

**GENDER DIFFERENTIAL EFFECTS OF CHALLENGES FACING  
MARRIAGES INVOLVING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WITH  
THEIR ABLE-BODIED PARTNERS IN KIANDUTU SLUMS,  
THIKA TOWN, KENYA**

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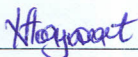
**A RESEARCH THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE  
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KENYATTA UNIVERSITY**

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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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## DEDICATION

To my loving and caring parents Mr. and Mrs. Voywa who instilled in me the value of education since my childhood and made all efforts to finance my education. To my dear siblings: Felix, Cedric, Getrude, Hillary and Seth for their support, encouragement and love throughout my studies. To my best friends: Makena Dorine and Oduor Kevin who encouraged and provided a shoulder to lean on whenever I needed it. Lastly, to all those able-bodied men and women who have married spouses who have disabilities and are doing all they can to make them feel whole.

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**ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>DPOs</b>	Disabled Persons' Organizations
<b>HI</b>	Handicap International
<b>KNHCR</b>	Kenya National Commission on Human Rights
<b>ANDY</b>	Action Network for the Disabled
<b>ILO</b>	International Labor Organization
<b>CWC</b>	Women Challenge Women
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development
<b>KSB</b>	Kenya Society for the Blind
<b>KUB</b>	Kenya Union of the Blind
<b>MTP</b>	Medium Term Plan
<b>WWD</b>	Women with Disabilities
<b>MWD</b>	Men with Disabilities
<b>NCPWD</b>	National Council for Persons with Disability
<b>NDPOs</b>	Non-Disabled Persons' Organizations
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>PH</b>	Physically Handicapped
<b>PWDs</b>	Persons with Disabilities
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programmes
<b>VI</b>	Visually Impaired
<b>W.H.O</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WPA</b>	World Programme of Action

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Challenge:** Here, the word challenge is used to refer to the obstacles that persons living with disabilities face due to their status.

**Gender Differential Effects:** These are the different experiences that men and women with disabilities have in marriages due to their difference in gender.

**Impairment:** For the purpose of this research, impairment refers to physical or mental disease, loss, abnormality or injury. It includes lack of part or all limbs; partial or total defects of eyes, ears; brain damage and failure to develop to maturity in any organ or body mechanism.

**Disability:** It is the inability to perform an activity within the normal range of human beings because of impairment.

**Handicap:** Regards to this study, 'handicap' indicates a disadvantage for a given individual resulting from an impairment or disability that limits or prevents the fulfillment of a role that is normal.

**Visual Impairment:** Visual disability may be total blindness or partial. For this paper, blind persons refer to those having difficulties in seeing or they may not be able to see at all.

**Persons with Disabilities:** For the purpose of this study persons with disabilities include the visually and the physically disabled.

**Able-bodied Persons:** People without major or serious body defects that can render them incapable of performing activities that are regarded as normal.

**Vulnerability:** In relation to this study, it encompasses the social, economic and physical factors, which could increase the susceptibility of an individual or group (persons with disability) to the impact of the challenges they face in marriage.

**Poverty:** It is a multi-dimensional concept and thus there is no single way to define it in a concrete way. However, for the purpose of this research focus is given to the 'basic needs approach' to define poverty. It is the state of being inferior in quality or insufficient in amount.

**Marriage:** The formal and legal union between two consenting individuals, (a man and a woman), by which they become husband and wife.

**Mixed marriages:** marriages involving able-bodied spouses and people with disabilities.

**Socio-cultural challenges:** These are the obstacles or problems in marriages mainly brought about by attitudes, cultural and religious beliefs in a particular society.

**Socio-economic challenges:** These are the obstacles or problems in marriages brought about by levels of education, income, occupation and place of residence of the people with disabilities.

**Rights of Persons with Disability:** Refer to the legal, social and ethical principles of entitlement of people living with disability.

**Privilege of Persons with Disability:** A special advantage or immunity granted to people living with disability.

**Marriage Stability:** The state of a marriage being firm and steady thus able to withstand challenges.

**Inclusivity:** An intention or policy of including people who could otherwise be marginalized, in this case, the people with disability.

**Integration:** The bringing of people with disability into unrestricted and equal association in organizations and in the society.

**Intervention:** An attempt to help PWDs married to able-bodied persons get help to the challenges they face.

## ABSTRACT

This study was carried out with the primary aim of unearthing the unique challenges facing couples in unions involving people with disabilities married to able-bodied spouses. The study also sought to find out the gender differential effects of these challenges. The rationale for this was so as to salvage mixed marriages from collapsing by addressing the unique challenges that they faced. In this manner, the study acknowledged the importance of marriages as the foundation pillars for stable and functioning families. In as much as the government, NGOs, religious institutions and other stake holders have made significant efforts in addressing challenges facing PWDs, no specific attention has been directed to those in mixed marriages with the aim of helping the marriages stabilize. The research design adopted was case study. The study sampled 17 people with visual disabilities, 8 people with physical handicap and 20 able-bodied people married to PWDs. The theoretical framework adopted was a merger of Sen's Capability Approach, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory and the Social Model of Disability. Purposive and snowball sampling were used. Purposive sampling targeted the intended participants who had the information needed since they were the ones affected. The instruments employed in the research were the Interview Schedules, Observation Checklists and Focused Group Discussions. The main conclusion drawn from the research was that couples in mixed marriages experienced complex and unique challenges mainly because of the disability status of one of the spouses. These couples were in dire need of specialized guidance and counseling amid other intervention measures so as to save their marriages from collapsing. The married women with disabilities were doubly disadvantaged on account of their gender and disability status hence effort should be placed especially so as to protect them from abusive marriages. Couples in mixed marriages and those preparing to get into such unions need to be enlightened through seminars and counseling classes on how to sustain and lead happy marriage lives despite the challenges encountered. As part of suggestions to further study, a comparative study should be done between mixed marriages and marriages involving PWDs married to PWDs.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter comprises the background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives and questions, justification, significance, scope and limitations of the study and its assumptions.

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

St. Augustine, in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century, wrote, 'peace is the tranquility that is produced by order: marriage provides the only suitable foundation for perpetuating this order.'(Craven, 2006) The importance of the marriage institution therefore cannot be overemphasized. It is the relationship that prepares and conditions us for community. (Craven, 2006) Marriage is the crowning glory that sets the stage for a wonderful, sustaining and lifelong commitment. It is therefore very unfortunate that people with disabilities, especially those from poor backgrounds, seem to be left out when it comes to the sharing of this 'crowning glory.'

The trouble starts way before the actual marriage and is brought about either by social or/and economic issues before marriage or after marriage. Before marriage, people with disabilities seem not to have the freedom to marry whoever they feel could be their lifetime spouses. It is as if they are destined into marrying those of their own 'category.' As such, most PWDs end up marrying fellow PWDs. This is an indicator of how the society shuns PWDs. Ngumba (2011) indicates that marriage rates for them are below normal (18%), the divorce rates are above normal (63%), compared to the able-bodied 80% and 40% respectively.

Only a few of them succeed in marrying people without disabilities. The study concerns itself with the few PWDs who marry able-bodied partners. It seeks to unearth and bring to the fore the unique challenges that these marriages go through. As indicated before, the trouble begins from the fact that most able-bodied people are unwilling to marry PWDs. Indeed, Dr. Raymond Hang in his June 2001 edition of *Understanding Disabilities from a South Indian Perspective* reiterates this by stating that most able-bodied people shy away from marrying men and women with disabilities. (Hang, 2001).

The challenges encountered in mixed marriages are undoubtedly tough since the divorce and separation rates for PWDs is quite high. The Government's National Health Interview Survey of nearly 50,000 households in Kenya in the year 1994 indicated that 20.7% of the adults who were with disabilities among those polled were divorced or separated, compared to 13.1% of those without disabilities. (Ngumba, 2011).

While investigating and unearthing the challenges that marriages involving PWDs and able-bodied people face, it will almost be impossible to fail to notice that it is the women with disabilities who suffer most in such marriages. Indeed, Kozue Nagata, in his article, *Gender and Disability in the Arab Region*, states that the status of women varies from one society to another; however, everywhere disability poses additional challenges for women. In conservative societies where the status of women is relatively low, it has a particularly negative impact, creating more challenges in their daily lives. (Nagata, 2003)

Ngumba is in agreement with this as he says that the situation is more serious for women in that it is more difficult for a woman with disability to find herself an able-bodied husband. Sadly enough, a considerable number of married women with disabilities who marry able-bodied men end up being deserted by their husbands who remarry able-bodied women. (Ngumba, 2011) The study will therefore also seek to find out the gender differential effects of the challenges facing marriages involving PWDs with able-bodied spouses.

The research was carried out in Kiandutu slum in Thika town because the researcher desired to focus more on people of low financial background. The slum is also close to several learning institutions of PWDs and so it was assumed that most of them could have settled close by. Most of the PWDs interviewed were those suffering from severe physical or visual impairment.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Marriages involving PWDs with able-bodied spouses are rare and can be termed as unique and special marriages. This is because most people avoid marrying PWDs and those willing to do so are vehemently discouraged by immediate relatives and close friends. Thus, the able-bodied people who end up marrying PWDs can be described as courageous. These marriages, being rare and unique undergo challenges and setbacks that could also be described as exceptional. It is these challenges that the study seeks to find out and address. In such marriages, the disability status of one of the spouses is an issue that cannot be ignored. How, then, does this status affect the marriage? How can the issue be addressed?



It is also expected- out of biological and gender differences- that the challenges and frustrations that men undergo in such marriages are slightly different from the ones that women undergo. What, then, are the gender differential effects of marriages involving PWDs and able-bodied persons and which is the best way of addressing these issues? Are mixed marriages viable? How can they be strengthened and protected from degeneration? These are the questions that the study seeks to find answers to.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

1. To determine the demographic characteristics of PWDs involved in marriages with able-bodied partners in Kiandutu slum.
2. To determine the stability status of marriages involving PWDs married to able-bodied partners.
3. To analyze gender-differential effects of the socio-cultural challenges that affect PWDs married to able-bodied spouses.
4. To analyze gender-differential effects of the socio-economic challenges that affect PWDs married to able-bodied spouses.
5. To document intervention measures to deal with challenges facing marriages involving PWDs married to able-bodied partners.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

1. What are the demographic characteristics of PWDs involved in marriages with able-bodied partners in Kiandutu slum?
2. How stable are marriages involving PWDs married to able-bodied partners?

3. What are the gender differential effects of the socio-cultural challenges that affect PWDs married to able-bodied spouses?
4. What are the gender differential effects of the socio-economic challenges that affect PWDs married to able-bodied spouses?
5. What are the intervention measures for the challenges facing PWDs married to able-bodied spouses?

### **1.5 Justification of the Study**

Despite increased and combined efforts by the government, non-governmental organizations, the society and learning institutions to enlighten and create awareness on matters pertaining to disability, few research has been conducted with the aim of unearthing and addressing the unique challenges that mixed marriages undergo. There are still a lot of unfounded myths and fears surrounding marriages involving PWDs. The study therefore is an attempt to provide empirical evidence that mixed marriages face unique challenges and hence there is need for interventions that gender and disability responsive. This in turn, would go a long way in enabling PWDs (and their able-bodied spouses) live their lives to their full potential as each will access basic life necessities such as need for love, security and belonging.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This research provided information about the issues couples face in marriages where one of the spouses was disabled. The information provided by this study may be useful to both the government and to the non-governmental organizations that assist persons with disabilities. The study provided insightful gender segregated information

of mixed marriages. The data will benefit policy makers in their attempt to generate gender and disability sensitive policies in formal and informal sectors.

Information provided will come in handy in the various attempts of addressing the specific challenges that mixed marriages undergo. This will help strengthen such marriages, protect them from degeneration and thus help keep order and peace in the society just as St. Augustine stated.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

The research focused on men and women with severe visual and physical challenges married to able-bodied spouses. Research was carried out in Kiandutu slum, Thika. Visually and physically challenged men and women were the targeted respondents since they were the ones directly affected. Information was also gathered from their able-bodied spouses so as to make the study more comprehensive.

The information sought from the respondents mainly included the challenges they faced in their marriages, how stable they thought their marriages were and their ideas on the best solutions to the challenges they faced. Their childhood and courtship experience was also sought as this invariably affected their marriages in one way or another.

### **1.8 Limitation of the Study**

Most respondents were unwilling to divulge the much-needed but sensitive information since they considered the information too private to be shared with anyone. The researcher tackled this problem by creating a conducive and free

atmosphere for the interview, striking rapport with the respondents and winning their confidence so as to make them share the sensitive information freely.

Some respondents were irritable hence the researcher had to be very careful with how she asked questions and also had to meticulously select her words so as not to provoke an argument with the respondents. Finally, many were the times when the researcher had to reschedule the appointments simply because the respondents realized very late that they would not be available. At other times the researcher had to wait till quite late in the evening for the respondents to give her audience.

The study focused on people with physical and visual disabilities. As such, information was not acquired from those with other types of disability such as mental and intellectual.

### **1.9 Assumptions of the Study**

Due to the high rates of divorce and separation in mixed marriages, the study's major assumption was that such marriages faced myriad complex and unique challenges that rendered the marriages unstable. However, the research was conducted because of the belief that mixed marriages can be fruitful and stable unions if these challenges are properly addressed

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter consists of the literature review, theoretical framework work, and conceptual framework addressing the challenges and possible solutions men and women with visual and physical disability married to able-bodied spouses face in marriages.

#### 2.1 Literature Review

Marriage is an institution in which a man and a woman are expected to venture into for companionship, procreation and the search for happiness. Entry into this institution is often with the hope of enjoying marital bliss, experiencing of affection, love, understanding and belonging. Unfortunately, for men and women with disability, the institution of marriage seems not to favor them hence majority of them avoid being married or end up being separated and divorced.

Throughout history PWDs have faced complex and multi-dimensional social expulsion; they have antiquity of silence; have been socially constructed as 'others' and not considered equal to able-bodied people within the society. This trend continued until the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. (Gear, Heart & Weishenn, 1992)

However, changes have been observed since then: philosophers and churches began to enlighten the community on the need to appreciate people with disability. The growing change of attitude and knowledge on disability created the expansion of

institutional reforms in most parts of the world, Kenya included. (Gear, Heart & Weishenn, 1992)

Since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the approach to understanding or helping PWDs began to change in the west. Gradually, more progressive development was observed and different models were adopted to address disability in the world. This development resulted in the formation of three major models of social disability. These included religious, medical and social models of welfare for disability (Clapton & Fitzgerald, 1997).

Religious model concerned itself with the roots of understanding the bodily difference on PWDs. In Biblical reference, particularly the Old Testament, it is presumed that disability was as a result of an evil spirit, the devil, witchcraft or God's displeasure. During the pre- industrial period, people with bodily limitations were required to stay at home and were often ostracized. This threatened their survival and thereby some became stigmatized to the extent of them not having interest in getting married.

The religious model was later overtaken by the enlightenment era of 18<sup>th</sup> century, which was based on reason. This is what was classified as the medical model. According to this model, PWD's were expected to access some support from the medical institutions. It was argued that helping PWDs access medical care was essential in enabling them get to their feet. (Gold & Shuman, 2009)

Later on there emerged the social model which sought to help PWDs rise to independence and self-responsibility. Emphasis was given on their participation in the social, political and civil rights movements. They were entitled to participate in social activities such as employment, education and recreation. (Clapton & Fitzgerald, 1996) Active participation of PWDs in social, economic and political activities was seen to be essential in addressing disability problems. For them it was not the impairment but the social response that had much more influence on the lives of PWDs.

According to this model, married visually and physically challenged persons faced three different types of discriminations in their life: institutional, environmental and attitudinal discrimination. (DFID, 2000)

This study follows the social model of disability since it basically views PWDs as victims of different social perceptions and directly or indirectly affected by the prevailing societal construction. The views of different scholars on this issue have been addressed critically under the sub-headings of Socio-cultural factors, Socio-economic factors, Rights and Policies and Intervention Strategies.

### **2.1.1 Socio-Cultural Factors**

It suffices to say that negative attitude is a major contributor to the troubles that mixed marriages face. The attitudes include those advanced by the society and those held by the couples in mixed marriages. A spouse getting into marriage and assuming that he/she is either doing a favour or receiving a favour on account of disability will definitely have problems with the marriage partner. The foundations

of marriage ought to be love and trust, not pity, sympathy or philanthropy. The trouble with most mixed marriages as witnessed from the field research and review of literature is that most able-bodied spouses view their partners as burdensome since they always need to be assisted and are not major contributors to the family's finances. The partners with disability are also, more often than not, moody, angry and critical. But this is usually because of the continued limitations, discrimination and stigma that they face on a daily basis. There is also the problem of shock and adaptation for the marriages whereby one partner became disabled while already in the marriage.

Among the couples who stay together after disability, many say they come close to the brink of serious depression or splitting up. Barbay Flemming's account of her marriage experience to Kenneth, a retired firefighter with multiple sclerosis attests to this.

*'We were high school sweethearts,' she says. 'He is now 90% blind and walks with a cane. We struggle along but in the end, it falls on me,' Mrs. Flemming says. 'I've gone outside the front door and mentally screamed. I have been in therapy and I go back when I feel I have to have someone to talk to.'* (New York Times)

This indicates the serious need for partners in mixed marriages to be counseled so as to know how to deal with the difficulties brought about by disability. The couple needs to be guided and counseled into adoption of the right attitudes towards each other. The most convenient place to go to for advice and counseling would in the religious institutions since most religions preach equality before the eyes of God.



However, religious literature indicates that disability has most of the time been viewed as a punishment from God for sins committed either by the disabled or their parents. This creates the notion that people with disability suffer justly since they are paying up for their sins. Such notions only serve to compound the predicament that people with disability suffer. For instance, in the Buddhist collection of teaching *Nihon Re IKI* (9<sup>th</sup> Century), there is a story which describes a certain child with a disability that rendered him incapable of walking or feeding himself at the age of 10 years considered to be reincarnation of a person whose mother owed someone a debt in a previous existence. It was seen as a result of women's immorality and disrespect to the subservience of women to men.

Moreover, the Shinto (an indigenous religion of Ancient Japan) concept of purity prescribes contempt of people with disability. Under this practice, all worldly sources of defilement such as contact with the dead, the sick or with women during either menstruation or child birth are to be avoided. Even today, the fear of contact with the dead still persists. PWDs came to be included in this category of Hin -nin or non people. (Shimizu, Matsuya, Ktzawa, 1985)

The Jewish religion also portrays disability to be as a result of sin as is illustrated in the book of John 9:1-3 of the Holy Bible. The disciples of Jesus, who were Jews, anticipated a connection between disability with sin when they posed the question, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?' (The Catholic Answer Bible, 2005)

In the Old Testament of the Bible, people with disabilities are seen to be discriminated against from the service of God in the temple. It is in the book of Leviticus 21:16-23 that God instructs Moses that none of the people with disabilities should 'come near to offer the food of his God.' The chapter goes on to describe these people as the 'blind or lame, disfigured or deformed, crippled at foot or on the hand, hunchbacked or dwarfed, or one with an eye defect, one with festering or running sores or damaged testicles...' (The Catholic Answer Bible, 2005)

Religious institutions therefore ought to come out clearly and explain the meaning and significance of such literature. Most troubled people, PWDs and their spouses included, run to these institutions seeking psychological help, advice or counseling because of the belief that it is only God who understands their predicament and who can offer them perpetual help.

An article, *Disability Limits Marriage Choices* (May 13<sup>th</sup> 2011) outlines the following on PWDs: 82% have a hard time finding a mate and getting married. The reason for this is that many people in society cannot look past the disability. Polls taken from USA, UK, Canada, Middle East, South East Asia and Australia had the following results: 59% women and 48% men refused to marry anyone with a challenge. 34% women and 37% men said it depended with the type of disability and extent of the situation. 7% women and 15% men said that they would marry them.

In Malawi, most PWDs (65%) had been married at some point but divorced. They are often described as over sensitive, self-pitying, helpless, dependent, easily

discouraged, non-ambitious and expecting special treatment from others. (Amsel & Fichten, 1986).

Bhambani agrees that persons with disability have significant challenges in getting married and having families. In cases of arranged marriages, women with physical and visual challenges are frequently given to able-bodied men who are way too old for these women. Sadly though, the rates of divorce and abandonment have been found to be high. (Bhambani, 2005)

Women with visual impairment and physical handicap are more likely to never marry, marry in old age or be divorced if they do get married. (Eide & Ingstad, 2011) Comparison of divorce rates of women and men with disability seems to suggest that women with challenges are more likely to be left alone than men. (Fine and Asch, 1981) When disability occurs after marriage, men are more likely to divorce their wives who become disabled; while the marriage seldom breaks down if it is the man who becomes disabled. (Hannaford, 1989)

According to an article, *Cultural Stigma and Myths* by Rosemary Okello, the society normally perceives women with disability as bad omen. Able-bodied men who cohabit with them usually come home late and leave very early in the morning so that they are not seen with them. Furthermore, they are not allowed to inherit property because of their disability and this leaves them poor and destitute.

Most blind women dismiss the possibility of marriage on account of their disability. (Lina-Abu-Habib, 1997) They are of the view that under no circumstance would a

sighted man accept a blind woman as his life partner. However, they argue that it is possible and easier for blind men to marry sighted women. According to the study, most blind ladies simply wished to find employment, become financially independent and help their families. Men with disability were found to be more confident about their marriage prospects, although they acknowledged that this was more problematic than for their non-disabled peers.

Research suggests that the most common perpetrators of violence against WWD are their spouses and partners. WWD fear rejection and being alone, forcing them to stay in abusive relationships. Once in a relationship disabled women were more likely to tolerate abuse from their partners rather than leave and be single. Therefore studies suggest that disabled women experience abuse for longer periods of time compared to those without disabilities. (Heijden, 2013)

The percentage of women with disability who remain unmarried is significantly higher in the developing world as compared to the developed world primarily because of the availability of various advanced medical, rehabilitation and counseling systems in the developed countries. (British Social Attitude Survey, 2009) These systems have proved to be to be an invaluable resource towards assisting the PWDs rehabilitate and also teaching those close to them on the best ways of living with them and managing their disability.

### **2.1.2 Socio-Economic Factors**

Disability has serious cost implications. Accessing healthcare services and other assistive amenities is costly for PWDs and thus increases the financial burden for

spouses in mixed marriages. Increase in financial burden results in increase in tensions and squabbles in the marriages. Secondly, PWDs' production of wealth may be limited primarily because of limited access to employment opportunities. This could unfortunately contribute to resentment from the able-bodied spouses.

'Tensions develop because the disabled spouse carries less weight in the household, shares in a few activities and withdraws or becomes moody, angry and critical,' says John Edward, professor of sociology and one of the team of researchers at Pennsylvania State University monitoring about 2000 couples on a variety of issues. It is a societal belief that those with disabilities do not fit in any working environment hence they are to depend on those they live with. (Banes, 1991) The family of the able-bodied individual always has the fear that their son/daughter would be greatly burdened if he/she marries someone with disability. They end up trying all means of dissuading their relative from marrying someone with disability.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, an international human rights treaty of the United Nations, intended to 'protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of human rights by all persons with disabilities and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.' (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities)

The Convention recognizes that PWDs encounter a myriad of physical and social obstacles that prevent them from receiving education, getting jobs even when they are well qualified, accessing information, obtaining proper healthcare, getting around and 'fitting in' or being accepted. (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities)

The Convention was very practical and realistic in unearthing these obstacles because they invariably negatively affect the mixed marriages by contributing to the frustrations that the spouses go through. Furthermore, the Convention was prudent in creating obligations for States to promote the human rights of PWDs.

The review of literature reveals the connection between poverty and disability. Lee, for instance, stipulates that poverty and disability are inextricably linked. He strongly believes that poverty can never be eradicated unless and until PWDs enjoy equal rights with the non-disabled people. (Lee, 1990).

Maxwell seems to be in agreement with this thought. He argues that poverty is not only about rates of income but also about social exclusion and powerlessness. In his works, he states that people become poor because they are excluded from social institutions where access is based on status, privilege, race and gender. Exclusion leads to lack of resources, lower expectations, poor health and poor education. (Maxwell, 1998) This contributes to frustration and desperation hence weakening of the marriage bonds.

Jeanine Braithwaite and Daniel Mont, in their publication, *Disability and Poverty: A Survey of World Bank Poverty Assessment and Implications*, contend that poverty causes disabilities and can furthermore lead to secondary disabilities for those individuals who are already disabled as a result of the poor living conditions, health endangering employment, malnutrition, poor access to health care and education opportunities etc. (Braithwaite and Mont, 2009)

Living in poverty decreases an individual's access to preventative health services, which results in an increase in the acquisition of potentially preventable disabilities. This is because some of the causes of the disabilities are considered treatable such as measles and polio. In addition, malnutrition and lack of proper sanitation lead to some of the diseases that cause disabilities in impoverished conditions. Indeed, the prevalence of disabilities in impoverished populations follows a cyclic pattern whereby those living in poverty are more likely to acquire a disability and those having a disability are more likely to become impoverished. (Braithwaite and Mont, 2009) The implication is that poor families are more likely to incur a disability within their lifetime compared to more financially privileged populations. Thus, it is not a wonder that the rate of disability in impoverished areas such as slums is notably higher than that found in lavish suburbs.

The relationship between disability and poverty is problematic given that it places those with the greatest needs in a position where they have access to the fewest resources. Assumptions are that this population is a drain of resources thus the society denies them access to the much-needed resources for their success. Such exclusion of individuals on the basis of their special needs in turn denies them the opportunity to make meaningful contributions that disprove these stereotypes. Oxfam asserts that this negative cycle is largely due to gross underestimation of the potential held by individuals with disabilities and a lack of awareness of the possibilities that each person may hold if the proper resources were present. (Barnes, 1994)

Braithwaite and Mont further reveal that the PWDs have been largely overlooked in the national development agenda so far hence the need to rethink and rewrite new poverty reduction strategies. The able-bodied are more than twice likely to be employed than those with a disability. Only a third of PWDs (37.2%) are known to be employed in the formal sector as compared to 75.1% of people without disabilities. (Braithwaite and Mont, 2009)

A combination of disproportionately low wages and the added cost of disabilities force many PWDs out of the labor market. (Barnes & Mercer, 2009) Fellow workers may be opposed to the employment of PWD's because of ignorance, prejudice or embarrassment. The few PWDs who get employed accept very low wages and perform duties and responsibilities unrelated to their area of specialization. (ILO, 2002) Such frustrations contribute to PWDs being moody and angry and even affect on the way they relate with their spouses.

It is, for instance unfortunate that the Kenyan National Development Strategies does not capture the aspect of disability as one of the important concerns in national development. This is evidenced by the Rationale behind the Kenya Population Situation Analysis produced and published by the National Council for Population and Development. The Rationale states: against the backdrop of the Millennium Development Goals and Kenya's long-term development blue print, Kenya Vision 2030, the Government of Kenya is committed to mainstreaming population dynamics, reproductive health and gender issues into national development strategies. (Kenya Population Situation Analysis, July 2013).



Article 6 of the Convention on the Rights of PWDs indicates that State parties recognize that WWD are subject to multiple discrimination and thus stipulate that 'State parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the full development, advancement and empowerment of women for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of the human rights and fundamental freedoms set out in the Convention.' (Convention on the Rights of PWDs)

Ostensibly, marriage is intended to insure against disabilities, as couples often vow to remain together in sickness and in health. But if a disability is unanticipated, or has a large effect on marital value, then a disability may precipitate divorce. The results show that the effect of disability onset on divorce is greatest among males who experience a work-preventing, rather than work-limiting disability. Disability onset decreases marital wealth by affecting the ability to earn income and to produce in the home. (Singleton, 1997)

Women with disabilities are often characterized as a homogenous social group consigned to a cultural stereotype with assumptions of dependence, asexuality and gender neutrality. Non-disabled women often feel trapped in unfulfilling or abusive relationships because they cannot imagine how they will survive economically on their own. Hannaford (1989) suggests that this may be even more true of women with disabilities who often may have to put up with abusive or exploitative relationships because of their limited social and economic means or because the only other alternative may be a life in an institution. (Hannon, 2012)

Love and affection sometimes played a role but marriage has always been an economic activity. Every business transaction has financial questions that have to be answered and marriage is no exception. ([www.womenintheancientworld.com/dowry%20and%20bride%0price.html](http://www.womenintheancientworld.com/dowry%20and%20bride%0price.html)) Traditionally, in the African societal setup, women were viewed as a source of wealth (because of the bride price required for their marriage) and the expectation to multiply wealth in the family where they were married. They were expected to do this by working hard in the farms and taking good care of the family's livestock, children and other affairs. That is why every man desired to have a hard working wife.

Unfortunately, a girl with disability was not expected to bring in much wealth as bride price simply because of the view that she was more of a liability than an asset. Similarly, she was to be regarded in the same manner wherever she was to be married. This was because she could have been regarded as incapable of multiplying wealth in the family. The society would thus look at the disabled wife with contempt and thus contribute to her limitations and the limitations of her household. In bad scenarios this could also lead to contempt from the able-bodied husband.

The largest part of the literature about women with disabilities has been written by themselves and a substantial part consists of their personal accounts of being female and having a disability. Some speak out in anger and bitterness of the isolation, despair, poverty, and powerlessness, while others celebrate achievements, strength, happiness, and fulfillment, despite their struggles. (National Disability Authority, October 2013)

### 2.1.3 Policies and Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Around the world for many decades surveys have been used as a means of collecting data for government planning, but it is only recently that surveys have been used to collect data on disability. For example, the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) has been used as a standard measure for assessing health in the USA, but it was not until 1994/1995 that the disability supplement was added. (Gona J, Hartley S, and Newton C, 2006)

Even so, there has been evolution and therefore improvement in policies and laws seeking to address the plight of PWDs all over the world. The creation of the Convention on the Rights of PWDs was a landmark victory in the history of the fight for the rights and privileges of PWDs. The Convention was necessary because a universal, legally binding standard is needed to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities are guaranteed everywhere. (Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities)

In Africa, the formulation of the African Disability Alliance was also a milestone in this fight. The African Disability Alliance was initially called the Secretariat of the African Decade of Persons with Disability (SADPD). The name was changed with effect from 11<sup>th</sup> April 2014. It is basically an African broad-based continental technical agency that works through alliances and networks using a broad range of policy tools that emanate from the United Nations, African Union, Regional Economic Commissions and other jurisdictions. Its vision is to have an African continent where PWDs enjoy their human rights. ([africadisabilityalliance.org](http://africadisabilityalliance.org)).

Similarly, the rights of PWDs received a boost at the conclusion of the first ever African Leaders Forum on Disability as government, civil society and development actors committed to challenge stigma and inequity by seeking their inclusion in the continent's development agenda. The forum was hosted by President Joyce Banda of Malawi and the Special Olympics on the 19<sup>th</sup> of February 2014. It seeks to align with efforts such as the African Union's Decade of Persons with Disability (now African Disability Alliance) with the goal of achieving full participation, equity and empowerment of PWDs in Africa. ([www.unicef.org/media/media-71902.html](http://www.unicef.org/media/media-71902.html)).

Growth in formulation of policies and laws protecting PWDs has also been experienced in Kenya. The 1969 Constitution of Kenya, for instance, outlaws discrimination on various grounds such as race, tribe and colour. However, it does not refer to discrimination on the basis of disability.

([www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed-emp/@ifp-skills/documents/publication](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed-emp/@ifp-skills/documents/publication))

However, Chapter 54(1) of the Constitution of Kenya stipulates that a person with any disability is entitled: to be treated with dignity and respect and to be addressed and referred to in a manner that is not demeaning; to access educational institutions and facilities for persons with disabilities that are integrated into society to the extent compatible with the interests of the person; to reasonable access to all places, public transport and information; to use Sign language, Braille or other appropriate means of communication; and to access materials and devices to overcome constraints arising from the person's disability. (Kenyan Constitution, 2010)

Article 2 of the same chapter states that the State shall ensure the progressive implementation of the principle that at least five percent of the members of the public in elective and appointive bodies are persons with disabilities, whilst Chapter 55 states that the State shall take measures, including affirmative action programmes, to ensure that the youth and persons with disabilities access relevant education and training; have opportunities to associate, be represented and participate in political, social, economic and other spheres of life; access employment; and are protected from harmful cultural practices and exploitation. (Kenyan Constitution, 2010)

The Kenyan Constitution therefore seeks to explicitly tackle the challenges that people with disabilities suffer. At the same time, the Parliament of Kenya in June 2004 enacted the 2003 Persons with Disability Act to provide for the rights and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities; to achieve equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities; to establish the National Council for Persons with Disabilities; and for connected purposes. (Persons with Disability Act; 2003)

The government of Kenya prepared a strategy that has been developed to ensure mainstreaming of disability in all bilateral co-operation activities of the country. It prepared the first Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper in 2000-2001. Civil Society organizations were consulted, but persons with physical disabilities were only mentioned in a list of marginalised groups. Under clause 2.4, the poor are clustered in certain socio-economic categories that include PWDs. *Investment Plan for Economic Recovery Strategy* has been reviewed twice and two annual progress reports published without mentioning disability.

Recently the Government completed a Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2008-2013, based on vision 2030, which mentions disability in a few places. Despite the low attention in the overall poverty reduction plans, the government shows increased willingness to secure and advance the rights of people with disabilities. However, activities addressing disability are fragmented and scattered, making it difficult to track real progress.

Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) was established through an Act of parliament in 2002 to promote and monitor human rights in Kenya. However, reports indicate that there is still violation of rights of PWDs especially women with disability, as awareness of their rights is limited.

United Persons with Disability in Kenya (UPDK) is made up of 194 disabled persons' organizations and aims to address disability equality concerns through legislation, advocacy and awareness-raising. Over the past years, it has worked closely with the Government in policy review, planning and evaluation. However, the strength of the organisation and the strength of many of the individual Disability Persons Organisations (DPOs) are heavily challenged by internal conflicts and power struggles, making the total disability movement appear rather fragile and fragmented.

Many policies dealing with PWDs have been put in place, but very little has been implemented. A lot more needs to be done especially in the informal settlements where many PWDs live and are faced with so many challenges. Advocacy and

awareness campaigns need to be strengthened for it is evident that many PWDs and able-bodied persons are ignorant of the rights and privileges of PWDs.

Research is undertaken to expand knowledge, discover the truth and provide evidence for practitioners, policy-makers and legislators. Research that involves people with disabilities is important in uncovering issues requiring attention; in informing policy; in evaluating programmes and services; and in tracking how social and economic change affects people with disabilities. (National Disability Authority, October 2009).

In as much as Kenya seems to have come up with very expressive laws and policies to protect and promote the rights of PWDs, it is however unfortunate that research on the plight of the PWDs does not seem to be on-going. Data on PWDs is wanting and not up-to-date as witnessed from the department of Gender and Social Welfare in Thika district where data was sought before the research was conducted. Inaccurate data could inhibit proper implementation of policies.

#### **2.1.4 Interventions**

Marriage being a vital institution in the society, the basic unit of society, and the place where values and dreams are formed, should be protected and promoted by all means. The challenges, setbacks and frustrations that PWDs go through eminently contribute to the tensions they experience in their marriages. It is therefore in addressing these challenges that we can salvage many mixed marriages from collapsing and even improve on the quality of the lives of the spouses.

It has variously been asserted that one's attitude determines his/her altitude. Therefore the couple in a mixed marriage ought to have the right attitude towards each other. One should not view another as a burden or a social misfit. The able-bodied partner needs to realize that he/she ought to be the source of moral support to the spouse. He/she ought to show acceptance of the partner with disability and may have to go an extra mile of making the spouse feel loved and appreciated. This able-bodied partner needs to realize that the spouse could have endured discrimination and stigma all his/her life and so he/she needs to put this to a stop.

The spouse with disability, on the other hand, also should have the right attitude towards the spouse and their marriage. This spouse needs to be self-confident and have high self-esteem. He/ she should enter the union as an equal partner with the spouse and love and accept himself/herself as he/she is. These right attitudes can be inculcated through proper counseling and guidance.

Initiatives on the local, national, and transnational levels addressing the connection between poverty and disability are not conspicuous. Deliberate and practicable efforts have rarely been made to bring to an end the vicious cycle of poverty and disability. Disability rights activists assert that it is crucial to incorporate the voices of individuals with disabilities into the decision making process.

Furthermore, many who are part of the disability rights movements argue that there is too little emphasis on aid designed to eliminate the physical and social barriers that those with disabilities face. The movement asserts that unless these obstacles are rectified, the connection between disability and poverty will persist. Employment is



seen as a critical agent in reducing stigma and increasing capacity in the lives of individuals with disabilities. Creation of job opportunities and advocacy for equality in job opportunities will go a long way in improving the lives of PWDs.

Persons with disability have been found not to live life to their full potential. It is because of this that the World Programme of Action (WPA) was put forward as a global strategy to help PWDs live to their full potential. It has tried to enhance disability prevention, rehabilitation and equalization of opportunities, which pertains to full participation of persons with disabilities in social life and national development.

The WPA also emphasizes the need to approach disability from a human rights perspective. Moreover, 'Equalization of Opportunities' is a central theme of the WPA and its guiding philosophy for the achievement of full participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of social and economic life. An important principle underlying this theme is that issues concerning persons with disabilities should not be treated in isolation, but within the context of normal community services. (Bynoe, 1991) This promotes the aspect of the feeling of belonging in the society and encourages that persons with disabilities are presented with equal life opportunities as persons without disabilities.

Disability rights movements have on various occasions secured equal opportunities and rights for PWDs. This has resulted in equal opportunities in independent living, employment, education, and housing, freedom from abuse, neglect, and violations of patients' rights. Effective civil rights legislation is sought in order to secure these

opportunities and rights. These movements have supported people with disabilities to live as more active participants in the society. (Paterson, 1999) Strategies such as building of ramps for wheel chairs has ensured that more social amenities are accessible to PWDs. Adaptive technology and access to educational facilities has helped improve education opportunities and independence for people with disabilities.

Discrimination has been part and parcel of PWDs for a long time. In the United Kingdom, following extensive activism by PWDs over several decades, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA, 1995) was passed. This made it unlawful in the United Kingdom to discriminate against people with disabilities in relation to employment, the provision of goods and services, education and transport. This has greatly impacted positively to the various stakeholders in Kenya.

Rehabilitation services are aimed at facilitating the participation of PWDs in regular community services and activities. (Dalal, 1998) All over the world, persons with disabilities have started to unite in organizations as advocates for their own rights to influence decision-makers in governments and all sectors of the society. These organizations have provided a voice of their own, identified their needs, expressed views on priorities, evaluated services and advocated for change and public awareness. (Baquer, 1997) Examples of Such organizations include NCPWD, ANDY, and sight savers, HI, CWC, KSB and KUB among others.

In Kenya for instance there are funding programs such as The Fund's Economic Empowerment Programme which has enabled people with disabilities to establish

and grow their own businesses. NCPWD and ANDY conduct and facilitate employability and soft skill training programs for PWDs, involve professional counselors and trainers for expert guidance. More so it assists with sourcing accessibility aids for all disabilities and spreading awareness among people and health workers in rural and slum areas regarding disability prevention, early detection and intervention (I.L.O, 2002).

The Persons with Disabilities Act 2003 which came into force on 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2004 has well stipulated clauses which give a lot of hope to PWDs in matters concerning their livelihood. Despite all these interventions, little has been done so far in trying to improve the lives of PWD's socially, economically and politically since majority of what was put on paper in terms of policies and strategies remains to be just on paper; most of it is yet to be properly implemented and put into action.

## **2.2 Literature Gap**

In as much as a lot of research has been conducted on the issue disability, little has been done on the marital lives of people with disability. Research on mixed marriages is non-existent and so this work is an eye opener to the world into the marital lives of PWDs; their challenges, successes, capabilities and expectations from the society. Moreover, disability studies have traditionally used a gender blind approach to examine the lives of people with disabilities and have neglected to explore the influence of gender in the lives of men and women with disabilities. The field of disability has not yet recognized the combined discrimination of gender and disability experienced by women who have disabilities, and policies and practices in

the field have not been designed to meet the specific needs of women with disabilities.

### **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of this study is a merger of three theories concerned with human potentials, achievements and barriers to these achievements. The theories include the Capability Approach, the Social Model of Disability and the Hierarchy of Needs Theory. In adopting these theories, the study recognizes getting married as an achievement and having a stable and successful marriage as a higher achievement. Marriage is also taken to be the basis of many other achievements as it is the primary institution that provides love, acceptance and other core human needs.

Capability Approach was first articulated by an Indian economist and philosopher, Amartya Sen in the 1980s. Its core characteristic is its focus on what people are effectively capable of achieving because of their potentials. Sen contends that in judging the quality of life, we should consider what people are able to achieve. He further observes that different people and societies typically differ in their capacity to convert income and commodities into valuable achievements. For example, PWDs may require extra resources (wheel chairs, ramps, lifts e.t.c) to achieve the same things (moving around) as an able-bodied person.). (Comim, Qizibash and Alkine, 2008)

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory complements the Capability Approach. According to Maslow, a humanist psychologist, our actions are motivated in order to achieve certain needs. As a humanist, Maslow believed that people have

an inborn desire to be self-actualized, to be all that they can be. In order to achieve this ultimate goal, however, a number of more basic needs must be met first such as the need for food, safety, love and self-esteem. (Goble, 2004)

The Social Model, on the other hand, is a concept which recognizes that some individuals have physical or psychological differences which affect their ability to function in the society. However, the social model suggests that it is society that causes individuals with these differences to be disabled. In other words, individuals with impairments are not disabled by their impairments but by the barriers that exist in the society which do not take into account their needs. (Goodley, Hughes and Davis, 2012)

The social model of disability identifies systemic barriers, negative attitudes and exclusion by society hence society is the main contributory factor in disabling people. Physical, sensory, intellectual, or psychological variations may cause individual functional limitations or impairments, but these do not lead to disability unless society fails to take account of and include people regardless of their individual differences. Capabilities in the Capability Approach refer to those things PWDs are capable of achieving in life based on existing opportunities: physical and mental health, ability to pursue spiritual goals, being part of the society and having friends, freedom to pursue career, be mobile and have jobs of their choice as well as ability to marry and raise their own families. These are echoed in level three of the Maslow's pyramid which he refers to as social needs. He argued that PWDs can 'behave badly' if their lower needs are frustrated and end up stagnating in life since

they cannot rise to another level. This 'behaving badly' can also increase the tensions in their marriages, hence making them less stable.

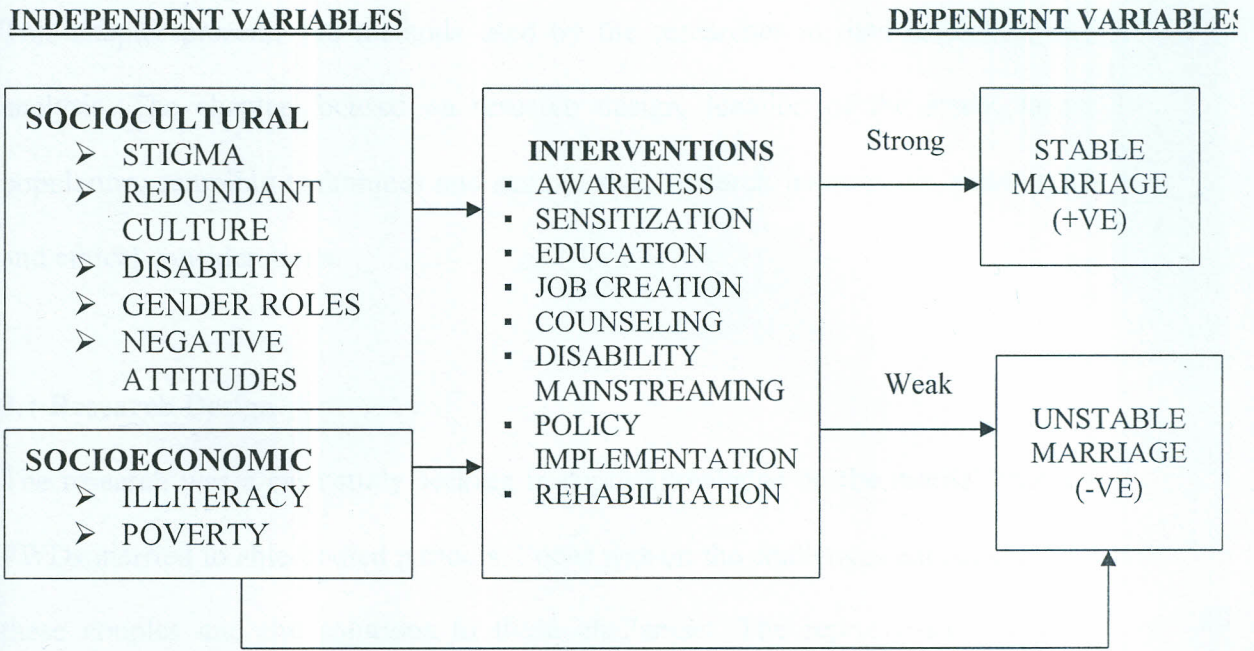
Maslow infers that, the main reason why PWDs do not reach full potential, or self-actualize is because of hindrances placed in their way by society (Simons et al, 1987) This applies to social model of disability that is associated with improving the quality of life of PWDs who face barriers in everyday living hence preventing them from participating as full members of the society. (Oliver, 1996)

Disability in Capability's perspective therefore implies deprivation of capabilities for PWDs. (Mitra, 2006) It can thus be reduced by providing them with access to basic amenities and resources in life. This is a certain way of reducing prevalence of disability. In the light of this study, removal of systemic barriers such as access to education and employment can go a long way in enabling PWDs bring into achievement potentials such as getting married, having a stable marriage and raising children.

## **2.4 Conceptual Framework**

The researcher developed the conceptual framework of this study from Sen's capability approach. Human beings have capabilities and when these are suppressed, life becomes unbearable, depressing and humiliating. The result is that all facets of the individual's life deteriorate. Therefore, if PWDs were to be given opportunities such as access to education, job opportunities and labor market, they could be in a position to work independently without stigma and discrimination and thus be equally capable of bringing about strong and stable marriages.

**Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework Illustrating Challenges in Marriages Involving PWDs and Their Able-bodied Spouses**



**Source:** Researcher (2014)

The above conceptual framework noticeably highlights the challenges encountered by PWDs married to able-bodied spouses. These challenges inevitably contribute to the weakening of the marriage institution, more especially if the intervening measures are missing or weak. However the presence of strong intervening measures such as counseling would be vital in strengthening the marriage institution

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the methods used by the researcher in data collection and analysis. The chapter focused on research design, location of the study, target population, sampling techniques and sample size, research instruments, pilot study and ethical considerations.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

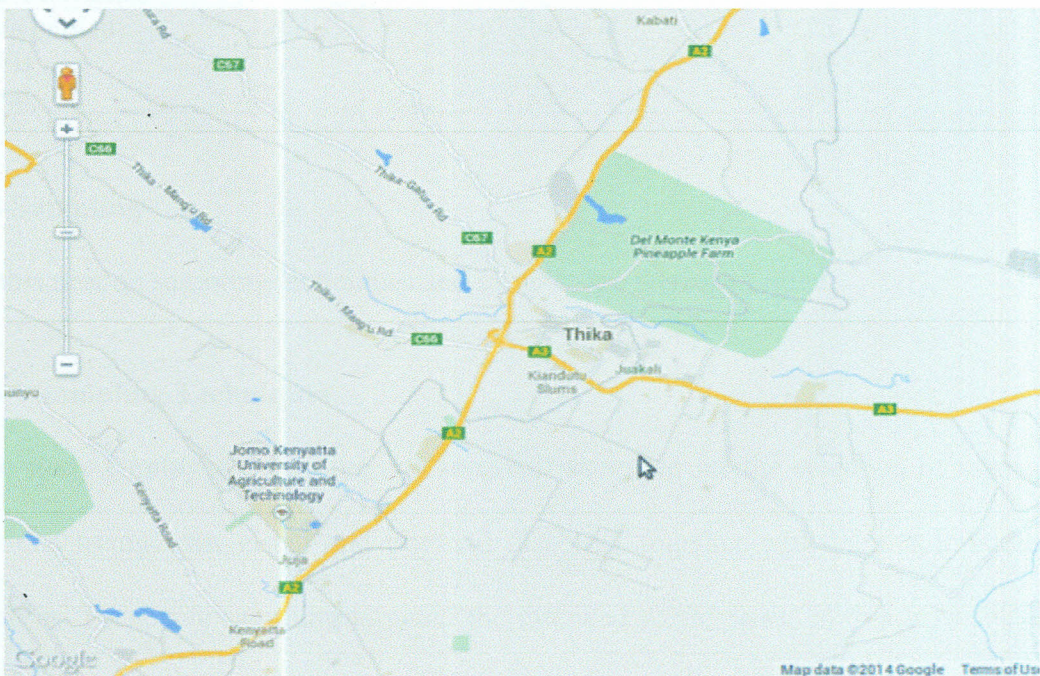
The research was a case study seeking in-depth knowledge on the marital lives of PWDs married to able-bodied partners. Focus was on the challenges encountered by these couples and the solutions to these challenges. The representative sample population, consisting of married couples in mixed marriages, was selected from Kiandutu slum. Using this sample population, the study was able to deduce the challenges encountered by most couples in mixed marriages, especially those from poor financial backgrounds. Conclusions and recommendations were then drawn from the experiences shared by these couples.

#### **3.2 Location of the Study**

The study was conducted in Kiandutu slum, Thika. This is Thika's major slum where approximately a third of its population resides. (Njoroge & Kibunga, 2007) It is among the largest informal settlements in Kenya and arguably the largest in central province. According to the national census of 2009, there are approximately 13,000 people and 5,000 households in the slum.



Most of those who reside in this slum are either jobless or casual labourers. A considerable number of the residents of the slum can be classified as falling into the vulnerable groups: single mothers, orphans, widows and widowers, persons with disabilities and street children. Geographically, Thika lies on the A Road, 40 Km northeast of Nairobi on Thika River, 13 S and 37.55 E. Its elevation is approximately 1420 meters -1550 meters in altitude. Kiandutu slum was the researcher's destination research centre because it is widely known for having a considerable number of people with disabilities (approximately 100), most of them being the visually impaired. During the pre-visit, information from community members revealed that most people with disabilities who resided in Kiandutu slum were formerly students at the Thika Primary and High School for the Blind, and Joytown Primary and Secondary school for the physically handicapped. Many of those who graduated from or dropped out of these schools ended up in the neighboring Kiandutu slum.



**Figure 3.1: Map Showing Location of Kiandutu Slum within Thika**

### 3.3 Target Population

The study focused on persons living with visual and physical disabilities married to able-bodied spouses in Kiandutu slum, Thika. The total number of persons living with visual and physical disability in Kiandutu slum was about 100. The researcher obtained this data from the department of Gender and Social Welfare in Thika district.

The visually impaired were estimated to be 78 while the physically handicapped were 22. Out of these, 55 were married, 30 were single, 10 were separated or divorced and 5 were widowed. Of the married, 25 of them were married to able-bodied spouses whilst 30 were married to people with disabilities. The study focused on the 25 who were married to able-bodied spouses and also sought information from their spouses. Therefore those targeted by the research totaled to 50.

**Table 3.0: Target population**

Demographic characteristics	Male	Female	Total
Able bodied	11	14	25
PWD	11	14	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>50</b>

### 3.4 Sampling

In this section sampling techniques and sample size were described.

#### 3.4.1 Sampling Techniques

The study employed purposive and snowball sampling for the selection of married persons living with visual and physical disability together with their able-bodied spouses. Purposive sampling targeted the intended participants, in this case PWDs together with their able-bodied spouses since they had same characteristics and the information needed in the study (have disability and know what they go through in

their marriage). Snowball sampling was employed to identify potential subjects who the researcher had no information of their whereabouts.

### **3.4.2 Sample Size**

The total number of persons living with visual and physical disability in Kiandutu slum is 100. The researcher was interested in the 25 people with disability married to able-bodied spouses. These comprised 19 visually impaired men and women, 6 physically handicapped men and women and their able-bodied spouses in the slum. Therefore the total sample size was 50 (25 able-bodied people and 25 people with disabilities). However, information was acquired from 45 respondents since 5 of the able-bodied spouses declined to participate in the exercise.

### **3.5 Research Instruments**

The research instruments used included Interview Schedules, Observation Checklists and Focused Group Discussions (FGDs). The Interview Schedules was most preferable since it allowed both the interviewer and interviewee the flexibility to probe for and to give more details. Focused Group Discussions was also used as a qualitative method of research where the respondents were put in groups of 8 and asked questions on their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards the concept of marriage in an interactive session. This session was lively and interactive so it encouraged openness as the respondents freely shared their experiences.

The Observation Checklist as an instrument was employed to confirm the validity of the information acquired from the respondents. This instrument was widely used when the researcher visited the respondents in their homes.

### 3.6 Pilot Study

The researcher carried out a pilot study in Mathare slum, Nairobi. She interviewed six people from the area. Three of the respondents were people with disability and the other three were their able-bodied spouses. The fact that the researcher managed to find three couples of which one spouse in each couple was a person with disability proved that the research was tenable: that there actually existed marriages between able-bodied people and people with disabilities in the slums.

Two of the respondents were visually impaired (and these were the women) while one was physically handicapped. Surprisingly, the respondents were open and generous with information. They confirmed that indeed they went through so many challenges in their marriage lives and affirmed that most marriages of such nature are usually unstable.

Two couples confessed that at one point in time their marriage was about to go to the drain. In fact, one couple had been separated for more than four months before they got back together. The other couple revealed that their marriage was marred by violence. In this particular family, the husband (who was able-bodied) had been a drunkard and totally disregarded his family. He had also been very violent that it took the intervention of the area chief and the elders to convince him to change his ways. One couple, of which the husband was physically handicapped, said that in as much as they were undergoing numerous challenges (especially financial challenges), they were managing well. The wife worked as a casual labourer in a textile industry while the husband managed their small shop close to their home. They attested that theirs had been a stable marriage so far.

The researcher used questionnaires to get information but realized that the respondents who were visually impaired could neither read nor give a written report of their marriage. The physically handicapped man also insisted that the interviews be carried out in Kiswahili and not English since he was more conversant with the Kiswahili language. These two occasions convinced the researcher that she had to change her research tools. She therefore decided to do away with the questionnaires in the actual research and opted to use Interview Schedules. She also prepared an English and Swahili version of the interview schedules.

The pilot study also convinced the researcher that marriages involving PWDs faced numerous hurdles because of the disability, poverty and to a large extent, ignorance or illiteracy. This was because all the PWDs interviewed were not fully aware of their rights and privileges as PWDs.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews, focused group discussions and employed the use of observation checklists with men and women with visual and physical disability together with their able-bodied spouses. The research was conducted at the respondents' convenient time and venue.

The researcher conducted a pre-visit of Kiandutu slum, familiarized herself with the place, introduced the team that assisted her conduct the research, and generally made sure that her respondents were willing and ready to provide the information needed. The researcher employed the help of three research assistants whom she had trained and worked with at the pilot stage in Mathare slum. One of the assistants was

invaluable since he was visually impaired and had lived in Kiandutu slum. He had already interacted well with most of respondents, knew their residences and so helped schedule for the preliminary interviews. It is also worth noting that without his help, the researcher would have easily gotten lost in the slum.

Since the researcher suffers an eyesight problem, she found it reasonable to get an assistant who would help in quickly noting down whatever the respondents said. The assistant came in handy as he made sure that no information was left out.

The third assistant was physically handicapped and was instrumental in making the interview environment conducive by striking rapport with the respondents who had disabilities. She did this by openly sharing her life experiences and challenges thereby helping the respondents open up and not shy away from talking about their lives.

Finally, the researcher asked questions the way they were on the interview schedule and recorded the information.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

Collected data from the interviews, focused group discussions, and observation were analyzed using qualitative data analysis. The researcher carefully reviewed the information collected from the field and processed the data according to themes exhibited. Data reduction process was done to identify and focus on what was meaningful. Meaningful themes were identified (thematic analysis) that helped answer research questions. Last but not least, data was assembled, organized and

compressed into a display that led to drawing conclusions in form of tables, graphs and charts. Finally, the researcher drew conclusions and verified it by revisiting the data severally then illustrated implications from the findings.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

The researcher secured official ethical clearance from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. As disability and marriage are highly sensitive issues, she was extremely polite with the respondents; she asked and probed questions in a most sensitive manner.

Before starting the interview session, the researcher first introduced the purpose of the study to the interviewees and assured them of privacy and confidentiality. Besides, the researcher maintained anonymity of the participants during and after the interview. The interview was held after oral and written consent of the participants.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULT PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

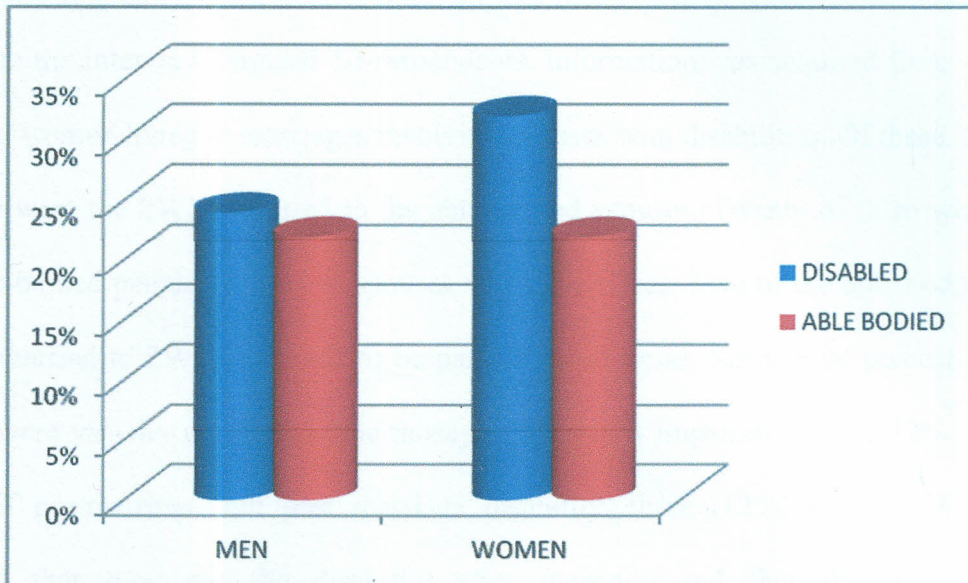
This chapter presents an analysis of the findings on the gender differential effects of challenges facing marriages involving PWDs married to able-bodied spouses in Kiandutu slum, Thika. The study addressed the following research questions that were derived from research objectives:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of PWDs involved in marriages with able-bodied partners in Kiandutu slum?
2. How stable are marriages involving PWDs married to able-bodied partners?
3. What are the gender differential effects of the socio-cultural challenges that affect PWDs married to able-bodied spouses?
4. What are the gender differential effects of the socio-economic challenges that affect PWDs married to able-bodied spouses?
5. What are the intervention measures for the challenges facing PWDs married to able bodied spouses?

#### 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of PWDs involved in Marriages with Able-bodied Partners in Kiandutu Slum

The demographic characteristics collected included the history and nature of the respondents' disability, their level of education, their social and economic status, their gender and age at which they married.





**Figure 4.1: Gender of Respondents**

Sixty three percent of the women with disabilities (WWD) said that they had mastered ways and means of accomplishing their expected gender-related responsibilities as wives and mothers. They expressed how this was important so as to ensure the stability of their marriages. Three quarters of them, including the visually impaired, said that they cooked for their able-bodied husbands, bathed their children and performed almost every other chore that an able-bodied wife and mother could do.

#### 4.1.4 Age of Marriage

The study indicated that disability was a key factor determining the age at which PWDs got married. The PWDs further expressed how their disability made it arduous for them to secure themselves able-bodied partners. They indicated how people just could not see beyond their disabilities.

#### **4.1.1 History and Nature of the Respondents' Disabilities**

Although the interview targeted 50 respondents, information was acquired from 45 men and women living in marriages involving spouses with disabilities. Of these, 25 of them were the PWDs married to the able-bodied spouses. Twenty of them were the able-bodied people married to spouses with disabilities. Five of the able-bodied people married to PWDs declined to be part of the exercise. Sixty eight percent of PWDs were visually impaired while those with physical impairment were 32%. In terms of pre-marriage and post marriage disability, three (12%) of the PWDs reported that they got the disability after marriage and that this had an overwhelmingly negative impact on their marriages. Some marriages became unbearable and fell apart though others were still pushing through despite the new challenges experienced.

#### **4.1.2 Level of Education and Economic Status**

Their unenviable area of residence, the slums, was evidence of their low living standards and revealed that most of them were destitute. They relied on begging as main source of income. This was not a sustainable source of livelihood. Forty eight percent indicated that they either did not transit to secondary school after completion of primary education or dropped out of school at the primary level.

#### **4.1.3 Gender of Participants**

Out of the twenty-five PWDs who were interviewed, fourteen (32%) of them were women while eleven (24%) were men. Among the twenty able-bodied people that were interviewed, half of them (22%) were men while the other half comprised the women. Figure 4.1 illustrates the gender of the informants.

The research found out that sixteen of the PWDs delayed getting married because throughout their childhood, they had not been exposed to the society and therefore their social skills were wanting. This, they attested, was mainly because their parents and close relatives were ashamed of them hence hid them from the public eye, oblivious of the fact that this would have a huge impact on their social lives. In addition, PWDs feared getting into marriage since the general society side-lined and neglected them. One of the respondents had this to say:

*Having been born physically handicapped, I was a source of shame to my parents since my birth. I was therefore denied the opportunity of going to school and to freely interact with people. When I clocked 30, I moved out and went to town to fend for myself. It was only then that I got to interact freely with people and was lucky enough to get married to a lady who accepted me as I was. (Married PH man, No. 34, 10<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2014)*

Table 4.1 gives an overview of the average age at which most PWDs and their able-bodied spouses got married.

**Table 4.1: Age Bracket of Marriage for PWDs and their Able-bodied Spouses**

Age	Able Bodied Women	Able Bodied Men PWD
	PWD Men	Women
41-45	1	0
36-40	1	1
31-35	3	1
26-30	5	4
21-25	1	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>

As indicated in the Table 4.1, ten out of the eleven interviewed men with disabilities got married when they were above twenty six years of age whereas only six out of the fourteen interviewed WWD got married at that age. Six MWD said that they got married at a more advanced age because they felt inadequate to win off ladies of their choice in a state of disability and poverty at the same time. They felt that poverty compounded their disability thus hindering them from attaining their ambitions, marriage ambitions included. They therefore felt that it was only when they had stabilized financially that they could have the courage to face and win off the 'ladies of their dreams.' This kind of thinking pushed the men into working hard so as to have something to show off as they approached the 'women of their dreams.' It is therefore only later on in life, at an advanced age and after they had stabilized financially that they got married.

On the other hand, women with disabilities reported that they got married at an earlier age as compared to their men counterparts mainly because of their low self-esteem and hopelessness in life. Their low self-esteem and hopelessness was primarily due to their lack of career and academic ambitions and the many frustrations they went through in life. Dropping out of school and failure to secure decent jobs left them with no better ambition in life than that of getting married and hopefully getting salvaged from such predicaments.

Secondly, WWD felt that no man would see them beyond their disabilities and love them for who they were. They expressed how they yearned for love and acceptance, something which they did not get from their close relatives because discrimination

and stigma began from their homes. For that reason, they admitted that they would gladly, and without giving much thought, get married to any man that showed the slightest interest in them because this, for them, was a miracle too big to believe.

These findings are in agreement with Malinga's assertion as stated in her book, *Equal Opportunities, not Charity*, that majority of the women with disabilities suffered mistreatments from their close relatives and spouses who claimed that they were over-dependent on them. (Malinga, 1993)

Thirdly, WWD said that they got married earlier on in life so as to escape the financial and social 'burden' that they were to their parents and close relatives. Since their relatives often treated them as of no good and as liabilities in life, four WWD thought it would be a relief to get married hence get away from such negativity in life. One married lady gave an account of such an experience:

*I am the youngest among my sisters who happened not to be married yet my parents insisted that I ought to be married. This gave me the impression that I was a burden they needed to relieve themselves of, since they did not pressurize my older and able-bodied sisters into marriage. (Married PH Woman, No. 24, 10<sup>th</sup> Dec, 2013)*

The study discovered that the able-bodied men who married PWDs were quite advanced in age. Two of the interviewed able-bodied men were widowers and two were divorcees. These men claimed that they did not mind marrying WWD because they were mature enough to see past the disabilities and get to know the real personalities of the ladies. They said that all they needed as wives were responsible homemakers and caring ladies to take good care of their children. They also did not meet a lot of resistance from their close relatives because of their maturity in age.

## **4.2 Stability in Marriages involving PWDs Married to Able-bodied Partners**

In formulating this research question, the study sought to establish the stability of mixed marriages by looking at the perception of respondents on happiness experienced in during their marriage. In this regard, the study sought to find out how many couples in marriages involving persons with disabilities were happy and how many such marriages proved to be stable and strong. The study also investigated the causes of happiness and unhappiness in the marriages as well as the reasons behind the stability or instability of the marriages.

Research findings revealed that happiness in marriages involving PWDs and their able-bodied spouses was based on factors such as love, appreciation, financial stability, mutual togetherness, enjoyment of conjugal rights and ability to perform gender roles as expected by the society and by the spouses.

The study found out that 52% of PWDs married to able-bodied spouses were not happy and 48% were happy in their marriages. Therefore, a slightly higher number of PWDs were unhappy in marriage as compared to those who were relatively happy. The study then embarked on unearthing the reasons behind the happiness/unhappiness of couples in mixed marriages.

**Table 4.2: Happiness and Unhappiness in Marriages Involving PWDs and their Able-bodied Spouses.**

	Able-bodied Women	PWD Men	Able-Bodied Men	PWD Women
Happiness	6(60%)	8 (72.7%)	4 (40%)	4 (28.6%)
Unhappiness	4 (40%)	3 (27.3)	6 (60%)	10 (71.4 %)
<b>Total</b>	<b>10(100)</b>	<b>11(100%)</b>	<b>10 (100%)</b>	<b>14(100%)</b>

Six (60 %) of able-bodied women married to men with disabilities were happy in their marriages while four (40 %) were unhappy. Two (20%) married able-bodied women were comfortable with their husbands' conditions, assisted them in their difficulties and performed their duties and responsibilities.

The study also revealed that 5(45%) of the men with disabilities had the ability to cater for their wives' financial needs. In addition, their able-bodied women earned income through their 'small-time' businesses that combined their husbands' efforts to sustain their union. Four of the able-bodied women appreciated their husbands and had mutual togetherness despite their husbands having disabilities. One able-bodied woman witnessed this:

*He is my husband and I am always proud to be with him anywhere we go regardless of what people say. (Married able-bodied woman, No. 29, interview, 10<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2014)*

The researcher encountered a case where an able-bodied woman married to a paraplegic man complained that she was miserable because her husband could

neither sire children nor perform her conjugal duties. One respondent, a paraplegic man married to an able-bodied woman, had this to say.

*I am a paraplegic because of a tragic road accident; I can neither make love nor bear children anymore. My wife stopped loving me since I could not satisfy her or give her children hence we live as strangers in our matrimonial home. (Married PH man, No38, interview, 12<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2014)*

The study revealed that 71.4% of the married WWD were found to be unhappy in marriage as shown in Table 4.2. They said that this was due to the myriad challenges they faced because of maltreatment from their husbands and pressure to perform all the expected gender-related roles despite their disability. They claimed that their able-bodied husbands did not honor them but humiliated and oppressed them. These women complained that their able-bodied husbands took advantage of them by taking whatever little they earned and squandering the money in drinking sprees and other unprofitable ventures.

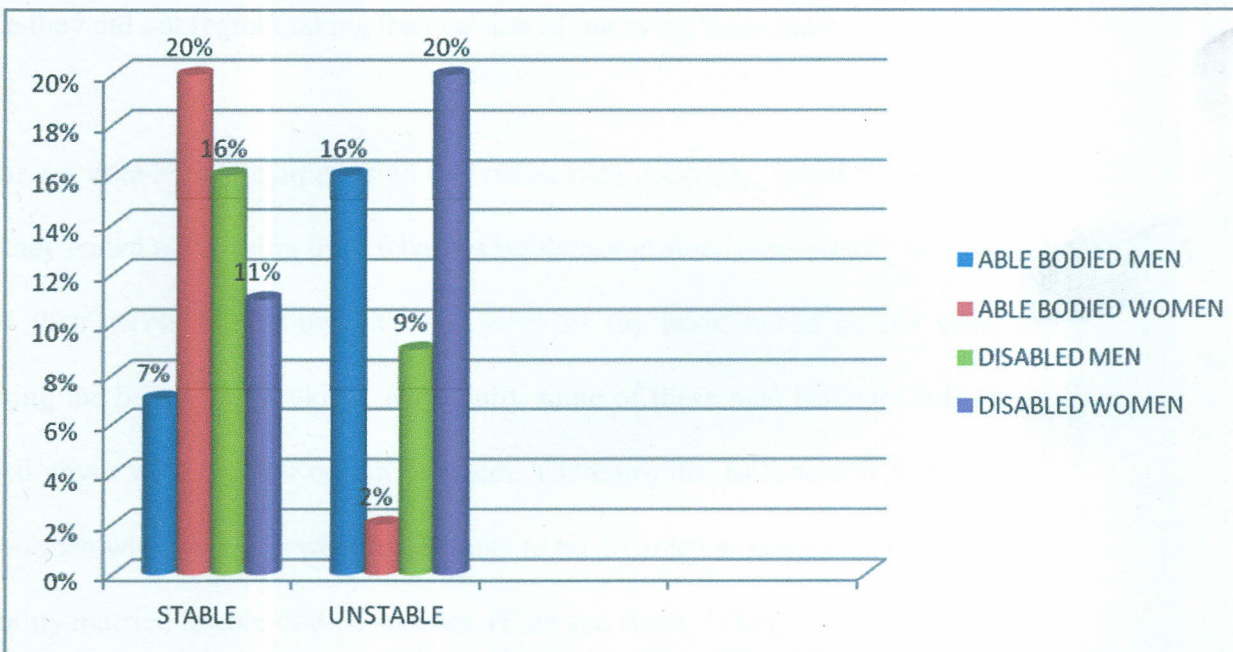
Six (30%) of WWD mentioned that under no circumstance did their able-bodied husbands offer them assistance in carrying out the household chores. Household chores, according to their husbands, solely belonged to women, despite their impairments. In addition, their able-bodied husbands avoided accompanying them out of their homes since they were ashamed of being with them in public, a clear indication that they neither appreciated nor loved them.

Seven (70%) of these able-bodied husbands affirmed that they practiced infidelity in their matrimonial home and even went as far as bearing children with other women. They thus totally disregarded their wives and failed to take responsibility over them. In fact, some of them confessed that they preferred being involved in



extra marital affairs instead of putting up with their wives whom they did not seem to be happy with.

From the Focused Group Discussions, the researcher discovered that marriage stability was directly linked to the level of happiness or unhappiness in marriage. The happier the couple, the more likely they were to stay in marriage. Similarly, the couples that were not happy of their union were more likely to dissolve their marriage. The discussions affirmed that stability was also founded upon resilience and perseverance of the existing storms in the marriages. The figure below indicates the findings of the research in relation to the stability of marriages involving PWDs.



**Figure 4.2: Marriage Stability for Marriages involving PWDs and their Able-bodied Spouses**

The study confirmed that 47% of PWDs and their able-bodied spouses were in unstable marriages. Among those that were in unstable unions nine out of the fourteen women with disabilities (20% of the total sample) affirmed that they opted

to stay with their able-bodied spouses even though they suffered a lot under these men. They expressed how their marriages were rocky and how life for them was frustrating and miserable. They, however, felt that they had no option but to hang on for the sake of their children who needed their motherly love. The idea of separation or divorce was not strange to them; they greatly toyed with this idea and that it was only a matter of time before they quit.

Out of the eleven men with disability that were interviewed, three of them (7% of the total sample) said that their marriages were stable despite the challenges they encountered. Their wives loved them unconditionally and took good care of them hence they did not regret making the decision of marrying these ladies.

Of the ten able-bodied men married to women with disability, six of them reported that they ended up viewing their wives as burdensome since they needed to actively assist their wives to accomplish even some of the basic house chores such as cleaning the house and cooking. Apparently some of these men believed that able-bodied wives were a better option for them. Therefore just as Fine and Asch found out, women with disability were more likely to be divorced as compared to men with disability married to able-bodied spouses. (Fine and Asch; 1981)

Eight of the married PWDs were of the view that their marriages would have been more stable if they would have married fellow PWDs. They imagined that marrying those who were in the same state as them would greatly help in reducing the tensions, stigma and frustrations they encountered both within and out of the family institution. Indeed, a majority of the blind women testified that they preferred getting married to fellow blind men so as to avoid great possibilities of divorces, abandonment and abusive marriages. One respondent expressed how her marriage to a fellow PWD was better as compared to when she married an able-bodied man:

*Currently I am married to an able-bodied man but this is just for convenience as my visually impaired husband passed on three years ago through a tragic road accident. Back then, marriage life was sweet and I enjoyed every bit of it. (Married VI woman, No.5, interview, 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2014)*

### **4.3 Gender Differential Effects of the Socio-Cultural Challenges that affect PWDs Married to Able-bodied Spouses**

The research question aimed at establishing the socio-cultural challenges that affect PWDs married to able-bodied spouses. The socio-cultural challenges included: lack of support of family members, societal rejection, ridicule and stigma, inclusivity in social groups and discrimination.

#### **4.3.1 Lack of Support from the Family**

Almost all of the informants interviewed reported that it was mainly due to the disability status of one of the spouses that their courtships and marriages received little or no support from their close relatives. This invariably disheartened the couples in mixed marriages and in the long run contributed to weakening of the marriage institution.

PWDs' in-laws rarely visited them and seldom wanted to identify with them. The able-bodied respondents married to PWDs admitted that their parents discouraged them from staying in such marriages and at the same time insisted on divorce or remarrying. One physically handicapped woman gave a testimony of how she has lived in constant rejection from her in-laws:

*It deeply pains me that up to now, my husband's family has never accepted me as their son's wife. (Married PH Woman No. 17, interview, 8<sup>th</sup> Dec, 2014)*

A married man with disability also gave an account of how both his family and his wife's family completely rejected their marriage:

*Our families (my wife's and mine) were opposed to our union and spent every single opportunity they had to try and dissuade us from continuing our relationship. My parents preferred that I remained single and happy rather than getting married and end up being frustrated. They did not imagine that someone could truly love me as I was. (Married PH man No. 38, interview, 12<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2014)*

#### **4.3.2 Societal Rejection, Ridicule and Stigma**

It is widely said that a human being is not an island and cannot live in isolation. Archbishop Desmond Tutu attests to this when he states; 'I am because you are' meaning that my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in those I relate with. Therefore the study deemed it important to investigate and find out the various challenges that couples in marriages involving PWDs faced when it came to integration within the society.

Forty percent of the PWDs interviewed said that they had suffered societal ridicule because of their disability, clear evidence that the society discriminated against them. Ridicule and finger-pointing made their able-bodied spouses ashamed of being with them in public. This, by all means, had an effect on the stability of the marriage

as the spouses with disability ended up feeling rejected even by the very persons they least expected. To add on to that, the study found out that 70% of the marriages involving PWDs were not formal. The disabled respondents said that their spouses had never officially introduced them to their families out of fear of rejection. Therefore, the presence of close relatives to help out and champion reconciliation when there were intrinsic marital challenges was missing.

Paraplegics who lost their ability to honor their conjugal obligations and sire children experienced stigma from their in-laws. The problem was worsened if the couple had not sired any children before and thus had no hope of ever getting children. One respondent said:

*My husband's family intimidates and discriminates me on grounds of my disability, claiming that I made their son miserable. (Married PH woman, No.17, interview, 8<sup>th</sup> Dec, 2013)*

The findings from the field revealed that PWDs had problems finding suitable marriage partners. In the same manner, the research found out that women with disabilities faced compound discrimination owing to their gender and disability. These findings concurred with Sentumbwe's assertion in his book, *Disability and Culture*, that isolation and confinement based on culture and traditions, attitudes and prejudices often affected women with disabilities more severely than their men counterparts. (Sentumbwe; 1995)

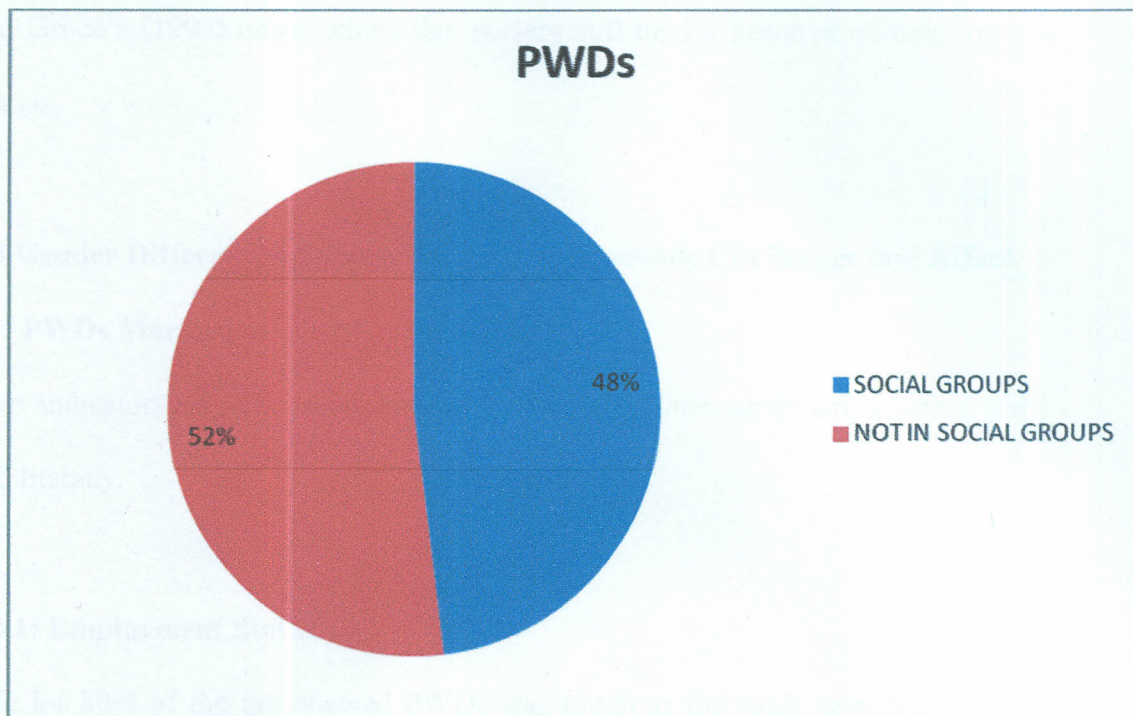
### 4.3.3 Inclusivity of PWDs in Social Groups

The study also sought to examine how well the PWDs and their able-bodied partners were included in community projects and social activities. Inclusivity into the communities' social groups could be a milestone in helping PWDs realize their potentials and be better placed in managing their homes.

The Oxford Dictionary defines inclusivity as an intention or policy of including people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those who are handicapped or learning-disabled, or racial and sexual minorities. From the Focused Group Discussion, the study found out that the problem hindering inclusivity of PWDs in social groups is discrimination. The respondents explained that this was brought about by the state of viewing PWDs as inadequate or rather not whole. Perhaps the poem by Dass, Ram and Gorman illustrates this fact in a clear manner:

*Can you understand this? Can you? No one sees me and helps me see myself as being complete, as is. No one really sees how that's true at the deepest level. Now I understand that is what I've got to see for myself,*  
*my*  
*own wholeness. But when you are talking about what really hurts and about what I'm really not getting from those who're trying to help me...that's it; that feeling of not being seen as a whole.*  
 (Dass, Ram and Gorman 1985;27 )

Fifty two percent of PWDs reported that they were made to feel and indeed ended up feeling that they were not good enough to join social groups consisting of able-bodied persons. They, thus preferred forming their own self-help groups and kept to their cocoons. A considerable number of them, however, rose up against this glass ceiling to wholly integrate with the 'outside world' by joining social groups consisting majorly of able-bodied persons. The figure below illustrates this finding.



**Figure 4.3: Inclusivity of PWDs in Social Groups**

Fifty-two percent of PWDs involved themselves in small groups comprising of PWDs only (Tuvumiliane and Nyota ya Milele groups) and rarely involved themselves in groups comprising the able-bodied because of the fear of rejection and intimidation. However, a considerable number of them joined development groups inclusive of the able-bodied.

#### 4.3.4 Discrimination of PWDs

Discrimination was observed to be more salient in women. This was attributed to 'double rejection' based on their gender and in tandem with their special needs. The stereotypes that accompanied these attributes contributed to women with disabilities to be dependent on others and served to amplify the misconception that this population is burdensome. The study's validity is also supported by Yuker's (1997)

and Groce's (1997) observations that society still held a negative attitude towards PWDs.

#### **4.4 Gender Differential Effects of the Socio-Economic Challenges that Affect PWDs Married to Able-bodied Spouses.**

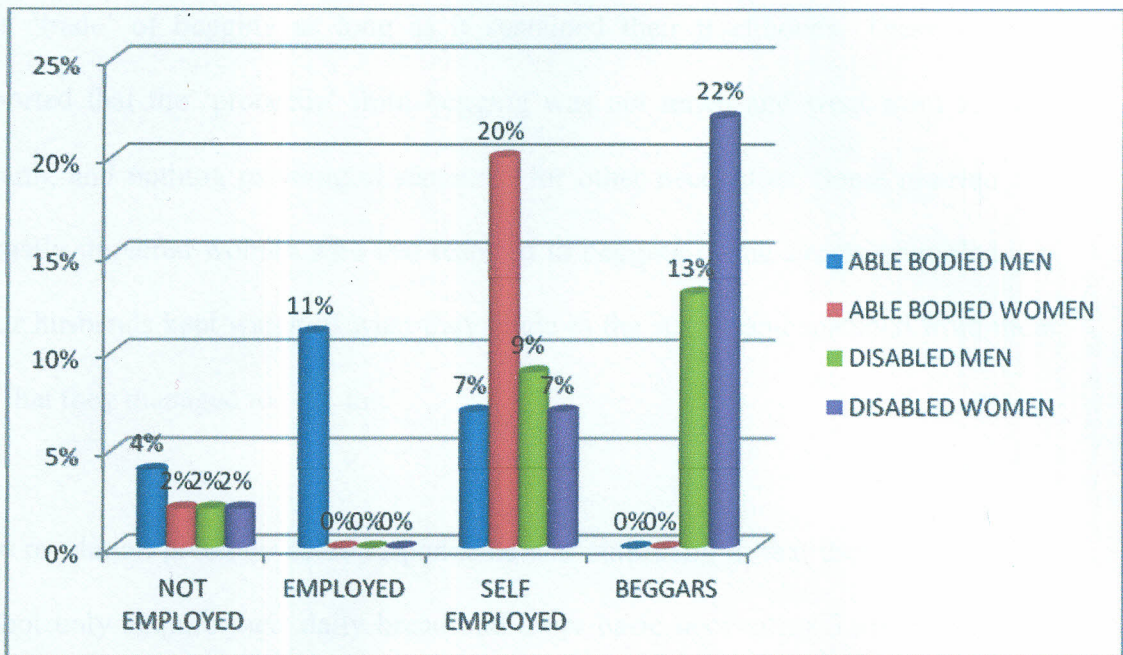
Two indicators of socio-economic challenges were measured: employment status and literacy.

##### **4.4.1: Employment Status**

Life for 80% of the interviewed PWDs was tough as the study revealed that they were living in utter poverty. This is primarily because most of them could not get formal employment and ended up in the streets as beggars. To make it worse they had so many dependants as they bore more children than they could possibly sustain. There is no doubt that unemployment had a disproportionate impact on the PWDs. They found it more difficult to get employment and most of them reported that they had almost given up hope of ever being formally employed. The respondents clarified that this was because employers thought them to be under-productive as compared to the non-disabled.

However, the PWDs argued that this was not true at all as they could work as productively as the non-disabled people, if and when they were accorded favorable working conditions. The research revealed that 16% were self-employed and 35% in the streets begging. It also emerged that PWDs were under-represented in higher level jobs as is shown by the Figure 4.4





**Figure 4.4: Economic Activities of PWDs and their Able-Bodied Spouses**

Findings indicated that eighteen (72%) PWDs were neither formally employed nor in business. 35% sustained their livelihoods through begging in the streets. This, they claimed, was not out of choice, but rather out of frustration and misery. The study revealed that the main hurdles hindering PWDs from accessing formal employment were low literacy levels and discrimination.

The few rehabilitated PWDs who had acquired basic skills such as knitting, pottery, shoe-making and weaving were better off as they were self-dependent. Nevertheless, they expressed how they felt short-changed as those who marketed their wares exploited them. A small percentage (16%) of the PWDs, especially the physically handicapped, engaged themselves in small-time business ventures such as selling sweets, handkerchiefs, cigarettes and stationary to enhance their economic status.

The able-bodied wives to the disabled men who begged in the streets did not mind

this 'trade' of begging as long as it sustained their livelihoods. These families reported that the 'proceeds' from begging was not much and went from hand to mouth, and nothing meaningful remained for other necessities. Some married and visually impaired women who had resorted to begging in the streets grumbled that their husbands kept watch of what they made in the streets and snatched from them all that they managed to 'toil for.'

The revelation given by some respondents was surprising in that they had managed to not only acquire their daily bread and other basic necessities from begging but also succeeded in educating their children even up to tertiary levels. However, all of the PWDs who were reduced to beggars exclaimed that this 'trade' was dehumanizing and made them lose their dignity in the society. They yearned to quit begging and get into business, only if they got a jumpstart.

The pictures that follow are of some of the respondents that have been left with no other option other than begging. The photographs were taken with the full consent and understanding of the informants. Some photographs were however not included because they clearly showed the identities of the PWDs hence could be dehumanizing.



**Figure 4.5a: Photograph showing a Person with Disability Begging**



**Figure 4.5b: A child Escorting her Visually Impaired Mother to Beg in Streets**

In as much as 51% of the interviewed PWDs were beggars and self-employed, they reported that they were greatly involved in finance groups that helped them manage their finances. Twelve (52%) of the interviewed PWDs said that they were members of support groups such as Tuvumiliane Group and Nyota ya Milele Group. The groups acted as merry-go-rounds or *chamas* as they are commonly referred to in Kenya nowadays. It is from these groups that some PWDs got loans to start up their small businesses and accomplished other responsibilities such as educating their children.

One of the respondents said:

*I am happy for the assistance Tuvumiliane self-help group offers and especially recall one time when my son was admitted in hospital for a long time and I got a small loan that helped me pay the hospital bill. (Married VI woman, No5, interview, 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov, 2013)*

Another respondent said:

*I do not know what I would have done without Tuvumiliane self-help group because I am able to pay my children's school fees through saving in that group. (Married VI woman, No15, interview, 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec, 2013)*

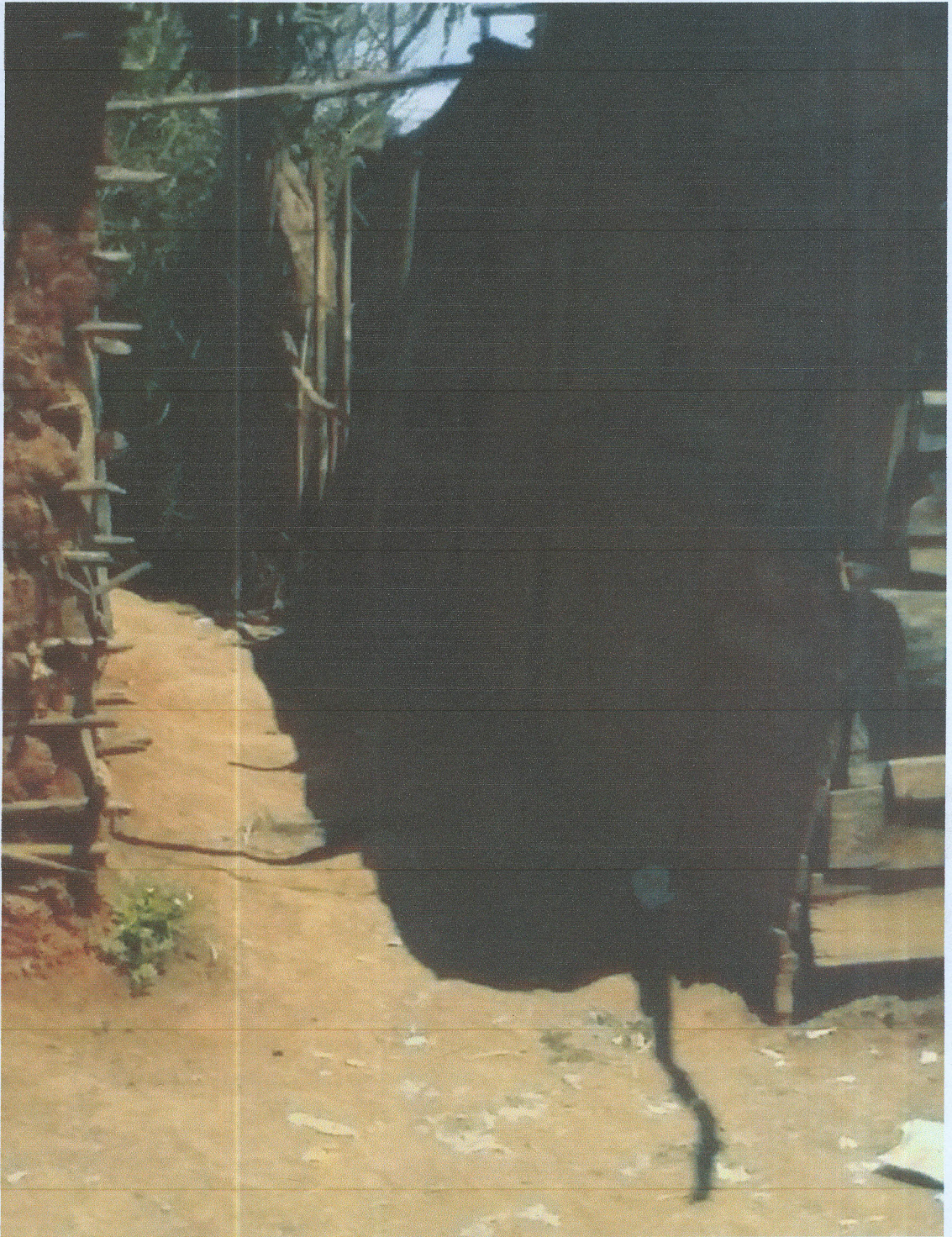
The study found out that begging created continuity in poverty for the succeeding generations of married PWDs, a majority being the visually impaired. This is because it was mostly their children who guided them while begging in the streets hence denying these children their right to education. The result was that their children ended up lacking good educational backgrounds thus limiting their chances of getting formal employment. It was therefore not surprising to see that most of their children had almost given up hope of a bright future.

The findings concurred with Barnes' assertion, in his book, *Disabled People in Britain and Discrimination* that most PWDs lived in extreme poverty due to unemployment. (Barnes; 1991) In the same manner, in his book, *Exploring Disability*, Barnes is of the view that dependency and illiteracy levels among PWDs is high; a majority of them are street beggars and yet nothing seems resolved to curb the situation in developing countries. (Barnes & Mercer; 2009)

The pictures below illustrate the poor living conditions in which some of the PWDs live.



**Figure 4.6a: Photograph showing poor drainage and shanty houses in Kiandutu slum**



**Figure 4.6b: Photographs Showing Poor Residential Units in Kiandutu Slum.**

#### 4.4.2 Literacy Levels among Married PWDs

Marriage is an important institution in the society hence the need for a lot of wisdom, knowledge and understanding on how it should be managed. (socyberty.com/issues/importance-of-education-and-marriage) In addition education has proven to be a prerequisite for the harmonious functioning of any society. It opens doors to people's minds and makes them receptive to the idea of broadening their horizons and learning new things. (www.buzzle.com/articles/importance-of-education.html) With education, one is therefore better positioned to handle the challenges associated with marriage. It is unfortunate that 48% of the PWDs interviewed reported that they did not have the opportunity to study beyond primary school. They attributed this to high poverty levels that rendered their parents too poor to take them to school. Few cases indicated that at times it was simply a case of discrimination as their able-bodied siblings were granted such privileges.

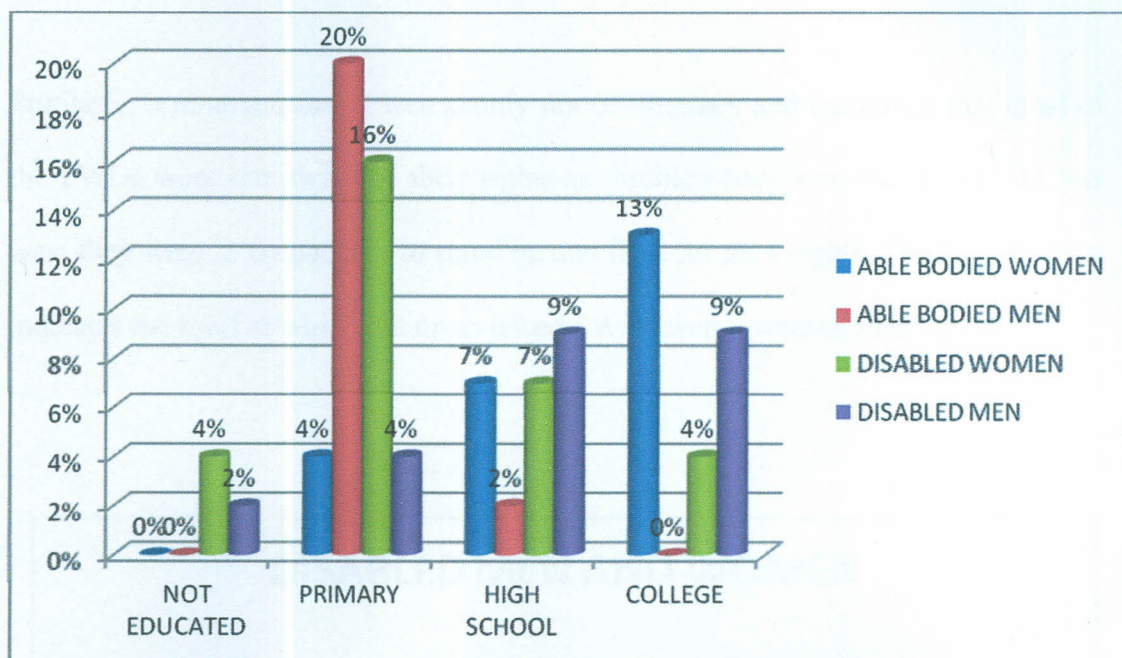
PWDs reported that they valued education and would certainly advance their education if given chance. One of the respondents had this to say:

*If only I could have a little more education, my marriage life would be better, I could support my children without depending on my drunkard and less concerned husband. (Married VI woman, No28, interview, 14<sup>th</sup> Dec, 2013)*

The article, *Labour Market Trends* showed that PWDs of working age were less likely to hold educational qualifications as compared to non-disabled people in the same age group. (Labour market Trends; 2012) Surprisingly, this had nothing to do with their intellectual ability but had everything to do with stigmatization on account of their disability.



The investigation showed that twelve (48%) of married PWDs living in Kiandutu slum were not educated beyond primary level, indicating a high level of illiteracy. However, 22% of their able-bodied spouses had slightly higher educational qualifications (high school and college). The figure below illustrates these findings.



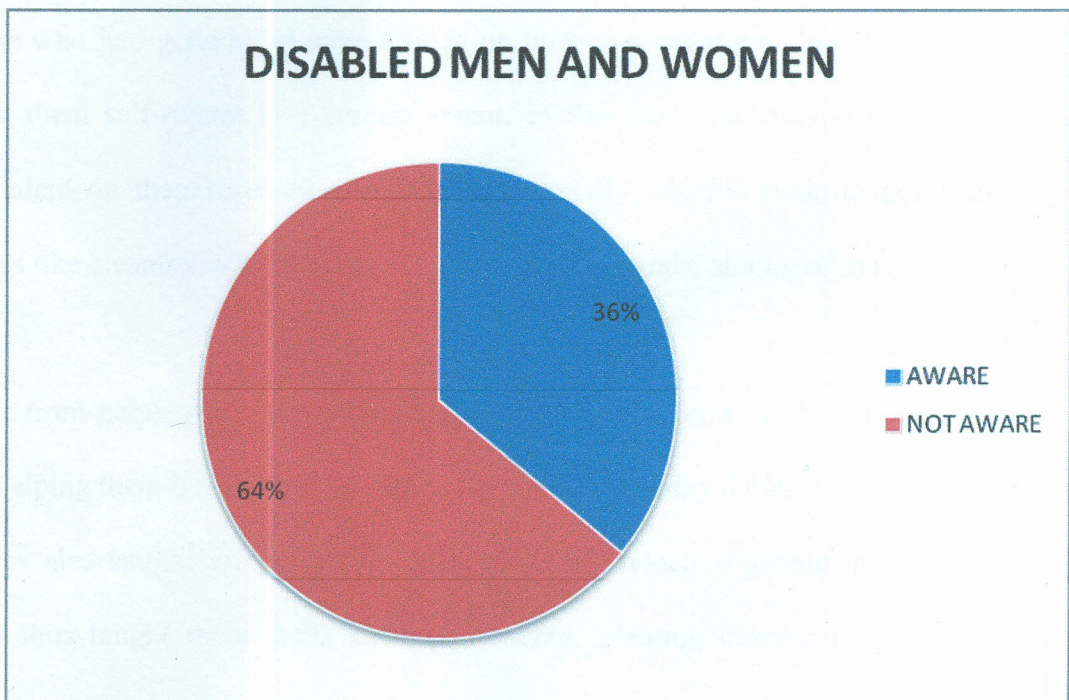
**Figure 4.7 Literacy Levels Among Married PWDs and their Able-Bodied Spouses**

Forty percent of PWDs reported that their parents denied them access to education since they were disabled. The repercussion created is that they could not access formal job opportunities and thus ended up either jobless or in lowly paid jobs. This rendered them incapable of fully taking charge over their families' responsibilities.

72% of the PWDs, and especially the visually impaired confessed that their children did not go to school. They admitted that their children acted as their guides as they went about begging in the streets. Therefore this contributed to continuity in the poverty cycle.

High levels of illiteracy in the families of PWDs hindered their ability to make sound and reasonable life decisions. For example, most couples agreed that they had too many children to sustain because they did not practice family planning. In the same manner, those who started small scale businesses did not possess the much-needed knowhow required to make their businesses soar to greater heights.

Similarly, it emerged that it was mainly out of illiteracy and ignorance that most of the PWDs were not aware of their rights as disabled people in the society. In this way, they were in no position to stand up and fight for their rights. The figure below indicates the level at which the interviewed PWDs were aware of their rights.



**Figure 4.8 Awareness of Rights for PWDs**

More than half (64%) of the disabled respondents admitted that they were completely unaware of their rights and privileges as people with disabilities.

#### 4.5 Intervention Strategies for PWDs

Having discovered the many challenges facing PWDs in marriages, the study sought to examine the different intervention strategies to alleviate the situation. First and foremost, the respondents suggested that the most crucial step towards helping them was rehabilitating them. All of them reiterated that, the transition from being able-bodied to being disabled came with a lot of shock, frustration, denial and depression.

Some of the respondents interviewed had had the privilege of getting into rehabilitation centers such as Machakos Rehabilitation Centre in Machakos while others had undergone rehabilitation from the National Councils for People with Disability, located in Westlands, Nairobi. The rehabilitation mainly sought to make the newly disabled persons accept their new status and move on with their lives. Those who had gone blind were trained on how to acquire mobility skills so as to make them self-reliant to a certain extent. In this way, they would not be over-dependent on their relatives and friends, especially when it came to doing basic chores like cleaning, sweeping, going out on small errands, among others.

Apart from helping the newly disabled people come to terms with their new status and helping them be capable of performing basic day to day duties, the rehabilitation centres also sought to make them economically productive people in the society. They thus taught them skills such as weaving, plaiting, massaging, pottery and basket-making.

37% of the PWDs interviewed were thankful to the associations dealing with them since it was such associations that had helped them come up with businesses thus

making them self-reliant. However, a majority of the PWDs, though aware of the existence of associations such as KUB, KSB, APDK and NCPWD, they had never received any assistance from them or seen their importance. One of the respondents attested to this fact:

*As a woman, I am restricted to my house. I am not allowed to go out frequently. Therefore, I do not have any idea about the existing facilities for people with disabilities... (Married VI woman, No15, interview, 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec, 2013)*

The findings showed that the PWDs acknowledged the government's and NGOs' efforts to help them although they lamented that little was being done in the slums with regard to implementation of policies and rights. They also complained that it was mainly due to corrupt government and NGO officials that help did not trickle down to the grassroots as effectively as it ought to. One respondent bitterly explained:

*The government and NGOs try a lot to offer assistance but those delegated the responsibility benefit at the expense of us dwelling in slums and struggling with poverty. (Married VI man, No. 8, Interview, 24<sup>th</sup> Nov, 2013)*

After witnessing the kind of life that the PWDs in Kiandutu slum had, the study concluded that in as much as the government and certain NGOs tried to alleviate the lives of the PWDs, their efforts were hardly noticeable. A lot more needed to be done so as to help the PWDs live more fulfilling lives.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This section presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the research. The main objective of the study was to unearth the gender differential effects of challenges faced by men and women in marriages involving people with disabilities. The study purposed to come up with practical solutions to the challenges such unions underwent. Information was acquired from 20 able-bodied men and women and 25 married PWDs.

The study used purposive sampling to identify married PWDs in Kiandutu slum since they had the information needed. Snowball sampling was necessary to trace other disabled respondents scattered in the slum. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) played a key role in enabling the researcher capture a variety of beliefs, ideas and opinions regarding what PWDs went through in their marriages.

The study was primarily based upon Amartya Sen's Capability Approach. In order to clearly understand the intricacies of this subject, this theory was merged with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory and the Social Model of Disability. The Conceptual Framework was developed from Sen's Capability Approach.

#### 5.1 Summary of the Findings

The main finding of the research was that mixed marriages underwent numerous unique challenges mainly brought about because of the disability status of one of the spouses. Due to the difference in gender, the challenges that the men went through

were also slightly different from those that the women experienced. The summary has been discussed following the order of the study objectives.

### **5.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of PWDs in Mixed Marriages**

Of the PWDs that were interviewed, sixty-eight percent were visually impaired while thirty-two percent were physically challenged. Twelve percent of the PWDs acquired their disability after getting into the marriage institutions while the rest had been living with the disability even before their marriage. Their unenviable area of residence, the slums, was evidence of their low living standards. Most WWD got married at a tender age whereas most MWD got married at an advanced age.

### **5.1.2 Stability of Mixed Marriages**

This was mainly established by finding out how happy or unhappy the couples in mixed marriages were. 52% of the respondents were unhappy of the happenings in their marriages hence more mixed marriages were unstable as compared to those that were stable. The study also revealed that WWD were more likely to be divorced as compared to men with disability.

### **5.1.3 Gender Differential Effects of the Socio-cultural Challenges**

The research revealed that PWDs suffered stigma, isolation and discrimination since their childhood and that this had adverse effects on their marital lives. Their upbringing affected the way they interacted with people of the opposite sex and greatly influenced the decisions they made when choosing spouses and in relating with the spouses even after marriage.

The researcher observed that constant frustrations made PWDs have low self-esteem and adopt negative attitudes towards life hence affecting the kind of decisions they made in life. Their able-bodied spouses thus perceived them to be egoistic, moody and short-tempered. This invariably had a negative effect on their marriages.

PWDs, just like any other people, yearned for love and appreciation. The saddening bit is that even their spouses, who had married them, supposedly, on the basis of love, did not make them feel acceptable and whole. Disability seemed to overshadow love.

Moreover, from courtship to marriage, the in-laws to the PWDs discriminated against them on grounds that they burdened their daughters and sons. This contributed to weakening of the mixed marriages as moral support was lacking from their close relatives and friends. Discouragement, on the other hand, was in abundance. Greater challenges were experienced when one spouse became disabled after marriage. It meant that life had to take a turn around, at times forcing the able-bodied spouse to be a care-giver, a task he/she could find to be too challenging. The couple could also be disabled from doing recreational activities together, enjoying their conjugal rights or even siring children thus contributing to more constraints.

Women with disabilities were found to suffer double tragedy on account of their gender and disability status. More often than not, WWD suffered maltreatment and victimization from their able-bodied husbands. They feared rejection and being alone, forcing them to stay on in abusive relationships.

#### **5.1.4 Gender Differential Effects of Socio-economic Challenges**

The study found out that poverty was a cancer eating up and contributing to the destruction of mixed marriages. Deplorable living conditions and financial constraints was a major reason for increase of misery and frustrations in the marital homes as the couples struggled to acquire basic needs. They said that the biggest challenge they faced was that of raising children under such conditions.

The study also found out that PWDs were denied employment opportunities yet, if given chance and favorable working environment, they could be as productive as any other non-disabled person. What this meant is that there are many people with disabilities whose skills are under-utilized at the present.

Since most of the PWDs were not fortunate enough to be well educated, they lacked the basic and much-needed skills in starting up and running businesses or even getting formal employment. The study indicated that education played a big role in making marriages stable as knowledge and wisdom were prerequisites of having a successful marriage.

The study also revealed that a majority of the married PWDs were not aware of their rights and privileges as people with disabilities in Kenya. Lack of this vital information was a hindrance towards the PWDs' emancipation from victimization, stigma and discrimination and their struggle to have blissful marriages.

As disability increased the chances of one being poor, poverty and poor living and working conditions increased the chances of one being disabled. The relationship



between disability and poverty is therefore problematic given that it places those with the greatest needs in a position where they have access to the fewest resources.

### **5.1.5 Intervention Measures**

The study showed that not all hope was lost as the PWDs living desolate lives have not been completely forgotten. Churches, NGOs and even the government have tried various ways of bettering their lives. They have come up with rehabilitation centres and sought to equip PWDs with entrepreneurial skills. The government has enacted gender-sensitive and disability-friendly laws and policies aimed at improving the lives of PWDs. More effort is however required in the implementation of these policies if the PWDs are to really enjoy their privileges and rights.

There is also need for assistance specifically directed to couples in mixed marriages because their challenges are unique and complex. These couples need specialized guidance and counseling to help them cope with the various attitudinal challenges they faced.

### **5.2 Conclusions**

From the analysis of the findings, it can be rightly concluded that poverty and disability will remain intertwined especially for those living in poor conditions unless there is full implementation of rights and policies involving PWDs. For instance, the PWDs in their childhood, and the PWDs' children should be encouraged to go to school and effort be made to keep them in school and help them pursue their dreams.

Secondly, it can be concluded that most PWDs married to able-bodied spouses had unhappy and therefore unstable marriages. This is mainly because they got into marriage out of frustration and desperation. The PWDs also did not feel fully accepted and loved by their spouses. They therefore still craved for love and acceptance.

An unfortunate conclusion is that married PWDs still faced discrimination, stigma, marginalization and isolation in the family and society. This made them lose their sense of self-worth, hence felt dejected and abandoned. This contributed to the frustrations experienced in mixed marriages.

Finally, it can be concluded that although the government, NGOs and churches have tried to help improve the lives of the PWDs, a lot is yet to be done. Corruption and corrupt officials have to be done away with so that the help trickles down well to the grassroots.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

This study, after its thorough investigation into the lives of married PWDs, recommends that those able-bodied men and women who have chosen to get married to PWDs should make up their minds to be fully committed and responsible spouses. They should, most importantly, be loving, empathetic and appreciative of their disabled spouses' strengths and shortcomings.

The government and NGOs ought to strive to make information on the rights, duties and privileges of the PWDs highly accessible to PWDs and to the general public.

Able-bodied men and women married to disabled spouses need to be enlightened through seminars on how to sustain and tolerate their spouses in marriage. It is also recommended that PWDs in their childhood and the children of PWDs be encouraged to go to school to pursue education. This will help reduce illiteracy and poverty among PWDs.

The study recommends that effort be placed towards encouraging PWDs gaining self-dignity and self-confidence. The society ought to shun discrimination and stigmatization and show the PWDs love and acceptance.

Lastly but of great significance is the recommendation that the government and NGOs should demonstrate commitment in assisting PWDs living in slums. All key stakeholders should play their respective roles in implementing policies put in place. Also, there should be enactment of tough laws that will protect married PWDs who are in abusive marriages.

#### **5.4 Suggestions for Further Research**

The study suggests that a comparative study be done to establish the difference in challenges and issues experienced by PWDs married to PWDs as compared to PWDs married to able-bodied spouses.

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## APPENDIX 1

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR MARRIED PWDs

#### Introduction

I am a student at Kenyatta University undertaking a Master of Arts Degree course in Gender and Development Studies. I am carrying out a research on challenges encountered by persons with visual and physical disability married to able spouses in Thika, Kiandutu slum. I would be pleased by your contribution in this research through answering these questions .I shall maintain confidentiality in whatever you tell me. Your responses will help me make recommendations for alleviating these challenges. Your responses will be used for the purpose of this research.

#### Section One

##### General Information

1. Gender \_\_\_\_\_
2. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your occupation? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you have children? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) How many? \_\_\_\_\_
5. When did you lose your ability to see / walk? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What was the cause of disability? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Did u get the disability before or after marriage? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) If it happened after marriage, did your marriage life change? \_\_\_\_\_
  - If yes, how? \_\_\_\_\_

##### Education

1. What is your academic qualification?
  - (a) Never attended school
  - (b) Primary
  - (c) Secondary
  - (d) Tertiary

If (b) why didn't you proceed to (C),

If (c) why didn't you proceed to (d)

2. What is the highest level of education of your spouse?
3. Does your level of education affect your marriage life?  
If yes how?
4. Would you mind advancing your level of education in order to cope with marriage life?
  - (a) Yes
  - (b) No

### **Employment**

1. What is your source of income?
  - (a) Employed
  - (b) Self employed
  - (c) Unemployed

If (a) or (b) are you contented with the source of income
2. What is your spouse's opinion concerning your source of income?
3. Do you participate in any development activity?
  - (a) Which one
  - (b) How beneficial is it to you and your family?
  - (c) Do you enjoy participating into it or you feel intimidated?

### **Section Two**

#### **Social Inclusion and Exclusion**

1. During courtship, did you experience difficulties from your own family or prospective spouse's family in marrying the person of your choice?  
If yes, how did you overcome the situation?
2. How often do family members / relatives / friends visit you?
3. (a) Do you accompany each other in community's functions?  
(b) Does your spouse feel free to be with you in public?
4. Have you ever been called names related to your type of disability?
  - i) If yes who are the people
    - a) Family members

- b) Friends
- c) Neighbors
- d) Strangers

ii) How do you react in such a situation?

### **Challenges in Marriage**

- (a) When were you married?
- (b) How is your marriage life?  
Does your spouse love and care for you?
- (c) Does he/she share domestic chores with you e.g. cooking, washing, and taking care of children?
- (d) How do the families where you are married view your marriage?
- (e) How stable is your marriage?

### **Assistance and Services**

- (a) Are you aware of any organization that provides rehabilitation services to the 'disabled'?
- (b) Have you ever sought rehabilitation from any of these organizations?
- (c) What did you gain at the rehabilitation center? And how helpful was it in your marriage?
- (d) Have you ever received any assistance for the disability you have?
  - Who provided?
  - What kind of assistance was provided?
  - Are you aware of your rights as a person with disability?
  - if yes, which ones?
- (e) What role does the church play in assisting married V.I and P.H in your community?

### **Intervention Strategies**

- (a) Is this community / society aware of the visually and physically challenged persons within? please explain
- (b) What role does the government and other non-governmental organization play in sensitizing the plight of the challenged persons in the community?

## Appendix 2

### Interview Schedule for Abled Spouses Married to Persons with Visual and Physical Disability

#### Introduction

I am a student at Kenyatta University undertaking a Master of Arts Degree course in Gender and Development Studies. I am carrying out a research on challenges encountered by persons with visual and physical disability married to able-bodied spouses in Kiandutu slum. I would be pleased by your contribution in this research through answering these questions. I shall maintain confidentiality in whatever you tell me. Your responses will help me make recommendations for alleviating these challenges. Your responses will be used for the purpose of this research.

#### Section One

##### General Information

1. Gender \_\_\_\_\_
2. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your occupation? \_\_\_\_\_
4. When did you marry/get married? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you have children? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) How many? \_\_\_\_\_

##### Education

1. What is your academic qualification?
  - a) Never attended school
  - b) Primary
  - c) Secondary
  - d) Tertiary

If (b) why didn't you proceed to (c)?

If (c) why didn't you proceed to (d)?

2. What is the highest level of education of your spouse?
3. Does your level of education affect your marriage life?  
If yes how?
3. Would you mind advancing your level of education in order to cope with marriage life?
  - (a) Yes
  - (b) No

### **Employment**

1. What is your source of income?
  - (a) Employed
  - (b) Self employed
  - (c) Unemployed

If (a) or (b) are you contented with the source of income
2. What is your spouse's opinion concerning your source of income?
3. Do you participate in any development activity with a social group?
  - (a) Which one?
  - (b) How beneficial is it to you and your family?
  - (c) Do you enjoy participating or you feel intimidated?

### **Section Two**

#### **Social Inclusion and Exclusion**

1. Before marriage, had you interacted with PWDs? How did you find the interaction?
2. What prompted you to marry / be married to a PWD?
3. During courtship, did you experience difficulties from your own family or prospective spouse's family in marrying a PWD?  
If yes, how did you overcome the situation?
4. How often do family members / relatives / friends visit you?
5. Do you accompany each other in community's functions?
6. Are you comfortable being with your disabled spouse in public?
7. How do other people perceive your marriage?
  - a) How do you react in such a situation?

- b) Do you enjoy your marriage life? Or you feel frustrated?
8. Do you help your disabled spouse in accomplishing of house chores e.g. cooking, washing and taking care of children?
  9. How do the families where you have married perceive you having married their child despite the disability?
  10. Do you find it a burden to live with your spouse? If yes, how?
  11. How do you view your marriage in future?

### **Intervention Strategies**

- (a) Is this community / society aware of the visually and physically challenged persons? Explain.
- (b) What role does the government and other non-governmental organization Play in sensitizing the plight of the challenged persons in the community?



### Appendix 3

#### A Checklist Of Issues Observed In Kiandutu Slum

##### (Respondents' Households)

#### Introduction

I am a student at Kenyatta University undertaking a Master of Arts Degree course in Gender and Development Studies. I am carrying out a research on challenges encountered by persons with visual and physical disability married to able-bodied spouses in Kiandutu slum. I would be pleased by your contribution in this research through answering these questions. I shall maintain confidentiality in whatever you tell me. Your responses will help me make recommendations for alleviating these challenges. Your responses will be used for the purpose of this research.

SECTOR	ISSUE
Social way of life between the couple, and the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Majority of the able bodied men cared less to assist their blind wives in domestic duties</li> <li>✓ portrayed violent character due to their drunkard state(lack of etiquette in their talking, clothing and general presentation within the house)</li> <li>✓ were seen to be irresponsible partners</li> <li>✓ Majority of able-bodied women were observed to be caring, assisted their men in house chores, were proud of their husbands and generally stood out as responsible and hardworking wives.</li> <li>✓ Still an element of discrimination was observed in that very few friends and neighbors were seen visiting</li> <li>✓ Majority of the married PWDs were in social groups that comprised of only PWDs</li> <li>✓ High birth rates implying low use of family planning methods</li> <li>✓ High poverty levels denying such marriages access to basic needs</li> <li>✓ Most are way behind in issues of development due to Inaccessibility to information and technology</li> </ul>

Socio-economic activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Majority of the able-bodied men spend their time in drinking sprees ,and idled besides the roads as a way of leisure</li> <li>✓ Most able bodied women kept themselves busy by running small businesses within kiandutu market so as to support their family</li> <li>✓ Majority of both men and women with disability moved out to beg in streets of Thika town so as to make ends meet.</li> </ul>
Physical environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Stagnant pools of water right at their doorsteps due to poor drainage</li> <li>✓ Inadequate sanitary facilities such as toilets, latrines, sources of clean water</li> <li>✓ Heaps of waste disposal within the houses</li> </ul>
✓ Physical infrastructures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Dilapidated houses that leak during rainy season</li> <li>✓ Live connection of electricity in few houses that are very risky</li> <li>✓ Poor state of roads (muddy, bumpy and full of tuktuks, motorbikes, bicycle and vehicles) right from their doorstep. This limits movements especially to the blind and physically handicapped</li> </ul>
Parental responsibility and literacy level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Lack of collective responsibility,</li> <li>✓ Children accompanied their blind parents in streets to beg instead of going to school</li> <li>✓ High rates of illiteracy noted in majority of able bodied men and their spouse</li> </ul>

## Appendix 4

### Focus Group Discussion For Married PWDs

#### Introduction

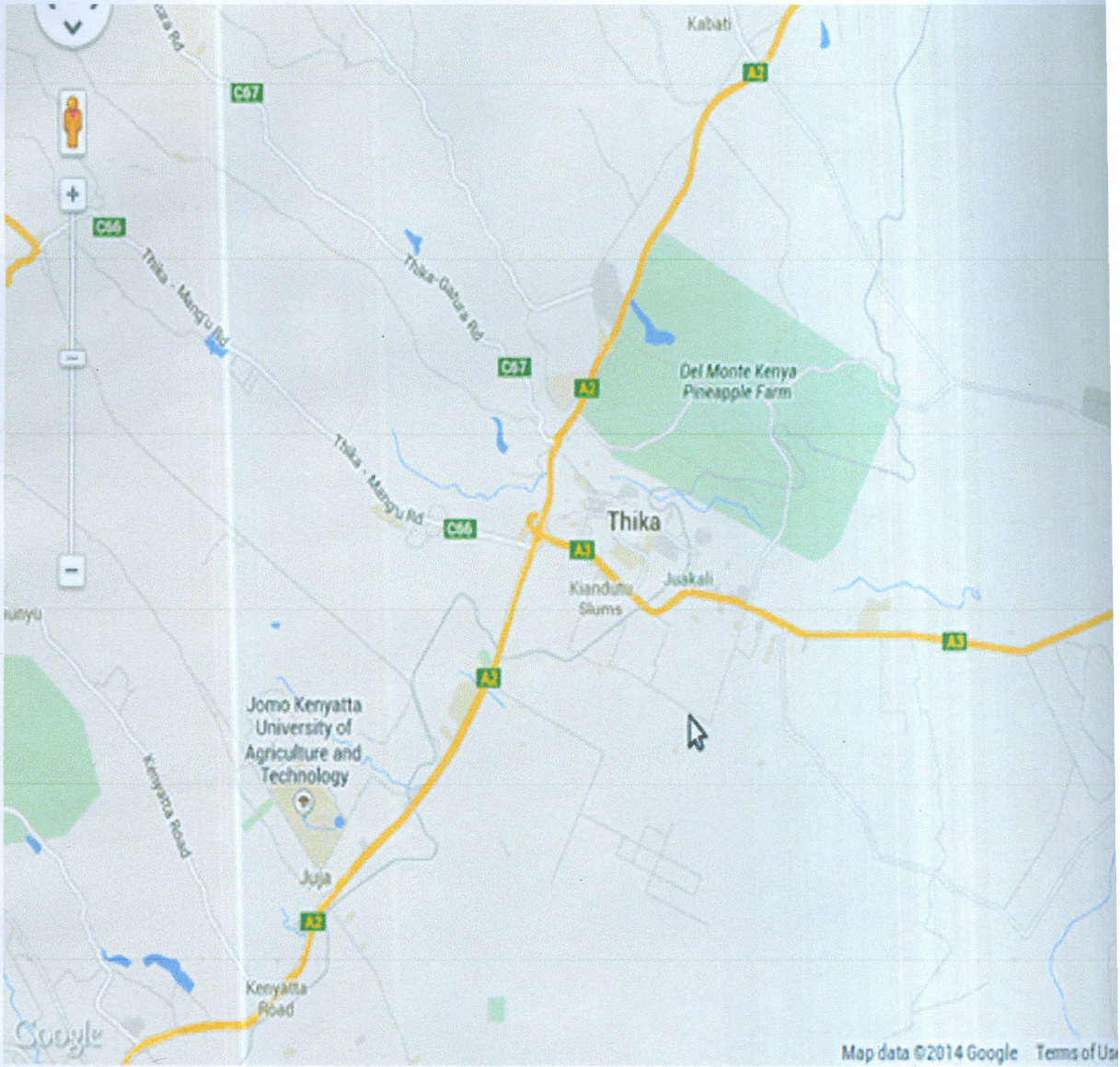
I am a student at Kenyatta University undertaking a Master of Arts Degree course in Gender and Development Studies. I am carrying out a research on challenges encountered by persons with visual and physical disability married to able-bodied spouses in Kibandutu slum. I would be pleased by your contribution in this research through answering these questions. I shall maintain confidentiality in whatever you tell me. Your responses will help me make recommendations for alleviating these challenges. Your responses will be used for the purpose of this research.

1. Does love exist in your marriage? Explain the reasons of existence and non-existence of love in your marriage
2. Do you experience stigma /discrimination from your spouse? If yes, kindly elaborate why and how your spouse discriminates against you?
3. Are there incidences of infidelity experienced in your marriage? If yes
  - a. What are the reasons that you think pushes your spouse into practicing infidelity?
  - b. How do you handle the situation?
4. In your own view, how does culture affect marriages involving persons living with disability?
5. How do the families you are married to view your marriage life? Do parents and in-laws support your marriage bearing in mind that their son/daughter doesn't have a disability?
6. Do you regret having been married or marrying an able-bodied spouse?

7. Are there incidences of violence experienced in your marriage? If yes
  - a. What are the reasons for the violence?
  - b. What forms of violence does your spouse subject you to?
  - c. How do you cope with a violent spouse?
8. While begging in streets, do you get sexual advances from strangers? If yes,
  - a. Who are these strangers? What are their intentions?
  - b. How do you deal with such a situation?
  - c. Do such incidences affect your marriage? If yes, how? How do you handle it?
9. Majority of persons living with disability live in abject poverty.
  - a. How does the poverty situation affect your marriage life?
  - b. How can this situation be dealt with to reduce high poverty levels among the disabled?
10. Generally, how do you rate the future of your marriage?
11. What advice can you give to other ladies and gentlemen living with disabilities who are preparing to get married to able-bodied partners?
12. What do you think should be done to better marriages involving the able-bodied and PWDs?

**Appendix 5**

**Map Showing Location Of Kiandutu Slum**



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