

**CHALLENGES FACING PARTICIPATION OF GIRLS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS  
IN INCLUSIVE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN CHUKA DIVISION IN THARAKA  
NITHI COUNTY.**

**MICHENI MONICA TIIRA**

**C50/CE/11604/08**

**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND  
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## DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my original work and it has not been presented for a degree in any University or for any other award.

Signature ..... 

Date ..... 10/6/2013 .....

**MICHENI MONICA TIIRA**

**C50/CE/11604/08**

We confirm that the work reported in this research report was carried out by the candidate under my supervision

Signature ..... 

Date ..... 12-06-13 .....

**PROFESSOR WANGARI MWAI**

**KENYATTA UNIVERSITY**

Signature ..... 

Date ..... 12/6/13 .....

**PROFESSOR CATHERINE NDUNGO**

**KENYATTA UNIVERSITY**

## ABSTRACT

Since the early years, children with learning disabilities were enrolled in special schools and this led to their segregation from regular schools. They were basically looked down upon in the society. Today, the government and key educational stakeholders have put great efforts in trying to include these learners into mainstream schools where they learn with the regular pupils. This has not been successful since not all children with special learning needs and who have attained the school age are enrolled in schools. The main concern of the study was to investigate the challenges facing the participation of school going girls with special needs in Chuka Division of Meru South District. The researcher also sought to establish the prevalence of girls with special needs and the different measures to address these challenges. Social learning theory by Vygotsky (1981) guided the study. The study established that social interaction by girls with special needs in the school environment precedes learning. This is in agreement with Vygotsky's social learning theory who also maintains that mainstream schools are better placed to offer inclusive education but have been slow to promote environment in which learners are actually involved in their education. Descriptive case study design was used. A total population of 74 respondents participated in the study. Purposive sampling was used to achieve a sample of educational officers, teachers, parents and girls with special needs. In Meru South District, Chuka Division has more schools that offer inclusive education and therefore these respondents. Stratified random sampling was used to get a sample of "normal" children through dividing the children into groups of boys and girls and then using simple random sampling to get a sample of 10 boys and 10 girls. Four sets of instruments were used. These were observation by the researcher, questionnaire for education officers and teachers, interview schedule for parents and girls with special needs and focus groups discussions for "normal" children. The instruments were valid and reliable in collecting data since they were first piloted in one primary school and changes made accordingly. Further the instruments content validity was ascertained by the supervisors who are experts in the department. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics whereas qualitative data was analyzed thematically in line with the objectives of the study. The major challenges identified were: - Low self-esteem, lack of facilities/inaccessible, overloading of teachers, discrimination due to disability and lack of role models. Counseling for girls with special needs and national campaigns on what entails inclusive education were some of the major recommendations that came up strongly. These will help the policy makers to address the unique needs of girls with special needs and to make programs that address their diverse challenges.