Limitations and delimitations of the study**

The study was limited to two residential schools for children with exceptional needs in Thika District. For more conclusive results, all residential schools for children with exceptional needs in the country would need to be studied but this was not possible due to constraints of time and resources. It was not possible to get the views and opinions of parents of children in these residential schools because it was difficult to reach such parents who came from all over the country and the researcher did not have access to them. Their views and opinions would have been helpful in that some children would disclose child abuse to people they trust most, particularly the mother. Since child abuse is a very broad area, the study limited itself to three areas only: namely physical, sexual and verbal abuse. Further, the acts that qualify to be defined as physical abuse, sexual abuse or verbal abuse lie in a continuum. This study considered only a few acts that may occur often in schools.
1.8 Assumptions of the study

In the proposed study, it was assumed that all respondents could be cooperative and honest and provide reliable responses. Since there is proven existence of physical, sexual and verbal abuse in regular schools in Kenya, it was assumed that there existed such abuse also in selected residential secondary schools for children with exceptional needs as these students are more vulnerable to abuse than their peers in regular schools. Further, it was assumed that the sample would be representative of the population of the study, considering that students in such schools are admitted nationally.

1.9 Theoretical framework

Good research should be aware of its theoretical base and use it to collect and analyse data. Theory helps data coherence and enables research to go beyond an aimless, unsystematic piling up of accounts (Orodho, 2004). This study is based on Bandura’s social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1978). This theory suggests that human subjects in social settings learn new responses by merely observing the behaviours of others. The person being observed is called a model. For instance, a child may learn a language by observing parents and other people speaking—a process called modeling. Modeling involves more than imitation (response mimicry) and is less diffuse than identification (incorporation of entire patterns of behaviour).

The theory distinguishes between acquisition and performance. The theory argues that it is possible to acquire behaviour without necessarily reproducing it. In other words the observer does not overtly perform the models responses during the acquisition phase—no trial learning. Thus the observation of consequences to a model affects performance but not acquisition. The theory also asserts that learning will take place even in situations where neither the model nor the observer is reinforced. Social learning theory does not view reinforcement as establishing stimulus-response connections. Rather, what is being established are certain expectations concerning the results of various actions and the development of general rules of actions. Rather than an automatic, mechanical connection between behaviour and reinforcement, there is a complex cognitive process.
Observational learning, therefore, accounts for the learning of new, complex patterns of behaviour independent of reinforcement.

Bandura (1978) emphasized the importance of self-perception of efficacy as cognitive mediators of action. The estimate of one’s own ability to perform a specific behaviour is called self-efficacy. This theory states that whether a person undertakes a task depends, in part, on his or her perceived level of efficacy regarding that task. Self-efficacy judgment influence thought, emotion and action. Perceived self-efficacy is at least partially independent on one’s actual abilities. People who are highly competent at a particular task but have little faith in their ability are unlikely to attempt the task (Liebert & Liebert, 1998).

The social learning theory is applicable in this study in that abused children tend to become child abusers themselves (Bakan, 1975; Innocenti Digest, 2000). According to this theory maladaptive behaviour is as a result of dysfunctional learning. Maladaptive responses can be learned as a result of direct experience or as a result of exposure to inadequate or “sick” models. When children are abused, be it physically, sexually or emotionally, they may learn that being aggressive is a way of life. Bandura suggests that the degree to which parents (and significant others) themselves model forms of aberrant behaviour is often a significant cause of psychopathology. According to Bakan (1975), persons who engage in violence tend to have been victims of violence. Every time a child is being punished by use of violence he/she is being taught that the use of violence is a proper mode of behaviour. Bakan further postulates that it is impossible to use corporal punishment on a child without simultaneously teaching that the deliberate infliction of pain as a form of persuasion and as a means of gaining ascendancy over others is legitimate. Hence, one way of riding society of violence is to stop child abuse at home and at school.

In a direct manner, child abuse tends to lower individual self-esteem. It damages and confuses interpersonal relationships and can bring about inconsistency and instability in behaviour (Johnston, 2003; Rickel & Hendren, 1993; Kay, 2003). Low self esteem in
children who are abused may then mean that these children may have little faith in their abilities. This in turn translates to their setting very low academic goals for themselves since their perceived self-efficacy is low (Liebert & Liebert, 1998). Such children may perform poorly academically. Since aggression is learnt through observing aggressive models, physically abused children may become aggressive towards other children and even the teachers. This means that the school environment and particularly the classroom would not be conducive for effective teaching and learning to take place (Reinert, 1986; Wolfe, 1987).

1.10 Conceptual framework

A child who observes self or others being abused may learn that the way to lord over others is by abusing them. In the school situation, a child may suffer abuse from teachers, subordinate staff or peers. This may create fear in children hindering effective learning and defeating the very purpose for which school is created. On the other hand, if the school environment is free of child abuse, then the resultant child has self confidence and high self-esteem. It is also highly unlikely that such a child will abuse other people. This can be conceptualized as below:
TYPES OF ABUSE

PHYSICAL ABUSE
1. Caning
2. Beating
3. Slapping
4. Kicking
5. Punching
6. Pinching

SEXUAL ABUSE
1. Unwanted sexual touch
2. Forced sexual intercourse
3. Sexual insults

VERBAL ABUSE
1. Insults
2. Belittling
3. Defaming
4. Humiliating
5. Unfair criticism
6. Shaming

ABUSED CHILD
1. Trauma
2. Low self esteem
3. Low self-efficacy
4. Poor academic performance
5. Poor social relations
6. Aggression

Figure 1.1: Types of abuse and possible effects on a child
Source: Developed by the researcher
1.11 Operational definition of terms

**Abused children:** Children who are traumatized in one way or another by adults.

**Child:** In this study the author describes a child as a human being who is below the age of eighteen years and attending residential schools for children with physical disabilities or visual impairments.

**Child abuse:** The researcher views child abuse as any act of omission or commission that harms or threatens to harm the growth of a child either physically, psychologically or spiritually. In this study it engulfs physical, sexual and verbal abuse, on learners with exceptional needs attending residential schools.

**Extent of child abuse:** The degree to which a certain form of abuse takes place i.e. how often.

**Nature of child abuse:** The type or forms that child abuse takes.

**Physical abuse:** This happens when an adult deliberately inflicts on a child or knowingly fail to prevent the coming to physical harm. Physical abuse may include caning, hitting, punching, beating, kicking, burning etc.

**Sexual abuse:** Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. It is normally perpetrated by adults on children without their consent or older children against young children.

**Sexual touch:** Involves touching one on the erogenous parts of the body with the intention of arousing one sexually e.g private parts, breasts and buttocks.

**Verbal abuse:** Deliberate use of words to unfairly criticize, shame and / or humiliate a child or to call a child bad /dirty names.
1.12 Summary

The chapter justified the need to carry out the research, outlined the objectives of the study, described the theory on which the study was based and gave a conceptual framework of the study. Operational definitions of terms were given. Chapter two looked at literature that is relevant to this study.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Child abuse is one form of violence that is rampant in families, schools and in communities. There seems to be a web in which one form of violence is intricately entangled with other forms of violence making it difficult for one to point at one type of violence, without of necessity, touching on others. For the purpose of this study, the literature will be reviewed under the following sub-headings; history of child abuse, meaning and scope of child abuse, possible effects of child abuse, perpetrators of child abuse, abuse in institutions of learning, role of the school in curbing child abuse and abuse on children with disabilities.

2.1 History of child abuse

In numerous known and publicly recorded instances children have been victimized by those responsible for their care (Bakan, 1975). One of the oldest recorded literature, The Bible, is littered with numerous instances of child abuse. In Exodus 1:22 (Bible Society, 1967), Pharaoh, King of Egypt decreed that every son born to the Hebrews was to be cast in the Nile River. Abraham, was about to slaughter his son Isaac when God miraculously provided him with a ram as recorded in Genesis 22 (Bible Society, 1967). The kings of Israel used to sacrifice their live sons in the valley of slaughter in 2 Chronicles 28:3 (Bible Society, 1967). Mathew 2:16 details how King Herod ordered the killing of all male children aged below two years (Bible Society, 1967).

Radbill, (1974) asserts that justification for maltreatment of children was for various reasons such as for discipline, to transmit knowledge, to please the gods or to expel evil spirits. Whipping of children was prerogative of teachers and parents. Ancient philosophers beat their pupils mercilessly adhering strictly to the biblical doctrine of ‘spare the rod and spoil the child’. Radbill records that even the high and the mighty were not spared. The regular flogging produced a most unhappy person in King Henry VI
though it made him a scholar and a gentleman who advocated for better treatment of children.

Child infanticide has been a common practice among many cultures. Roman laws gave the father the power of life and death over his children (Bakan, 1975; Radbill, 1974). Among the Indians, female infanticide took different forms, such as drowning infants in water or milk, overdosing them with opium or starving them to death (Korbin, 1981). As late as 1873, female infanticide was permitted in China. It was also reported as a regular feature among the Eskimos, Polynesians, Egyptians, Scandinavians, Africans, American Indians as well as the Australian Aborigines.

Harsh physical punishment upon children is also another practice that cuts across many cultures. The traditional Chinese cultural values uphold the absolute rights of parents to inflict hard physical punishment upon children while children are obliged to endure or even to show enjoyment of parental punishment (Korbin, 1981). In India, boys were occasionally punished by hanging by the hands- the hands would be tied together by a rope, which would be tied to a rafter ensuring that the feet of the child did not touch the ground (Korbin, 1981). Radbill (1974) records that in instances where epilepsy was attributed to demonic possession, the sufferer was thrashed soundly to expel the said demon.

Children with disabilities may have suffered much more in history than their normal peers. In China, India and throughout the orient, deformed children were usually destroyed at birth. In the sixteenth century Europe, Martin Luther ordered mentally defective children drowned because he was convinced they were instruments of the devil (Radbill, 1974). The Greeks and the Romans killed their weak or deformed infants since the Roman law of the Twelve Tables forbade rearing of deformed children. In classical times, Seneca, Plato and Aristotle maintained that killing of defective children was a wise custom (Bakan, 1975). In other words, during the pre-Christian era, the handicapped tended to be neglected and mistreated. They were abandoned or even killed, particularly if the handicapping condition was of an obvious physical nature. The spread of
Christianity called for more humanitarian treatment of people with handicaps and custodial residential centres were established to provide care for them. However, these institutions degenerated into asylums (Kirk, et al, 2003).

The advent of Industrial Revolution in USA demanded more and more unskilled labour. Children, as young as ten years, were employed into most hazardous jobs. This led voluntary organizations to develop orphanages, foster homes and homes for the retarded and the insane. But in these institutions, children were heavily punished, overworked and underfed (Taylor, 1981). To ease this problem, children were placed in foster homes through contracts of indenture. This meant that a child was bound to the service of the foster parents until she/he was eighteen years old. Maltreatment of those children was common.

In such a foster home, Mary Ellen was placed at eighteen months of age. She became one of a series of children whose tragic life led to public outcry, demands for action and the changes in social policy. At eight years, she was regularly beaten, abused (verbal), neglected, cut with scissors, and seriously malnourished. At that point in time, the right of parents (biological or foster) to chastise their own children was still sacred and there was no law under which any agency could interfere, to protect a child like her. But there were laws against cruelty to animals, so the matter was brought before a court on the grounds that Mary Ellen was a member of the animal kingdom. The case was proved and she was granted protection. This culminated in the formation of New York Society of Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and the formation in Britain of National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, in 1895 (Jones, and Pickett, 1987; Taylor, 1981; Radbill, 1974).

In 1962, an American pediatrician coined the term “battered baby syndrome”, which was instrumental in bringing child abuse to the attention of the general public (Helfer and Kempe, 1974). He argued that some injuries suffered by some of the children he had treated had no other explanation rather than that they had been inflicted by adults. The battering to death of Maria Colwel in 1973 by her stepfather in Britain aroused public outcry (Parton, 1985). Though this case elicited a lot of publicity, it was not an isolated
scandal but simply the tip of a much bigger iceberg. However, the inquiry into the case led to enhancing policies on child abuse.

The United Nations has been vocal in advocating the rights of the child so as to protect the child from abuse. In 1924, the League of Nations adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which was updated in 1959. Unicef was bestowed with the responsibility of disbursing aid to international communities to help them to carry out the aim proclaimed by the declaration (UNICEF, 1972). The Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1991) stipulated, among other highlights, that:

a) Every child has the inherent right to life, and states shall ensure, to the maximum, child survival and development; as articulated in article 6.

b) States shall protect children from physical or mental harm and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation. Article 19 reads in part ‘...protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, or exploitation including sexual abuse, while in the care of the parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.” Teachers are included here.

c) Disabled children will have the right to special treatment, education and care. Article 23 specifies that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life in conditions that ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child’s active participation in the community.

Although most nations of the world (Kenya included) are signatories to the convention, children continue to be abused in many countries (UNICEF, 2004). The report states that when children are left unprotected and vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, their childhood is undermined. A protective environment is pivotal to governmental and societies commitment to ensuring that no child is deprived of the material, spiritual and emotional resources needed to achieve their potential and participate as full members of society. United Nations Secretary Generals’ Report (2006) indicates that violence against children exists in every country of the world cutting across culture, class, education, income and ethnic origin. The report further argues that no violence against children is justifiable and that all violence is preventable. Therefore, states must invest in evidence-based policies and programmes to address factors that give rise to violence against...
children. According to media reports, child abuse is rampant in Kenya yet these reports are just a tip of the iceberg (Mwiti, 1997). The abuse takes place at home as well as in schools.

2.2 Meaning and scope of child abuse

Efforts to define child abuse and neglect have been fraught with controversy and shortcomings. This controversy exists in part because the nature of child maltreatment does not lend itself to clear definitions that apply to each new situation without considering discretion (Wolfe, 1987). In other words, the definition of child abuse will depend on the purpose for which it is intended. For instance, for the social researcher, an inclination towards the social and psychological implications of abuse on the child’s development would suffice. On the other hand, a legally based definition that focuses largely on evidential criteria would be important in proof of guilty or not guilty of abuse (Wolfe, 1987). Further, different cultures have different concepts of what constitutes child abuse, making it difficult to define this term cross-culturally. Thus the term may not have one universally accepted definition, for the acts that constitute it lie in a continuum, ranging from ignoring the cry of a baby to assault and murder. Each of these acts has their own definitions.

UNICEF (1986) defines child abuse as harm to children that results from human action or inaction that is prescribed, proximate and preventable. It includes physical and mental injury, sexual abuse, exploitation, and negligent treatment of the child by a person who is responsible for the child’s welfare. For the researcher, child abuse will be viewed as any act of omission or commission that would harm or threatens to harm the physical, psychological or spiritual growth of a child. Since child abuse is a significantly broad term, it is important to define its facets which are key to this study namely; physical abuse, sexual abuse and verbal abuse.
Physical abuse happens when an adult or adults deliberately inflict injuries on a child or knowingly fail to prevent the coming to physical harm (Kay, 2003). Physical abuse may take different forms such as:

(i) Hitting, punching or slapping, kicking, burning, scalding,
(ii) Beating with an object e.g. a belt,
(iii) Smothering or suffocating the child,
(iv) Poisoning,
(v) Shaking the child violently,
(vi) Scratching, pinching or twisting parts of the child’s body,
(vii) Grabbing, squeezing or crushing parts of the child’s body and
(viii) Throwing an object at the child, stabbing or cutting.

Some physical abuse of children may be described as over-punishment. This occurs when the child is subject to physical punishment from a carer who then ‘goes too far’ resulting in injury. This may be the result of the carer losing her temper or being unable to control her behaviour. It may also result from an escalation of punishment whereby the punishments become more severe over time because the lesser punishment is considered ineffective.

On the other hand, sexual abuse, which may variously be referred as sexual assault or sexual victimization, involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetration (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Sexual abuse of children involves any sexual behaviour or activity through which an adult uses a child for his/her own sexual gratification (Kay, 2003). Sexual abuse of children could include the following:

(i) Sexual intercourse including vaginal or anal penetration,
(ii) Rape,
(iii) Masturbation of the child or of the adult by the child,
(iv) Oral sex with the child or by the child, indecent exposure,
(v) Touching, fondling or kissing the child in a sexual manner and for sexual gratification,
(vi) Child pornography involving the inclusion of children in sexual activities with adults or each other, possibly animals or objects and recording these activities on video, film or still photographs which could be sold or otherwise distributed,
(vii) Child prostitution which could involve the child in sexual activity with a number of partners for pay,
(viii) Showing the child pornographic material in order to stimulate the child, and
(ix) Involving the child in sexual activities with adults or other children for the sexual gratification of the adults present.

Child sexual abuse may occur in the home, at school, at work or in a public place, (Population Reference Bureau(PRB), 2000) and since it is the exploitation of power, young people are especially at risk, and the violations can have lasting consequences for their sexual and reproductive health. The costs include unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, physical injury and trauma or even death. Young people who have been sexually abused are more likely to engage in high-risk sexual behaviour than are those who have not been abused (Johnston, 2003; Rickel and Hendren, 1993).

Verbal abuse is one form of emotional abuse (Kay, 2003). Emotional abuse involves harm to the child's psychological and emotional development due to persistent and severe ill treatment. Emotional abuse may take many forms, one of which is terrorizing the child. This can be done through verbal assault, creating a climate of fear, bullying and frightening a child, making the child believe that the world is capricious and hostile. Verbal abuse may accompany both physical and sexual abuse so as to intimidate a child. Kay, (2003) notes that even for non-abused children, unfair criticism or ridicule and rejection can be painful and demoralizing for a period of time.
Browne and Herbert (1997) give a definition of emotional abuse that is suggestive of acts that are usually verbal. They define emotional abuse as regular criticism, humiliation, denigration, insults, putdowns, name-calling and other attempts to undermine self-image and sense of worth.

The prevalence and incidence of child abuse is widely accepted as conservative (Rickel and Hendren, 1993). This tendency is due to the failure of citizens and professionals to report suspected cases and the reluctance of abused children to talk, many believing their punishment are deserved. Boys are less likely to report sexual victimization than girls although data suggests that the actual at-risk potential for children in the age bracket of 10-13 years is equal for both sexes (Groth and Binbaum, 1979). Johnston (2000) points out that rape is prevalent in most sub-Sahara Africa but the extent of forced sexual intercourse is difficult to establish because of the stigma and lack of reporting. For Kenya, he says that surveys show that both boys and girls experience rape. PRP (2000) suggests that the stigma attached to women and girls who have been raped or otherwise sexually assaulted continue to hinder research in the issue.

2.3 Possible effects of child abuse

Child abuse does not seem to affect each victim in a predictable or a consistent fashion (Wolfe, 1987). Abused children are not a homogeneous group. Calam and Franchi (1987), note that some are compliant and anxious to please, others manifest ‘demon’ symptoms, yet others switch from sweet, compliant behaviour to disruptive behaviour without apparent provocation. Children with ‘demon’ symptoms are difficult to manage, not listening to directions and seemingly impervious to disapproval. They also move constantly, cannot play with other children and hit at others continually. Their language is aggressive as is their behaviour – due to viewing aggression as their only outlet and have learnt a negative mode of coping with the situation. However, some child victims of abuse emerge from very abusive families unscathed, leading to the realization that the impact of abuse cannot always be detected in terms of its negative or undesirable influences upon the child’s development. Diverse outcomes are especially understandable
when positive mediators of adjustment such as supportive relatives or the child’s coping abilities are taken into consideration (Wolfe, 1987; Meier, 1985).

The immediate effects of physical abuse can range from minor injuries such as bruising, through to broken bones and internal injuries. It can also result in permanent injury or death as in the case of subdural haematoma (bleeding of the membrane surrounding the brain), which can cause permanent brain damage or death (Jones and Pickett, 1987).

Physical abuse can also result in developmental delays relating to the child’s mental and physical growth. This can lead to short or longer-term learning delays that might be apparent at school or nursery (Kay, 2003). Calam and Franchi (1987) indicate that abused children may have poor expressive language skills and this affects their verbal intelligence quotient seriously. This inability to express themselves may have detrimental effects in the school adjustment processes since they may be unable to cope with academic work, to respond well to teachers and to form good relationships with peers. Ineffective school adjustment may in turn lead to learning difficulties (Calam and Franchi, 1987). However, they caution that opposition on the part of the abused children and unwillingness to attempt the task may lead to diminished scores indicating problems of interaction rather than cognition.

A child who lives in an unpredictable and unsafe environment may develop an almost uncanny ability to detect the state of mind of the abuser. This ability is developed as a defense mechanism by which the child hopes to avoid further abuse by not provoking anger, or acting to placate the aggressor. Such children are described as being in a state of “frozen watchfulness” (Kay, 2003). This is a state of extreme attentiveness. They stare continually, constantly scanning the environment, avoiding eye contact and keeping their faces immobile. They are fearful and shy and have not learnt to please with smiling, and social behaviour. They are extra ordinary passive, accepting whatever happens to them. They may avoid punishment by such behaviour but optimal conditions for learning through exploration of parents, toys and environment are missing (Calam and Franchi, 1987).
Abused children may also develop pseudo-mature behaviour. This means that these children are locked in styles which are not conducive to age, appropriate enjoyment or flexibility. The pseudo adult child has forfeited his/her right to feel and act as a child, instead planning his life for the pleasure of adults rather than for himself/herself. He/she concentrates on keeping his/her parent(s) happy and avoiding harm and consequently may miss out on play and feels unconfident to explore the environment fully (Kay, 2003; Calam and Franchi, 1987).

Abused children may have low self-esteem -seeing themselves as stupid or naughty and underestimating themselves -not doing things clearly within their ability. This may be an adaptive response where the child finds it safer not to attempt something rather than attempt and risk failure and possible punishment. This response may be carried over into the school situation (Calam and Franchi, 1987). Kay (2003) adds that abused children have poor self-confidence. They have little sense of self through being denied basic love and care, through being treated as an object, deprived the right to have needs, views and opinions of their own and perhaps being made to feel that they deserve the treatment they receive. Sexually abused children are often made to feel valueless because they are denied the right to make choices about the most intimate parts of themselves. This lack of self-esteem can be one of the longer-term effects of abuse lasting throughout adulthood and affecting all aspects of life (Wolfe, 1987; Finkelhor, 1979). Children who are subjected to physical aggression often become aggressive towards other children (Maher, 1987). This may be a way of releasing frustration and anger or it can be that the child has learnt that this is a way of dealing with other humans that is effective in terms of getting his/her own way. Children who suffer sexual abuse can also become physically and sexually aggressive to other children (Kay, 2003). As mentioned earlier, their language may also be aggressive.

All abuse involves the child in high levels of stress, and this may result in strange or bizarre behaviour, regressive behaviour – behaviour patterns of a younger age or self-destructive behaviour – attempts to harm self. The child may also have eating and
sleeping problems, bed-wetting, outbursts and tantrums. Some children become indifferent and withdrawn (Kay, 2003; NAEYC, 2006).

Children who are abused from an earlier age may have difficulty in knowing how to establish loving, trusting relations later in life since they are denied positive loving care needed in order to make attachments to their carers (Kay, 2003; Jaffe, Wolfe & Wilson, 1990). When adolescents are experiencing abuse or neglect, their reactions may be more drastic than when younger children experience similar life events. They may have great difficulty with the formation of identity and with attainment of the balance between interdependence and dependence. They may portray inappropriate behaviour such as delinquency, aggression, future abusive behaviours as parents, sexual promiscuity and maladjustment, school drop out or difficulties in school and difficulties in peer relationships.

2.4 Perpetrators of child abuse

Many authors have noted a significant overlap between wife assault and child abuse. Researchers estimate that the extent of the overlap between wife assault and child physical or sexual abuse to be approximately thirty to forty percent (Jaffe et al, 1990). Roy (1977), points that child abuse and wife abuse are serious social problems that have plagued man in one form or another since time immemorial.

Cases of severe abuse are found to be more rampant in families where there are marital problems resulting in quarrels, physical fights and the battering of women and children. Violence is not an isolated phenomenon, it feeds on itself. A climate of violence and physical abuse in a home permeates the relationships of all individuals involved. It is not possible to talk of child abuse without discovering a history of abuse in families from which the abusing parents have come, asserts Roy. A man who beats his child has been beaten as a child, a woman who beats her child, had been neglected as a child.
Jaffe et al (1990) concur with the view that 'violence breeds violence'. The cycle-of-violence hypothesis, derived in part from the social learning theory, suggests that a child who learns violent behaviour patterns at home will be more likely to engage in similar patterns later on. Physical aggression in the home provides both a model for learning aggressive behaviour and a supportive environment that views such behaviours as appropriate. By being participant members of a violent family, each new generation of children learns how to be violent towards their own family members.

Bakan (1975) points out that child abuse is an exploitation of power where seemingly weaker individual is annihilated by the stronger. A child who is a witness to adult violence quite rightly asks himself/herself why he/she may not use violence in order to make other people behave according to his/her wishes. The answer is he/she does not have sufficient physical and social might to inflict pain on others without their retaliating. All that he/she lacks is power. Sooner he/she gets it, he/she uses violence on the next generation of children. He/she is licensed to abuse his/her child as he/she was abused as a child – the license having been handed over by the original superego figure (parents).

The physical abuse of early childhood is that which begins in home and family. The early perpetrators are the parents who carry the responsibility of disciplining children (Johnston, 2002). Though the intervention may be noble, there is little doubt that many cases of child abuse arise from physical chastisement that has become increasingly harsh. Physical chastisement is generally condoned as a necessary sanction against children (Calam and Franchi, 1987).

Calam and Franchi, (1987) reviewed the literature on abusing parents and concluded that:

a) The abusing parent has a history of a deprived childhood and/or of abuse,

b) The abusing parent brings to his/her role mistaken notion of child rearing,

c) The abusing parent has a general deficit in character structure allowing aggressive impulses to be expressed too freely, and
d) Social-economic factors may place additional stresses on the parent but these stresses are not in themselves sufficient to cause abuse.

A report by ANPPCAN (2001) on Kenya, lists virtually everybody as a potential abuser of children. They include natural (biological) parents, step/foster parents, relatives/guardians, domestic workers, family friends, religious leaders, teachers, neighbours, siblings, matatu touts, influential persons as well as strangers. Media reports are in support of such assertions. Wanyonyi (2001) reported a case of a woman who poured kerosene and set ablaze her eight-year-old son for allegedly stealing Ksh 800, which she had spared to attend a funeral at her rural home in Kakamega. The same daily reported on 3/8/1999 about a mother who scalded her seven-year-old daughter for stealing Ksh 500 (Mukinda, 1999).

Reports of teachers physically and/or sexually abusing their pupils are quite common. A survey by TSC on sexual abuse between 2003 and 2007 indicated that up to 12660 girls were sexually abused over that period but only 633 teachers were charged (Siringi, 2009). The survey also revealed that 53 percent of the respondents viewed sexual abuse of girls by teachers as very high and that 90 percent of the cases of sexual abuse cases never reached TSC. Kamau (2001) reported a case of Janet who was beaten by her teacher for failing to turn up for games in games kit till she bled to death. A 53-year-old teacher had allegedly sexually molested nine class two pupils within Othaya Division of Nyeri District (Murigi and Muiruri, 2002). Some of these children were children with special needs.

Johnston (2000) concludes that in many Kenyan communities, physical abuse of the young appears to be a community affair. Any wrongdoing is punishable by any adult who is being annoyed. His study reveals that, within the family the most frequent physical abusers are fathers, followed by mothers, brothers, sisters and then other relatives. Outside the family, the main offenders are the peers, teachers, religious leaders, servants (houseboys) and neighbours. According to WHO (2002), whether abusers are more likely
to be male or female, depends in part on the type of abuse. Research conducted in China, Chile, Finland, India and United States suggests that women report using more physical discipline than men. In Kenya, reports from children also show more violence by mothers than fathers.

In the case of sexual abuse, the prime perpetrators are fathers where the sexual abuse is usually between a father and a daughter. Older siblings abuse their younger siblings especially older brothers abusing their younger sisters. Other relatives may also be involved, usually older male relatives taking advantage of young female relatives. Rarely is there a report of mother-son sexual abuse (Zastrow, 1982).

UNICEF terms sexual abuse as the most invisible form of violence. This is because the father, stepfather, grandfather, brother, uncle or another male relative in a position of trust, perpetrates the crime, most often. The rights of a child are sacrificed in order to protect the name of the family and that of the perpetrator (Innocenti Digest, 2000).

Perpetrators of child assault are most often between the ages of 20-25 years with the number of cases decreasing with the age of the perpetrator. Sexual assault occurs more often with male perpetrators and female victims, whereas female perpetrators more frequently are cited for deprivation of necessities (Meier, 1985).

2.5 Abuse in institutions of learning

Schools are essential social institutions of acquiring knowledge, abilities and skills; ideal centres for the socializing of the children and inculcating required standards of behaviours. The young people are expected to acquire the essential life skills they need to cope with today’s demanding requirements (Terefe and Mengistu, 1997). Today, however, a major challenge for the teaching-learning process in the school is the abuse committed in these institutions against those that they are expected to nurture and protect (Leach, 2003). Child abuse is a subset of the bigger picture of violence in schools.
As mentioned earlier, WHO acknowledges that sexually violent and harassing behaviours take place in learning institutions and for most young women the most common place where sexual coercion and harassment occurs is in the school. In the United Kingdom, much research on sexual violence in school falls under “sexual bullying”. Research in mixed-sex comprehensive schools revealed that behaviours such as boys calling girls sexualized names like “prossie” meaning prostitute, flicking their bra straps, looking up their skirts and grabbing or fondling were routinely mentioned by girls as a way in which the boys would try to upset them. On the other hand, boys were called ‘gay’ and “sconner” (meaning a youth with no pubic hair) by girls and other boys (Panos, 2003).

In a review of child abuse and neglect in Africa, Arnoldo, (2001), points out that Africa has a major challenge of changing perceptions that child physical abuse is an accepted disciplinary measure in the community (including the school). This implies that corporal punishment continues to be meted on children in schools in Africa with impunity. Also, schools in sub-Saharan Africa tolerate serious sexual harassment and abuse most of it perpetrated by older male pupils and male teachers (Leach, 2003).

Panos also reports that in Zimbabwe, girls in secondary schools experience unsolicited physical contact with boys in school such as grabbing or pinching their breasts or buttocks, pulling them, twisting their arms, blocking their way and in a few cases beating or hitting them. Some girls reported being propositioned by a teacher for sex. Terefe and Megistu (1997) argue that in Ethiopia schoolgirls drop out of school because of excessive bullying and terrorizing including rape. Other acts of violence in these schools include, open snatching of schoolbooks, ornaments and money, stabbing as well as killing of students. Other studies in schools indicate that sexual harassment, bullying by boys and rape by teachers is a major cause for the high rate of school dropout by girls (UNIFEM, 2003). In a study done at the Chancellor College in Zomba, Malawi, 12.6% of the respondents had been raped in campus and 67% had been sexually harassed in the same place, nearly half of them by their boy friends.
A national survey carried out in Ugandan schools (AAIU, 2004), revealed the following forms of violence among others

i. Sexual violence – defilement; sexual harassment and suggestive language,
ii. Explicit use of sexual language – abusive and degrading to girls,
iii. Writing love letters and sometimes asking for sex,
iv. Assault by boys especially when girls refuse sexual or love advances,
v. Sexual oriented teasing and jokes about gender specific traits,
vi. Physical contact and touching private parts, and
vii. Promising high grades and sexual remarks about dress by teachers.

It is notable that this study included children with disabilities; Sixty five per cent of the respondents had observed or experienced violence against girls with disability and 62.7% of the respondents had observed or experienced violence against boys with disability. Also, the study revealed that some teachers use derogatory and negative language against girls in relation to their physical appearance (including disability) as well as their intellectual ability.

Child abuse is rampant in Kenyan schools. A survey carried out by Johnston (2002) in Nairobi primary schools revealed that 80% of the respondents had been or were being verbally abused at school. Verbal abuse includes such acts as being yelled at, threatened or shamed, intimidated as well as being belittled. Of the total respondents, 60% believe they had being physically abused; even after corporal punishment had been outlawed in Kenyan schools. This shows that caning has remained as the most common form of physical punishment in Kenyan schools. Others include being slapped and being beaten. Further, half of the children surveyed claimed to have been sexually abused at school. This is in terms of unwanted sexual touches where children claimed to have been touched inappropriately and without consent on such body parts as the breasts, buttocks and the genitalia. Finally, 10% claimed to have been forced into sexual intercourse. The main perpetrators of this vice were male peers followed by teachers.
Such a survey can be supported further by media reports. Korir (2000), suggests that girls involve themselves in relationships with teachers due to poverty, emotional needs and the male oriented education system. He further argues that in most rural areas of Kenya male teachers are the only men with an income. For instance, Mumo (1999), reported that a headmaster who had been found guilty of raping a 14-year-old pupil was jailed for only three years. And the same daily reported that a teacher who had sexually molested nine class two pupils had only been interdicted (Murigi and Muiruri, 2000). For flimsy reason a teacher would beat a pupil senseless. A standard eight pupil was reported to have been severely beaten by her teacher, leaving her with suspected spinal injuries, for failing to finish her assignment (Muguro, 1999).

2.6 The role of the school in curbing child abuse

The vulnerability of children, from infancy throughout their childhood years of dependency on the adults for safety and nurturing, puts them at risk of neglect and maltreatment in many forms (Arnoldo, 2001). These forms include physical abuse, sexual abuse as well as verbal abuse. Most childhood years are spent in school. The school, whose main responsibility is to impart knowledge and skills in the children, cannot negate the responsibility of teaching the same children how to be free of violence. Jaffe, et al (1990) note that most teachers feel that reading, writing and arithmetic in crowded classrooms is enough challenge without addressing major social problems like alcohol and drugs, AIDS, teen pregnancy, suicide and violence in the family. The reality, however, is that teachers must address these issues directly or indirectly on a daily basis whether or not they want to. The UN General Secretary’s Report (2006) informs that schools have an important role in protecting children from violence. Adults who oversee and work in educational settings have a duty to provide safe environments that support and promote children’s dignity and development. On the contrary, the Report asserts that educational settings expose many children to violence and may in fact teach them violence.
International research indicates that the potential for maltreatment (of children) exist in all social strata and within families at some point in a child’s development (Arnoldo, 2001). Jaffe, et al (1990), postulate that societal attitudes condone violence, and that only a major commitment by the school system to address this problem could lead to any meaningful changes. Barth and Derezotes (1990) argue that the local public school system is the only sensible choice for coordinating prevention from smoking to child abuse from kindergarten to high school. Further, Maher (1987) asserts that the teaching profession is given a special responsibility to nurture the whole child, within an educational environment, so as to encourage development into a mature, informed adult. The detection of child abuse is one of their pastoral duties.

For schools to play a major role in curbing child abuse; training, curriculum development and student involvement in addressing family violence (including child abuse) are key. In teacher training, the student teacher should be equipped with knowledge on different forms of abuse, how to identify an abused child and intervention strategies. Adequate curriculum on child abuse needs to also be developed for pupils. Barth and Derezotes (1990) advice that such a curriculum should be comprehensive and have a ‘careful sequence’ that runs from pre-school through to senior high school. Content and constructional approaches should be first introduced at the time pupils are developmentally ready for them and then reinforced and expanded appropriately through the higher grades. The said authors also point out that since helping students to change their worldview and behavior is very difficult, the achievement of such goals will not happen without the orchestration of teaching efforts. Thus it is necessary to coordinate the teaching of child abuse prevention with other life skills approaches to enhancing health and welfare. Life skills or issues such as prevention of substance abuse, smoking, pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and school dropouts are common in America’s high schools, which could also be thought to be happening here in Kenya.
Kay (2003) suggests that a curriculum on child abuse for children should focus on:

(i) Basic safe behavior; for example “don’t move off with strangers”,
(ii) Raising children’s awareness for danger in the environment,
(iii) Building self-confidence,
(iv) Practical problems for children to cope with potential abuse,
(v) Helping children to trust their own judgment, and
(vi) Teaching children to break rules to protect themselves.

Kay (2003) points out that it is the responsibility of the school to develop whole school strategies to create a non-abusive environment. These include a general responsibility to ensure that policies and procedures are in place for protection of children. For children to experience school as a safe place, they need to feel among others;

(i) Safe from physical harm, threats and bullying.
(ii) Safe from fear, anxiety and anticipation of these feelings.
(iii) Safe from verbal abuse, sarcasm and ridicule.
(iv) They belong to and are valued within the school.
(v) Their contributions are recognized and rewarded by acknowledgement and praise.
(vi) They can experiment, make mistakes and not be criticized for this.
(vii) They are making progress and achieving, and
(viii) That their particular type of family, first language, religion and culture are significantly acknowledged and accepted in the school environment.

It is important to acknowledge that children are abused in schools and that such abuse may take years to come to the limelight and in some cases it can be submerged forever. Colleagues need to have willingness to report suspicions of abuse by a teacher. There also needs to be well-defined procedures for dealing with allegations against a teacher. Baginsky (2002) decries that in Britain there is no regular training for teachers so as to recognize the signs of abuse in children as well as in how to respond to suspicions and disclosures. Child protection is not given the same status or emphasis as other academic subjects in many initial training courses, and not all staff have access to training in this
area after qualification. Further, Maher (1987) advises that those professionals who may as a consequence of their work become targets for the disclosure by abused children, must receive suitable training in child abuse. Maher warns that the assumption that children will readily disclose abuse is erroneous. The disclosure is occasional. A child who comes from a violent and deprived background has usually experienced cruelty for as long as they can remember.

Regular physical examination on all pupils would be helpful in discovering children who have been battered. In Japan, for instance, in every school, public and private, from first grade to the twelfth grade, all pupils receive physical examination twice a year. The results are reported to parents and records are kept in school. The so called battered child syndrome would not be likely to escape the eyes of an examining doctor, a helping nurse, or the several teachers who are present at the physical examinations (Korbin, 1981). In Kenya, there is hardly anything on child protection neither in initial teacher training courses nor in in-service courses after qualification. The student’s curriculum, from preschool through university has little if anything on child protection.

There are two major roles for schools in the prevention of maltreatment of children with disabilities. First, all children should be educated to encourage their understanding and acceptance of people with disabilities. This will give the people with disabilities a chance to be considered as equal members of society and not people to be taken advantage of. Secondly, all children, including those with disabilities should be taught some form of protective behaviours or personal safety program. Such a program could include chapters on basic sex education, appropriate sexual behaviour and protective skills (Tomison, 1996).
2.7 Abuse on children with disabilities

One commonly held assumption is that children with disabilities are unlikely to be abused (Kay, 2003). On the contrary, research shows that disabled children are more likely to be abused than able-bodied children and suggests that dependency, institutional care and communication are main reasons for this. Disabled children are often dependent on others for eating, dressing, using the toilet and moving around. These activities may give a potential abuser a legitimate reason to touch a child’s body. A child may find it difficult to tell anyone about his or her unhappiness or may feel confused and ambivalent about the situation. Some may even want to protect the abuser because of the emotional comfort they share. Secondly, children living away from home may lack trusted adults they may turn to. They may not report incidents of abuse for fear of punishment or not being believed. Fixed routines and lack of opportunities for free choice in the activities carried out, are fertile grounds for potential child abusers to exploit. Thirdly, a disabled child may not have the communication skills or vocabulary needed to express himself/herself. This deficit in communication could be taken advantage of by potential child abuser since the child would not be able to report (NSPCC, 2006). Children with disabilities may not be able to comprehend or carry out self-help strategies to protect themselves from abuse. They may be less likely to be believed by adults when they try to disclose sexual abuse: for instance children with physical and verbal disabilities that impair communication (Tomison, 1996).

Children with learning difficulties and physical disabilities might have developmental delays because of their disability. Such children may be vulnerable to abuse because it may be difficult to recognize the signs and symptoms of abuse where developmental delays or behavioural problems are part of the child’s character. It may be difficult to distinguish between accidental injuries that result from their impairment, and abuse related injuries, thus hampering the detection of maltreatment when it is occurring. In such children, all bruises may not necessarily be accidental. Children with disabilities in residential and day care centres may be vulnerable to abuse by their caregivers. This can be seen in two ways: the inhabitable conditions in institutions for persons with disabilities.
and the abuse on the children themselves. According to Taylor (1981), Pennhurst State School for the mentally retarded was closed down in 1977 due to inhabitable conditions. There often were excrement and urine on the floors; outbreak of pinworm and infectious diseases were common; toilet areas had no towels, soap, or toilet paper; injuries by residents to other residents and through self-abuse were common. Kate school was closed down a year later. In this school, the staff used 'confrontational therapy' to teach autistic children. Children were pinched, poked, slapped, spanked and even finger-flicked around the face. Their hair and ears were pulled. More deadly acts such as forcing a child to eat regurgitated food by closing the nose and holding the mouth open as well as electrically shocking children with cattle prods were also applied. A most sad case is of a child who used to be hit and slapped so as to hear yet this child was profoundly deaf!

There is a direct relationship between physical deformities, pre-maturity and child management problems. These factors place the child at higher risk for one or more kinds of child assault (Meier, 1985). Parents conceptualize an ideal child who will grow up to become an idealized adult. The reality of caring for a helpless, dependent, self-centered infant is a difficult enough challenge, but when children are deformed in visible ways that make them look different, the parents may become disappointed and distraught. Further, a child's handicap may contribute to his/her assault or the assault may cause a handicap. Children who are vigorously shaken may have brain damage though it may not be clear whether the reason the child was vigorously shaken was due to other provocative behaviour. Wolfe (1987) explains that children with congenital characteristics (such as low birth weight, pre-maturity, mental retardation, unusual physical appearance or anomalies, handicaps) may be less acceptable or less satisfying to a parent, thereby increasing stress upon the parent. These factors inhibit attachment formation between parents and their children thereby increasing the likelihood of child abuse.
2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed literature on child abuse under seven sub-headings. The material under review reveals that child abuse is as old as man; there are no absolute definitions of child abuse within some countries, much less from country to country or region to region. Further, it is difficult to give substantiated data on the number of children who are abused. Possible aspects of child abuse are highlighted as well as possible perpetrators of these heinous acts. Abuse in institutions of learning and the measures that these institutions need to take to curb this menace have been discussed. Finally, some light has been shed on abuse of children with disabilities. The chapter that follows dealt with the methods of data collection and analysis.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the procedures and strategies that were used in the study are described. The chapter focuses on the research design, the target population, the sample and sampling procedures, the instrument and its administration as well as an outline for data analysis. The main purpose of this study was to find out the nature and extent of physical, verbal and sexual abuse of children with exceptional needs in selected residential secondary schools in Thika District.

3.1 Research design

A descriptive survey design involving qualitative and quantitative methods was adopted for this study. A survey study gathers data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of the existing conditions, identifying the standards against which existing conditions can be compared as well as determining the relationship between specific events (Orodho, 2004). This design was fit for this study in that the researcher hoped to compare the level of abuse on students with visual impairments against students with physical handicaps. establish the relationship between abuse and the two forms of disabilities. The survey is the most frequently used method for collecting information about peoples' attitudes, opinions, habits or any of the variety of education or social issues. This type of design usually seeks to find answers to questions generated from the statement of the problem. Using this design, an attempt is made to find answers to questions by analyzing the specific variable relationships. Gay (1992) defines descriptive research as a process of collecting data in order to test hypothesis or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subjects in the study. A descriptive research design determines and reports the way things are (Mugenda & Mugenda 1999). By use of this design the researcher intended to report the status of child abuse as it were in the institutions studied.
3.2 Locale of the study

The study was carried out in two selected residential secondary schools for learners with exceptional needs in Thika District. Thika District is one of the seven districts that form Central Province. It was curved out of the larger Kiambu and Murang’a Districts in 1995. It lies between latitudes 3° 53 and 1° 45 south of the Equator and longitudes 36° 35 and 37° 25 east. It borders Nairobi city to the south, Kiambu District to the west, Maragua District to the north and Machakos District to the East. The district has a total area of 1960.2 Km². Thika is divided into six administrative divisions namely Ruiru, Gatundu, Kamwangi, Gatanga, Kakuzi and Thika Municipality. Thika Distrit is popular for production of pineapples (Republic of Kenya, 2002).

The two schools are situated in Thika Municipality. They can be accessed easily by road. Thika High School for the V.I is situated on the western side of the town while Joytown School for the P.H is on the east, separated by the main business area of the town. These schools are preferred for this study because they are the only selected residential secondary schools for children with exceptional needs in Thika District. Further, Thika High School for the V.I having a student population of 225, is the only high school for students with visual impairment in the country. Being a national school it draws its students from all over the country. It is an extension of the Primary School for the V.I which is one of the oldest special schools in Kenya. On the other hand, Joytown Secondary School for the P.H is an extension of Joytown primary school, and has a student population of 136. These two schools are sponsored by The Salvation Army Church.

3.3 Target population

The study targeted all the students and teachers in Joytown Secondary School for the P.H and Thika High School for the V.I in Thika District. The two schools had a population of 361 students. This population was made up of 208 boys and 153 girls. This is summarised in Table 1.0 below:
Table 3.0: Schools’ student population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thika High School for the V.I</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joytown Secondary School for the P.H</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two schools had a teaching staff of 58. Joytown Secondary School for the P.H had 14 female teachers and 8 male teachers. Thika High School for the V.I had 20 female teachers and 16 male teachers.

Table 3.1: Number of secondary school teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of school</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thika High School for the V.I</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joytown Secondary School for the P.H</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4 Sampling technique and sample size

The sample population of the study comprised of 153 students and 26 teachers. The 153 students were all Form 2 and Form 3 students in both schools. These students were purposefully selected because they had been in their schools long enough to understand the on goings in their schools. Form 4 and Form 1 students were excluded because the former was an examination class and the latter were too new in the school to understand the on goings in the school and could still feel intimidated by the new environment. Out of the 26 teachers, 6 were to respond to the interview schedule. The six included deputy principals, Heads of Guidance and Counseling departments and Heads of Boarding
Departments in both schools. These were purposefully selected because their duties predispose them to interact more with the students on matters relating to discipline. In each school ten teachers were to respond to the questionnaire. Simple random sampling involving the lottery technique was used to get five female teachers and five male teachers in each school to respond to the questionnaire. The total number of respondents was to be 179 i.e. 153 students and 26 teachers. This is summarised in Tables 1.2 and 1.3 below:

**Table 3.2: Student sample population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thika High School for V.I</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joytown Secondary School for P.H</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.3: Teacher sample population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Deputy H.O.D.</th>
<th>H.O.D. G/C</th>
<th>Female teachers</th>
<th>Male teachers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thika High school for the V.I</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joytown Secondary School for P.H</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.5 Research instruments

Two research instruments were used to collect the data; questionnaires and an interview schedule. One questionnaire was for students (Appendix 1) and the other for teachers.
A questionnaire was adequate for this study since questionnaires are commonly used to collect important information about a population (Orodho, 2004) and each item in the questionnaire was developed to address a specific objective (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). Since a questionnaire guarantees anonymity it was useful for this study in that the respondents could divulge personal information about abuse without the fear of being found out and therefore, allowed for more honest answers. The questionnaire enabled the researcher to reach a large sample in a short time and at low cost as well as enabling the researcher to gather a wide range of information. A standardized instrument to suit this study was not found but some items were adopted from Johnston (2000, 2002 and 2003).

The questionnaire for students had four sections. The first section was on demographic information, the second part dealt with abuse in relation to self, the third part dealt with abuse in relation to others and the last part dealt with measures to curb child abuse. The questionnaire for teachers was used to supplement the views of the students. The questionnaire for teachers had 17 questions. Question 1 was about the gender of the respondent. Questions 2-4 were on the number of abused children, questions 5-6 were on any training on child abuse, questions 7-10 sought the teachers’ suggestions on the measures the society could take to stop child abuse, questions 11-13 were on perpetrators of abuse, question 14-16 were on the causes of abuse while question 17 was on the policies that need to be put in place to protect children from abuse.

An interview schedule (Appendix 3) for selected teachers was used to close-check the views solicited by the questionnaires. An interview schedule is a set of questions that an interviewer asks, when interviewing. It makes it possible to obtain data required to meet specific objectives of the study. Since interviews are face-to-face encounters, they provide in-depth data by using probing questions, which is not possible to get using a questionnaire (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999).
3.6 Piloting

Piloting is essential so as to reveal the weaknesses that may be in the questionnaire, such as vague questions, unclear directions and general layout. It also reveals if the anticipated analytical techniques are appropriate. The questionnaire was pre-tested on a sample which was selected through simple random sampling. The procedures which were used in pre-testing were identical to those that were used in actual data collection. Since Thika High School for the V.I is the only one of its kind in Kenya, piloting was done with Standard 8 pupils at Thika primary school for V.I and at Joytown Primary School for P.H. The Standard 8 students were chosen because they were close to their secondary school counterparts in terms of age. Three girls and 3 boys with visual impairment took part in the pilot study. Similarly 3 boys and 3 girls with physical handicaps participated. Six teachers; 3 males and 3 females also participated in the pilot study. The results of the pilot study proved that the items in the questionnaires were basically understood the same way by the respondents and very little improvement was made on the items.

3.7 Reliability and validity

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). It is concerned with precision and accuracy. Reliability is a synonym for consistency and replicability over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). In the study, reliability of the instrument was achieved through test-retest procedure. An interval of two weeks was taken between the test and retest. A reliability coefficient was computed using the Spearman’s coefficient of correlation formula. A correlation coefficient of 0.75 was obtained which is considered high enough to judge the instrument as reliable.

Validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). It is concerned with establishing whether the questionnaire content is measuring what it is supposed to measure. Content validity can be determined by experts in the area of study. For this
reason, the supervisors helped the researcher to establish the validity of the questionnaire through discussions. Further, items that were vague in the piloting stage were rephrased to enhance validity. Construct validity is a quality control feature aimed at ensuring that researchers are actually researching what they think and what they report, they are researching. It is about talking the same language: putting people at the same wavelength and avoiding confusion resulting from misunderstanding, misinterpretation and vagueness (Evans, 2002). Construct validity was enhanced by giving operational definitions of key terms used in the study. Further questions and words discovered to be ambiguous during piloting stage were rephrased. For instance, after discovering that some respondents gave more than one choice in items 6 and other similar items the instruction to tick the appropriate choice was added.

3.8 Data collection procedure

Quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in data collection. Quantitative method has the advantage of getting responses of the same questions from a large number of people. Their responses can then be quantified and conclusions drawn from them. Qualitative method enables the researcher to collect data in the actual context in which the actual phenomenon occurs. It is usually an exploratory activity in which data is collected in a real-life, natural setting and is therefore rich, descriptive and extensive (Wellington, 2000).

The data was collected by use of questionnaires and interview schedules. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher with the help of two research assistants who were trained by the researcher beforehand as suggested by Orodho, (2004). The questionnaires were delivered to the schools, directly administered to the student respondents and collected the same day. A brief introduction on how the students were expected to fill the questionnaires was given. The team also answered questions that arose from the students. Questionnaires were delivered to teachers and collected after three days. With prior arrangements, the researcher interviewed the respondents at their own convenience.
3.9 Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of information collected (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). In this study qualitative data was derived from open-ended questions in the questionnaires and the interview schedule; and was meant to supplement quantitative data availed by the questionnaire. Notes from the field were read thoroughly for the researcher to be familiar with it. Different cards were used to record different themes which arose from the research questions. Themes included types of abuse, frequency of abuse, perpetrators of abuse and policies on abuse of children in schools. Qualitative data was presented in a narrative form paying particular attention to the respondents' comments, some of which was quoted verbatim.

To facilitate quantitative analysis, questionnaire items were pre-coded. A code book was prepared. This enabled the data to be entered into the computer. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages was used. To establish the nature of abuse in schools, the extent of abuse and the perpetrators of abuse frequencies and percentages were used. To establish gender parity or disparity as relates to different types of abuse, percentages were calculated. The findings were presented in pie charts, bar graphs, frequency tables and percentages for ease of interpretation.

3.10 Logistical and ethical considerations

The researcher obtained written permission to carry out the study from the Ministry of Education. All the participants were briefed on the importance of the research and requested to participate voluntarily. The researcher assured the study participants that all the information they gave would be treated with strict confidence and only used for the purpose of this study. The students were reminded not to write their names or the names of their school on the questionnaires to ensure anonymity. A code was used to identify each school. This assured the students that their true identity was concealed.
3.11 Summary

The chapter described methods of data collection and analysis. The key instruments used in data collection were questionnaires and interview schedules. Chapter four deals with data analysis and results.
CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The findings of the study were presented in the chapter based on the data collected from
the respondents and as per the research objectives. Those included:

a. To establish the nature of physical, sexual and verbal abuse on learners with
   exceptional needs in selected residential secondary schools.

b. To find out the extent of physical, sexual and verbal abuse on learners with
   exceptional needs in selected residential secondary schools.

c. To find out the major perpetrators of physical, sexual and verbal abuse on learners
   with exceptional needs in selected residential secondary schools.

d. To determine the gender parity/disparity in physical, sexual and verbal abuse on
   learners with exceptional needs in selected residential secondary schools.

e. To find out the measures that could be taken to curb child abuse in selected
   residential secondary schools for learners with exceptional needs.

A total of 143 questionnaires were filled out of the 153 given out, giving a response rate
of 93 per cent which was adequate for analysis. Discussion of the results was done as per
the objectives of the study.

4.1 Background Information

The background information was discussed under the following subheadings; sex of
respondents, schools of respondents, year of study of respondents, persons respondents
lived with at home and ages of respondents.

4.1.1 Sex of the Respondents

The sampled population consisted of 84 (59%) males and the rest 59 (41%) were females
(Figure 4.1). That offered a fair representation as far as both sexes were concerned since
females in the target population were few (153) as compared to males (208). This was an
important observation of the study since according to Eshiwani (1984); girl child access
to education in Kenya was always limited due to social economic and cultural factors, an aspect reflected even in residential schools for children with exceptional needs.

![Figure 4.1 Sex of the Respondents](image)

**Figure 4.1 Sex of the Respondents**

### 4.1.2 Schools of the Respondents

With a student's population of 225, Thika High School for the VI had the highest number of respondents which constituted 61% of the respondents as indicated in figure 4.2. On the other hand, Joytown School had a student's population of 136 and constituted a lesser proportion (39%) of the respondents. That was done purposely to enhance equitable representation of the two schools.

![Figure 4.2 Schools of the Respondents](image)

**Figure 4.2 Schools of the Respondents**

### 4.1.3 Year of study of the respondents

The equitable distribution among all years of study resulted to the form two class having the highest number of representatives which were 83 representing 58% of the respondents (Figure 4.3). Respondents in Form Three were 60 representing 42% of the respondents.

45
Form Two and Form Three respondents were chosen because they had been in their schools long enough to understand the ongoing activities in their schools.

**Figure 4.3 Year of Study of the Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Study</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form Two</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form Three</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.1.4 Persons respondents lived with at home**

The majority of the students interviewed lived with both parents (55%) followed by those who lived with their mothers at 19% (Figure 4.4). Respondents living with their fathers constituted 14% while those living with other relatives constituted 8% of the respondents. Ideal family setups constituted both parents and other members of the family. In the absence of a father or a mother especially, children with exceptional needs had additional psychological, social, and sometimes economic challenges to deal with. In addition only parents could be expected to take good care of their children regardless of the status of their needs. That meant that children under the care of distant relatives might not get adequate care and thus might be vulnerable to abuse.
4.1.5 Ages of the respondents

The majority of the respondents (24%) were at the age of 16 years followed by 17 years at (20%). The results were presented in figure 4.5. Those students whose age was 18 years constituted 15% while those with 15 years were 13%. Those were individuals in their teen age, an age of self identification on issues regarding personal development, career prospects and human rights and any form of abuse could have had serious implications on their future development to adulthood.
4.2 Nature of physical, sexual and verbal abuse on learners with exceptional needs in selected residential secondary schools.

The study also sought to investigate the nature of abuse students with exceptional needs went through in both the studied schools (Table 4.1). The findings indicated that up to 64 (74%) of the students interviewed in Thika High School for the VI had been beaten as compared to 16 (29%) in the case of Joytown School for P.H. That meant that beating was more rampant in Thika High School for the VI as compared to Joy Town School type for PH. As discussed earlier beating is one of culturally accepted way of correcting children which is still practiced in regular schools as well, despite the government’s efforts to ban corporal punishment in schools. The study however indicated that a significant proportion of students (44%) did not report having been subjected to any of beating.
Table 4.0: Beating abuse against the schools studied

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of abuse</th>
<th>Name of school</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thika High for the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V.I.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># %</td>
<td># %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beating</td>
<td>64 74</td>
<td>23 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joytown School for the P.H.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># %</td>
<td># %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 29</td>
<td>40 71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># %</td>
<td># %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80 56</td>
<td>63 44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.1 Types of beating experienced by the respondents

With regards to the type of beating experienced by the students interviewed, the majority of the respondents had experienced caning (31.7) followed by slapping at 25% (Figure 4.6). Others included hitting (13.3), punching (11.7) and hair and ear pulling at 10%. That showed that caning had remained as the most common form of physical punishment in Kenyan schools.

![Figure 4.6 Types of Beating Experienced by the Respondents](image-url)
As regards to touching the study indicated that three types of abuse to students with exceptional needs were reported (Table 4.1). Those included touching breasts, touching private parts and touching buttocks. Thika High School for the V.I reported 15(17%) cases of touching of breasts as compared to 5(9%) in Joytown School for P.H. The school had also the highest number of cases of touching of private parts at 18(21%) as compared to 8(14%) in Joytown School for P.H. Finally touching of buttocks was also common in Thika High School for the V.I at 10(11%) as compared to 7(12%) in Joytown School for P.H.

Table 4.1: Touching Abuse against the Studied Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of abuse: Touch</th>
<th>Name of school</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thika High for the V.I.</td>
<td>Joystown School for the P.H.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breasts</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private parts</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buttocks</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children who were blind or had low vision were usually not fully aware of their surroundings, within the school. That made them vulnerable to exploitation by others either deliberately or conditioned to touch due to ongoing personal care or other disability or medical-related services.
With regards to verbal abuse (insults), the study revealed that 64% of the respondents had been or were being verbally abused at school (Table 4.2). In Thika High School for the V.I, 75% of the respondents were or had been abused as compared to 46% in Joytown School for P.H. Verbal abuse included use of unkind words, belittling, criticizing and humiliating words such as being intimidated. Those results indicated that Thika High School for the V.I scored higher in terms of having a higher number of students with exceptional needs who had also become victims of verbal abuse.

Table 4.2: Insult abuse against the studied schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of abuse</th>
<th>Name of school</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thika High for the V.I.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insult</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.2 Types of insults to learners with special needs

The most common type of verbal abuse was Unkind or rude words at 44.3% (Figure 4.7). Criticizing words were reported by 22.9% of the respondents while humiliating words were reported by 21.4% of the respondents. Belittling words were reported by 11.4% of all the respondents. Over 75% of the teacher respondents agreed that verbal abuse happened on average in both schools. Johnston, (2002) observed that verbal abuse practice remains alive and well in Kenyan regular schools. A survey carried out in 2002 in Nairobi upper primary schools revealed that 80% of the 1146 pupils (boys and girls) had been or were being verbally abused at school.
The findings of the study indicated that the frequency of abuse to others as reported by the respondents was generally high as compared to respondent’s experience of the various types of abuse (Table 4.3). In Thika High School for the V.I for example, over 86% of the respondents had seen others being beaten as compared to 50% in the case of Joytown School for P.H. With regards to seeing or hearing others being insulted, up to 67% of the respondents reported having seen or heard as compared to 52% in the case of Joytown School for P.H. Finally up to 45% of the respondents from Thika High School for the V.I had seen others being touched as compared to 45% in the case of Joytown School for PH. Generally, Thika High School for the V.I reported high number of cases of abuse to students with disability as compared to Joytown School for P.H. That could partially be due to the fact that abusers of students with exceptional needs took advantage of the fact that their victims could not see them and thus not identify them. That could also be due to a general school environment that predisposed those students more to abuse as compared to Joytown School for P.H. Interestingly, up to 46% of the teachers interviewed reported that none of their students were physically abused in their school. However, as would be discussed later, teachers are mentioned by the students as some of the perpetrators of physical abuse in their schools.

Figure 4.7 Types of insults to learners with exceptional needs

The findings of the study indicated that the frequency of abuse to others as reported by the respondents was generally high as compared to respondent’s experience of the various types of abuse (Table 4.3). In Thika High School for the V.I for example, over 86% of the respondents had seen others being beaten as compared to 50% in the case of Joytown School for P.H. With regards to seeing or hearing others being insulted, up to 67% of the respondents reported having seen or heard as compared to 52% in the case of Joytown School for P.H. Finally up to 45% of the respondents from Thika High School for the V.I had seen others being touched as compared to 45% in the case of Joytown School for PH. Generally, Thika High School for the V.I reported high number of cases of abuse to students with disability as compared to Joytown School for P.H. That could partially be due to the fact that abusers of students with exceptional needs took advantage of the fact that their victims could not see them and thus not identify them. That could also be due to a general school environment that predisposed those students more to abuse as compared to Joytown School for P.H. Interestingly, up to 46% of the teachers interviewed reported that none of their students were physically abused in their school. However, as would be discussed later, teachers are mentioned by the students as some of the perpetrators of physical abuse in their schools.
Table 4.3: Abuse to others in the schools studied

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of abuse to others</th>
<th>Thika High School for the VI (%)</th>
<th>Joystown School for PH (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seen/Heard Others being Beaten</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seen/Heard Others being Insulted</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seen/Heard others being Touched</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 Extent of physical, sexual and verbal abuse on learners with exceptional needs in selected residential secondary schools

The study also sought to understand the extent of physical, sexual and verbal abuse on learners with exceptional needs in selected residential secondary schools. The respondents reported the frequency of abuse as it happened to themselves and to other students as shown in tables 4.4 and 4.5.

Table 4.4: Extent of abuse meted on the respondent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abuse</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beating</td>
<td>Thika High school for the V.I</td>
<td># 50</td>
<td>% 57</td>
<td># 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joytown School for P.H</td>
<td># 9</td>
<td>% 16</td>
<td># 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insult</td>
<td>Thika High school for the V.I</td>
<td># 50</td>
<td>% 57</td>
<td># 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joytown School for P.H</td>
<td># 13</td>
<td>% 23</td>
<td># 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching</td>
<td>Thika High school for the V.I</td>
<td># 26</td>
<td>% 30</td>
<td># 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joytown School for P.H</td>
<td># 9</td>
<td>% 14</td>
<td># 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced sex</td>
<td>Thika High school for the V.I</td>
<td># 18</td>
<td>% 21</td>
<td># 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.5: Extent of abuse meted on other students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abuse</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beating</td>
<td>Thika High school for the V.I</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joytown School for P.H</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insulting</td>
<td>Thika High school for the V.I</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joytown School for P.H</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching</td>
<td>Thika High school for the V.I</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joytown School for P.H</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results indicated that 57% of the respondents from Thika High School for the V.I reported that beating was frequent, while only 16% reported the same from Joytown School for P.H. From Thika High School for the V.I 57% respondents reported that insulting was frequent against 23% from Joytown School for P.H. Up to 46% of the teachers reported that insult abuse to students with exceptional needs was low. This was backed up by the views of the school counsellors who reported that they hardly got reports of beating. With regards to touching 30% of the respondents from Thika High School for the V.I were victims while 14% of the respondents from Joytown School for PH were victims. Thika High School for the V.I had 21% of its respondents reporting that they had been forced into sex while in Joytown School for PH the victims were 14% of the respondents. These views are supported by Ruto (2009) who asserts that Kenyan statistics for rape /defilement rage from 10% to 27%. Students who witnessed beating of others from Thika High School for the V.I were 74% while in Joytown School for P.H they were 23%. Sixty seven percent respondents from Thika High School for the V.I had witnessed other students being insulted against 45% from Joytown School for P.H.
Finally with regards to witnessing others being touched, 41% of the respondents from Thika High School for the V.I were positive while from Joytown School for P.H 35% were positive.

A comparison of the two tables shows that it was easier for the students to report that abuse was occurring to other students than it was happening to themselves. From those results, it was clear that students with special needs were frequently exposed to a range of abuse in different forms. That exposure to abuse might have a wide range of negative impacts on the general development of those children. According to Sobsey, (1994), sexual abuse for example caused harmful psychological, physical and behavioral effects.

4.4 The Major perpetrators of physical, sexual and verbal abuse on learners with exceptional needs

The major perpetrators of abuse were discussed under the following sub headings; beating abuse, insult, touching and sexual abuse.

4.4.1 Beating abuse

The most common perpetrators of beating abuse were female teachers as reported by 51.7% of the respondents followed by male teachers at 38.3% (Figure 4.8). Others included Housemasters/mistresses at 5%. As noted earlier by WHO (2002), mothers were more likely to show violence than fathers hence these results qualify this claim. However, most teachers reported that they were not aware of any physical abuse taking place in their schools. Teachers that humble, bully or beat children not only directly cause harm to the child, but model such behavior for other children in their classroom, who might follow the teacher's lead in physically harming, bullying and socially isolating the targeted child.
The study revealed that most common perpetrators of insulting abuse were female teachers as reported by 39.7% of the respondents followed by male teachers at 32.3% (Figure 4.9). Others included cooks and watchmen at 8.8%, Housemasters/mistresses at 7.4% and other fellow students at 11.8%. Though teachers were still the major perpetrators of that form of abuse, attendants for children with exceptional needs, such as house helps, transporters, feeders or carers for such children, constituted a significant proportion of perpetrators as they spent a lot of time with those vulnerable children with no or limited supervision.
4.4.3 Touching

With regard to touching abuse, the study revealed that most common perpetrators were fellow students at 38.2% followed by male teachers at 23.6% (Figure 4.10). Others included housemasters/mistresses at 14.7% and female teachers at 14.7% while cooks and watchmen came last at 8.8%. The emergence of fellow students as major perpetrators of touching could be attributed to the many hours students spend together with more vulnerable students being bullied by the more dominant, strong and less vulnerable students.
4.4.4 Sexual abuse

The study indicated that most common perpetrators of sexual abuse were fellow students at 31.8% followed by male teachers at 27.3% (Figure 4.11). This confirms earlier observations by Johnston, 2002 in his research that the main perpetrators are male peers and teachers. Others included female teachers at 22.7%, cooks and watchmen at 13.7% and housemasters/mistresses at 4.5%. Sexual abuse by fellow students is a great concern and is often linked to physical violence and bullying behaviors by such schoolmates. Sexual insults and innuendos can be as damaging to individual self worth and self esteem as other forms of sexual abuse (Johnston, 2003).
Figure 4.11 Perpetrators of sexual abuse on learners with exceptional needs

4.5 Gender parity/disparity in physical, sexual and verbal abuse on learners with exceptional needs

The study further sought to evaluate the gender parity/disparity in physical, sexual and verbal abuse on learners with exceptional needs (Table 4.6). The study indicated that of the 80 respondents who had ever been beaten, 66% were male while 34% were females. Out of the 91 respondents who had ever been insulted, 66% were male while 34% were females. The study also indicated that out of the 15 respondents whose buttocks had been touched 60% were male while 40% were females. With regards to touching breasts, up to 19 cases were reported. Out of these, 42% were males while 58% were females.

Up to 26 respondents had their private parts touched with 85% of them being males while 15% were females. Finally among the 21 respondents who had been forced into sex, 62% were males while 38% were females. Notable gender differences were observed. Boys were more likely to report that someone had beaten them, forced them into sex and touched their other body parts, while girls were more likely to report that the perpetrator
had touched their breasts. In general, it could be concluded that for all types of abuse except touching of breasts, boys were more likely to be victims.

Table 4.6: Gender parity/disparity of abuse on learners with exceptional needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender of the Respondent</th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beaten</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insulted</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touched buttocks</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touched private parts</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced into sex</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6 Respondents perceptions regarding measures that can be taken to curb child abuse in selected residential secondary schools

Respondents had varying perceptions regarding measures that could be taken to curb child abuse in selected residential secondary schools (Table 4.7). Up to 96% of the respondents strongly agreed that children should be taught how to protect themselves from those who abuse them at school. According to 86% of the respondents the government should ensure that those who abuse children at school are sacked and prosecuted. The same sentiments were expressed by 92% of the teachers interviewed showing that they also wanted severe action to be taken on perpetrators. Up to 87% of the respondents strongly agreed that the school should create a good environment where students could report those who abused them without being intimidated since some of the cases could still be going unreported. It also emerged that up to 84% of the respondents strongly agreed that parents needed to be sensitized about the presence of child abuse in schools. According to 74% of the student respondents and 92% of teachers agreed that, a component of child abuse should be incorporated in the teacher training curriculum to
improve their knowledge on child abuse. Up to 75% thought that a component of child abuse should be incorporated in the students’ curriculum from pre-school through high school.

Table 4.7: Respondents perceptions regarding measures that could be taken to curb child abuse in selected residential secondary schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Neutral (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teach children on self protection</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create good environment at school for reporting abusers</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sack and prosecute perpetrators</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children molesters should be given severe sentences</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitized parents on existence of child abuse at school</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporate child abuse in teacher training curriculum</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporate child abuse in students' curriculum</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train police on child abuse</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of communication enhances abuse</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporal punishment help maintain discipline</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to 85% of the respondents, teachers and others who sexually molest children should be given severe sentences including a life sentence in jail. Further, 72% of the respondents strongly agreed that the police and other law enforcers should be given special training on child abuse so that they could be able to prosecute the perpetrators of child abuse. Up to 55% of the respondents strongly agreed that lack of communication between children and their parents/guardians enhanced child abuse at school since victims were unable to report their experiences to their parents for action to be taken. Only 43% of the respondents felt that corporal punishment was a sure way of maintaining discipline in schools, an attitude that made the students more vulnerable to abuse by either teachers or other caretakers purporting to install discipline. However, up to 6% of
the teachers interviewed were neutral on this aspect since they either did not want to admit the vice was happening in their schools or because some had been implicated as perpetrators.

4.7 Discussion

4.7.1 Nature of physical, sexual and verbal abuse on learners with exceptional needs in selected residential secondary schools

The findings indicated that a large number of students with special needs interviewed had been beaten, insulted and touched without their consent, especially those from Thika High School for the V.I. Though beating and insulting were easily understood by the victim, children with cognitive disabilities might not understand the difference between sexual and non-sexual touches and, if they were abused, might not understand that the violation was not normal, especially in cases of sexual abuse. Children who were blind or had low vision might not be fully aware of their surroundings, within the school that could make them vulnerable to exploitation by others. Many persons who were blind were taught mobility and Braille by guided physical contact. An individual might be conditioned to touch due to ongoing personal care or other disability or medical-related services. Being touched, often without permission, could provide confusing messages about space, boundaries and physical contact with others.

Many individuals with disabilities are taught in schools, through service providers and family members to do as they were told, to comply with requests of others, and to control difficult behaviors. Students with disabilities often are not taught about boundaries, assertiveness, or the right to say no especially to authority figures, to painful or other unwanted touches. Compliance training could make the individual vulnerable to abuse or exploitation. Quite often, parents, caregivers and special education teachers do not teach children with disabilities about sexuality, abuse prevention, self-protection or personal safety strategies, in an effort to “protect” the child. Thus, children with disabilities might lack knowledge about their bodies, healthy relationships and how to protect themselves.
4.7.2 Extent of physical, sexual and verbal abuse on learners with exceptional needs

From the results, it was clear that students with exceptional needs were frequently exposed to a range of abuse in different forms. That exposure to abuse might have a wide range of negative impacts on the general development of the children. According to Sobsey, *(1994)*, sexual abuse for example, caused harmful psychological, physical and behavioral effects. The individual might become pregnant, acquire sexually transmitted diseases, and suffer bruises, lacerations and other physical abuse. Psychosomatic symptoms often occurred, such as stomachaches, headaches, seizures and problems with sleeping. Common psychological consequences included low self-esteem, shame and guilt, irrational fear, depression and loss of trust. Behavioral difficulties include withdrawal, as well as noncompliant, aggressive, self-injurious and sexually inappropriate behavior.

Although all people were at risk for violence, many children with exceptional needs faced increased vulnerability factors for abuse. Although many of the studies on abuse against people with exceptional needs consisted of small samples or are limited in scope, the findings overwhelmingly pointed to the fact that children with disabilities were more vulnerable and faced increased risks for abuse than children without disabilities *(Sobsey, 1994)*. A child with a disability who was abused might not be aware that abuse happened to other people as well. S/he might feel embarrassed or ashamed. Some children with disabilities might not understand the difference between a sexual touch, an affectionate touch or a hygienic touch. They might not be able to distinguish when they were being abused. Sobsey *(1994)* further observed that abused survivors who had disabilities experienced long-term effects including difficulties in developing trust and forming close relationships with other people. Other behaviors of survivors with disabilities might be social withdrawal, problems with identity formation, difficulties with self-protection, overly compliant behavior, alienation and disassociation.
4.7.3 Major perpetrators of physical, sexual and verbal abuse on learners with exceptional needs

The study revealed that most common perpetrators of abuse were female teachers, male teachers, cooks and watchmen, housemasters/mistresses and other students. It was clear that children with disabilities experienced violence and abuse in their daily lives at school. The problem of abuse against persons with exceptional needs was complicated by the fact that most of the abuse was perpetrated by people with whom the individual had an established relationship. People with exceptional needs traditionally have been oppressed through their segregation from the community by placement into congregated care, residential facilities or educational settings like residential schools.

Crossmaker (1991) asserted that people with mental illness, mental retardation or developmental disabilities faced increased risks for abuse when they resided in an institution. In many residential facilities, there was an unequal balance of power between residents with disabilities and the staff. Staff might make decisions for residents rather than involving them in decisions that affect their lives. In most instances, children with disabilities who live in institutions and are abused have difficulty reporting to outside sources. Residents of institutions tended to lack access to telephones, family, social supports, police or advocates. Generally, social isolation is associated with a higher risk for abuse as well as creating barriers for disclosing abuse.

4.7.4 Gender parity/disparity in physical, sexual and verbal abuse on learners with exceptional needs

Notable gender differences were observed among victims of abuse in the two selected residential secondary schools studied. Boys were more likely to report that someone had beaten them, forced them to sex and touched their other body parts except breasts, while girls were more likely to report that the perpetrator had touched their breasts. Therefore, for all types of abuse except touching of breasts, boys were more likely to be victims. An American national study found out that between 39-83 percent of females and 16-32 percent of males with developmental disabilities would be sexually abused before they reached age 18 (Baladerian, 1991). Those figures were rather higher compared to what this study indicated especially for women. Another study of victims ranging in age from
one to 57 contradicted the finding of the study since it found out that 84 percent of victims were females and the rest males (Sobsey and Varnhagen, 1989).

Although females with exceptional needs experienced sexual abuse more often than their male counterparts, males living in institutional settings might face a greater degree of risk associated with their disabilities. Although most people (with or without exceptional needs) who were sexually abused were female, boys and men made up a larger percentage of victims with exceptional needs than they did in abuse victims without exceptional needs. Consequently, all people with disabilities whether male or female, needed training and education on how to prevent sexual victimization (Sobsey, 1994).

4.7.5 Measures that could be taken to curb child abuse in selected residential secondary schools for learners with exceptional needs

Respondents had varying opinions regarding measures that could be taken to curb child abuse in selected residential secondary schools. However, all pointed out to the fact that children who were abused needed specialized services. Schools might be a source for increasing children’s immediate safety, providing social support and teaching skills for non-violent relationships. School-based counseling and groups for boys and girls could educate students and support them in achieving relationships based on personal safety, equality and respect. It is important that children with disabilities be included, as that population is vulnerable to abuse, yet often excluded from receiving information and education pertaining to violence prevention, sexuality, healthy relationships and personal safety.

Children with disabilities should be given access to information and education (adapted to their individual learning needs) in school about abuse prevention, respect, assertiveness, boundaries, healthy relationships, personal safety and related topics. An individual education plan should be developed (with input from educators, parents and the child) for students who received special education services in public schools. Educational goals and objectives related to learning about abuse prevention and personal safety could be included in a student’s individual education plan. Parents or other family
members should assist with educating their children on abuse prevention. They should be aware of what would be taught in the classroom and have access to copies of the curriculum. They might want to express their concerns or fears about the vulnerabilities that their children faced.

Family members often have valuable input about teaching their children who had exceptional needs. Including them in the process could both reinforce the information presented, while incorporating individual family, religious and cultural values. Parental involvement also creates consistency between information that was taught at school and information provided in the home environment. Research has shown that education and training efforts that include sexuality awareness, violence and abuse prevention and assertiveness training helped to prevent abuse against people with disabilities (Haseltine and Miltenberger, 1990). A common misperception is that individuals with exceptional needs are asexual and are not at risk for sexual or other forms of abuse or neglect. Additionally, there are family members or professionals who believe that children with certain types of disabilities (cognitive disabilities) cannot benefit from abuse prevention education. Many people with disabilities have never received correct information or education about abuse prevention, sexuality and self-protection strategies or been provided education on ways to develop and maintain healthy, respectful and supportive relationships.

4.8 Summary

Data analysis has been presented in the chapter and results discussed as per the objectives. The three types of abuse as focused by the study were seen to be taking place in the schools studied. The major perpetrators of abuse were teachers and fellow students. The next chapter focuses on summary, conclusions and recommendations.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The chapter gives a summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations which could be made to help in managing the nature and extent of physical, sexual and verbal abuse of learners with exceptional needs in selected residential secondary schools for children with exceptional needs in Thika District.

5.1 Summary of the findings

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the nature and extent of physical, sexual and verbal abuse of learners with exceptional needs in selected residential secondary schools for students with exceptional needs in Thika District. The study was guided by Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory. Relevant literature was reviewed. The study was conducted using descriptive survey research design. Data was collected using questionnaires and key informant interview and was presented using percentages, frequency distribution and cross tabulation.

The results indicated that up to 64 (74%) of the students interviewed in Thika High School for the V.I had been beaten as compared to 16 (29%) in the case of Joytown School for P.H. That meant that beating was more rampant in Thika High School for the VI as compared to Joytown School for P.H. With regards to the type of beating experienced by the students interviewed, the majority of the respondents had experienced caning (31.7%) followed by slapping at 25%. With regards to touching, the study indicated that three types of abuse to students with exceptional needs were reported. Those included touching breasts, touching private parts and touching buttocks. Thika High School for the VI reported 17% cases of touching of breasts as compared to 9% in Joytown School for PH. With regards to verbal abuse, the study revealed that 64% of the respondents had been or were being verbally abused at school. In Thika High School for the VI, 75% of the respondents were or had been verbally abused as compared to 46% in
Joytown School for PH. The most common type of verbal abuse was unkind or rude words at 44.3%. Criticizing words were reported by 22.9% of the respondents while humiliating words were reported by 21.4% of the respondents.

The findings of the study also indicated that the frequency of abuse to others as reported by the respondents was generally high as compared to respondent’s experience of the various types of abuse. In Thika High School for the VI for example, over 75% of the respondents had seen or heard others being beaten as compared to 50% in the case of Joytown School for PH. The results indicated that among the respondents who reported that beating was frequent, 57% came from Thika High School for the VI while 16% came from Joytown School for PH. Respondents who reported that insulting was very frequent, 57% came from Thika High School for the VI while 23% came from Joytown School for PH.

The most common perpetrators of beating abuse were female teachers as reported by 51.7% of the respondents followed by male teachers at 38.3%. Others included housemasters/mistresses at 5%. The study revealed that most common perpetrators of insulting abuse were female teachers as reported by 39.7% of the respondents followed by male teachers at 32.3%. With regards to touching abuse, the study revealed that most common perpetrators were fellow students at 38.2% followed by male teachers at 23.6%. The most common perpetrators of sexual abuse were fellow students at 31.8% followed by male teachers at 27.3%. Notable gender differences were observed. Boys were more likely to report that someone had beaten them, forced them to sex and touched them other body parts, while girls were more likely to report that the perpetrator had touched their breasts.

Respondents had varying perceptions regarding measures that could be taken to curb child abuse in selected residential secondary schools. Up to 96% of the student respondents strongly agreed that they should be taught how to protect themselves from those who abuse them at school. According to 86% of the respondents the government should ensure that those who abuse children at school are sacked and prosecuted.
same sentiments were expressed by 92% of the teachers interviewed showing that they also wanted severe action to be taken on perpetrators. Up to 82% of the teacher respondents strongly agreed that children should be taught how to protect themselves from those who abuse them at school. According to 74% of the respondents, a component of child abuse should be incorporated in the teacher training curriculum while 75% thought that a component of child abuse should be incorporated in the students’ curriculum from pre-school through high school.

5.2 Conclusions

The major findings of the study indicated that physical, verbal and sexual abuse was common among students with exceptional needs in the two residential schools studied. They also suggested that the schools were not necessarily a safe place for young people especially since teachers and fellow students were the most common perpetrators of abuse. It was possible that many students experienced multiple types of abuse which could still be going on unreported. Gender differences emerged, indicating that boys reported more cases of abuse than girls. Respondents perceptions regarding measures that could be taken to curb child abuse in selected residential secondary schools included teaching students how to protect themselves from those who abuse them at school, ensuring that perpetrators were prosecuted and creating a good environment where students could report those who abused them without being intimidated since some of the cases could still be going on unreported. The need for component of child abuse to be incorporated in the teacher training curriculum and the students’ curriculum from pre-school through high school was apparent.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations were made from the study.

i. There is need for the stakeholders in the administration of residential schools for students with disability to admit that sexual abuse of the students is not only possible, but actually happening. The first step in preventing sexual abuse is
recognizing the magnitude of the problem and confronting the ugly truth that students with disabilities were more vulnerable to sexual victimization than those without disabilities.

ii. All forms of abuse must be reported in order for repeat victimization to stop. Abusers typically abuse as many people before ever getting caught. Without reporting, there could be no prosecution of offenders or treatment for victims. Legislation and policies should be developed that mandate zero tolerance of violence against disabled children and severe penalties for perpetrators of such abuse and violence.

iii. Providing sex education training and teaching self-determination skills can help individuals with exceptional needs learn how to protect themselves in threatening situations. Unfortunately, many special education programs had encouraged students to be submissive increasing the child's vulnerability to abuse.

iv. Educational programs on violence prevention for children with exceptional needs and their families should be widely offered and all research, policies and programs related to violence prevention for children with exceptional needs should include gender specific aspects of abuse. While children with exceptional needs needed greater access to programs for children safety, they also needed programs specifically designed to address their unique needs.

v. The government should encourage community-based programs in which stakeholders in schools management could join forces in providing comprehensive prevention and intervention services that addressed the problems of abuse in students’ lives. By working together, local domestic violence/sexual assault programs and schools could maximize their resources for responding to the needs of children who had been hurt, and for preventing future violence. A strong partnership offered potential results that neither could achieve alone.
vi. A component of child abuse should be incorporated in the teacher training curriculum so as to equip the teachers with the necessary knowledge to enable them deal adequately with child abuse in schools. The practicing teachers also need in-service training in this area.

5.4 Areas for further research

Further research was recommended in the following areas.

a) The study was carried out in two residential schools. There was need for widespread research that documented the extent and nature of the violence that children with exceptional needs faced at home, in their communities and in their schools.

b) There was need for more research to understand the impact of child abuse on health, school enrollment, outcomes and education for students with exceptional needs in order to inform policy decision toward reducing the vice.

c) Further research could be done to qualify the impact of child abuse on learners who are intellectually challenged since their ability to report such cases is inhibitive.

d) With increased access to education through free primary education program in Kenya, more learners with exceptional needs have been absorbed in regular primary and secondary schools. Research could be done to assess the nature of abuse such learners could experience and its impact on their learning.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

Please answer the questions as truthfully as possible. Do not write your name anywhere on this paper. The information you give will be treated with absolute confidentiality and will be used only for the purpose of this research. Thank you for your participation.

SECTION A: Personal details

1. Sex: Girl [ ] Boy [ ]
2. Age _______________________
3. Whom do you live with at home?
   - Both parents [ ]
   - Father [ ]
   - Mother [ ]
   - Brother [ ]
   - Sister [ ]
   - Other relatives [ ]

SECTION B: Abuse on self

1. Are you ever beaten at your school?
   - Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes, what type of beating have you ever received?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Beating</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hitting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slapping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulling ears/pulling hair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kicking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 If your answer to question 4 is yes, who beats you? (You can tick more than one answer)

- Female Teachers [ ]
- Male Teachers [ ]
- Cooks/Cleaners/Watchmen [ ]
- Others (specify) .................................................................

6 How often are you beaten at school? (Tick the appropriate choice)

5= very frequently  4= frequently  3= moderately  2= rarely  1= never

7 Has someone ever insulted you at school?

Yes [ ]  No [ ]

If yes what kind of insult did you receive?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Words to humiliate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words to unfairly criticize</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words to belittle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unkind and/or rude words</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 If your answer to question 7 is yes, who insulted you? (You can tick more than one answer)

- Female Teachers [ ]
- Male Teachers [ ]
- Cooks/Cleaners/Watchmen [ ]
- Others (specify) ........................................................................
9. How often has someone insulted you at school? (Tick the appropriate choice)
   5 = very frequently  4 = frequently  3 = moderately  2 = rarely  1 = never

10. Has someone ever touched you on the following parts without your consent? (Put a tick against those that apply).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breasts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private parts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buttocks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. If yes, who touched your private parts, breasts or buttocks?
   (You can tick more than one answer)

- Female Teachers [ ]
- Male Teachers [ ]
- Cooks/Cleaners/Watchmen [ ]
- Others (specify) .........................................................

12. How often has someone touched your private parts, breasts or buttocks without your consent at school? (Tick the appropriate choice)
   5 = very frequently  4 = frequently  3 = moderately  2 = rarely  1 = never

13. Has someone ever forced you to have sexual intercourse with him/her at school?
   Yes [ ]  No [ ]
14 If yes who forced you to have sexual intercourse with him/her at school?  
(You can tick more than one answer)  
Female Teachers [ ]  
Male Teachers [ ]  
Cooks/Cleaners/Watchmen [ ]  
Others (specify) ..........................................................

15 How often has someone forced you to have sexual intercourse with him/her at school? (Tick the appropriate choice)  
5= very frequently  4=frequently  3=moderately  2=rarely  1=never

SECTION C : Abuse on others

16 Have you seen or heard of other students being beaten at your school?  
Yes [ ]  No [ ]

17 If yes who beats them? (you can tick more than one answer)  
Female Teachers [ ]  
Male Teachers [ ]  
Cooks/Cleaners/Watchmen [ ]  
Others (specify) ..........................................................

18 How often are they beaten?  
5= very frequently  4=frequently  3=moderately  2=rarely  1=never
19 Have you seen or heard of other students being insulted at your school?
   Yes [ ]   No [ ]
If yes who insults them?
   Female Teachers [ ]
   Male Teachers [ ]
   Cooks/Cleaners/Watchmen [ ]
   Others (specify) ..............................................................

20 How often are they insulted?
   5= very frequently  4=frequently  3=moderately  2=rarely  1=never

21 Could you have seen or heard that someone touched the private parts, breasts or buttocks of students without their consent?
   Yes [ ]   No [ ]
If yes who did?
   Female Teachers [ ]
   Male Teachers [ ]
   Cooks/Cleaners/Watchmen [ ]
   Others (specify) ..............................................................

22 How often have you seen or heard that someone touched the private parts, breasts or buttocks of students without their consent?
   5= very frequently  4=frequently  3=moderately  2=rarely  1=never
23. Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements by putting a tick in the appropriate box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Children should be taught how to protect themselves from those who abuse them at school.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The government should ensure that those who abuse children at school are sacked and prosecuted.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>The school should create a good environment where students can report those who abuse them without being intimidated.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Parents need to be sensitized about the presence of child abuse in schools.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>The police and other law enforces should be given special training on child abuse.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lack of communication between children and their parents/guardians enhances child abuse at school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Corporal punishment is a sure way of maintaining discipline in schools.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
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APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

This study seeks to find out the nature and extent of child abuse in residential schools for children with exceptional needs. I would be grateful if you could answer the questions herein truthfully and honestly. Do not write your name or that of your school. The information you give will be treated with absolute confidentiality and will be used only for the purpose of this research. Thank you for your participation.

1. Indicate your gender.   Female [ ]   Male [ ]

2. In your opinion, the number of physically abused children in your school is
   (a) High   (b) Average   (c) Low   (d) None
   Give a reason for the answer you have given above.
   ........................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................

3. In your opinion, the number of verbally abused children in your school is
   (a) High   (b) Average   (c) Low   (d) None
   Give a reason for the answer you have given above.
   ........................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................

4. In your opinion, the number of sexually abused children in your school is
   (a) High   (b) Average   (c) Low   (d) None
   Give a reason for the answer you have given above.
   ........................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................

5. Do you have any training on how to handle children who have been abused?
   Yes.........   No.........

If yes, where did you receive this training?
   ........................................................................................................

6. Does your school offer any child abuse education related programs to students.
   Yes.........   No.........
If yes, specify two approaches used in the programs

(a) ..............................................................................................................
(b) ..............................................................................................................

If no, give two reasons why not.

(a) ..............................................................................................................
(a) ..............................................................................................................

7. What do you think can be done by the government to stop child abuse in schools?
..............................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................

8. What can parents do to stop child abuse in schools?
..............................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................

9. What can the teachers do to stop child abuse?
..............................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................

10. What can the students do to stop child abuse in schools?
..............................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................

11. In your opinion, the physical abuse of children is perpetrated mostly by

   (a) subordinate staff [ ]
   (b) teachers [ ]
   Other (specify) .................................................................

12. In your opinion, the sexual abuse of children at school is mostly perpetrated by

   (a) teachers [ ]
   (b) subordinate staff [ ]
   Other (specify) .................................................................

13. In your opinion, verbal abuse of children in schools is mostly perpetrated by

   (a) teachers [ ]
   (b) subordinate staff [ ]
   Other (specify) .................................................................
14. What do you think is the major cause of physical abuse?

15. What do you think is the major cause of sexual abuse?

16. What do you think is the major cause of verbal abuse?

17. Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements by putting a tick in the appropriate box.

<table>
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<th>No.</th>
<th>Statements</th>
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</table>
APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The interview was guided by the following questions:

1. For effective teaching and learning the physical and social environment of the school should be conducive. What measures has your school put in place to ensure that students feel secure at school?

2. Discipline of students is rather difficult to maintain without the use of the cane. How has your school been able to maintain discipline?

3. For students to achieve their best, they need to feel protected. How do you ensure that your students feel wanted and safe?
Gichuke Virginia Wambui  
Kenyatta University  
P.O. Box 43844  
NAIROBI  

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION  

Following your application for authority to carry out research on, 'The Nature and Extent of Child Abuse in Residential Secondary Schools for Children with Exceptional Needs in Thika District,'  

I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to carry out research in Thika District for a period ending 30th April, 2009.  

You are advised to report to District Commissioner and District Education Officer Thika District before embarking on your research.  

On completion of your research, you are expected to submit two copies of your research report to this office.  

M. O. ONDIEKI  
FOR: PERMANENT SECRETARY  

Copy to:  

The District Commissioner  
Thika District  

The District Education Officer  
Thika District