



ISSN 1710-2146

**The Progress Made in the Implementation of Inclusive Education Policy in
Tanzania: Opinions from Parents and Students**

Emanuel Ismael Maphie,

*Department of Sociology and Anthropology, College of Social Sciences, University of
Dar Salaam.*

Abstract

This research employed phenomenological approach to explore parents and students' perspectives on inclusive education settings in Tanzanian secondary schools. Twenty-four respondents, including students and parents were involved. The study objective was to explore the students' and parents' perspectives on inclusive education settings in secondary schools in Tanzania. The study leading question was: What are the opinions of students and parents on inclusive education settings in secondary schools in Tanzania? Interviews and focused group discussions used to gather data. The findings reflected various perspectives from parents and students on secondary school inclusive education settings. Students with and without disabilities had positive perception towards inclusive education settings despite the fact that they had some reservations for improvement. For parents of children with disabilities had positive opinions towards inclusive education settings and found it appropriate to include their children with those without disabilities in a classroom. Parents of children without disabilities had negative perception and were against inclusive education. Parents also found not participating and cooperating in financing education for their children in inclusive education settings.

Keywords: Inclusive education, special needs education, students with disabilities, individualized education programme

Introduction

Globally, it is estimated that one third of the 93 million primary school aged children have disabilities (WHO, 2022). The 2010 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Report has recorded a strong link between disability and marginalization in education. Education for All Global Monitoring Report (2007), estimates that the majority of children with disabilities in Africa do not go to school. In Africa alone, less than 10% of children with disabilities are in schools. Tanzania is among the countries with 7.8% population of the individuals with disabilities (UNICEF, 2011). According to the 2011 UNICEF report on adolescence in Tanzania, about 0.5% of all the children enrolled in primary schools had disabilities. The report shows that in secondary schools, 0.2% of boys and 0.4% of girls had disabilities. The percentages are extremely low compared to the estimated 7.8% of Tanzanian population with disabilities (WHO, 2020).

The move to make sure that children with disabilities receive equal and accessible education rose as a global concern. To deal with both internal and external pressure, Tanzania in 2000 signed a Salamanca Statement and in 2004 adopted it as a guide and selected 37 schools to pilot inclusive education aiming at full inclusion of all of its schools in future (MoEVT, 2013; 2012). The piloted schools necessitated to adopt an education system that captures the need of individuals, rather than changing the individual to fit in the system. The purpose was to ensure that more learners with special educational needs were served in general education classrooms rather than in special schools or classrooms (MoEVT, 2012).

Inclusive education has been defined by Ainscow (1999) as an education provided to students with disabilities (SWDs) in chronologically age-appropriate general education classes in their home schools at the same time and receiving specialized instruction delineated by their individualized education programs within the context of the core curriculum and general class activities. It is a full acceptance of all students which leads to a sense of belonging within the classroom community; children with disabilities learn together in regular schools or classes with their peers, irrespective of their differences or difficulties in learning or development. The change from special needs education systems to inclusive education poses difficulties to teachers and education specialists (Khan, 2012). For example, Kapinga (2012) observes that although the inclusive model emphasizes assistance to learners by class or subject teachers and not by specialists, there is no evidence that teachers in inclusive education settings in

Tanzania are prepared to undertake the role. Instead, teachers without training on teaching students with disabilities found themselves in a new role of including students with disabilities (SWDs) in their classrooms. International Labour Organisation (ILO) Report (2009) informs that teachers in Tanzania are reluctant to accept learners classified as having disabilities in their classrooms and that they have negative attitude towards inclusive education. Furthermore, Gwala (2006) illustrated that teachers in Tanzania are not motivated. Meijer (2005) and Rieser (2008) insist that inclusive education system requires dedicated and responsible teachers in the front line to display positive attitudes towards disabled learners. Sreenath (2012) suggested that one of the important elements for successful inclusion is motivation to teachers. If teachers are not recognized and motivated for the work they perform, inclusive education may not be implemented with success (Tungaraza, 1994).

The shift to inclusive education also affects the education system in terms of physical environments including infrastructures. The introduction of the new approach of teaching learners with special educational needs in normal classrooms or schools in Tanzania demanded for change to most of Tanzanian secondary schools infrastructures so that they can support SWDs (Pima, 2012; Chediell, Sekwao & Komba, 2000; Mkonongwa, 2014). Maphie and Possi (2017) showed that most of secondary schools' infrastructures do not support the needs of students with disabilities.

In this regard, inclusive education has unique characteristics different from those of ordinary or special needs education in terms of its aims, objectives, time, contents methods and perception (Farrel, 2004). Parents of the children with disabilities before enrolling their children they assess all the school environments settings to see how they cater the needs of their children. Further, parents and students are among the key stakeholders in schools. Their confidences and trust to the school systems may determine how successful the inclusive education is in the country. Hence, the present study sought to investigate parents and students' opinions on secondary school inclusive education settings in Tanzania.

Literature review

Disability in Tanzania is defined under the Disability Policy of 2004 and the 2010 Tanzanian Disability Act as the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical, mental or social factors (Ministry of Health and Social Welfare [MoHSW], 2010). Tanzania has also signed several International Declarations including the Declaration on the

Rights of People with Disabilities (1975), the Convention on the Rights of Children (1989) and the Standard Rule on the Question of Opportunities for People with Disabilities (1993).

In Tanzania, inclusive education started through a pilot study in some schools including Uhuru Mchanganyiko, Moshi technical, and Old Moshi schools to mention but a few (MoEVT, 2012). In the year 2004, the National Policy on Disability came in place followed by the Act for people with disabilities of 2010 (MoHSW, 2010). The 2010 Act for People with Disabilities prohibits discrimination of any form in the provision of education at all levels. It puts clearly the right of educating SWDs in inclusive settings (MoHSW, 2010). For the first time, the act made it necessary for SWDs to be educated in inclusive settings. MoEVT (2012) suggests that the government of Tanzania has trained classroom teachers, school inspectors, District Education Officers (DEOs) and Ward Education Officers on inclusive approach as a way forward to full implementation of inclusive education. MoEVT (2011) indicates that the government has conducted several policy reviews and curriculum reforms so as to take on board inclusive education features.

Despite the fact that the National Disability Policy and the Act for People with Disabilities require all public places, including schools, to be accessible to people with disabilities; one notable and notorious challenge indicated by different literatures is inaccessibility to building as well as poor physical infrastructures (Masenga, & Mkandawire, 2007). Mbagga (2002) suggests that most of the Tanzanian public school buildings are inaccessible. Kapinga (2012), on the same, attributes challenges on inclusive and special needs education to the government. The author contends that even during the years 2002-2006, when many reforms took place in the sector of education, the question of inclusive and special needs education was ignored. The author also reports lack of qualified teachers for special needs education, inaccessible facilities, shortage of teaching and learning materials, overcrowded classrooms as well as lack of assistive devices for SWDs as common problems in schools.

In addition, Pima (2012) suggests that inclusive education in Tanzania falls in the hands of teachers who are unaware of various impairments and how to deal with most common learning difficulties. The findings support that of Possi (1996) who shows that teachers in Tanzania are not informed on how to adapt the classroom and school environment to overcome barriers to learning. Further, most teachers in Tanzania are unaware of how to respond to students' diversity and how to adapt the curriculum to

suit the needs of SWD. Pima (2012) suggests that inclusive education principles encourage the involvement of parents/community so that they become aware of diversities and support inclusion. However, parents/communities in Tanzania are neither involved in planning of inclusive programmes nor are they aware of diversities within their children.

For successful inclusion, attention should be paid to the importance of human agency. Education stakeholders are the most important agents in the implementation of inclusive education in schools (Loreman et al., 2008). They include but not limited to teachers, students, parents, and government and non-government organizations. They affect the way inclusion as a phenomenon can be viewed. Commenting on this, Loreman et al. (2008) suggest that the perceptions of different people in the society determine the success or failure of inclusive education. The authors show that teachers, professionals and parents appear to be aware of the concept of inclusive education but they are not sure of how it is implemented in ordinary settings. On the other hand, Feldman and Matos (2012), show that there is a difference between parents' perception in the developed and developing countries. Parents in developed countries have a more positive perception towards inclusive education compared to those in developing countries who demonstrate less positive perceptions. In developed countries, positive perceptions are attributed to inclusion being widely practised because of the public laws. Negative perception in developing countries is attributed to limited awareness for community members on issues related to disabilities. There is also a belief among teachers and parents that SWDs are unable to cope with the level of academic demand in the mainstream schools' system (MacDonald, 2012)

Coopeland & Cosbey (2009) raise an important argument that there is a no way inclusive education setting can be conducive for SWDs without participation of parents or families. These are important components in inclusive school settings as they tie for a successful inclusion. Coopeland & Cosbey (2009) continue that educators' need to be aware of how parents view the process of inclusion. Coopeland and Cosbey (2009) conclude that there is no way educators can work effectively with SWDs without assistance from students' parents/families. Working with the parents/families therefore, is an important duty of educators/teachers. They help both students and their parents/families to achieve their goals through assistance and resources they provide to the learners to reach their goals (Stubbs, 2008).

In this regard, therefore, inclusive education has been in practice for many years in Tanzania. However, the available literature shows that there is a lot that remained unknown especially parents and students perceptions on inclusive education settings in the context of Tanzanian secondary schools. This study, therefore aimed to investigate on opinions of parents and students on the implementation inclusion in Tanzanian secondary school settings.

Theoretical Framework

The current study is guided by the Social Model (SM) of disability. The model suggests that people are termed as having disability by the fact that they are excluded from participating within the mainstreamed society as a result of physical organization and attitudinal barriers (Forlin, 2010). The social model seeks for inclusion of everyone in the society rather than exclusion (Rieser, 2002). The model also focuses on promoting positive attitudes and perceptions, modifying the built environment, providing information in accessible manners (large print), and making sure that laws and policies support the exercise of full participation and non-discrimination (Rieser, 2002). The model was selected to guide the study as it gives light on the barriers within the society and the way they affect education for SWDs. They include the environment (inaccessible buildings and services); peoples' attitudes (stereotyping, discrimination and prejudice) and organizations (inflexible policies, practice and procedures). The model helped in identifying solutions for barriers against SWDs. It encourages the removal of barriers within the society or reduction of their effects. It also encourages the society to be more inclusive.

Methodology

The current study is qualitative in nature. Instead of measuring the phenomenon of inclusive education settings by numbers, it used open questions to explore participants' opinions. Besides the exploratory character of the study, it still uses existing theories to understand the concept of inclusive education (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Given the interpretive stance adopted and the nature of the research questions, a phenomenological design was chosen as the design of enquiry for the study. Strauss and Corbin, (1990) put it clear that phenomenological researchers study the ordinary life world: they are interested in the way people experience their world, what it is like for them' and how best to understand their experiences. The current research, through interviews and focus group discussions, yielded experienced perceptions and concerns of participants on their real lived experiences concerning inclusive education settings in

secondary schools (Groenewald, 2004). Parents and students had the chance to describe their experiences on inclusive education settings, as they perceive. The design allowed the researcher to study inclusive secondary schools settings extensively, gathering participants' experiences on inclusive education; develop patterns and relationships of the lived experiences by the participants concerning inclusive education settings in secondary schools in Tanzania.

The study was conducted in Dar es Salaam and Kilimanjaro regions; covering three inclusive secondary schools whereby purposive sampling was used to sample schools as well as parents while quota sampling used to draw students' sample (Groenewald, 2004). A total of 24 participants consented participation and formed the study sample. Sixteen (16) students stratified into four strata and then four (4) students from each stratum were purposively selected for the study. Finally, eight (8) parents purposively selected to form the sample.

Two qualitative data methods were used to collect data; interviews and focus group discussion. Interviews were conducted individually to parents for 30 to 40 minutes. The method gathered data on the parents' perceptions on the inclusive education settings. The second method used to collect data is focus group discussions. The method gathered students' perspectives on their experiences towards inclusive education settings in secondary schools. The technique aimed at sharing views among students without disabilities toward studying with their peers with disabilities (Patton, 2002). Groups of five to six members were formed and issued with different topics on inclusive education for discussion. The researcher was moving around to give clarifications where need arose but also recording the sessions. Assessment of the emotional tone of the meeting and the group process enabled the researcher to judge the validity of the information collected during FGD. The methods helped to provide valuable spontaneous and in-depth information with high quality data on concepts, perceptions and ideas of a group in a short time and at a relatively low cost (Reeves et al., 2008). Interaction of respondents also stimulated a richer response or new and valuable thought.

Limitations

One limitation of this research study is that it focused on four categories of disabilities only, namely, hearing, physical, intellectual and visual impairments. The limitation makes it difficult for its findings to be generalized to other forms of

disabilities. Further, the study was conducted in secondary schools, thus its findings are bound within that context. They cannot be applied to other levels of education. In addition, the small sample size of the study is a limitation in that there were four schools involved with a total of twenty participants. One may opt to replicate the study to assess the reliability of its findings as well as adding to the available data regarding opinions of parents and students on inclusive education settings in Tanzania secondary schools.

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The study involved 24 participants whereas 16 were students with and without disabilities and 8 parents. Student sample had fifty six percent of boys and forty four percent of girls. In terms of age, forty four percent of students ranged 10 – 12, thirty one percent 12 – 14 and twenty five percent had 14 – 17 years.

For case of parents, 50% were males and 50% females. Parents involved were in the middle adulthood age ranging between 32 - 49 years. In their marital status aspect, twenty two percent of the parents were divorced, twelve percent in separation and sixty two percent were in marriage. On their levels of education, sixty three percent had diploma and university education while thirty-seven were standard seven leavers.

Data analysis

The research data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The researcher used steps for formal data analysis. First, the formal phase was introduced after extensive reading and re-reading of the transcripts (Schnorr, 1997). Secondly, the process of categorizing the data was undertaken. Thirdly, in order to obtain a good interpretation of the studied phenomenon, the data were coded noting what happened to be interesting and requiring labeling significant words and then the data was filed appropriately as proposed by Creswell (2007). On the basis of the categories, identifying and creating themes were the final steps in data analysis. Words, phrases, and statements that addressed the participants' description of feelings related to inclusive settings were marked using a highlighter. Codes were assigned for different types of statements whilst identification statements of significance were grouped into meaningful units (Van Manen, 1990)

During data collection in fieldwork, participants were informed of the purpose of the study in which there was a small presentation on the study objective. Participants were asked if they had questions regarding the study. After that, they were requested for their participation. They were also informed of their right to withdraw from

participating at any time. The respondents were assured that their names and that of the school would not be used in the report and documentation of the data, and that they would not be made available to anyone who is not directly involved in the study (Collins et al., 2009). Prior to going to the field, permission to conduct the research was sought from the committee responsible for research in Tanzania.

Results

This section presents the research findings. It is important to note that the study focused on investigating the perceptions of students and parents on inclusive education settings in Tanzanian secondary schools. Following the analysis of raw data, various categories and themes emerged. The themes are presented as emerged from the field.

Students' Perspectives.

The findings showed that students with and without disabilities had varied perceptions towards the implementation of inclusive education in secondary schools in Tanzania. The findings indicate that students concerns were on the improvement of inclusive education settings so that they could be more conducive for SWDs. According to the findings, students' perspectives included the need for adequate number of qualified teachers, awareness campaign on inclusive education for students without disabilities, friendly school physical environments, supportive learning materials and social support for students with disabilities.

Number and quality of teachers.

The findings, on this theme, show that students (both with and without disabilities), were dissatisfied with the current inadequate number and competences of teachers who handle students in inclusive education settings. The findings revealed that students were dissatisfied with the number of teachers, especially those trained in special needs education. The findings indicate that students urge for an increase in number of specialized teachers and training for those without special needs education. One of the interviewed students with disabilities gave following comment:

We have few teachers. Students with disabilities need more time with teachers to help them catch up with studies. In our school, teachers cannot afford this as our numbers in the class overwhelms them. We are requesting for more teachers. Not only teachers but also those who can understand teach and love us. The few teachers we have should be trained on how to handle inclusive classrooms by considering students with special needs.

Furthermore, the findings show that some students, especially those with hearing impairment had some discomfort with the inclusive education settings specifically on the academic aspects. The findings revealed that students with hearing impairments were even ready to shift from inclusive schools to special ones. One of the students with hearing impairment commented the following in this regard:

We lack teachers with experience in teaching students with disabilities, particularly those with hearing impairment. We are not learning here. We are unable to communicate with teachers. They do not have expertise in sign language and we cannot understand their language. As a result, we are not learning anything. It is my opinion that the government brings teachers who are qualified to teach us; otherwise, we should be allowed to join special schools for students with hearing impairments.

Another respondent with hearing impairment from an interview had this to say:

I am totally at a loss here. I am not gaining anything. Everything is bad to me, the environment is unfriendly, I cannot understand teachers when they teach and they never understand me. I am getting zero communication. Teachers never recognize my presence in classes. They generalize us (students with disabilities) with normal students. I think it is better that we go back to our special schools.

Awareness of students without disabilities

The study found out that students without disabilities had minimal understanding of issues concerning SWDs. They needed some sensitization and awareness campaign on inclusive education, specifically on how to interact and help those with disabilities. It was revealed that students without disabilities were interested in cooperating with those with disabilities but were facing difficulties as they lacked knowledge on special needs issues. In an interview with students without disabilities, one of them had this to say:

We really need some sensitization on issues concerning students with disabilities. Some of us want to support our fellows with disabilities but we are unaware of their needs, particularly the means of communication. Sometimes it appears as if we do not want to help them, but it is because we do not know how to treat them appropriately. We need to have some basics to help us interact with them easily, particularly with communication and use of their assistive devices.

Physical environments

The study findings show that environments of schools involved in this study hindered mobility of students with disabilities. School buildings, pavements, dormitories, classrooms as well as teachers' offices have steep stairs. Such environments hinder the movement of SWDs from one point to another. Findings showed that there were no strong measures taken by the school management or the government to make the school environments and infrastructures inclusive. The physical environments and infrastructures in the sampled schools were unfriendly, not only to SWDs, but also, to those without disabilities.

From an interview with SWDs, one physically impaired student said: The study also revealed students' concerns on unsupportive environments within the school compound. It was learned that classes, dormitories, toilets and almost every building had steep stairs. This is a challenge to students with physical disabilities whose movements are limited in terms of access to buildings with such infrastructures. In one of the interviews with students with disabilities, one of them responded as indicated in the quotation.

The environment handicaps us. The school surroundings are not friendly to us. Our dormitories, for example, are far from classrooms. Sometimes we arrive late in our classrooms and find teachers finalizing teaching.

We request the administration to improve on the infrastructure so that we can move around easily.

The other student who was also physically impaired added the following:

Our school has steep stairs everywhere. I start with them right from my dormitory to classrooms and teachers' offices. We face difficulties to go through using our wheelchairs. As you can see, there is a long distance from the dormitories to classrooms. 'I walk a long distance from my dormitory to classrooms. The roads are not friendly to us. During rainy seasons, we do not attend classes; we fall down as roads are muddy. Had it not been the help we get from our non-disabled colleagues we would late our classes every day.

Learning materials and social supports

The study findings indicate shortage of learning materials and social supports for SWDs. The data inform that students with disabilities were in shortage of learning materials that are special for their needs. For example, they lack books written in

Braille, sound magnifiers for those with hearing impairment and lenses for those with low vision. Further, they in shortage of supportive devices, including wheelchairs for those with physical impairment, white canes for students with visual impairment and sunscreen lotions for students with albinism.

One of them in an interview had this to say:

We are suffering from lack of special teaching and learning materials, for our needs. Can you imagine that there is no single Braille book in our school! Our fellows with visual impairment have nothing to read. This is our cry to the responsible organs; let them see a high demand of ours! We also lack assistive devices to support our learning. There are, for example, few wheelchairs, white canes, and lack of sunscreen lotions.

The findings further show that SWDs need social support to enhance their studies. For example, it was revealed that there was need of counselling services for both students with and without disabilities. It was noted that counsellors are needed to help students on how to deal with problems encountered in schools. In an interview with students with disabilities, one of them reported as follows:

We have psychological and social problems. We need somebody who can support us; we need counsellors to help us on how to go through the difficulties we are facing in inclusive education settings. We need help on how to read, do examinations and perform excellently. Counsellors will also help us in explaining our situation to fellows without disabilities. They need to help us so that our fellow students as well as can see us as normal students and not as people who are helpless!

It was also found out that students with disabilities needed to be engaged in school activities and decision-making bodies. The findings show that students with disabilities were not involved in sports activities or decision-making organs. From the interview with students with disabilities, one of them gave the following comment:

Students with disabilities should be involved in decision-making organs at school level. Our interest is to have persons to represent us. We are the ones who experience the real meaning of being disabled; we can talk about our needs more clearly in more unbiased manner rather than having a person to speak on behalf of us. We request the government and the school management in particular, to see how they can integrate us in decision-making bodies.

Parents' Perspectives on inclusive education

The researcher intended to gather parents' perspectives on secondary school inclusive education settings. The focus was on parents' understanding of inclusive education, their views on the same, and their involvement in school activities as well as their role in running inclusive education.

The findings showed different perspectives from different respondents as indicated in the following subsection.

Parents' understanding of inclusive education

The findings have indicated various ways on how parents understand inclusive education. The study findings have revealed that parents of the children with disabilities expressed good understanding of inclusive education as well as being positive towards the implementation of inclusive education. They viewed inclusive education as the best option that gives opportunity to their children to study. They also demonstrated clear understanding of problems facing inclusive education in secondary schools. In the interviews with parents of the children with disabilities, one of them said:

I understand that inclusive education has replaced special needs education. Inclusive education settings give advantages for learners with disabilities to be integrated with those without disabilities. In my view, the system is good despite the fact that there are some problems such as schools' unfriendly environment to the learners with disabilities.

Consequently, parents of children without disabilities were ignorant about inclusive education settings. The findings indicate their negative opinions and rejection of integrating their children with those with disabilities. One of the parents said:

Nowadays schools are not serious with education. Why do children without disabilities study together with those with disabilities? Do you think they can learn? I suggest that this should stop so that our children can learn without disturbance.

Furthermore, the findings indicate lack of awareness among parents of students without disabilities on the rights of children with disabilities to attend inclusive education schools. The findings show that parents' understanding lies on the assumption that students with disabilities should be educated in their own schools. They view them as students with low level of understanding, poor skills and are not good to be integrated with those without disabilities. In an in-depth interview with parents, one of them put forward the following:

I do not understand why my child is mixed with children with disabilities. Students with disabilities should be educated in their own schools. These students are difficult to teach and sometimes they never learn. Putting them together with my child, will cause my child to lag behind in studies and look like them.

The findings also revealed that the community has negative perception about students with disabilities. The community views students with disabilities as useless people who cannot study together with other students without disabilities. In an interview with parents, one responded as indicated hereunder:

Inclusive education system is in conflict with the community. There are always questions, which indicate that inclusive education is not welcomed. They see students with disabilities as being unable and not understanding what is being taught in classes. Some community members challenge why children without disabilities are educated together with those with disabilities.

Involvement of parents in school activities

The researcher was also interested in gathering data on parents' involvement in school activities. The findings show poor participation of parents in school activities. It was noted that parents were not involved in school activities such as planning school programmes as well as decision-making. The study findings also revealed that school managements set plans at their own and parents were directed to implement. Parents showed discomfort on the way school programmes and decisions are made. They also queried on the system used to get their representation in the school decision making organs. The findings showed that parents were not aware of anything happening in schools where their children attended. In an interview with parents, one of them had the following to say:

For the case of our involvement in school activities, we are not involved. We only have few representatives in schools' decision-making organs. We are not involved in the process of electing them. I don't even know who my representative is! The school management does not hold regular parents' meetings. There are things we can advise on how to run school activities, especially on students with disabilities but there is no platform for us to do that.

The study findings further revealed that there were irresponsible parents who did not take good care of their children with disabilities. The data collected revealed that some

parents were not ready to contribute for their children's education. They perceived that it is the responsibility of teachers, school management and the government to educate students with disabilities. In the interviews with the parents, one of them was recorded saying:

I am not involved in school activities and for me it is okay. It is not my duty to interfere with school management on how to run education for SWDs. I do not have any contribution. Educated people can do these issues. By the way, education for SWDs has special people to deal with. There are donors, for example, who fund it. Also, the government has guaranteed free education for SWDs. With all that, I do not see why I should bother to interfere.

Discussion

The collected data on students' perceptions have raised the three issues. First, the data show that both students with and without disabilities were not prepared to be accommodated in inclusive education settings. Several factors that hindered the provision of quality education were pointed out including shortage of teachers trained in special needs education and with experiences on disabilities issues and poor schools' infrastructures. Lack of sufficient trained and experienced teachers demoralize students especially those with disabilities since they lack support and treatment according to their special needs. Having untrained teachers in special needs education or inexperienced one with regard to disability issues, signals that education and support to SWDs in inclusive settings may be poor. In this scenario, where teachers are not well prepared to support the needs of SWDs, the goal of inclusive education (that is to make sure student with disabilities are valued and supported) is in jeopardy.

The study by Cole (2005) supports these perspectives from students where he suggests that educators do not agree that all students with disabilities fit in the general education classrooms. He argues that inclusive education denies some students the benefit of intensive and individualized instruction that they would receive in special education settings. This is due to the fact that general education teachers do not have enough knowledge of the nature and characteristics of SWDs as most of pre-service teachers leave their training programme having received limited training and experience on how to teach SWDs and feel less adequately prepared to teach inclusive classrooms. In addition, the findings by Forlin et al. (2009) concur with this study's findings that lack of trained teachers in special needs education affects academic performance of

SWDs. Special needs education teachers use a variety of teaching strategies to accommodate the needs of learners with disabilities compared to the way general teachers do. On the same, the author indicates that special needs education teachers monitor student behaviour frequently, praise students, and provide answers to their own questions if the students' responses are inadequate. Special needs education teachers also collect data to monitor SWDs progress and they are more knowledgeable about individual student's needs. They also have a wider repertoire of responses to manage students' disruptive behaviour or inattention.

Poor and unsupportive physical environment and infrastructure in relation to the needs of SWDs was the second of concern from students. Unfriendly schools' physical environments and infrastructures challenged the existence of SWDs in schools. Friendly environments and infrastructures for SWDs in schools are important aspects in facilitating the provision of education to students. When it happens that they are not supportive to students, especially SWDs, it becomes difficult to have education equity and therefore, distorting the intention of having inclusive education. The findings are in line with Wondwosen et al (2014), in the study which aimed at capturing SWDs' feelings on inclusive education settings in Ethiopia, where it was reported that about eighty per cent of SWDs who were involved in the study, mentioned unfriendly environments in their school as one of the things which they would have liked to be improved.

Another observation was that non-disabled students require sensitization and education on disability issues. Students without disabilities expressed their perspectives that they need more knowledge on disabilities and knowledge on how to support those with disabilities. It was noted, for example, that students without disabilities were willing to give help and support to their colleagues with disabilities but they were not aware of how to do it. This is a challenge to inclusive education advocates and implementers including school management, government and other non-governmental organizations to ensure that inclusive education knowledge reaches everyone in the community, including students without disabilities. Gillies and Carrington (2004) also reflect the findings in the study, which show that a large section of the population of students without disabilities holds negative attitudes towards SWDs and these attitudes are underpinned by the general lack of understanding about disability and SWDs needs. Tremblay and Montenegro (2007) agreed on the need of sensitization on disability issues to students without disabilities whereas he asserts that understanding of

disabilities issues could be shaped through more interaction between students with and without disabilities. This is evidenced in Tungaraza, (2005) who found out that, four out of ten (38%) students without disabilities reported that they 'rarely' or 'never' had the opportunity to socialize and mix with SWDs.

The third concern from the students, specifically those with disabilities is that despite the fact that inclusive education setting proposes inclusion of students in all aspects of school activities; SWDs were not included in all school activities. It was evidenced that they were excluded from some activities. It was noted, for example, that they were not involved in sports, and this could have been done intentionally or unknowingly. Segregation of SWDs in some school activities sends a message to them that they cannot have countable contribution even in sports or social activities. This observation gives a picture that SWDs are facing discrimination in inclusive education settings. Their potential and contributions are not seen or valued just because they have disabilities. This is an indicator that discrimination of SWDs still exists among school community members. Inclusive education schools externally, look as if they are involving, accepting and loving to SWDs but internally, there are some discriminative behaviours or features.

The findings further indicate that there was demand for guidance and counselling services to SWDs. It was noted that among the four sampled schools, only one had a counselling unit for students. It was also noted that even for the school that had the counselling unit, it lacked professional counsellors. It was teachers without skills in guidance and counselling who supported the students. Guidance and counselling services in inclusive schools are important as students, including those with disabilities experience difficulties that require somebody who is professional to guide and counsel them. The study findings are generally compatible with those of Pima (2012), who observed that inclusive education in Tanzania is negatively affected by teachers who are not aware of various impairments and how to deal with the most common learning difficulties. In the study, it was noticed that, teachers in inclusive schools in Tanzania were illiterate on how to adapt classrooms and school environments to overcome barriers of learning to SWDs. The ILO Report (2009) is also in line with the present study's findings as it points out that the reluctance of teachers in Tanzania to accept learners classified as having disabilities in their classrooms was very common. The reason behind this was that most teachers lacked adequate and quality special education training. Additionally, Clarck et al. (1999) holds the same view as their

findings match with the present study showing that teachers are still using traditional methods while teaching in inclusive education classrooms. The flexible methods of teaching classrooms with SWDs as suggested by MacDonald (2012) do not feature in the inclusive education schools involved in this study. Massenga and Mkandawire (2012) bring to a close what has been found by the present study that teachers, educators and experts in the education system in Tanzania do not have techniques of dealing with SWDs diversity needs.

The findings on parents' perceptions towards inclusive education settings show that only a few parents had positive understanding. It was the parents of children with disabilities who understood and supported inclusive education whereas parents of students without disabilities viewed the process of educating children without disabilities together with those with disabilities as lack of school seriousness. They had a thought that students with disabilities (who are not able) require a special place where they can receive help and not integrating them with able students (students). Further, the findings have shown that parents were not involved in schools' activities. It was also noted that parents do not involve themselves with the provision of education to their children with disabilities. They had a thought that the duty to educate SWDs belongs to special people who are experts and parents are not supposed to intervene or be involved in it. Further, there was a notion that the role of educating and providing services to SWDs in schools lies in the shoulders of the government and nongovernmental organizations. As a result, parents were not cooperating with the school management to ensure the provision of education to SWDs. Consequently, school management find it difficult in providing services to SWDs as there are needs that are supposed to come from parents. The situation increases burden and costs to school as they rely solely on resources/funds they get from the government only which are insufficient and leaves many services for SWDs unattended.

The findings are in agreement with those of Coopeland and Cosbey (2009), who suggest that there is no way inclusive education can be fulfilled without the participation of parents or families of SWDs. As per Coopeland and Cosbey (2009), parents' involvement is important component in inclusive education as they are the tie for successful inclusion. The study findings indicate a non-healthy relationship between parents and the school managements. This contradicts with James (2014) who suggests that there should be established partnership of parents and families of SWDs and school management for successful inclusive education settings. The author emphasized that

there is no way educators can work effectively with SWDs without assistance from students' parents/families.

These findings are also supported by the widely expressed views that negative attitudes among various societies in Tanzania form part of the disadvantages to inclusion (Mbagi, 2002). The author supports the findings of the current study that parents kept their children with disabilities away from the public sphere, such as schools. Further, many parents' beliefs are associated with shame of having children with disabilities. Parents perceived their "impaired" children as liability and subsequently a burden to the family. Forlin (2004) cordially agrees with this study findings as he affirms that among the six variables that were noted to impinge schools' effectiveness in implementing inclusive educational practices, negative attitudes towards SWDs were listed the first.

Furthermore, the study by UNESCO (2009) supports the current study's findings by showing that the main disadvantages encountered by parents in educating their children with learning disabilities was stigmatization, negative attitudes from members of the society and parental ignorance. To emphasize on how negative attitudes affects SWDs education as it has been shown in this study, Possi (1999) observed that, in some cultures, people with disabilities are seen as having a form of divine punishment or as carriers of misfortune. As a result, children with disabilities who could be in schools are sometimes not permitted to attend. Associating negative attitudes and SWDs performances, Gillies et al. (2004) add that because of the negative attitudes towards SWDs, even where people are supportive to students with disabilities, expectations might be low and little attention is paid to academic achievement. He points out that there is time when teachers, parents, and other students may well be caring for SWDs but at the same time not believing in their capacity. The same comment was raised by Sreenath (2010) who showed that negative attitudes lower expectations that community members, educators and parents have towards children with disabilities. Because the society had already negative expectation towards SWDs, even at a time when SWDs perform better than those without disabilities, their success is not recognized or supported. To substantiate that negative attitude is a common inclination in Tanzania, Possi (1999) informs that the attitudes are also reflected in the language used to refer to people with disabilities. Croft (2010) suggests that negative attitudes towards SWDs can be conquered by raising consciousness of human rights in communities and publicizing optimistic examples of children with disabilities

succeeding in inclusive education settings and in life beyond school as a result. The other suggested possible solution is to include and support children with disabilities to express their aspirations let them participate in the planning processes, as well as promote action research and critical pedagogy amongst teachers.

Conclusion

To sum up, in view of the results of this research, three major conclusions have been drawn. First, the results of this research have demonstrated overwhelming opinions of students on the implementation of inclusive education in Tanzanian secondary schools. There is need for education stakeholders to address the shortcoming raised and reinforces the advantageous side. Additionally, from interviews with parents on their understanding of inclusive education, some specifically, those with students without disabilities lacked understanding of inclusive education. There is a need of raising awareness and advocating inclusive education among parents and the community at large.

References

- Alqurain, T. & Gut, D. (2012). Critical components of successful inclusion of students with severe disability: literature review. *International Journal of Special Education* 27 (1) 42-59.
- Ainscow, M. (1999). *Understanding the development of inclusive schools*. London: Farmer Press.
- Braun, V. & Clark, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Journal of Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2) 77-101
- Chediel, R. V., Sekwao, N. & Komba, P. L. (2002). *Private and community schools in Tanzania mainland*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Clarck, C., Dyson, A., Millward, A. & Robson, S. (1999). Theories of inclusion, theory of schools: deconstructing and reconstructing the inclusive school. *British Education Research Journal*, 25 (2), 157-177
- Cohen, L., Maninon, L. & Marrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education*. London: Routledge
- Cole, B. A. (2005). Mission impossible? Special education needs, inclusion and the reconceptualization of the role of the SENCO in England and Wales. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 20(3), 287-307
- Cole, C. M., Waldron, N., & Majd, M. (2004). Academic progress of students across inclusive and traditional settings. *Journal of Mental Retardation*, 42(2), 136-144
- Coopeland, S. R., & Cosbey, J. (2009). Making progress in the general curriculum: rethinking effective instructional practices. *Journal of Research and Practice for Persons with Disabilities*, 34(1), 214-227
- Corbett, J. (2001). *Supporting inclusive education. A connective pedagogy*. London: Routledge
- Cornodi, C., Terren, A., Scruggs, T. E., & Mastropieri, M. A. (1998). Teachers attitudes in Italy after twenty years of inclusion. *Journal of Remedial and Special Education*, 19(6),350-356
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Boston: Pearson education Inc.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approach*. Sage Publication Limited: London.

- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. London: Sage Publication Limited
- Creswell J. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Ellis, T. J. & Levy, Y. (2012). Toward a guide to a novice researcher on research methodology: Review and proposed methods. *Journal of issues in informing Science and Information technology*, 6(2)323-337
- European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, (2015). Empowering teachers to promote inclusive education. European agency for special needs and inclusive education. Brussels
- Farrell, P. (2011) *Inclusive education for all: a dream or reality?* UK: University of Manchester
- Feldman, E. K., & Matos, R. (2012). Training paraprofessional to facilitate social interaction between children with autism and their typically developing peers. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 15(3),169-179
- Forlin, C. (2010). *Teacher education for inclusion: Changing paradigms and innovative approaches*. London: Routledge
- Forlin, C., Loreman, T., Sharma, U. & Earle, C. (2009). Demographic differences in changing pre-service teachers' attitude, sentiments and concerns about inclusive education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 13(2), 195-209
- Gillies, Robyn M. & Carrington, Suzanne (2004). Inclusion: Culture, policy and practice: a Queensland perspective. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education* 24(2),117-128.
- Groenewald, T. (2004). A phenomenological research design illustrated. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 3(1), 42-55.
- Gwala, Q. V. (2006). *Challenges facing implementation of inclusive education in primary schools*. Republic of South Africa: University of Zululand
<http://uzspace.unizulu.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10530/327/Challenges%20facing%20the%20implementation%20of%20inclusive%20education%20in%20primary%20schools%20%20Gwala%20VQ.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

- Guba, E. G. (1981). Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries. *Education Resource Information Centre Annual Review Paper, 1*(29) 75-91
- ILO (2009). *Inclusion of people with disabilities in the United Republic of Tanzania*. Ethiopia: ILO-Irish Partnership Programme:
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_111461.pdf
- I-TECH (2008). *Qualitative interviews*. Washington: University of Washington.
Retrieved on 18th May 2014 from <https://www.go2itech.org/>
- Kapinga, O. (2012). Transforming initial teacher education (ITE) for special education in Tanzania. *Paper Presented at the Fifth Quality Education Conference in Dar es Salaam*
- Kapinga, O. (2012). *Professional development among educators pursuing a B.Ed programme in special education in Tanzania*. Finland: Abo Akademi University.
- Khan, T. A. (2012). *Investigation of secondary school teachers' attitudes towards and knowledge about inclusive education in Bangladesh*. New Zealand: University of Canterbury.
https://ir.canterbury.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10092/6290/thesis_fulltext.pdf
- Kisanji, J., & Saanane, C.B. (2009). Responding to marginalization and exclusion in education in Tanzania, chapter prepared for the research forum, Institute for Inclusive Education, State University of Arizona. Cited from http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/eenet_newsletter/news14/page2.php.
- Kisanji, J. (1999). *Keynote address of the workshop on inclusive education in Namibia: the challenges for teacher education*. Windhoek: Rossing Foundation
- Kisanji, J. (1995). Interface between culture and disability in the Tanzanian context: Part I. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education* 42 (2),93–108.
- Loreman, T., Richmond, M. D., Barber, J. & Lupart, J. (2008). Students' perspectives on inclusive education. A survey of grade 3-6 children in rural Alberta, Canada. *International Journal of Whole Schooling*, 5(1),1-12
- MacDonald, A. S. (2012). Preparing children with developmental disabilities for life in the community: A Tanzanian perspective. *Journal of Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, 2012, 47(3),255–268

- Maphie, E.I & Posssi, M. (2017). Challenges of educating students with disabilities in Tanzania secondary school inclusive education settings. *The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies*, 5(11),210-229
- Masenga, R.C. & Mkandawire, H. K. (2007). *Regional seminar “poverty alleviation, hiv and aids education and inclusive education: Priority issues for inclusive quality education in eastern and western sub-Saharan Africa*. Nairobi: UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000162378>
- Mbaga, D. R. (2002). *The inclusive classroom in Tanzania: Dream or reality*. Stockholm: University of Stockholm.
<https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/5544484>
- Meijer, C. J. W. (2005). *Inclusive education and classroom practice in secondary education*. Brussels: European agency for development in special needs education:
https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/inclusive-education-and-classroom-practice-in-secondary-education_iecp_secondary_en.pdf
- Mkonongwa, L. M. (2014). Inclusive education in Tanzania: Is it well understood and implemented? *Paper Presented in the TEN/MET Quality Education Conference 18th -19th June, 2014*:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323281904_Special_and_Inclusive_Education_in_Tanzania_Remiscing_the_Past_Building_the_Future
- MoEVT (2013). *Special needs unit: Inclusive secondary schools*. Retrieved 18thJuly, 2013 from <http://www.moe.go.tz>
- MoEVT (2012). *Education sector development programme (esdp); education sector performance report 2011/2012: Sector development committee*. Dar es Salaam: MoEVT: <https://studylib.net/doc/25866073/tanzania-education-education-sector-development-programme...>
- MoEVT (2012). *Basic education statistics in Tanzania*. Dar es Salaam: MoEVT: <https://download.ei-ie.org/Docs/WebDepot/BEST2016FINAL2SEPT2016-FINALPRINTING-2.pdf>
- MoEVT (2011). *Education sector development programme (ESPD): education sector performance report 2011/2012*. Dar es Salaam. MoEVT: <https://studylib.net/doc/25866073/tanzania-education-education-sector-development-programme...>

- MoEVT (2010). *Education sector development programme (esdp): education sector performance report 2009/2010: education sector committee*. MoEVT: http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website01312/WEB/IMAGES/EDUC_SECTOR.PDF
- MoHSW (2010). *The persons with disabilities Act, 2010*. Dar es Salaamu. MoLYDS
- MoHSW (2004). *National policy on disabilities*. Dar es Salaamu. MoLYDS
- Muyungu, E. G. (2015). *Towards inclusive education in Tanzania: A study of pre-service student teachers training and perceived needs to practice inclusive education*. Oslo: University of Oslo
- NBS (2014). *Statistical abstract 2013*. Dar es Salaam. NBS: <https://www.nbs.go.tz/index.php/en/tanzania-statistical-abstract/280-statistical-abstract-2013>
- NBS (2010). *Tanzania in figures 2010*. Dar es Salaam. NBS: <https://www.nbs.go.tz/index.php/en/tanzania-in-figures/273-tanzania-in-figures-2010>
- NBS (2009). *Tanzania disability survey*. Dar es Salaam. NBS: <https://www.nbs.go.tz/index.php/en/census-surveys/health-statistics/disability-statistics/99-tanzania-disability-survey-report-2008>
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*. Sage Publications Inc.: London.
- Pima, J. M. (2012). *Six years of implementing the national policy on disability in Tanzania: A study of primary school teachers' perspective on the influence of the policy in special needs education*. University of Oslo: Oslo.
- Possi, M. A. K. (1999). Culture and disability: Superstitious behaviour towards people with disabilities in coastal Tanzania. *African Journal of Special Needs Education* 1,22–35.
- Possi, M. A. K. (1996). Gender and education of people with disabilities in Tanzania. *UTAFITI (New Series)* 3(2),155-168
- Reeves, S., Kuper, A. & Hodges, B. D. (2008). Qualitative methodologies: Ethnography. *Journal of BMJ* 2008 (337) 1020.
- Rieser, R. (2008). *Implementing inclusive education: a commonwealth guide to implementing article 24 of the UN convention on the rights of people with disabilities*. The Charles worth Group: London.

- Rieser, R. (2002). *Medical model and social model of disability*. London: Inner London Education: <http://worldofinclusion.com/medical-model-social-model-r-rieser/>
- Rouse, M. (2009). *Developing inclusive practice: A role for teachers and teacher education?* New Zealand: University of Aberdeen: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/education/research/eitn/journal/46/>
- Silverman, D. (2010). *Doing qualitative research*. London: Sage Publications Limited
- Silverman, D. (2006), *Interpreting qualitative data – methods for analyzing talk, text and interaction*. Sage Publications: London EC1Y 1SP
- Sreenath, K. C. (2012). *Breaking barriers: Towards inclusion*. India: VHA Press.
- Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1990) *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. London: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Stubbs, S. (2008). *Inclusive education: Where there are few resources*. Oslo: The Atlas Alliance
- Tanzania Federation of Disabled People's Organisation [TFDPO] (2009). *Inputs and comments on the draft of MKUKUTA II*. Dar es Salaam. TFDPO
- Tremblay, P. & Montenegro T. (2007). *Special needs education basis: Historical and conceptual approach*. Brussels: University of Brussels: https://urmh.edu.mx/download/156e50_special-needs-education-basis-historical-and-conceptual
- Tungaraza, F.D. (2005). Inclusive education as a rational choice for Tanzania: Advantages and obstacles to its implementations. *Faculty of Education, University of Dar es Salaam. Papers in Education and Development* 20.
- Tungaraza F.D. (1994). The development and history of special education in Tanzania. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 41(3) 213-222
- UNESCO (2005). *Guidelines for Inclusion: Ensuring Access to Education for All*. UNESCO: France. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000140224>
- WHO (2022) *Autism Spectrum Disorders*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/factsheets/detail/autism-spectrum-disorders>.
- Wondwosen M., Yitayal A., & Semahegn M. (2014). *Challenges and Opportunities to Implement Inclusive Education*. University of Gondar: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339073057_Challenges_and_Opportunities_to_Implement_Inclusive_Education