CAUSES OF CHILD LABOUR AMONG LEARNERS WITH MILD MENTAL RETARDATION IN SPECIAL UNITS IN IGEMBE NORTH DISTRICT, MERU COUNTY, KENYA

BY
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DECLARATION

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

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This work was dedicated to my late father Andrew.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AAMR	:	American Association on Mental Retardation.
ANPPCAN	:	African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect.
CL	:	Child Labour.
CMMR	:	Child/Children with Mild Mental Retardation.
CMR	:	Child/Children with Mental Retardation.
CWSN	:	Child/Children with Special Needs.
DEO	:	District Education Officer.
EARCs	:	Education Assessment Resource Centers.
FGD	:	Focused Group Discussion
FPE	:	Free Primary Education
HIV/AIDS	:	Human Immune Deficiency Virus/Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
ILO	:	International Labour Organization.
IQ	:	Intelligent Quotient.
KISE	:	Kenya Institute of Special Education.
KNBS	:	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics.
LMMR	:	Learner/ Learners with Mild Mental Retardation.
MMR	:	Mild Mental Retardation.
MoE	:	Ministry of Education.
MR	:	Mental Retardation.
PWDs	:	Persons with Disabilities.
SNE	:	Special Needs Education
UNICEF	:	United Nations International Children's Emergency Funds.

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to establish causes of child labour (CL) among learners with mild mental retardation (LMMR) in special units in Igembe North, Meru County, Kenya**.** The study aimed to find out causes of CL among LMMR with the following objectives: To investigate the role of socio-economic status of the family in influencing LMMR to engage in CL, to investigate social cultural practices that influence involvement of LMMR in CL, to establish school practices that can predispose LMMR to CL and to establish whether lack of parental awareness on the causes of mental retardation (MR) drive LMMR into CL? The study employed descriptive survey design. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were applied in data collection. Data was collected on variables related to the role played by social economic status of the family, influence of social cultural practices, school practices and how lack of parental awareness influenced LMMR into CL. Data was obtained using questionnaires for head teachers and teachers, interview schedules for parents/guardians and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) for learners. The study applied purposeful sampling techniques to sample out respondents. Respondents were head teachers, teachers, parents/guardians and LMMR. A total of 82 respondents were interviewed, among them 7 head teachers, 9 teachers, 33 parents/guardians and 33 learners. A pilot study was carried out to help identify any weaknesses in the tools. Reliability of the instruments was established through comparison of consistence in the developed themes which was then triangulated to form justification. Data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively guided by research objectives. It was presented thematically with themes derived from research objectives. The data was analyzed, interpreted and presented using qualitative statements, expose tables frequencies and percentages. One of the major findings of the study was that LMMR were massively involved in pervasive CL. Poverty and social cultural beliefs were notorious in predisposing LMMR to CL. According to the study findings, this study concludes that LMMR were involved in CL hence, the study recommended that the government institute immediate, broad and inclusive strategies and policies to involve all stakeholders in instituting inclusive and sustainable strategies that can be used to curb CL among LMMR in Igembe north district. The broad measures may include advocacy campaigns, strengthening of professional capacity and provision of vital infrastructure in various institutions to counter the vice. The study recommended further investigations to be undertaken in another locale in Kenya to avail information on the magnitude LMMR involvement in CL. The study further recommended another study to be carried in the same locale to inform whether other categories of children with disabilities are involved in CL and yet another one to be carried to debunk social beliefs attitudes and myths involving children with MR and other children with disabilities.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that around the world some 250 million children between ages 5 and 14 work for a living. This number includes children with disabilities, though their actual numbers have not been established. Out of the total number of children involved in labour, 61% are in Asia, 32% in Africa and 7% are in Latin America. Some 200 million (10%) of the world's children are born with a disability or become disabled before age 19 (UNICEF, 2005). It is estimated that nearly 614,000 children aged 3-21 have some level of intellectual disability and need special education in schools. Disabilities occur in many forms and varieties which include mental, physical, hearing and visual problems among many others. Mental retardation (MR) is one of the most common form of disability; in fact one out of every ten (1/10) children who need special education has some form of intellectual disability (Friend, 2008). Those children with mild mental retardation (MMR) may be involved in child labour as they can follow instructions though a lot has not been done through empirical studies to establish their actual numbers.

The American Association on Mental Retardation (AAMR) define mental retardation as a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behaviour as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills (Friend, 2008). Mental retardation can be classified into: mild MR with an

intelligence quotient (IQ) of 55-69, moderate MR with an IQ of 40-54, severe MR with an IQ of 25-39 and profound MR with an IQ below 25. This study focused on Learners with Mild Mental Retardation (LMMR). LMMR are individuals who can acquire practical skills, functional reading and arithmetic abilities with special education and who can be guided towards social conformity. They may develop good social, vocational and communication skills. They can learn academic skills up to level of primary class six or seven (Terres des hommes, 2007). These are children who can perform tasks with minimal support, or the support may be short term (Friend, 2008). These children can easily be involved in child labour practices

In the United States, children with impairments are 3.4 times more likely to be maltreated than those without disabilities. In the United Kingdom there is limited information regarding the prevalence of abuse among children with disabilities (Stalker & Mcarthur, 2010). In a study conducted in Taiwan, the proportion of child prostitutes who had mild developmental disabilities or MMR was six times greater than what might be expected from the incidence of the general population (UNICEF, 2005). In another study conducted in Israel, 28% of students with disabilities were reported being forced to do something against their will, which is a form of child forced labour as compared to 8% of their non-disabled counterparts (Reiter, Bryen & Shachar, 2007).

In China, adults and children with MR are lured to work in brick kilns as forced labourers, (Moxley, 2011).

African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN, 2008) found out that children are violated on the basis of special needs among other aspects. The report informs that out of 44 key informants, 40 cited children without special needs as being violated and attributed this to the fact that children with special needs (CWSN) are hidden. Thus, the report calls for more research on violence among CWSN. It is against this backdrop that the researcher investigated the factors leading to the involvement of LMMR into CL, bearing in mind that child labour is part of violence against children.

A report from a survey carried in three districts in Uganda in the year 2009 revealed that children with various disabilities were involved in CL which made them to miss schooling. The overall disability rate was 14% for children aged between 5-17 years with minimal variations across districts. The prevalence of CL was slightly higher among the children with disabilities in all the three districts under study as compared to those without disabilities which made them to miss educational opportunities. Overall, while the prevalence of CL was 16% for children with disabilities, it was 15% for children with no disabilities, which is a clear indicator that children with disabilities particularly those with MR have minimal access to formal education opportunities (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2009). Further, the report revealed that there was a high likelihood of children working as commercial sex workers and in eating places and small bars. This could even be worse for CMR who are part of children involved in CL. The report cites child disability status as one of the determinants of child labour, which makes children with MR more prone to CL due to their disability. Indeed, involvement

in CL made them loose valuable time for schooling. Child abuse of individuals with intellectual disabilities is much easier because of their lack of understanding.

Normally we do not know about the abuse, nor hear about the abuse from the child (Gray, 2005).

While the amount of research available on this population is extremely limited, particularly for children with disabilities in the developed world, current research indicates that violence against children with disabilities occurs at an annual rate of 1.7 times greater than their non disabled peers (UNICEF, 2005). Children with MR could be the worst affected as far as child labour is concerned. Children with disabilities are more likely than their counterparts without disabilities to miss schooling or to leave school early due to abuse and lack of appropriate educational opportunities. Consequently, they are more likely to be used to make money in a dishonesty ways. Once in the streets, they are likely to be lured into taking part in criminal activities against their will which is a serious form of child abuse and exploitation (UNICEF, 2005). These activities could include child labour. A third of street children may have some type of disability (UNICEF, 2005). Children with disabilities are regularly used to generate income through begging. Some are placed on the streets to beg by their own families, some are sold by their families to others who keep stables of children with disabilities in organized rings of beggars (UNCEF, 2005).

In Kenya the problem of child labour according to Ringera (2008) dates back to pre-independent Kenya. This is the time when Africans bordering white settlement areas

sent their children to work in European farms and their homes for source of income to enable them pay taxes imposed by colonial government. Some of these children working in these farms could have been CMR. In absence of any empirical study concerning children with LMMR in child labour then, it becomes critical that the study explored the causes of CL among LMMR to fill that gap.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Children with MR are especially vulnerable when it comes to different forms of abuse including CL among others. Studies show that they are more likely to be abused than their able-bodied counterparts due to their disability. Working children especially those with MMR, lack opportunities to attend school and acquire skills valuable for better employment and economic activities in adult life (ANPPCAN, 2004). This is a critical concern of the community, parents, teachers and the government due to loss of human capital invested in education and more so since special institutions receive the bulk of funds from Free Primary Education (FPE) which should be used to enable CMR to be self-reliant and contribute to national development.

Despite several international and national policies and legislations protecting children from CL, the vice is widespread in the world particularly in Africa, Latin America and Asia (Shorter, 1999). Article 18 (3) of the African Charter on The Rights and Welfare of the Child stipulates that the state shall ensure the elimination of every discriminative nature against women and also ensure the protection of the rights of the child as stipulated in international declarations and conventions. Kenya has ratified this charter

(Shorter, 1999). Nevertheless, CL in Kenya persists and particularly for those with MMR, even though laws and standards to eliminate them exist (Shorter, 1999). Indeed, most studies have focused on CL of the non-disabled children, creating a dearth for those with MMR though they are more predisposed to CL due to their disability. The aspect of LMMR has hardly been undertaken and there is no empirical study with comprehensive information on the number or size of children with MMR involved in CL. Subsequently, the researcher intended to investigate causes of CL among LMMR in schools in Igembe North District, Kenya in an attempt to fill the gaps identified.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to find out causes of child labour among learners with mild mental retardation and to identify the kinds of work these learners were involved in.

1.4 Study Objectives

Specifically the objectives of the study were:

- To investigate the role of socio-economic status of the family in influencing LMMR to engage in CL.
- To investigate social-cultural practices that influence involvement of LMMR in CL.
- To establish school practices that can predispose LMMR to CL.
- To establish whether lack of parental awareness on the causes of MR drive LMMR into CL.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed by the study;

- What role does socio-economic status of the family play in influencing LMMR to engage in CL?
- How do social cultural practices influence the involvement of LMMR in CL?
- What school practices predisposed LMMR to child labour?
- How does lack of parental awareness on the causes of MR drive LMMR into CL?

1.6 Significance of the Study

It is hoped that the findings of the study may create awareness that LMMR are subjected to child labour just like their non-handicapped counterparts in Igembe North district. The study may be useful to all the stake holders in the Ministry of Education (MoE) in that it may guide them in coming up with new strategies to deal with child labour, and especially for children with disabilities particularly LMMR. The study may have the potential of triggering the MoE and that of Provincial Administration to embark on a campaign to return CMMR to school and take to school those who have never had the chance of attending school or any other relevant programmes. The study may also have the potential to reveal the cultural practices that encourage CL especially that of LMMR and suggest ways of overcoming the vice.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study was confined to LMMR in integrated units in Igembe North District. Four (4) to six (6) LMMR were sampled from each of the seven (7) units. It also included the head teachers of the schools with integrated units alongside the teachers of the special units. Parents/Guardians of the CMR were also included in the study. The study was not concerned with other issues affecting LMMR. It only focused on causes of CL among LMMR in special units in Igembe North District Meru County, Kenya.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The study was faced by financial constraints since the integrated units were widely spaced in the district and the terrain is hilly, thus some units were not accessible by road which called for a lot of walking or going for an alternative mode of transport like the motorcycle transport. Getting clear information from LMMR posed a challenge. Also some respondents like the parents of LMMR were reluctant to divulge information. Head teachers and teachers were against the idea of the researcher of audio recording information during the FGDs.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

The study was based on the following assumptions; that:

1. LMMR were involved in CL in Igembe North district.
2. Socio-economic status of the family, social-cultural practices, school practices and lack of parental awareness on the causes of MR contributed to the involvement of LMMR into CL.

3. All respondents would be cooperative and honest during the data collection process.

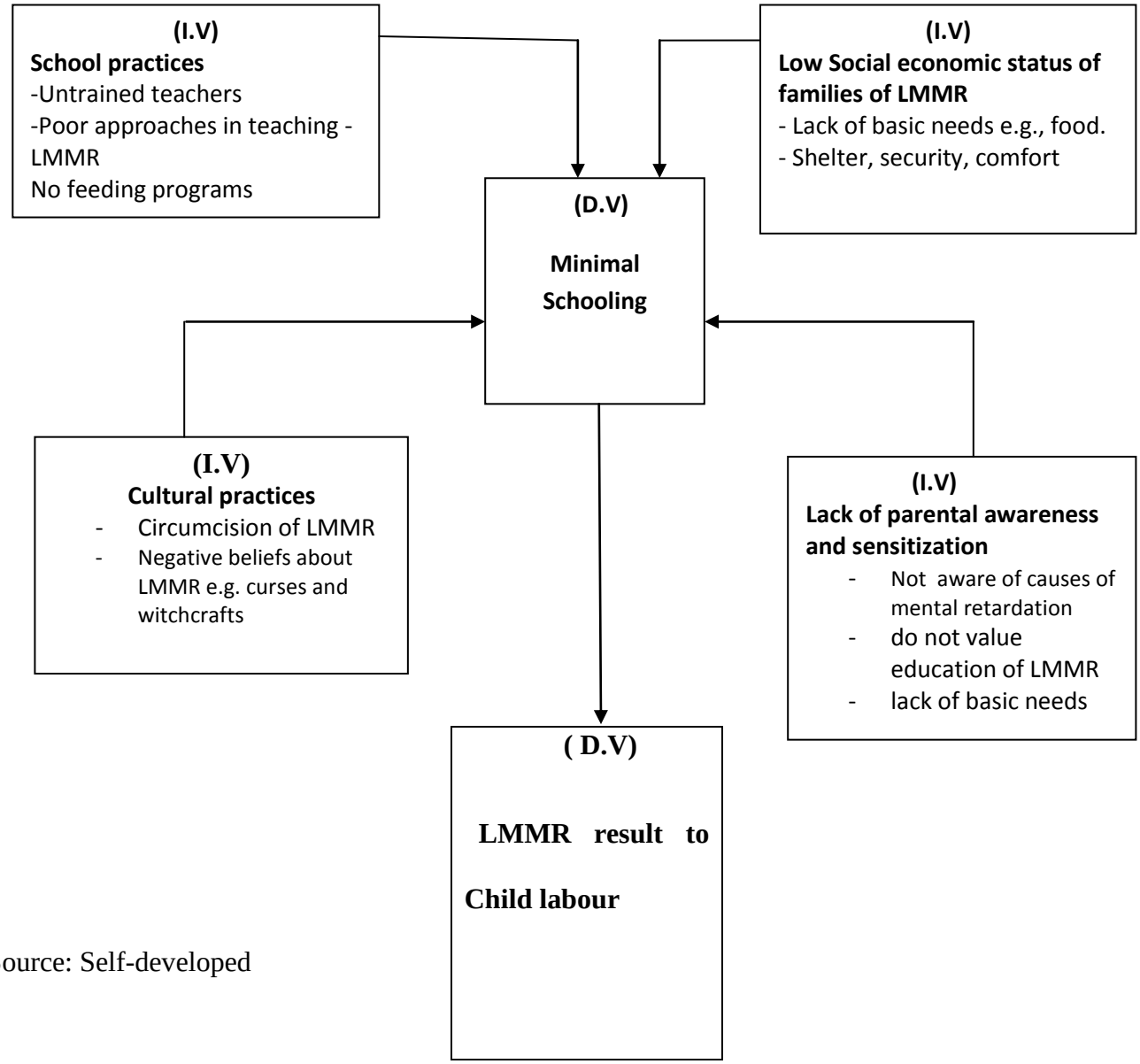
1.10 Theoretical Framework

Child labour (CL) phenomenon has been covered by several theoretical approaches. Among them is the needs theory of motivation (Maslow, 1954). According to Maslow's theory, human beings are motivated to behave in a certain manner by primary needs found in various environments such as the school, society and in the family. The needs range from hunger, thirst, shelter, love and a sense of belonging and avoidance of pain. These basic needs make human beings behave in a certain way in order to fulfill them. According to Maslow the needs can be arranged in hierarchical order with basic needs or psychological starting at the bottom. The lowest hierarchy being physiological needs which encompasses need for food, water and oxygen. Applied in this study this theory provided the background to identify which factors made children and in particular LMMR to engage in CL to enable them satisfy their basic needs as human beings. In a family or a school environment where pupils are provided with basic needs like food through feeding programmes or lunch from their families, by their parents, teachers and peers, they will remain in school and concentrate in studies; conversely in situations where such basic needs are lacking from schools and families, children will tend to run away from school and seek for ways and means to get basic needs by engaging in CL to fend for themselves. Applied in this study, this theory enabled the study to find out whether lack of provision of basic needs from schools and families made LMMR to engage in CL.

The second level is the safety and security needs and the need to be safe from danger by providing a caring environment where one feels protected. In situations where teachers are caring and loving, learners will remain in school and concentrate in learning; similarly where parents and teachers may not care or show love to children, they may run away from school or family to seek for a caring environment where they feel protected from pain and harm, hence dropping out of school and running away from harsh home environment. This is quite critical to LMMR who may be neglected by teachers and parents hence tempted to go out and seek for help by engaging in CL. Applied in this study, this theory enabled the study to establish whether lack of security, love and care in families and schools made LMMR to engage in CL.

The other categories are self- esteem needs and self-actualization needs. Children and in particular those with MR need to be recognized and valued for what they are and what they are capable of doing. In schools and families where they are given opportunities to learn and practice a given skill and enable them to realize their potential, they may tend to be friendly and remain in school or in the family setting since there is hope and contentment in realization of their expectations. Similarly in schools where discipline is harsh, poor teaching methods, lack of facilities such as sheltered workshops among others may lead to low self esteem that may lure them to resort to CL. Applied in this study, this theory enabled the researcher to find out whether lack of opportunities in schools and families made LMMR to engage in CL.

Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework: **Causes of CL among LMMR**



Source: Self-developed

Key:

D.V –Dependent Variable

I.V- Independent Variable

1.10.1 Conceptual Framework

.The conceptual framework illustrates various causes of CL among learners with LMMR; in particular the framework shows that negative social cultural beliefs such as beliefs in curses and witchcraft makes families with a LMMR not to care for the child by providing basic needs like food, and water. That made them drop out of school to fend for themselves. In such cases the child with LMMR resorts to roaming around to look for food and other basic needs hence they engage in any type of job so long as the employer provides them with basic needs. In such scenario they are easy prey for exploitation and abuse by their employers. Similarly, in schools where teachers lack specialized professional knowledge and skills to teach LMMR coupled with lack of feeding programs in schools create a hostile environment for learning for LMMR who hail from low social-economic status. This may tempt them to be on and off from school to search for employment to cater for their basic needs. In such cases they may often be absent from school particularly during peak seasons when they get employed in casual labour. This makes them miss schooling and eventually give up and drop out of school.

1.11 Operational Definition of Terms

Child Labour: Child labour means any work which make children lead prematurely adult lives, working long hours for low wages under conditions which damage their physical and mental development and lacking meaningful learning and education opportunities.

Child with Mental Retardation: A child with a disability that is characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior as expressed conceptual, social, and in practical adaptive skills.

Child: A learner with mild mental retardation.

Parent/Guardian: Any individual who provides the child with basic care and directions.

Parental/Guardian Awareness: Knowledge parents/guardians have on issues Pertaining to their CMMR.

School Practices: Functions and activities which take place in the school environment that affect stay of LMMR in the school.

Social Cultural Practices: Traditional behaviors and believes embraced by a given society.

Social Economic Status: Ability of the parent/guardian to meet the basic needs of the child.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter comprises of social-economic status, social-cultural factors, lack of parental awareness, school factors and summary of literature review.

2.1 Overview of Child Labour

Child labour refers to the employment of children at regular and sustained labour. This practice is considered exploitative by many international organizations and is illegal in many countries. Child labour was utilized to varying extents through most of history, but raised concern with the advent of universal schooling, with changes in working conditions during the industrial revolution and with the emergence of the concepts of workers' and child rights. Government of Kenya (GoK) (2009) refers to child labour as work undertaken by children between 5 and 17 years that prevents them from attending school, is exploitative, hazardous or inappropriate for their age. In most cases, such work is detrimental to children's schooling, social, mental, spiritual and moral development, and is usually undertaken in violation of international laws and legislation.

2.2 General experiences of Child Labour

Child work has existed throughout history, but the presence of children in factories and mines brought by the industrial revolution in Europe made it conspicuous, hazardous and more exploitative (Black, 1993). History of child labour can be traced to the dark

realms of industrialization. History of child labour states that industrial revolution saw children work in factories, mines and even having their own small business like selling food, flowers and doing much of unusual kind of jobs. Although child labour was not new to the world, it is believed that between 1780 and 1840, there was a massive increase in child exploitation.

In 1788, more than 60% of workers in textile mills of England and Scotland were children (Pakhare, 2010). Since it is difficult to identify LMMR easily, they could have been among the 60% child workers. In 1919, the world began to address the issue of child labour and the ILO adopted standards to eliminate it. Throughout the 20th century a number of legally binding agreements and international conventions were adopted but in spite of these, child labour continues today (Agbu, 2009).

The highest number of child labourers is in the Asian pacific region but the largest percentage of children working as proportion of the child population is found in sub-Saharan Africa (Agbu, 2006). According to Agbu (2009) children in Africa have always been in one form of domestic work or other, which were not exploitative and therefore not worrisome. But today, Agbu argues that children and youth have generally been sucked into a world of exploitative labour which, in an extreme way, creates a vicious cycle of poverty. In sub-Saharan Africa, around one in three million children are engaged in child labour, representing forty nine million children (Agbu, 2009). Some of these children could be LMMR.

Out of about 9.6 million school age children in Kenya, 2.6 million (27%), do not attend school. The ILO estimates that out of this number, 1.9 million are child labourers which may include LMMR. The problem of child labour in Kenya has a long history, traceable back to the colonial period, in which radicalized notions of childhood were played out allowing for the practice of child labour becoming entrenched (Murithi, 2007). The problem of child labour in Kenya dates back to pre-independence Kenya (GoK, 2001). According to the Ministry of Planning (2001), child labour is widespread both in rural and urban areas of the country, and it is widespread on the upward trend. According to the 1998/99 child labour survey conducted by the Kenya Bureau of Statistics released in 2001, about 29% of children in the age bracket of 6-14 years accounting for 2.3million children did not attend school. LMMR could be a subset of this number. Majority of these could be involved in child labour (KNBS, 1998/99). As per the 1998/99 Child Labour Report by the Ministry of Finance, the highest population of working children to the total population age 5-17 were in Coast, Eastern, Rift valley, and Western Provinces. In Kenya, children constitute 20-30 percent of the casual labour force in plantations. In the harvest season, around 30 percent of coffee pickers are under age. In some rice fields, up to 90 percent of the planting was done by children (Andvig,1997).

According to Kinoti (2007), children are involved in child labour in miraa (khat) business in Meru North District particularly in transporting the commodity to the market. Abuse of children with intellectual disabilities and that of LMMR in particular is much easier because of their lack of understanding. ‘We don`t always see the abuse, nor hear about the abuse from the child (Gray, 2005). In a study conducted in Taiwan,

the proportion of child prostitutes who had mild developmental disabilities was six times greater than what might be expected from the incidence of the general population (UNICEF, 2005). This was a clear indicator that CMMR could be engaged in CL because prostitution is a form of CL.

In another study conducted in Israel, 28% of students with disabilities reported being forced to do something against their will which is a form of child labour as compared to 8% of their non-disabled counterparts (Reiter, Bryen & Shachar, 2007). Among this population of children with disabilities there could be LMMR. In China, adults and CMR are lured to work in brick kilns as forced laborers (Moxley, 2011). LMMR could be a subset of CMR working in these kilns.

2.3 Family Social – Economic Status

The main reason why children start work instead of attending school, or leave school before completing their primary education is that their families are poor and cannot pay the basic costs of food and housing without their child earning something as well (UNICEF, 2005). According to UNICEF, some adult workers get low pay which is inadequate to support the family in terms of shelter, clothing and food. In some cases, one or both parents could be earning nothing, probably as a result of death of parents or because they are unable to get work. Sometimes employers find it a better option to employ children as they are more obedient and cheaper to hire than adults. LMMR are more gullible and vulnerable and could be worst hit if they are in such a situation. All forms of child labour are affected, by at least partially by poverty (Shorter, 1999:54).

Poverty is associated with features such as lack of land, unemployment, inability to feed oneself, lack of housing, poor health and inability to educate children and pay medical bills. In most societies many children start work by helping their families, before they can go out to work for others (Onyango 2003). This could be as a result of poverty although in many societies cultural values and expectations view this as a natural and "right way to introduce a child to responsibilities (Ringera, 2008). According to the Basic Report of Fourth Participatory Poverty Assessment by the Ministry of Planning and National Development (2007:37) when poverty strikes a household, all the members of the household suffer, but women and children suffer most. Children, including LMMR also suffer as they have no food and clothes. They do not go to school since the parents cannot afford or if already in school they may drop out. In the above situations, children, LMMR included could be attracted to CL.

According to the Kenya National Survey for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) (2008), 39% of them who left or dropped out of school said they did not have enough money to continue with education. The Survey further revealed that some PWDs in certain communities were reportedly being used in incidents of crime, witchcraft, and trafficking of drugs or other substances and illicit drinks in exchange for food or money. LMMR are more likely to be involved in these illicit activities due to their inability to acquire practical, social as well as communication skills. In many countries, children from poor households whether urban or rural attend school less than children from more affluent families. Children with disabilities are much less likely to attend school than the average child. A child with disabilities is half as likely to be in school as a child

without disabilities. Children with disabilities encompass LMMR. As per the National Development Plan 2002-2003, the number of child labourers in Kenya was estimated to be 1.9 million. LMMR could be among this number. Terre des Hommes (2007) asserts that parents of children with disabilities are often poor thus unable or unwilling to pay school fees and for the upkeep of their children.

Family breakdown may push children into child labour. When families break down, households are left short of income. The breakdown could be as a result of divorce leaving one parent to look after more children than he/she can afford to feed. Divorce is sometimes brought about by domestic violence, which also directly drives children to leave home when they are still young. Families also lose their livelihoods as a result of natural disasters and human crisis that leave people destitute and force children to start working. UNICEF (2005) cites the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, in which almost one million people were murdered, leaving big numbers of orphans. The effect of this is that five years later more than 45,000 Rwandese households are headed by children, who bore the responsibility of providing for their brothers and sisters. LMMR from such families may be compelled to drop out of school and join CL in order to fend for themselves and their siblings.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) also play a role in pushing children to the world of work. By 2001, the UN estimated that 13 million children including LMMR around the world under the age of fifteen had either lost one or both parents to the pandemic. This makes the children take the responsibility of seeking an income to support themselves and their young brothers

and sisters. In the case of HIV/AIDS, children often take on this role when their one surviving parent becomes seriously ill and is unable to work. Joining child labour could be an option for all children including LMMR so that they can cater for their siblings.

All around the world, children belonging to particular social groups leave school and start work earlier than other children in the same country. In industrialized countries, the differences are based on wealth and social economic whereby children from poor families start work several years before their peers in the rich households. In Latin America, indigenous children start work first. In south Asia, the caste system determines that from *dalit* families (who have low status in the caste hierarchy) or *advasi* (tribal or indigenous) communities start work first or do not attend school at all. In south East Europe, it is children from the Roma minority who start work first (UNICEF, 2005). LMMR from such classes are likely to be involved in CL and other maltreatments.

All over the world, children are at risk of being abused and maltreated. Children with disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse and maltreatment (Terre des Hommes, 2007). LMMR are not exceptional. Abuse can range from physical, psychological, emotional, neglect and abandonment and exploitation among others. Physically, children can be beaten, kicked, burnt, scalded, poisoned and suffocated among others (ANPPCAN, 2008). Psychological abuse includes verbally abusing a child and telling him/her that he/she is worthless, comparing him/ her with other children. Emotional abuse involves ill-treatment or rejection of a child. Neglect and abandonment occurs when a person

who is in charge of taking care of the child fails to do so or abandons all such responsibilities. Children with disabilities are often victims of abandonment and other forms of child abuse (Terre des Hommes, 2007). Exploitation involves a situation where children are involved in activities that inhibit their physical, mental and emotional development by a person who benefits or profits from it. This can be economic exploitation, which includes child labour or sexual exploitation (child prostitution). Children with disabilities, LMMR inclusive are more likely to be abused than their able-bodied counterparts (Wambui, 2010). Many of these children, among them LMMR, are forced to leave home even before the age of 18 years and are exposed to other forms of violence as they seek employment or flee to the streets (ANPPCAN, 2008). Should LMMR undergo the above forms of abuses, they will likewise flee away from homes or schools and this could be a recipe for them to join child labour.

2.4 Social-Cultural Practices and Child Labour

Gargiulo and Kilgo (2005) defines culture as the attitudes, values, beliefs, systems, norms and traditions which are shared by a particular group of people that form their heritage. Culture is transmitted through various avenues from generation to generation. Culture provides individuals with a frame of reference or perspective for attaching meaning to specific events or situations such as the value and purpose of education or the birth of a child with disability. In many East African cultures, traditional beliefs associate disability with bad fortune, evil and punishment by forefathers or God. Getting a child with disability is often seen as the result of wrongdoing by the parents, while others may also think the disability is the result of a curse (Terre des Hommes

2007). LMMR are victims of the same viewpoint. As a result these learners are confronted with negative attitudes right from birth. This can lead to isolation, rejection and even abuse of the child. When LMMR receive these types of maltreatment from the family, they may flee their homes, drop out of school and may join CL in an effort to fend for themselves. These children are viewed as useless burdens to the community and society in general, hence they are underestimated which indeed leads to the underdevelopment of their capabilities. By not taking the capabilities of children with disabilities as a starting point, they miss out opportunities to develop and to be educated in the appropriate way. This in turn promotes the stereotype that children with disabilities are totally incapable of living a meaningful and productive life. This study explored the contemporary negative social-cultural beliefs towards LMMR that continue to predispose them to CL.

2.5 Lack of Parental Awareness

Lack of awareness about issues surrounding learners with special needs and disabilities by service providers, policy makers and community at large is a common problem. In some cases, local communities are not aware of special needs programmes and Educational Assessment and Resource Centres (EARCs) in their localities, (GoK, 2009). Parents often do not have information about the relevant services available for their children. As a result, they may place their children in inappropriate programs where learners may not cope, hence feel frustrated and ultimately drop out of school to engage in CL. Parents may not be aware of medical causes of MMR. Terre des Hommes (2007) cites lack of knowledge about the medical causes of MMR as one of

the reasons why people hold negative traditional beliefs on CMMR. This may make parents not to support them even in school as they believe that their children are bewitched or cursed and therefore useless. As a result, instead of positively engaging a child with MMR, the parent confronts him/her with isolation, rejection and even abuse. LMMR living under such circumstances may drop out of school or run away from home to join CL.

2.6 School Factors

Majority of teachers in special education schools and units have not had training in special education, the reason being that the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) does not have the capacity to meet the demand for trained teachers (National Action Plan, 2003-2015). Consequently, they use ineffective methods and approaches such as lecture method, look and say, discussion among others. They lack the insight of taking LMMR as a heterogeneous group whose problems, needs and abilities are quite different. These teachers are not able to provide a conducive environment for effective learning. This in turn may daunt learners and may drop out of school to join child labour**.**

Gargiulo (2006) said that labeling is a demeaning process frequently contributing to stigmatization and leading to social and educational isolation. Labels are stigmatizing and may lead to stereotyping. Labeling is frustrating especially to LMMR as it has a potential of focusing attention on the limitations and what a person cannot do. It

diminishes self-concept, lower expectations and poor self-esteem. Therefore, due to labeling these learners may run away from school and join CL.

Some of the challenges faced by LMMR in schools are the shortage or total absence of appropriate curriculum and support materials. The curriculum and support materials for these learners come later when their counterparts in regular school set up are already familiar with the curriculum contents and requirements. These delays make the students lag behind in syllabus implementation which adversely affects their performance and consequently some run away from school (Republic of Kenya, 2009). Those that run away may decide to join labour market to earn their living. In 2003, the Kenyan Government implemented the FPE for all school age children. However, the opportunity did not help LMMR much because there are still significant barriers which hinder them from learning. For example, in many poor or remote areas LMMR are unable to reach units (schools). Although all learners are affected, LMMR are often more affected. Insufficient school facilities such as classrooms, unacceptable teacher-learner ratio, lack of enough specially trained teachers and educational materials affect their learning process and can lead to learners feeling of exclusion and drop out to engage in other activities such as CL (Organization of People With Disabilities Zanzibar, 2002).

2.7 Summary of Reviewed Literature

This chapter has reviewed literature on CL of LMMR under the following four components. These are: Family Socio-economic status of parents, Social cultural

practices, Lack of parental awareness on the causes of mental retardation and School factors. The material reviewed reveals that child labour is as old as man. It also reveals that very little has been studied on CL of LMMR. There are no empirical studies done regarding CL among LMMR in Igembe North District, Meru County, hence there was need to conduct this study to highlight critical issues regarding these learners (Republic of Kenya, 2008).

Poverty and lack of education have been cited as notorious in predisposing children to CL particularly in developing countries where women and children are the worst affected. PWDs are particularly edged-out to CL because they are less valued compared to ‘able’ or ‘normal’ children. Family disputes and social cultural factors have more negative effects to PWDs and by extension LMMR who suffer due to lack of care and resort to CL to eke living learners (Republic of Kenya, 2008).

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The review has sufficiently established that negative social cultural beliefs, practices and attitudes are biased against LMMR resulting to untold suffering and discrimination leading to en-masse involvement in CL. Indeed, the review has overtly demonstrated that child abuse takes various forms ranging to sexual abuse, CL, beating, neglect, and abandonment, psychological, emotional and physical exploitation...

Further the studies have demonstrated that many teachers and educationist do not posses sufficient knowledge and skills to enable their professional efficacy in providing services that can retain and keep LMMR in school to curb massive dropouts; many drop

out to join CL due to frustrations and hopelessness. Similarly schools lack curriculum content and teaching-learning resources/equipments that are friendly to LMMR. All the preceding observation from the past studies suggests that CL is likely to soar unless drastic measures are instituted. These are critical issues that are addressed through the findings of this study (Republic of Kenya, 2009).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the procedures and strategies that were used in the study, That is; research design, study variables, location of the study, population, sampling technique and sample size, how pilot study was conducted, instruments for data collection, data collection techniques, logistical and ethical considerations and methods which were used to analyze data.

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive survey design which explains the conditions at the ground as they are. 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). Survey techniques provide useful information most of the time and if researchers use proper techniques, the number of misjudgments and the magnitude of error are small (Beins, 2009:248). This was suitable for this study in that the researcher was able to compare the effects of independent variables on the dependent variable. By use of this design the researcher was able to report the status of CL in the area of study.

3.1.1 Study Variables

A variable is a measurable characteristic that assumes different values among the subjects (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). Variables can have different roles in a certain problem. They may influence other variables, thereby determining the values of the affected variables (Orodho, 2009).

3.1.1.1 Independent Variables

An independent variable is a variable that a researcher manipulates in order to determine its effects or influence on other variables (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). In this study, the independent variables comprised of; child labour: social economic status, social cultural factors, lack of parental awareness and school factors.

3.1.1.2 Dependent variables

A dependent variable is a variable that attempts to indicate the total influence arising from the effects of the independent variable (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). The dependent variables in this study were child labour and minimal schooling. This was influenced by the causes of CL of LMMR.

3.2 Location of the study

The study was located in Igembe North District in Meru County; Kenya. The district is known for miraa production, which is a major attraction for child labourers. The choice of the location was based on the fact that it has a high number of school children who are lured into Miraa and coffee picking during school time (GoK, 2004). Some of the

children involved in Miraa and Coffee sectors during school time could be LMMR although the information available did not show statistics or evidence of their involvement. This does not mean that LMMR, who are not different from other children both physically and socially, were not involved in CL in miraa business.

Igembe North District was curved out from the larger Meru North District. Laare town which is about 320 km East of Nairobi is the District Headquarters. The district is located in the central part of Eastern Province and it is approximately 1327.4 square kilometers. The district borders Isiolo and Garbatula districts to the north, Igembe South District to the West, and Meru National Park to the south (GoK 2009).

3.3 Target population

The study targeted all children with mental retardation in the integrated units in Igembe North District, the parents of these children, all teachers in the units and all the head teachers of the primary schools with integrated units. The district had seven (7) integrated units distributed in the whole district with a total number of one hundred and twenty (120) pupils, seven (7) head teachers, nine (9) teachers and one hundred and twenty (120) parents/guardians. The target population was two hundred and fifty six (256) as shown in the table below 3.3.1:

Table 3.3.1: Target Population

Unit	Learners	Teachers	Parents/Guardian
Mwe	18	2	18
Nka	15	3	15
Mut	24	2	24
Mat	17	2	17
Kat	16	2	16
Mac	18	3	18
The	12	2	12
TOTAL	**120**	**16**	**120**

The study adopted pseudo names in the report due to ethical considerations.

3.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Sampling is the process of selecting a number of individuals or objects from a population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire group (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). A sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole (Kombo & Tromp, 2006).

3.4.1 Sampling Technique

The study utilized purposive sampling techniques. Igembe North district was purposively sampled because the researcher would obtain useful information on CL. According to ANPPCAN (2008), CL was prevalent in upper Eastern Province especially in Miraa plantations, where Igembe North district falls. Purposive sampling was used to select the schools with integrated units in the district, the head teachers and teachers in the Special Units because the researcher believed they would provide useful

information on CL of LMMR. Learners were purposively selected based on their physical abilities, for example, their involvement in vocational activities in school and their ability to communicate. Parents/guardians were purposively sampled based on the fact that they had children who had been identified to participate in the FGDs.

3.4.2 Sample Size

A total of eighty two respondents participated in the study. All the seven head teachers and the nine teachers teaching in the integrated units were involved in the study. This is because any percentage less than hundred percent could reduce the chances of generalizing and applicability of the results (Beins, 2009). The study involved thirty three learners and thirty three parents/guardians who were purposively sampled.

3.5 Research Instruments

Research instruments are tools used by researchers to gather information from respondents (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). Three research instruments were used to collect data; questionnaires, FGDs and interview schedules. These instruments were developed by the researcher guided by the research objectives and research questions of the study; this was critical so that the tools could capture pertinent data that could adequately respond to issues envisaged by the study objectives. It also enhanced the efficacy in data collection process that makes the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study to be fairly objective and valid to enable generalizability of the study findings.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

There were two questionnaires for head teachers and teachers teaching in the units and an interview guide for parents/guardians. Questionnaires were both open and closed ended. The questionnaires for teachers and head teachers had five sections each. Part one had general information, part two had socio-economic status, part three had socio-cultural practices while part four and five dealt with school practices and parental awareness respectively. Teachers' questionnaires had 15 questions while that of the head teachers 18 questions. Questionnaires were adequate for this study since they are commonly used to collect information about a population (Orodho, 2004). The questionnaires were administered by the researcher. The questionnaires were delivered to schools, directly administered to the respondents and collected the same day.

3.5.2 Focus Group Discussions

The purpose of focus group discussions (FGD) was to establish the factors that made LMMR to join CL, and the kind of work they did. FGD can produce a lot of information quickly and are good for indentifying and exploring beliefs, ideas or opinions in a community (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The LMMR were grouped into 4-6 members per group. Creswell (2005), comments that a focus group interview is the process of collecting data through interviews with a group of people, typically four to six. Each integrated unit had one FGD comprising of LMMR. In total there were seven FGDs. The research regulated the discussion to avoid dominance of some members during the discussion. Throughout the discussion, the researcher was recording by

writing. They sat in a semicircular manner and the researcher asked probing questions for further clarification during the discussion.

3.5.3 Interview Schedules

The purpose of the interview guide was to enable the researcher to obtain the data required to meet the specific objectives of the study (Frankel & Wallen, 2008). Interview guides were administered to the parents/guardians. There were eleven questions in the interview guides. Interviews were conducted orally, and responses to the questions were recorded by the researcher.

3.6 Pilot Study

A pilot study was carried out in Athiru Gaiti Primary School which had an integrated unit for LMMR. The school was in Igembe South District. The school was selected because it provided an environment and population similar to the population for the main study. Pilot study helped the researcher to discover any weaknesses in the instruments, check for clarity of the questions and modify the research instruments before the actual study. One head teacher, one teacher, two parents/guardians and two LMMR participated in the pilot study. Questionnaires were administered to the head teacher and the teacher teaching in the unit, interview guides on the parents/guardians while FGD were used to obtain information from the learners. The findings of the pilot study were used to fine tune and improve the data collection tool. In particular the language and editorial issues in questionnaires were adjusted

3.6.1 Validity

Research design can be meaningful if researchers create designs that relate the independent variable meaningfully to the dependent variable. This is another way of saying that research results are valid (Beins, 2009). A measure is said to be valid if it measures what it is intended to do (Orodho, 2008). Content validity can be determined by experts in the study area. For this reason, the questionnaires and FGD guides were scrutinized by the supervisors and their content validated. Further, items that were likely to be vague were rephrased to enhance validity. The recommendations from the supervisors were incorporated in the questionnaires, interview guides and FGD guides. This enabled the tools to capture valid data during the piloting of the tools and later during the actual study.

3.6.2 Reliability

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). It is concerned with precision and accuracy. If a measurement is reliable, then repeated measurements on the same person should result in similar outcomes each time (Beins, 2009). Reliability relates to consistency and repeatability in the results. Reliability of the instruments was assessed by comparing the findings from respondents in the pilot and the objectives of the study.The split half method were deployed. Spearman rank order correlation coefficient was used and reliability level was 0.7 and 0.6 for questionnaires and interview guides respectively. This enabled the tools to capture reliable data during the piloting of the tools and later during the actual study.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Before proceeding to the field for the study, the researcher obtained a letter from Kenyatta University Graduate School allowing him to collect data, and then sought for a permit from the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology. The researcher reported to the two District Education Officers (DEO's) who issued him with letters to introduce him to the respective schools identified for the pilot study and the main study respectively. The researcher piloted the instruments and made corrections and adjustments before engaging in the final study. The researcher made orientation visits to the study schools. During these visits the researcher notified the schools that they had been selected as study schools and explained to them the purpose of the study and its importance. The researcher held interactive meetings with LMMR and their teachers and explained the purpose of the study to them. During the visits, the researcher arranged with the head teachers the most convenient time to meet the parents for interviews. The researcher also organized for the appropriate time for the head teachers and teachers to fill in the questionnaires and for conducting FGDs with pupils. Data was collected by use of questionnaires, interview guides and FGDs. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher. The questionnaires were delivered to schools, directly administered to the respondents and collected the same day.

3.8 Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods. Qualitative data was analyzed using a combination of thematic approach guided by research objectives. Under thematic approach information was sorted out, classified and

categorized under the four themes of the study which were; social economic status, social cultural factors, lack of parental awareness and school factors. All the material relevant to a particular theme was placed together. The frequency with which an idea, word or description appeared was interpreted as a measure of importance, attention or emphasis because issues related to LMMR had cultural connotations. Qualitative data was presented using reported statements, verbal expression and exposes. Quantitative data was analyzed using simple descriptive statistics and was presented in Tables, frequencies and percentages. The findings of the study were used to make conclusions and recommendations emanating from the study. Suggestions for further research were also recommended so as to avail more information on Special Needs Education (SNE).

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Participation in the research was voluntary. Direct consent was sought from teachers, parents, and pupils through the head teacher. Consent of children participating in the study was sought from their parents and the pupils themselves. Participants were assured that the information they provided was kept confidential and was used for the purpose of the study as was indicated in each research instrument.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents data on the findings of the study and discusses the research findings. The study was carried out in seven primary schools with special units in Igembe North district, Meru County, Kenya. The findings were organized according to the objectives, which guided the study. Thus, the following sections were discussed: Enrolment of LMMR, Effects of Social-Economic Status on school attendance among LMMR, Social-Cultural Practices that affected school attendance among learners with LMMR, school practices that predisposed LMMR to CL and lack of Parental awareness and its influence on LMMR to CL

4.1 Enrolment of LMMR

The study respondents were asked to indicate the number of learners with mild mental retardation in their classes. The responses were as tabulated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Number of LMMR in the sampled Schools and percentage

School	Number of LMMR	Percentage
MWE	18	15
NKA	15	13
MUT	24	20
MAT	17	14
KAT	16	13
MAC	18	15
THE	12	10
Total pupils	**120**	**100**

The findings in Table 4.1 seemed to suggest that sampled schools in the area had learners with mild mental retardation. This indicated that LMMR were found in all special units for learners with MR in sampled schools. Further, the study required the respondents to give their area of specialization; incidentally all the respondents indicated their area of specialization as inclusive education 09 (100%).

The findings indicate that the LMMR were found almost equally in the entire sections of Igembe community. This was perhaps due to the fact that conditions of poverty and social cultural beliefs were homogenous in the same community. The teachers in all schools had limited specialized knowledge and skills due to their professional specialization; hence were not competent enough to offer effective specialized services to LMMR. The findings concurs with the National Action Plan on Education for All (2003-2015) which observed that teachers in special education schools and units did not have specialized skills in special education due to the fact majority of them lack training.

4.2 Effects of Social-Economic Status on School Attendance among LMMR

The study inquired from teacher respondents whether learners absented themselves from school. All the respondents in all the schools 09 (100%) sampled for the study reported that their learners absented themselves from school. The study went further to explore the reasons that contributed to absenteeism among LMMR. The respondents gave a variety of responses as shown in Table 4.2

Table 4.2 Causes of Absenteeism among LMMR

Causes of Absenteeism Among LMMR	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of basic needs like food	05	25
Lack of clothing	01	05
Poor health/ sickness	01	05
Lack of proper care from parents (neglect)	02	10
Poverty	03	15
To pick miraa	03	15
To graze cattle	01	05
To help in household chores	02	10
Circumcision	02	10
Total	**20**	**100**

From **table 4.2**, 05 (25%) of the teachers attributed absenteeism of LMMR to lack of basic needs like food, 03 (15%) of the respondents attributed absenteeism to poverty while another 03 (15%) attributed it to Miraa picking, 02 (10%) of the respondents associated absenteeism with LMMR helping in household chores while another 02 (10%) associated it with LMMR being involved in cultural practices such as circumcision, among other reasons. Some of the reasons given by the respondents such as picking miraa, grazing cattle, and helping in household chore were forms of child labour while others were contributing factors.

The findings seemed to reveal that there were many causes of absenteeism among LMMR; notable among them were lack of basic needs like food, uniforms, love, care and poverty which made them go for employment as miraa pickers. The findings further confirmed that LMMR dropped out of school due to lack of care and provision of basic needs that were critical for their survival. The finding were in tandem with Maslow

(1954) who observed that basic needs like food, body cover and water were critical for survival of human beings.

4.2.1 Absenteeism of LMMR from School

The study inquired from the head teachers weather LMMR absented themselves from school. Out of the seven headteachers, 06 (86%) agreed while 01 (14%) disagreed. Further, the study required the respondents to state where LMMR went when they absented themselves from school. The responses they gave were as show in Table 4.3

Table 4.3 Where LMMR Go When Not In School by frequency and percentage

Where LMMR go when not in school	Frequency	Percentage
Digging	01	08
Caring for animals	03	25
Fetching water	02	17
Baby Sitting	02	17
Helping in house hold chores	01	08
Pick Miraa	03	25
Total	**12**	**100**

The findings in Table 4.3 indicated that among the activities LMMR were engaged in when they absented themselves from school, looking after domestic animals and picking miraa took the lead at 03 (25%) each. Those respondents who cited fetching water were 02 (17%) and yet another 02 (17%) worked as baby sitters. Most learners particularly boys were involved in herding of cattle and picking Miraa. Miraa farming and animal keeping were the key economic activities in the area of study. On the other hand, girls were mostly involved in baby sitting and fetching water.

In Igembe North, where the study was conducted, water was very scarce and a 20-litre jerrycan could be sold at as high as Ksh. 100. Due to their gullibility, LMMR could be paid in kind by even being bought "mandazi'' after fetching several jerrycans of water or picking a certain amount of Miraa. LMMR were also involved in some activities at home in the name of helping parents which was a form of CL since it interfered with their education. The findings of the study concur with another finding in China where CMR were lured to work in brick kilns (Moxley, 2011)

4.2.2 Constraints Experienced by Parents in Educating LMMR

The study further required the parents to state the constraints they experienced in educating LMMR. Their responses were as shown in Table 4.4

Table 4.4 Constraints Experienced by Parents in Educating LMMR

Constraints Experienced by Parents	Frequency	Percentage
LMMR are bullied by big boys	03	05
Lack of food on daily basis	20	33
Lack of money to buy uniform	25	42
Famine	10	17
Insecurity	02	03
Total	**60**	**100**

It is evident from the findings that majority of the parents 25 (42%) cited lack of money to buy school uniform as the major constraint. Other constraints included; lack of food on daily basis 20 (33%), famine 10 (17%), LMMR bullied by big boys 03 (05%) among others.

When LMMR were in school in torn clothes or in clothes different from their colleagues particularly those in regular classes, they were scolded and embarrassed. This led LMMR to absent themselves habitually from school and ultimately dropped out. The findings of this study are supported by those of a study carried by Ringera (2008), who found out that children worked as child labourers due to lack of basic necessities such as food, clothing, education and shelter among others.

4.2.3 What LMMR Do When They Are Not in School

The study inquired from the parents what their LMMR did on weekends or after school. They responded as tabulated in Table 4.5

Table 4.5 What LMMR Do When Not in School by Frequency and Percentage

What LMMR do when not in school	Frequency	Percentage
Pick miraa	16	32
Graze animals	04	08
Fetch water	11	22
Help at home	05	10
Collect firewood	05	10
Helps in the shamba	02	04
Washing clothes	02	04
Cooking	05	10
Total	**50**	**100**

With regards to what LMMR did when they were not in school according to the parents interviewed, the majority of the respondents said LMMR were involved in Miraa picking 16 (32%), fetching water 11 (22%), collecting firewood 05 (10%), cooking 05 (10%), helping at home 05 (10%) and grazing animals among others.

The study also required the parents to tell whether their children did some paid work. Out of 33 respondents, 19 (58%) said that LMMR did some paid work, whereas 14 (42%) said that LMMR did not do any paid work. The findings of this study indicated that LMMR were involved in both paid and unpaid CL.

Majority of LMMR were involved in CL through their parents or even guardians, most of whom were not employed. Some of the LMMR were involved in Miraa picking, grazing animals, fetching water and collecting firewood for their neighbours and members of the extended families in return for food. In Igembe community Miraa farming is the main economic activity whereas in the drier areas/zone grazing of animals and fetching water is a profitable preoccupation. This study augments Agbu (2009) who observed that children in Africa were involved in one form of domestic work or other, but today children have been sucked into a world of exploitative labour.

4.2.4 Retaining LMMR in School

The study went on to inquire from the parents what they thought could be done by the community and other stake-holders to retain LMMR in school. The views of the respondents were as shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Measures to Retain LMMR in School by Frequency and Percentage

Measures to Retain LMMR in School	Frequency	Percentage
To start boarding schools	10	28
Train LMMR	01	03
To start feeding programme at school	20	57
Government to allocate funds for these children	01	03
Build good classes	01	03
Build a dispensary in school	01	03
To be sponsored with food and uniform	01	03
Total	**35**	**100**

The findings seemed to indicate that up to 20 (57%) of the parents interviewed mentioned feeding programme as a means which could be used to retain LMMR in school while 10 (28%) cited establishment of boarding schools as a solution. The views of the parents seemed to suggest that most of them needed services which were finance based.

The fact that some parents suggested for a sponsored feeding programme revealed that levels of poverty were high among the respondents. The findings of the study were supported by another study carried by Terre des Hommes (2007) which observed that parents of children with disabilities were often poor thus they were unable or unwilling to pay school fees and upkeep for their children.

The participants in learners FGDs in all schools were asked whether some of their colleagues dropped out of school. It was interesting to note that all respondents reported that many of their colleagues dropped and continued to drop out of school. The study went further to explore reasons that made them to drop out of school where they observed that;

> Our friends drop out of school to stay at home and do household jobs given by our parents since parents do not believe we can pass exams…we are also told to get employed as miraa pickers , harvesters to provide money to pay for education of our able brothers and sisters who will pass exams…

The discussants in all FGDs seemed to support the preceding findings and went further to reveal that parents seemed not to believe that LMMR could make it through

education due to their disability. This was perhaps one of the critical issues that encouraged them to drop out of school and seek early employment to earn some income for the family and also to finance education for other siblings. The study went further to investigate the feelings of respondents on what they felt could make them happy either in school or at home. The respondents felt that they could be happy when at school if they;

> Are not beaten…other children play with us…given balls and books for reading and writing…our teacher protects us from those who beat us… and gives us food…

It was also notable that the respondents felt that parents can…

> allow us time to play at home with brothers/sisters…given us enough food and care…show love to us and not give us hard work like digging, fetching water and firewood…harvesting miraa…

The findings seemed to suggest that children with LMMR were quite aware about how they could be treated like other children so that they could do well in school as well as reduce absenteeism and drop out. This was important because it could make them do well in education. Those findings seemed to agree with a report by Kinoti (2007) who said that children worked as labourers in Miraa business.

4.3 Social-Cultural Practices

This section explored the social cultural practices that affected school attendance among LMMR. In Igembe community some social cultural beliefs and practices about LMMR include negative attitudes, practices like FGM, early marriages, '*Njuri ncheke practices*' and gender inequities. Those practices predisposed LMMR to CL as was evident from the study findings.

4.3.1 Social-Cultural Practices that Affect School Attendance among LMMR

The study sought to find out from the head teachers the social-cultural practices that affected school attendance among LMMR. The study respondents in all the schools reported that social cultural practices made LMMR to drop out of school. The study further explored where LMMR went after dropping out of school and the study respondents provided the responses presented in Table 4.7

Table 4.7: What LMMR Do After Dropping Out of School by Frequency and Percentage

What LMMR Do After Dropping Out of School	Frequency	Percentage
Help at home	07	35
Fetch water	03	15
Pick miraa	02	10
Take care of animals	02	10
Baby sitting	01	05
Working in the farm	01	05
Collect firewood	01	05
Do small businesses	03	15
Total	**20**	**100**

From the findings, 07 (35%) of the respondents said that LMMR helped at home, 03 (15%) reported that LMMR fetched water, another 03 (15%) said they did small businesses, 02 (10%) said that they picked miraa, while another 02 (10%) claimed that LMMR took care of domestic animals among others. The findings of this study indicated that LMMR were involved in both paid and unpaid CL. Majority of LMMR were involved in CL through their parents or even guardians, most of whom were not employed. Some of the LMMR helped at home, others in fetching water, in small businesses while others collected firewood for their neighbours and members of the extended families in return for food. The findings of this study was supported by Agbu (2009) who observed that children in Africa have been in one form of domestic work but today children have been sucked into a world of exploitative labour and this concurs with this study.

In an effort to unravel social-cultural practices that affected learning of LMMR, teachers were asked to state whether social-cultural practices had any effect on learning processes of LMMR. All the respondents reported that social-cultural beliefs had a prominent role in the learning of LMMR. The study sought further clarification from the teacher respondents to identify social-cultural practices that made learners with LMMR to drop out of learning programmes. The findings were as shown in Table 4.8

Table 4.8: Social-Cultural Practices that Affect Learning of LMMR by Frequency and Percentage

Social-Cultural Practices that Affect Learning of LMMR	Frequency	Percentage
Female genital mutilation	06	30
'Njuuri ncheke'-confiscate and even destroy property	02	10
Early marriages	03	15
Traditional circumcision	07	35
Gender inequity (girls tend to be less valued)	01	05
Education is not highly valued	01	05
Total	**20**	**100**

The findings in Table 4.8 suggested that various social-cultural practices such as traditional circumcision 07 (35%), female genital mutilation 06 (30%) and early marriages 03 (15%) since LMMR girls are taken as sex objects… other notorious cultural practice were *'Njuuri-Ncheke'* activities such as heavy fines that included confiscating of ones land, miraa crops and other valuables if one was reported to have used fertilizer or pesticides to enhance productivity or destroy pests that attack miraa plants. That impoverished parents, making them unable to educate their children. In fact it was also alleged that *'Njuuri-Ncheke'* could invoke a curse that could ruin or cause disabilities if not death to the entire family, which was suspected as one of the causes of LMMR in the community'.

Indeed the local community strongly believed that LMMR arising from '*Njuuri-Ncheke'* curse had no remedy whether through formal education nor divine intervention; hence community members did not feel that such children could be taken to school. The findings seemed to concur with Terre des Hommes (2007), who postulated that getting a child with a disability was seen as the result of wrong doing by parents or as a result of a curse.

The head teachers were also required to tell whether there were cultural practices that affected learning of LMMR. 07 (100%) of the respondents agreed that cultural practices that affected learning of LMMR existed. When asked to name the cultural practices that affected learning of LMMR, 04 (57%) respondents cited FGM, 03 (42%) cited early marriages while 06 (86%) of respondents cited traditional circumcision.

4.4. School Practices

This section deals with the school practices that predisposed LMMR to Child Labour. The study established that notable school practices like positive reinforcement, teaching in a creative way involving learners, use individualized education programmes, feeding programmes, use of token, guidance and counseling, discipline among others. These are captured in the study findings in the ensuing sections.

4.4.1 School Practices that Predispose LMMR to CL

The study further sought to establish school practices that predisposed LMMR to CL; towards that end, teachers were required to state how they ensured that learners enjoyed learning. The findings were as shown in Table 4.9

Table 4.9 Ways of Ensuring LMMR Enjoy Learning by Frequency and Percentage

Ways of Ensuring Learners Enjoy Learning	Frequency	Percentage
Reinforcing them positively	01	10
By making learning interesting	03	30
Involving them in activities	01	10
Use of Individualized Education Programs	02	20
Motivate them by feeding them at school	01	10
By giving tokens	02	20
Total	**10**	**100**

As deduced from Table 4.9, 03 (30%0 of the respondents made learning interesting, 02 (20%) applied Individualized Education Programmes, while another 02 (20%) gave tokens to LMMR. Although no teacher mentioned beating or caning of LMMR, the issue of caning and beating arose during the FGDs as the participants claimed they were beaten by teachers. That claim seemed to reveal that teachers were not sincere in filling the questionnaires. That, coupled with the fact that all teacher respondents were trained in inclusive education meant that teachers were likely to be incompetent to handle LMMR since they were not specifically trained to handle learners with MR.

The findings agree with those of another study carried by Organization of People with Disabilities in Zanzibar (2002), which cited lack of enough specially trained teachers among others as a factor which led learners to have a feeling of exclusion and drop out of school to engage in other activities.

4.4.2 Challenges Experienced in Teaching LMMR

Teachers were also required to identify challenges experienced in teaching LMMR. Their responses are tabulated in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10 Challenges Experienced in Teaching LMMR by Frequency and Percentage

Challenges Experienced in Teaching LMMR.	Frequency	Percentage
Absenteeism	06	30
Lateness	05	25
Lack of funds to buy learning materials	04	20
Un-cooperative parents	04	20
Unsupportive administration	01	05
Total	**20**	**100**

The results in table 4.10 revealed some of the challenges teachers experienced in teaching LMMR. Majority of the respondents 06 (30%) cited absenteeism as a challenge, 05 (25%) cited lateness of LMMR, 04 (20%) cited lack of funds to buy learning materials and yet another 04 (20%) mentioned un-cooperative parents among other challenges. In the absence of proper learning materials, uncooperative parents and unsupportive head teachers, learning of LMMR and the school life in general could not be favorable. This was aggravated by the fact that the schools were widely spaced which encouraged LMMR to be late or absent from school (National Action Plan on Education for All 2003-2015).

4.4.3 Methods Teachers Use to Discipline LMMR

The study went ahead to inquire from the study respondents (teachers) the methods they used to discipline LMMR. The findings seemed to reveal that 05 (60%) of the respondents applied behaviour modification while 02 (20%) used guidance and counseling.

The study inquired from head teachers in the sampled schools the methods used to discipline children with LMMR. Majority of the head teachers said that they used guidance and counseling 03 (43%), caned them 02 (29%) and others used negative reinforcement 01 (14%) and withdrawing reinforcements/rewards 01 (14%). However, it was revealed during the FGDs that learners were caned which seemed to make them dislike school, thus absented themselves or dropped out of school altogether to join CL. Furthermore, none of the head teachers had any form of training in special needs education (National Action Plan on Education for All 2003-2015) and this agrees with the study data.

4.4.4 Causes of Fluctuation in Enrollment

Further, the study sought to know from the head teachers if there was fluctuation in the enrollment and the possible causes of the same. On fluctuation, 07 (100%) of the respondents revealed that fluctuation was rampant. On the causes of the said fluctuation, the responses are tabulated in Table 4.11

Table 4.11 Causes of Fluctuation in Enrollment by Frequency and Percentage

Causes of Fluctuation in Enrollment	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Domestic problems	01	10
Negative attitudes of the parents	01	10
Drop-outs	02	20
Absenteeism	02	20
Poverty of parents	02	20
Sickness	01	10
Lack of parental care	01	10
Total	**10**	**100**

The findings on Table 4.13 revealed that 02 (20%) of the respondents associated fluctuation in enrollment with drop-out, another 02 (20%) with absenteeism and 02 (20%) with poverty of parents among others. Most learners absented themselves or dropped out of school due labeling and stigmatization caused by other learners from regular school. Gargiulo (2006) asserts that labeling is a demeaning process frequently contributing to stigmatization and leading to social and educational isolation. This agrees with this study. The LMMR who experienced this kind of problem developed a dislike for school and dropped out. Such learners involved themselves in other activities which could be CL.

The study required the head teachers to tell whether they had feeding programmes in their schools. That revealed that 04 (57%) of the schools did not have feeding programmes while 03 (43%) had feeding programmes. The study further inquired from the parents whether their children benefited from school. Their responses were as indicated in Table 4.12

Table 4.12: How LMMR Benefit from School by Frequency and Percentage

How LMMR Benefit from School	Frequency	Percentage
Can socialize with others	08	20
Can count	04	10
Can go to the shop	02	05
Can read	08	20
Can write	06	15
Can wash clothes and utensils	02	05
Does not benefit	02	05
Feeds at school	02	05
Has become bright	02	05
Can take care of her/his things	04	10
Total	**40**	**100**

The FGD comprised of 4-6 LMMR in each respective schools sampled for the study. The researcher introduced the sessions and created good rapport by guiding the respondents in each particular question so that they could understand and respond appropriately. The researcher assured the respondents that they were free to give all their views freely without fear since their views were treated with confidentiality. They were allowed to use Kimeru (the local language), Kiswahili or English language since the researcher was conversant with each of them. This enabled the study to capture valuable information regarding the study. The respondents were passionate and exposed various issues regarding the study. The respondents were asked whether they attended school on daily basis; the entire 33 respondents in the discussion groups in all schools revealed that they and their colleagues did not attend school everyday. The study went further to probe what they did when they absented themselves from school…the respondents noted that;

> We are absent from school because our parent's tell us to look after cows…fetch water…pick miraa for pay…

On further inquiry as to why they were told by the parent to engage in the preceding jobs the respondents reported that;

> We lack food…school uniforms…writing materials and therefore we are told to go and work so that we can get money to buy them…hence we have no option but to be absent from school to go and work for money to buy those items since they are needed in school…

In fact the respondents were so forthright that one girl revealed that she started missing school when her mother remarried and later her father remarried another woman who usually mistreats her due to her inability…indeed she revealed that most of the time she did all the household work like cleaning, washing, fetching water/firewood, babysitting and feeding children of her step-mother…she also alleged that her step mother scolds her as a bad omen in the family…it was evident and visible from marks of beatings and bite marks on her skin that the young girl was often abused and physically assaulted. Other respondents were shocked and very sympathetic when they saw the marks. These findings concur with those of a study conducted by Wambui (2010), who noted that child abuse was rampant in families. She further asserted that mothers were more likely to show violence than fathers. Wambui also found out that about 51.7% of female teachers abused children with disabilities.

On inquiring whether they reported the abuses to their teachers, the respondents said their parents had threatened and warned them that they would be denied food and chased away from home if they told the teachers what happened at home…that made them not to reveal anything to their teachers due to fear of dire consequences.

In a bid to find out whether LMMR enjoyed learning in school, the study sought to explore the feelings of the respondents about learning in school. The findings were quite varied but majority said that;

> School learning and in particular class work was boring…stressful and very difficult…

This clearly indicated that LMMR felt teachers were not addressing their needs satisfactorily in terms of perhaps teaching and discipline which made them to be bored, withdrawn and stressed since they did not enjoy the learning process; further lack of specialized skills on how to handle LMMR effectively made them to hate being in schools and un-conducive learning atmosphere devoid of provision of basic needs like feeding programmes made life in school very difficult.

The study sought incisive explanation why the LMMR found school work stressful and very difficult. The respondents reported that;

> We are discriminated and are beaten by other children who do not want to play with us because they abuse and call us names…teachers pinch and beat us…our teacher do not beat those who beat us…

It was also interesting to note that gender issues were reflected in the responses because the pupils revealed that;

> We are not given balls like other boys…Other girls run away from us…mother buys uniform for others and not me…father does not like me because I am a girl and do not buy shoes for me like my sister who is big and in class seven…

It was quite revealing that some respondents reported that parents assaulted them physically to an extent of 'biting them' in the process of beating so as to compel them to

stay at home and work while other able-bodied siblings went to school, indeed mothers were notorious in doing that.

4.5 Parental Awareness

This section deals with parents' awareness of the causes of mental retardation, their support and its influence on LMMR involvement in Child Labour.

4.5.1 Lack of Parental Awareness and Its Influence on LMMR to CL

The study inquired from the teachers whether parents were aware of the causes of MR. Their responses were as indicated in Table 4.13

Table 4.13 Causes of MR by Frequency and Percentage

Causes of MR	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Some say it is a curse	04	09
Others say it is traditions such as '*iciaro'*	04	09
Taboos	04	09
Witchcraft	08	18
Bad omen	02	05
It is the will of God	10	23
Sickness	12	27
Total	**44**	**100**

The findings in Table 4.13 seemed to suggest that parents were aware of various causes of MR. Sickness was singled out as the most significant cause of MR. It was interesting to note that among those mentioned were dogmatic beliefs such as MR is caused by sickness12 (27%), will of God 10 (23%), Witchcraft 08 (18%), taboos 04 (9%), curses 04 (9%) and traditions like *'iciaro'* (a notorious belief that if you oppress a kin from a

certain clan by mistreatment, dodging, lying…one's children will be affected negatively and such effect was manifested through dumbness, deafness, physical handicapping, blindness, miscarriage, suicidal tendencies among other misfortunes; that was highly feared)…In fact that belief was so strong and pervasive among the members of the community making them not to be sympathetic to people with such children since they were suspected to be offenders to gods, traditions and ethics/morals of a society. The findings seemed to indicate that majority of the parents were not aware of the medical causes of MR. They strongly believed that MR was caused by *iciaro,* witchcraft and curses which they believed had no remedy, not even education. Thus education was of no use. Those findings agreed with the findings of another study carried by Terre des Hommes (2007) who found out that in many East African cultures, traditional beliefs associated disability with bad fortune or punishment by forefathers or God. According to Terres des Hommes, (2007) getting a disabled child was seen as a result of wrong doing by the parents or as a result of witchcraft or a curse.

4.5.2 Parental Support

The respondents were required to tell whether the parents gave necessary support as far as the learning of LMMR was concerned. Hundred percent 07 (100%) of the respondents gave a negative response. Further, the study sought to identify the reasons why parents did not give the necessary support in the learning of LMMR. The responses are shown in Table 4.14

Table 4.14: Reasons Why Parents Do Not Give Support by Frequency and Percentage

Reasons Why Parents Do Not Give Support	Frequency	Percentage
Poverty	05	20
Traditional beliefs	04	16
They feel stigmatized	01	04
They feel that the government should take responsibility	02	08
They term them as a burden	07	28
Lack of awareness	05	20
Don't care attitude	01	04
Total	**25**	**100**

The findings in Table 4.14 revealed that parents were not supportive as far as learning of LMMR was concerned. 07 (28%) of the parents did not support their children as they took them as a burden, 05 (20%) cited poverty, 05 (20%) lacked awareness, 04 (16%) attributed it to traditional beliefs, and 02 (8%) felt it was government responsibility among others. Due to lack of support from parents, LMMR lacked some basics like food, love, shelter and writing materials. Under those circumstances, they could not go to school consistently and some dropped altogether to join CL.

The study inquired from the head teachers as to whether the parents were aware of the causes of MR. Of the seven head teachers, 06(86%) said that the parents were not aware of the causes of MR, while only 01 (14%) said that the parents were aware of the causes of MR. Lack of awareness about issues surrounding learners with disabilities by service providers is a common problem. Most parents of LMMR were not aware of the relevant special needs programmes such as Educational Assessment and Resource Centres (EARC) in their localities (Republic of Kenya 2009). This supported the study findings.

As a result, they placed their children in inappropriate programmes where LMMR could not cope, hence felt frustrated and ultimately dropped out of school to engage in child labour. As a result of ignorance, most parents did not give appropriate support to their LMMR as they termed them as a burden. Terre des Hommes (2007) cited lack of knowledge about medical causes of MMR as one of the reasons why people hold negative traditional beliefs on CMMR. This supports the study findings. This made parents not to support them even in school as they believed that their children were bewitched or cursed and therefore useless in life

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

5.0 Introduction

The concern of the study was to investigate the causes of child labour among LMMR in special units in Igembe North District. That was important considering that child labour was detrimental to a child's physical and educational development. The chapter outlines summary, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

5.1. Summary of Research Findings

The findings of the study revealed that issues in the family made LMMR to dropout of school; such issues were remarriage of parents, mistreatments, domestic/household chores and being labeled/tagged as 'bad omen in the family'… Another revealing finding of the study was that parents were ignorant about the causes of MR. The findings revealed that parents averred false beliefs such as God's will, witchcraft, taboos, curses and traditions like *'iciaro' among other* notorious beliefs.

Further the study informed that social-cultural practices affected school attendance among LMMR. They reported that social cultural practices such as FGM, traditional circumcisions, early marriages, and negative beliefs about education of LMMR made them to be absent and eventually dropped out of school. That was more prevalent among girls. Parents revealed similar sentiments as those of teachers; however they went further to reveal that the community of the area in which the study was conducted

believed strongly in curses and other traditions. Parents alleged that the community believed that MR was as a result of a curse or a bad omen, and that 'nothing could be done to improve the life of such a child'...indeed they averred that bad omen included hooting of an owl or howling of a fox in the night preceding the birth of a CMR'…they claimed that such strong feelings were rife and pervasive in society which led to negative feelings due to social cultural connotations to LMMR. This could not be the case because the condition of MR has research-based causes which are categorized as biomedical, social, behavioral and educational (Friend 2008). LMMR are also classified as educable who can learn and lead independent life if only provided with appropriate environment.

One of the findings of the study was that teachers attributed absenteeism of LMMR to poverty. Majority of the teachers and also head teachers revealed that lack of basic needs like food and clothing made LMMR to be absent from school and engaged in miraa picking to meet those needs. Similarly, parents cited lack of food and clothing as the main reason why LMMR absented themselves from school to join CL. Parents went further to report that they were poor and could neither afford to take their children to boarding schools nor feeding or providing school uniform for them. Parents alleged that LMMR were also involved in grazing of animals, fetching water for pay so that they could cater for basic needs. It was also interesting to note that some parents LMMR engage LMMR in CL to cater for education of their able-bodied siblings.

Another interesting and revealing finding of the study was that learners with LMMR and some of their colleagues absented themselves from school as a result of being bullied by other pupils from regular classes who were ‘stronger and bigger than them’. Moreover, LMMR also indicated that they were neglected and not cared, attention and good treatment was not accorded to them like other siblings; indeed they reported that ‘torn uniforms, or in clothes different from their colleagues particularly those in regular classes’ made others to scorn, jeer and laugh at them. That made them embarrassed and missed school.

Another critical finding of the study indicated that LMMR absented or dropped out of school to join CL as a result of harsh treatment they received from teachers. Majority of the learners reported that they were either beaten or pinched by teachers. According to the study all the teachers in the units were trained in inclusion education thus their training was superficial as far as MR were concerned since LMMR require a different specialization of teachers to serve them effectively. Furthermore, majority of the teachers admitted that their training course was a crash-programme such that they could cover even two categories of disability in a day which in ordinary settings was done in two years...trainers rushed them through and credited them to graduate in less than two years. That meant that no teacher was specialized to handle LMMR despite the fact that they are a group that generally calls for relevant specific teaching methods and real teaching materials for concept building with a well prepared IEP, which could only be handled by a well trained teacher.

The study further found out that head teachers disciplined LMMR by caning them, an aspect which made LMMR run away from school to join CL. Head teachers were also unsupportive as far as learning of LMMR was concerned. They never provided either adequate or appropriate learning/teaching materials, appropriate learning environment, did not prepare regular learners to accept LMMR as their colleagues and did not allow teachers in the special units to carry out home–bound programmes. The study found out that schools did not have feeding programmes which were critical to retain learners with MR in various learning programmes. In the absence of feeding programmes in schools and lack of food in their homes LMMR could not concentrate in learning, thus they joined CL.

On what could be done to improve education of LMMR, the study found out that both teachers and parents felt that feeding programmes and boarding facilities could be provided at school to overcome the challenges such as lack of food at home, being bullied on their way to school among others. However, teachers also felt that schools could provide learning resources/materials for teachers to make teaching-learning interesting and enjoyable. They also suggested that guidance and counseling and use of behaviour modification strategies could be used on regular learners to make them accept and accommodate LMMR. That could help to retain LMMR in school since they would not be experiencing stigma and embarrassment.

5.2 Conclusions of the study

Based on the findings of the study, the study concluded that absenteeism was a critical issue among LMMR which was caused by massive and pervasive poverty leading to CL. That made LMMR to be absent and eventually dropped out of school to engage in miraa picking to meet basic needs, and to become animal herders for the family and neighbours.

Another conclusion from the study was that bullying and molesting of LMMR by regular students was a serious issue that made LMMR to dropout of school. Similarly, based on the study findings, the study concluded that schools had no feeding programmes, neither provided good care and attention to LMMR like regular learners. That was evident because they were neglected and good treatment was not accorded to them like other siblings, indeed they reported that 'torn uniforms, clothes or in clothes different from their colleagues particularly those in regular classes' made others to scorn, jeer and laugh at them. Hence their frustrations leading to school drop-out.

From the findings of the study, it was critical that social-cultural practices affected school attendance among LMMR. Social cultural practices such as FGM, traditional circumcisions, early marriages, negative beliefs about education of LMMR made LMMR to be absent and eventually dropped out of school. Another conclusion emerging from the study was that schools used harsh treatments to LMMR that made them to drop out of school and indulged in CL. Harsh treatments included beating,

caning and pinching done by teachers as most of them did not have specialized skills in handling LMMR. That behaviour of teachers contributed a lot in most school drop out from school to CL.

Further, based on the study findings, the study concluded that teachers who taught in special units in all sampled schools were not specially trained to teach LMMR. That was serious because lack of essential knowledge, skills and expertise about LMMR made them incompetent and unable to effectively handle such learners in school though they could have had general knowledge pertaining to SNE and inclusive education. That undermined their moral and commitment in teaching LMMR. That led to lack of motivation in LMMR in school issues hence dropped out of school to other more interesting activities such as CL.

Finally, the study concluded that schools could institute broad and expeditious measures to reduce persistent dropout and eventual involvement in CL among LMMR. Those sustainable strategies could be done in a collaborative approach involving all stakeholders so that LMMR could be empowered and supported to be self reliant in inclusive society.

5.3 Recommendations

The study found out that LMMR were absent from school; based on the findings and conclusions, the study recommended that head teachers, teachers and other educational stakeholders should regularly consult and involve all stakeholders to come up with

sustainable measures that could be instituted to curb absenteeism and eventual dropping out of LMMR from school to join CL.

Another critical recommendation emanating from the findings and conclusions of the study was that schools should institute immediate and long term measures that could be used to combat bullying among LMMR. That was critical so as to enable LMMR not to be intimidated and fear coming to school since they alleged that they were bullied and jeered by able-bodied pupils who were ‘bigger and stronger’. Good school practices and effective discipline and use of open dialogue could be used to stump out and eradicate those antisocial vices among other strategies.

The study recommends that field educational officers and all stakeholders at school level and in local community to jointly organize advocacy campaigns to create awareness and educate entire community to overcome social cultural beliefs, attitudes and bad practices that had negative implications to LMMR. That was critical because it would enable change ingrained negative attitudes towards LMMR. The head teachers could take advantage of provincial administration to use new constitutional dispensation to eradicate unethical practices such as early marriages, FGM and CL.

It was also notable that the study observed that LMMR alleged mistreatment by their teachers; hence the study recommends that teachers dealing with LMMR be trained to acquire and be proficient in use of specialized skills, abilities and competence to enhance their efficacy in teaching such learners. Immediate measures such as in-service

course, seminars and workshops could be useful to arrest the dire situation as the study found and long term strategies could be adopted for the future. That would offer helpful sustainable strategies to enable LMMR exploit their potential and become self reliant to benefit self and their families in an inclusive society.

The study found out that head teachers and teachers disciplined LMMR by caning them; an aspect which made LMMR run away from school to join CL. Based on this finding, the study strongly recommended that schools should institute more humane and friendly school practices when dealing with LMMR. That was critical since it would enhance their self concept, self esteem and self worth, dignity and self confidence; nevertheless it would reduce personal and social stigma resulting from pain when they were handled harshly.

Other measures that were strongly recommended based on the findings of the study were use of good school practices such as guidance and counseling, use of good teaching-learning methods/resources, setting conducive learning environment, regular use of home–bound programmes to reach out to parents so as to enable them to bring back LMMR who dropped out of school; use of feeding programmes to combat hunger and enable LMMR to focus and concentrate in learning. The presence of feeding programme in a school attracts not only LMMR to school, but also regular learners as well.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

The study recommends more investigation in the following aspects;

a) A similar study can be done in another locale in the country to avail pertinent data that can enable the society to appreciate the magnitude of LMMR and their involvement in CL. This is critical so that more evidence can be available to enable the government to design a comprehensive policy to deal with CL among learners with LMMR.

b) That a study can be conducted in the same locale to find out whether other categories of learners with disabilities are engaged in CL. Such a study will yield comparable data to shed more light on issues that affect learners in SNE. The findings will then be useful to the government to lay broad strategies to back roll inclusive educational strategies to empower all learners with SNE to make valuable contributions to national development.

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APPENDIX A: TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this study is to establish causes of child labour among learners with mild mental retardation. The information you give will remain confidential and used only for this study. Kindly fill the questionnaire with honesty and individuality. I will highly appreciate your patience and time spent in filling the questionnaire.

PART 1: General Information

Please indicate by writing or putting a tick in the spaces provided.

1. Name of your school _____
2. What is the number of learners with mild mental retardation in your class? _____
3. What is your area of specialization? _____

PART II: Social-Economic Status

4. Do some learners absent themselves from school? Yes [ ] No [ ].

5. If yes, why do you think they absent themselves from school? (Explain briefly)_____

_____

_____

_____

PART III: Social-Cultural Practices

6. Has any learner dropped out of your class in the recent past? Yes [ ] No [ ].

7. If yes, where do they go and what do they do there?

_____

_____

8. Are there cultural practices which affect learning? Yes [ ] No [ ]

9 If yes in 8 above, which are they?

1._____ 2._____

3._____ 4._____

PART IV: School Practices

10. How do you ensure that your learners enjoy learning? (Explain briefly)

_____

_____

11. What challenges do you experience as you teach learners with mild mental retardation?_____

_____

12. Briefly explain how you discipline your learners? _____

_____

_____

PART V: Lack of Parental Awareness

13. What do parents say is the cause of mental retardation?_____

_____

_____

14 In your view, do parents give the necessary support as far as learning of these

15 If no in 14 above, what could be the reasons?_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX B: HEAD TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this study is to establish causes of child labour among learners with mild mental retardation. The information you give will remain confidential and used only for this study. Kindly fill the questionnaire with honesty and individuality. I will highly appreciate your patience and time spent in filling the questionnaire.

PART 1: General Information

Please indicate by writing or putting a tick in the spaces provided.

1. Name of your school_____
2. How long have you taught in this school? _____
3. Which year was the special unit for children with mental retardation established? _____
4. What is the total enrolment in the special unit? _____
5. Are there teachers in the special unit who are not trained to handle learners with mental retardation? Yes [ ] No [ ].

PART II: Social –Economic Status

6 Do some learners absent themselves from school? Yes [ ] No [ ].

7 If yes, where do they go? _____

_____

_____

PART III: Social-Cultural Practices.

8. Has any learner dropped out of the unit in the recent past? Yes [ ] No [ ].

9. If yes, where do they go and what do they do there?_____

_____

10 Are there cultural practices which affect learning? Yes [ ] No [ ]

11 If yes, which are they? 1._____ 2._____

3._____ 4._____

Part IV: School Practices

12 Does the enrollment fluctuate? Yes [ ] No [ ]

13 If yes, what causes the fluctuation? _____

_____.

14 Do you have a feeding programme for learners with mental retardation in this school? Yes [ ] No [ ]

PART V: Lack of Parental Awareness

15 Do you think the parents of learners with mental retardation are aware of the causes of the condition? Yes [ ] No [ ]

16 In your view, do parents give the necessary support as far as learning of these children is concerned? Yes [ ] No [ ]

17 If no in 16 above, what could be the reasons? _____

_____

_____

18 How do you discipline learners with mental retardation? (Explain briefly)_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS

The purpose of this study is to establish causes of child labour among learners with mild mental retardation. The information you give will remain confidential and used only for this study.

Part I: General Information

1. Relationship with the child. Parent [ ] Guardian [ ].

2. Marital status. Married [ ] Single [ ] Divorced [ ] widowed [ ].

3. Education level. Certificate [ ] Diploma [ ] Degree [ ]

4. Employment status. Self employed [ ] salaried employed [ ].

Part II: Information of child labour

5. How does your child benefit from school? _____

6. Does your child go to school every day? _____

7. What constraints do you experience in educating your child? _____

_____

8. In your own understanding, what may be the causes of mental retardation?

_____

9. When your child is not in school like weekends and after school, what does he/she do? _____

10. Does your child do some paid work?

11. What do you think can be done by the community and other stakeholders to retain these children in school

APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE BY LMMR

The purpose of this Focus Group Discussion questions is to establish factors which lead learners with mild mental retardation to be engaged in child labour.

Start time: _____ Stop time: _____

Main Question	**Probe Notes**
1. Do you come to school every day?	- Who is absent today? - When you absent yourself from school, where do you go? -Why absent?
2. Are there some of you who dropped out of school?	- Why? Where did they go? What do they do there?
3. How do you like learning at school?	- Why is it so?
4. When are you happy most? Is it in school or at home?	-Why is it so?
5. Do you eat food at school?	Between the foods at home and at school which do you enjoy most?