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Inclusivity in Response to Diversity and Equal Human Rights

A special publication to celebrate the 1st International Symposium on Inclusion (ISI)

INCLUSIVITY IN RESPONSE TO DIVERSITY AND EQUAL HUMAN RIGHTS

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1st International Symposium on Inclusion (ISI)

EDITORS
Prof. J.M. Ngwaru
Prof. L.M. Dreyer

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This book is dedicated to all educators, professors, education authorities and PhD students who are committed to promoting inclusive education worldwide that contribute to and affect the quality of education.

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FOREWORD

Disability is a phenomenon that comes with crippling educational challenges and is perceived at different levels with traditional, social and emotional myths. Universities and other educational institutions have often been seized with efforts to support people with disabilities, young and old. The most common disabilities in Sub-Saharan Africa include but are not limited to vision impairment, hearing impairment and the genetic conditions such as of albinism. Other genetic conditions such as sickle cell anaemia and Down syndrome are less frequent.

In that order, vision impairment poses an enormous global financial burden on economies, since globally 2.2 billion people have a near or distance vision impairment. The leading causes of vision impairment and blindness are uncorrected refractive errors and cataracts. For purposes of the Reformed Church University (RCU) whose niche area is Inclusivity, what is significant is the fact that most of the causes of vision impairment can be prevented, corrected or helped. Impairment in hearing as a disability category on the other hand, is similar to the category of deafness although it is not the same. This can be permanent or fluctuating and both conditions seriously affect a child's educational performance. Hearing loss falls into four subcategories namely conductive, sensorineural, mixed and central according to the location in the brain where the hearing impairment occurs. Hearing loss is categorized as slight, mild, moderate, severe or profound, depending on how well an individual can hear the frequencies that are commonly associated with speech. For the university's purposes here again, what is significant is that all these subcategories of hearing loss can be helped through hearing aids and other sound amplifying assistive technologies for students with conductive hearing loss. Genetic disabilities, such as albinism, sickle cell anaemia, Down syndrome and others again affect quality of life significantly and by all means need informed levels of assistance to minimize their effects on students and school children. This can contribute immensely towards inclusion into mainstream society.

The foregoing is the background to the rationale why the RCU has chosen Inclusivity as its niche area. Being a Reformed Church in Zimbabwe institution, the mission of the evangelical work among the Karanga people was to establish schools as a way of

luring the young to its faith while at the same time taking an interest in the marginalized and ostracized. The RCU therefore takes interest in and intends to set up systems and structures to ensure that people with disabilities are at best supported for integration into mainstream society. The RCU therefore seeks to erode the impact of the negative myths that surround disability by establishing an Inclusivity Hub to produce or manufacture, adapt, and distribute assistive devises as implied by the theoretical and practical papers presented in this Symposium.

Prof. E.O. Maravanyika
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INTRODUCTION

FROM STEPS TO STRIDES TOWARDS FULL INCLUSIVITY: RCU'S SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE

Prof. J.M. Ngwaru (Acting Pro-Vice Chancellor)
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Zimbabwe

The Reformed Church University (RCU) is quickly transforming its steps to strides towards achieving excellence in its Inclusivity niche by doing everything possible to promote the same. One way of achieving this was to come up with decisions and plans to establish an Institutional Inclusivity Hub to spearhead activities to realize the goal of becoming a national and international centre of excellence in the niche. One of the several ways of gathering ideas towards the establishment of such a centre was the holding of an International Symposium with the Theme: Inclusivity in Response to Diversity and Equal Human Rights on 26 and 27 August 2019. The symposium would bring together professionals and academics to share ideas of theoretical as well as tangible plans of action for possible applications of those ideas including resource mobilization strategies.

Some careful planning at national and international level involving the University (RCU) and Ministry officials (Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development) necessarily, therefore, preceded the symposium. Again, and separately, more brainstorming and ideas sharing was done at national level with the office of the Special Advisor in the President's Office on Disability Issues (Dr Joshua Malinga) and at international level with the management of the Centre for Collaboration in Africa headed by Dr Nico Elema at the Stellenbosch University. The Reformed Church University is one of the partner institutions of Stellenbosch especially on matters of Inclusivity.

This paper introduces the symposium speakers and the papers they presented on the occasion to enable readers to identify what they might be more interested in before they sit down to explore the whole narrative of the symposium.

Fittingly**, Prof. Dreyer, Lorna M.,** from Stellenbosch was the keynote speaker who presented a plenary paper entitled: **In search of contextually relevant Inclusive Education epistemology for Africa.** In her presentation Prof. Dreyer articulated the theoretical basis on which inclusivity had been based. She focused her attention on the understanding of where this whole discourse had come from. She indicates that the discourse had started out with the focus on disabilities and that then it had a distinctive medical approach. This medical model was gradually substituted with a social model that argues that disability is a result of how societies label and treat people with disability (Slee, 2005). Her keynote paper is based on the premise that currently, the concept of inclusion and Inclusive Education is viewed from a much broader perspective, which is framed within a social justice and human rights discourse. The central view of this paper was very much in sync with the RCU niche of Inclusivity in as far as holding the broader view that looks at individuals with disabilities as differently abled and rendered vulnerable and marginalized by dominant societal culture. For rest of details readers are invited to sit and explore more from this plenary presentation as detailed.

The other presenters and their papers, not necessarily summarized in any order of importance, are as follows: **Dr Esther Rutoro's** paper is entitled: **Language and the Social Power Base Empowerment Approach: An Inclusion Approach for Higher Education.** The author here gives a graphic historical event to premise the inception of Special Needs Education by the forerunners of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. This paper makes a very good background based firmly on a documented real story of a mother who saved her visually impaired son from murder by drowning on the instructions of the father who was acting on common practice as recently as 1915. When the mother instead fled with the boy to the missionaries at a nearby mission station, this became the inception of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission's Special Needs Education that has since evolved to what is now Inclusive Education. This paper shows how a model premised on social powerbases was explored for its influence on Higher and Tertiary education in Zimbabwe in light of Education 5.0 and the Heritage Based philosophy.

Mrs. Mudarikwa, Roseweter A., visually impaired but still an assertive and vibrant Head of a High School, a Disability Gender Expert and Chairperson of the Network of

African Women with Disabilities, made a presentation entitled: **Inclusivity in Response to Diversity and Equal Human Rights: Exclusion Implications to Humanity.** Here she demonstrates her view that “life is all about socialization which can either be inclusive or exclusive; and that it is again about how one interacts with others, one's environment or negotiates/ navigates one's way through the terrain of life. She illustrates how the creation of a world where the equal worth of every individual is respected and valued is easier said than done. Read this paper to find out how she endeavours to trigger a discussion on social exclusion implications to humanity in general and to the disability sector in particular. This is what the paper does by exploring the experiences of social exclusion of individuals with disabilities as they negotiate their daily lives in their homes and societal settings in stark contrast to human rights mechanisms that tend to focus primarily on civil and political rights.

Alice Siwela (Mrs), and Dr M Fungai, a part-time lecturer in Special Needs Education at RCU made presentation entitled: **Hearing Population can make a difference to social inclusion of learners with hearing impairment in inclusive schools** where she delves into the inclusion nexus of Deaf learners. She explores how the hearing population can make a difference in regular primary schools. Her presentation was based on the study focusing on the attempt to fill a gap in literature about inclusivity that could promote social participation of Deaf learners in inclusive schools and the society at large. She outlines findings from an investigation into the inclusion nexus at primary school level, the context where learners acquired language and developed their mother tongue fully. This article explores more about how social isolation was a result of the unavailability of specific indigenous Sign language to be acquired by both hearing and non-hearing people. Read more to find the recommendations made to different stakeholders including curriculum-designers, policymakers and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education among others.

Next, looking at how one sector of the differently abled in society, the blind, could influence University Students Affairs, Department was **Dr Chinangure, F.’s** presentation on the topic: **The extent to which needs of disabled beggars can inform an inclusive practical skills development curriculum in tertiary institutions.**

Attending the symposium from the influence of student affairs together with being an academic himself, he looks at how the needs of beggars could inform an inclusive practical skills development curriculum in tertiary institutions. The gist to his argument was based on how the needs of disabled beggars could inform the development of an inclusive practical skills curriculum to empower their lot so they do not survive on charity but through their own acquired productive skills. Read Dr Chinangure's paper to find how otherwise destitute beggars could be equipped to participate in mainstream economy. As an academic in his own right, the author looks at the weaknesses of the "exam driven meritocratic education system" that marginalised the people with disabilities and their families.

Mr. Chipika Charles G., and Mrs. Podzo, Barbra Z., both of the Reformed Church University made a presentation on: **The Need for Teacher Preparation for Inclusion.** This was based on a study whose results indicated that, while inclusion in education was a noble idea, pre-service teacher preparation in Zimbabwe did not fully address the phenomenon for its effective implementation. The problems cited included lack of information about inclusion, instructional methodology and inclusive practices aimed at the acquisition of pedagogy that caters for unique needs of diverse children in the mainstream classrooms. This notwithstanding was against a background that in 1994, the world had shifted from exclusion to inclusion in education in accordance with the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education. The statement reaffirmed the right to education of every individual as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948).

The same authors**, Mrs Podzo B.Z. and Chipika C.G.,** made another presentation with the title: **The Social Model: A Key Driver Towards the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Higher Education.** In this presentation the outline the fact that inclusivity in education constitutes an international policy imperative that promotes the rights of disabled learners to be educated alongside their peers in mainstream classrooms. This they argue is a strategy meant to contribute towards making education accessible to all by opening spaces, providing equal opportunities for the marginalized and creating inclusive communities, and ultimately promoting an all-inclusive society. Their presentation was based on a study where the researchers focused on how the social model influenced inclusion of students with disabilities at

one higher education institution in Masvingo Province basing on a qualitative study that attempted to close a gap in literature and to provide a deeper understanding of the challenges that students with disabilities encountered towards their inclusion and suggested strategies towards its promotion. Read more to get the details of the findings and recommendations made in this study that reveal the kind of barriers encountered by this section of the population as well as the model they recommend for their effective inclusion.

Mrs. Marandure, Mufaro, a sign language specialist from the RCU came onto the stage to present on whether 21st century inclusivity benefits were fact or not in her presentation entitled: **21st century inclusivity benefits for learners with and without disabilities in Zimbabwe: A fact or fallacy.** Here she makes the observation that there is a dramatic difference in the educational opportunities provided for learners with disabilities and those without. She correctly argues that it would simply not be possible to realize the goal of the mantra Education for All, if a complete change in the situation was not affected sooner rather than later. The paper sheds more light on how the dawn of the 21st century witnessed a paradigm shift in educational approaches for people living with disabilities from Special Needs to Inclusive Education a sociological perspective that recognizes and promotes the full participation of all learners in all aspects of schooling. Read more to find out how this presentation examines inclusivity benefits, for learners with and without disabilities in Zimbabwe focusing most explicitly on the issue of human rights.

SYMPOSIUM AS RALLYING CONFLUENCE

In part what these presentations and papers articulated is presented here for the record as conference proceedings. This has assisted to inform the logistics and details of instituting an Inclusivity Hub at the Reformed Church University. The experiences articulated, altogether formed the rallying confluence of ideas leading to the establishment of the national and international Inclusivity centre of excellence. Informed by all the preparatory work indicated above and the symposium here summarized, an institute focusing on Teaching, Research and Rehabilitation of people living with various forms of disabilities was conceived. The Inclusivity Industrial Hub would adopt rehabilitation as its main mandate: making adapting and distributing assistive devices across a wide range of disabilities supported by the relevant

research, teaching and innovation activities. Archiving data on inclusivity and creating a database for Zimbabwe and the Southern African region were identified as key purposes and functions of such a hub. Collaboration with different NGOs and government departments proved to be a crucial appropriate aspect that required to be pursued. The papers in these proceedings clearly indicate that the establishment of the Inclusivity hub guided by a full understanding of the background knowledge and contextual factors that affected the differently abled was most important. The physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic and other peculiarities of differently enabled individuals necessarily had to be catered for in the best way possible. As some of the papers indicate, this was the only way each person would be accorded the opportunity to be integrated into the process of education and training, development and socialization. It is all these together that would enable raising individuals to become equal members of society with minimum risks segregation and isolation (Nasibullov, Kashapova & Shavaliyeva, 2015:545). The proceedings show clearly that it is imperative therefore that educational institutions catering for the differently abled put up universal physical infrastructures to facilitate free unassisted movement people with disabilities.

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NB: All references in this introduction are in the different papers summarized.

IN SEARCH OF CONTEXTUALLY RELEVANT INCLUSIVE EDUCATION EPISTEMOLOGY FOR AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

The church has always been inextricably linked to taking care of the most vulnerable and marginalised in society. It is therefore no surprise that the Reformed Church University found its niche area to be inclusivity to promote social justice and to ensure human rights for all. Many African countries still bear and battle with the scars of exclusion and marginalisation on all levels of society caused by our colonial past. However, even within this era of suppression and exploitation it was the church that stepped up to provide education to the poor and marginalised. They were also the first to establish special schools for children with disabilities.

The call for Inclusive Education (IE) started from a discourse to justify the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schooling. Nevertheless, the notion of IE has evolved through a few paradigm shifts. Currently IE is viewed from a social justice perspective and education without discrimination as a basic human right. From this perspective, the understanding of inclusion is broadened to include all those who are vulnerable and marginalised by dominant societal culture.

The principles of inclusion are not foreign to African cultures of which the philosophy of Ubuntu has always been part of. Ubuntu embraces difference by acknowledging and respecting the humanness of every individual. Currently there is an upsurge of African academic voices that are starting to reclaim the values of Ubuntu that are aligned with the principles of IE. With it comes a strong call for policies and implementation of IE to be contextually responsive to the needs of those included.

In the vision of the RCU to become a centre of excellence and to “develop a shared understanding of inclusion to promote inclusive socio-cultural development for

sustainable advancement of quality life for all echelons of society" there is opportunity to advance the debate on contextually responsive inclusion through interrogation of prevalent epistemology.

Keywords: colonialism, church, epistemology, inclusive education, Ubuntu

INTRODUCTION

(This is a historic occasion that signifies the first of many spaces to debate the importance of inclusion and equality and our responses as academics to the contextual challenges it brings along). The church has always been inextricably linked to taking care of the most vulnerable and marginalised in society. It is therefore no surprise that the Reformed Church University in Zimbabwe found its niche area to be inclusivity to promote social justice and to ensure human rights for all.

The history of education in countries that were colonised is characterised by extreme neglect of the majority of learners, particularly those with special needs. For example, in South Africa the state only became involved in special education in 1900 when it recognised the existence of the white church-run schools. At this time, the Union Education Department could establish "vocational schools" and "special schools" for white children. No official provision was made for formal education of the black populations of this country, and consequently not for any special education. However, it was the churches that established a number of schools to address this void (Du Toit, 1996:9; Engelbrecht, Howell & Bassett, 2002:61). Many African countries still bear and battle with the scars of exclusion and marginalisation on all levels of society caused by our colonial past. However, even within this era of suppression and exploitation (of colonialism) it was the church that stepped up to provide education to the poor and marginalised. The initial focus for providing services to people with disabilities started with the focus from a charity perspective. Based on the shared history of colonial rule education in Zimbabwe followed more or less the same route as South Africa.

ROLE OF THE CHURCH

In our search to become contextually relevant it is important that we know where we come from. The history of providing support to people with disability went through some phases of which the first was characterised by an absence of any kind of support. In

fact, it was surrounded by superstition and an absence of provision of support. As this first phase was characterised by superstition, traditional tribal customs allowed for children who were different or born with some disability, to be killed at birth (Dreyer, 2008).

During the second Phase that started during the late 19th century towards about 1963. Stage 1 of this phase was characterised by support through the church and private provision for children with disabilities. In South Africa this support was provided along racial lines of the state. None-the-less, it was the church that mainly initiated this kind of special education and support. There are, however, scholars like Pasha (2016) and others, who rightfully, attribute the oppression of the African people to the very same mission schools. They argue that the education through mission schools have undermined African religions in favour of Christianity. However, the discourse on the role of religion is not the focus of this paper, it merely wants to highlight the contribution made by the church in relation to providing education and support to people with disabilities. The paradox, however, lies in the symbiotic relationship between the missions and the colonial governments (Khapoya, 2015).

PARADIGM SHIFTS

When we look at inclusion it is important that we understand where it comes from. The discourse started out with the focus on disabilities and it had a distinctive medical approach. The medical model assumes that the learners are deficient and that the deficiencies are pathological (Gibson & Blandford, 2005). Something that needed to be healed or fixed. This medical model was gradually substituted with a social model. This model argues that disability is a result of how societies label and treat people with disability (Slee, 2005). Currently, the concept of inclusion and Inclusive Education is viewed from a much broader perspective which is framed within a social justice and human rights discourse. The debate is currently framed by a social justice perspective and education without discrimination as a basic human right (National Planning Commission, Republic of South Africa, 2011). From this perspective, the understanding of inclusion is broadened to include all those who are vulnerable and marginalised by dominant societal culture and that culture permeates our educational institutions. A lot of the initial debates cantered around the justification for including people with disabilities into mainstream settings. Within the South African context and

most certainly many other African contexts we need a wider trajectory than disability when we talk about Inclusive Education (Department of Education, 2001). This is now also accepted by international bodies like UNESCO that is also embracing the term Barriers to learning and development when it speaks of the Sustainable Developmental Goals, Education for All (EFA) and Inclusive Education.

However, there is an upsurge in moving beyond the justification debate to one that interrogates how we're going forward to implement Inclusive Education (Dyson, 1999; Dreyer, 2017). However, what is important is that researchers are increasingly making it clear that Inclusive Education is 'more than a new special education service delivery model'.

That brings me to our common history of countries that were colonised. Colonial forms of curriculum, school organisation and management were institutionalised in our countries and this deeply influenced the way we think about education.

COLONIALISM

During colonialist rule, the education system was the ideal vehicle to promote Western values through a Eurocentric curriculum (Khapoya, 2015). This "colonial education very often alienated young people from their own culture" (p. 103) as they gradually conformed to Eurocentric values and culture.

The post colonialist era is characterised by political changes that profess to promote principles of democracy, respect for human dignity, and diversity. However, we must acknowledge that Africa is not an island. It is part of the global village and other cultures and religions have impacted how we view the world today. It can therefore be appreciated why more and more scholars from Southern Africa are of the opinion that IE as a global agenda is a perpetuation of colonialism as a form of neo-colonialism (Lunga, 2008; Pashby, 2012). It is no surprise then that 3 years ago in South Africa we experienced mass student protests with the #RhodesMustFall movement which fuelled renewed debates on decolonisation.

Therefore when the international world started fighting for the rights of people with disabilities through forums such as the World conferences in Salamanca, Spain, Education for All and now the Incheon declaration, amongst others; We forgot that

ancient cultures had values that embraced humanness, interconnectedness, communalism, respect for human dignity, etc. These are the African values that were not acknowledged by the colonisers … AFRIKA have UBUNTU. All these aspects of Ubuntu as a philosophy, are in line with what IE embraces in order to respond to the needs of all and to allow all children to develop to their best ability. Inclusive Education promotes the notion that quality education and support to all children should be provided in mainstream educational institutions (UNICEF, 2000). It is clear that the core belief of Ubuntu, that every individual must be valued and respected, is also the key emphasis of Inclusive Education.

It is recognised that global discourse, developments, and international declarations have a profound impact on policy development in the different countries. It is, however, equally clear that local historical, cultural and socio-economic contexts, values, and belief systems also influence and determine local practices (Mitchell, 2005). However, research in Botswana (as only one example) shows that "the cultural contexts and the indigenous knowledge system(s) were not given adequate attention in policy development" (Mukhopadhyay, 2015).

ZIMBABWE

According to Mutepfa, Mpofu and Chataika (2007) there is no specific legislation for Inclusive Education in Zimbabwe, although many government policies are consistent with the intent of Inclusive Education: E.g. the Zimbabwean Education Act (Education Act (Amended), 2006), Disabled Persons Act (Disabled Persons Act, 1996-revised 2001), and various Ministry of Education circulars (Education Secretary's Policy Circular No. P36,1990). All these documents require that all students, regardless of race, religion, gender, creed, and disability, have access to basic or primary education (up to Grade 7). According to the UNICEF Zimbabwe Country Office: Disability Strategy 2018-2020, there is a mandate to achieve equality, dignity and equal opportunities for children with disabilities in specific areas of the Country Office programming. This requires ensuring the best interest of the child, independence, freedom of choice, full and active participation in all areas of life and society.

Currently Zimbabwe follows a continuum (Fig.1) by which Inclusive Education is being implemented. This continuum resembles the model used in South Africa. However,

this too is a Western model taken from the wealthier countries from the global North (Dreyer, 2008). These countries have a well-established and well-resourced special needs education system, parallel to an equally well-resourced mainstream education system.

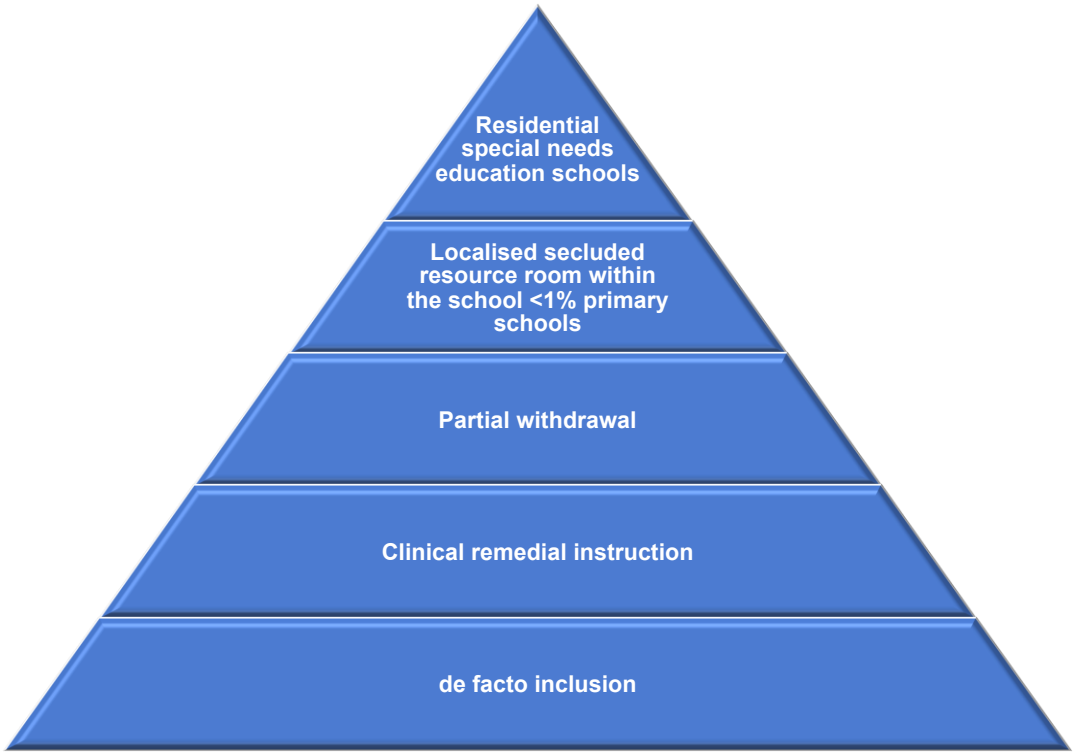

Fig.1 Zimbabwean continuum of support

It is evident that, post colonisation, African countries still hold on to models and practices of a Eurocentric origin. It is my contention that as Africans, we are challenged by our own realities and therefore need to be contextually relevant to our specific needs (Dreyer, Engelbrecht & Swart, 2012) while acknowledging the indigenous knowledge and values such as Ubuntu and build on that. Too often we still take on models from the West as being the best (Mukhopadhyay, 2015). We should rather be asking, “Is it the best for us?”.

CONTEXTUALITY IN SEARCH OF TRANSFORMATION

Recently, researchers have been critical to the undisputed acceptance of foreign models to solve local problems. According to Kalyanpur (2014) “Inclusive Education is predominantly a Western concept, which was initiated in the 1980s to promote access

to education for learners with special educational needs. As the model became successful in some developed countries; it was considered a solution for global educational problems. With globalisation, this concept has become a major policy agenda in developing countries". Mukhopadhyay (2015) maintains that against these contexts, policies are implemented with a top-down approach that does not recognise teachers' indigenous knowledge.

According to research (Dreyer, 2008; Dreyer et al., 2012) the learning support model used in South Africa, which is similar to the Zimbabwean model, is clearly based on models of countries with a well-established and well-resourced special needs education system, parallel to an equally well-resourced mainstream education system. South Africa, as some other African countries, still struggles with transforming an education system that was based on and thrived on racial discrimination, inequality and social injustices, to a system in which a human rights and social model approach is dominant. According to research (Dreyer, 2008), the vast discrepancies that still exist among schools do not allow for this model to be accepted unconditionally, and without a concerted effort to provide the necessary support systems for this continuum of service provision. It is established that the success of Inclusive Education lies within the provision of adequate support for learners who experience barriers to learning in mainstream schools, as well as in the changing roles of teachers and support services staff. This directly impacts on the local context as developing countries do not have the financial, material or human resources this model of implementation requires. An evaluation of a model to promote Inclusive Education through a continuum of service provision, had established that is not completely contextually responsive to the South African context with specific reference to resources, both human and physical (Dreyer et al., 2012). Another more recent example of models driven by wealthier, developed countries, is a joint venture between the SA National Department of Education and the British Council. While still in the trial implementation phase, there are already calls from teachers that the material or case studies are not relevant to their contexts.

ALTERNATIVE THEORY FOR CONTEXTUALLY RELEVANT EPISTEMOLOGY

Scholars from the global South are emerging and reclaiming their African voice by proposing alternative theories. These are alternative ways of making meaning of current contexts as they are advocating for a contextually relevant epistemology.

Pasha (2016) argues that an Afrocentric theoretical framework is needed. However, she cautions against using it as the only lens through which we look at Inclusive Education. To be contextually relevant she suggests a merging of African and Eurocentric perspectives to understand IE. A balanced perspective that gives a voice to Africans and promotes their values and identity. Mukhopadhyay (2015) is of the contention that a Post-Colonial Theory (PCT) should be used to analyse the dominance of Western ideologies in the education of learners with SEN. According to Coloma (2009) there is a need to challenge the "unilateral Western dominance that tends to control the mind-set in the 'lower income' countries".

EPISTEMOLOGY

With a closer look at the concept "Epistemology" we can see that it is about how we make meaning and how we understand the world around us. As a philosophical concept the goal of an epistemology is to shape convictions about knowledge. Makoelle (2012) explains that epistemology includes the ways in which knowledge is acquired and validated. As referred to above, I am of the contention that for too long the indigenous ways of acquiring knowledge and making meaning as well as understanding have not been validated. It has been ignored and actively been pushed aside as unsophisticated and unscientific. However, as academics who are in the business of knowledge production (through our research and teachings), we need to challenge the dominant epistemologies particularly in terms of what knowledge and whose knowledge is accepted and validated.

CONTEXTUAL RELEVANCE

Aligned to challenging popular epistemologies is the notion that contextual realities need to be acknowledged. The matter of contextual relevance regarding IE is thus very important. It feeds into the notion and understanding that IE is not a static conception but that it is interpreted and implemented differently across the globe (Mitchell, 2005). Complex histories and socio-cultural conditions shape how IE is defined and implemented. Local historical, socio-economic and cultural contexts, values and belief systems influence and determine local practices (Mitchell, 2005). Therefore, it becomes imperative that we do not duplicate models of implementation in African contexts without considering contextual factors.

In a report to the world bank Peters (2004) asserts that IE in the context of the goals of EFA is a complex issue. She echoes the conception that the understanding and implementation of IE is contextualised across the world. According to Peters (2004:6) "… policy development faces challenges to avoid fragmented, uneven, and difficult to access services. IE may also be implemented at different levels, embrace different goals, be based on different motives, reflect different classifications of special education needs, and provide services in different contexts". However, in her research she realised the contexts of countries in the global South shares some commonalities not shared by the global North. This she presents in an Inclusive Education Framework as an open system. In this framework there are components of the EFA framework but contains value-added factors and insights from the literature on IE in the South. An open system such as this framework accounts for external factors that have an influence on Inclusive Education, such as policy, legislation, cultural and socio-economic conditions. It also considers that these external factors are integral components of the development of Inclusive Education.

This conceptual framework is providing us with an opportunity to acknowledge those contextual factors that shape our way of understanding and constructing meaning. It allows for validating local and indigenous understandings, values and practices.

AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION EPISTEMOLOGY

If we concede that the concept of epistemology is about the ways in which knowledge is constructed and validated (Makoelle, 2012), Africa should only take lessons from the global North but need to frame our own understanding and implementation based on the contextual realities of the global South, with specific reference to an African philosophy of Ubuntu in mind.

IN CONCLUSION

In searching for an African epistemology of Inclusive Education we need to delve into our colonial past and therefore also the impact of Eurocentric theoretical frameworks that still guide our understanding and meaning making to a great extent.

The challenges for universities in Africa are to 1) help create a critical voice when teaching theories to our students, doing research and with our involvement with

communities and 2) equip our students with a balanced perspective of the theoretical underpinnings that include an Afrocentric understanding/ theory of inclusion.

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THE EXTENT TO WHICH NEEDS OF DISABLED BEGGARS CAN INFORM AN INCLUSIVE PRACTICAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study investigated the needs of disabled people who were begging along the Masvingo-Beitbridge road and in public places in and around the city of Masvingo in Zimbabwe. The main purpose of the study was to establish how the needs of disabled beggars could inform the development an inclusive practical skills curriculum to empower so that they could not survive on charity but through the acquired productive skills. The study that elicited data from a convenient sample of sixty disabled beggars through in depth interviews established that increase in the number of disabled people begging for food and money along the roads and in public places was a testimony for failure by the education system to equip them with self-reliant skills. The study further established that although potential to participate in mainstream economy if they had relevant skills to sustain their livelihoods, the exam driven meritocratic education system marginalised the people with disabilities and their families. The study recommended the development and implementation an inclusive practical skills curriculum to empower them.

Key words: *Curriculum, potential approach, awareness, skills, discrimination, disability, needs, development, sustainable, cohort age, exclusion, stigma and marginalisation*

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The increase in the number of people with disabilities begging for food and other basic needs was increasing on a daily basis. It was been observed that as people with disabilities went out to beg, they took along their young children or relatives of school

going age with them (Namwata, 2012). The young children and relatives were deprived of their right to education because they were born to parents or relatives with disabilities (Namwata, 2012). Being taken along to beg, was practically denying the young children and relatives of their right to education (Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2015). Yet, international organizations, to which Zimbabwe was a member, agreed that education was more than just a fundamental right; it was a foundation upon which a successful and productive life was to be built (UNICEF, 2013). Thus, denying young children and relatives the right to education eventually exposed the children to a life of charity and abuse (Namwata, 2012; Chikiwa, 2019). In addition to exposure to abuse, a cycle of poverty was created for those families. Seen from this angle, the assumption was that a broad-based inclusive skills curriculum to accommodate diverse needs of disabled members of the community was missing. Hence, the need for this study.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The number of people with disabilities begging for food and money along Masvingo – Beitbridge highway was on the increase (Rugoho & Siziba, 2014). A study by Mukhopadhyay et al. (2012) noted an influx of disabled beggars of Zimbabwean origin in the streets of Johannesburg as well, in the neighbouring country. The situation has exposed people with disabilities to horrible incidences of sexual, drug and emotional abuse (Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2015).

Every normal society has a responsibility to support the vulnerable members of their community. The gradual increase of disabled beggars in public places and along roads is clear testimony that very little is being done to promote social justice and equality (Rugoho & Siziba, 2014; Namwata, 2012; UNICEF, 2013; Chikiwa, 2019). The social ills could be allowed to continue. The truth was that disabled members of the community, who could not take care of themselves, subsequently failed to take care of their children. The failure created a cycle of poverty, which could be very difficult to break for generations (Mukhopadhyay, Nanty & Abosi, 2012; Scruggs & Mastopieri, 1996). The purpose of this study was to interrogate the needs of disabled beggars in order to establish ways of addressing this problem. Several questions were raised by the researcher on the issue of the problem of the increase of disabled beggars on the

streets and public places. Why were the disabled people opting for a life of begging instead of surviving on productive lives like other citizens?

1.3 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The number of Zimbabweans with disabilities begging on the streets has been rising quite dramatically (United Nations, 2019; Njema, 2016). The assumption was increase in the number of disabled people living off begging was attributed to failure by society and other key institutions to cater for the needs of disabled people (Chikiwa, 2019). There was a need to address and respond to the diverse needs of all people regardless of their differences (United Nations, 2016). This goal has not been met in Zimbabwe as evidenced by increase in the number of disabled people who are living off the streets begging for survival (Chikiwa, 2019). It was against this background that this study sought to investigate the needs of disabled people who were begging along the roads and public places and how their views could inform an inclusive practical skills development curriculum.

1.4 THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

The present study was guided by the following main research question: To what extent can needs of disabled beggars inform an inclusive practical skills development curriculum in tertiary institutions.

1.4.1 Sub-Research Questions

The main research question was addressed by the following sub-research questions:

1.4.1.1 What issues forced disabled people to opt for a life of begging?

1.4.1.2 How does the life of begging affect the welfare of the families of disabled people?

1.4.1.3 To what extent can needs of disabled beggars inform an inclusive practical skills development curriculum in tertiary institutions?

1.5 OBJECTIVES

1.5.1 Re-construct an inclusive practical skills development curriculum that reflects the needs and aspirations of the disabled people who were excluded from the mainstream economy.

1.5.2 Establish ways of breaking a cycle of poverty that pervaded the families, communities and individuals with disabilities through practical skills development.

1.5.3 Find and justify the strategies that could reduce the number of disabled beggars from the streets.

1.6 RATIONALE FOR THIS STUDY

Studies have shown that many disabled people have the potential to work for themselves if they were taught practical skills to sustain normal livelihoods. In light of this, an interrogation of the needs of disabled people may be a source of vital views that could inform an inclusive skills development curriculum focusing on provision of goods and services.

It has been observed that there is no bright future without the right kind of education and practical skills in any normal society (UNICEF, 2013). In addition, without any practical skills one may never be able to secure a decent profession in Zimbabwe, let alone manage to live a decent live. There is no way problems affecting the disabled people could be addressed without involving them. There was a need to understand why a large proportion of the disabled people kept going back to the streets to beg even after going through schools that focused on promoting diversity. As such, limited research focusing on needs of disabled beggars is evidence enough that needs of the disabled people who were begging had not been interrogated fully. Gathering evidence from disabled beggars was beginning point towards stimulating debate on how the current educational practices could address diverse needs of the disabled people from the streets.

Few studies focusing on addressing needs of disabled people have established that every individual has the potential to fully participate in mainstream economy if they had relevant practical skills to sustain their livelihoods (United Nations, 2016; Chimhenga,

2016; Burgdorf & Burgdorf, 1975; Mathopa, 2007:1; Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2015). Therefore, if disabled people who were begging on the streets were to survive independently, an inclusive practical skills curriculum that could cater for the needs of the disabled people was the only way out. Currently, most institutions of higher learning were not having the capacity to cater for the needs of disabled people.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study draws heavily from the social and human rights paradigm of inclusion. The philosophy is based on equal opportunity and full participation of disabled persons in socio economic development (Nyathi, 1986). A theory by Rawls (2001:42) of Fair Equality of Opportunity (FEO) was used in this study to explain how the concept of equal opportunities could have implications for people with disabilities in the Zimbabwean context. FEO holds that all citizens of a country are potential agents for national development. The state has an obligation to remove obstacles that may inhibit people from developing their potential.

When applied to disability issues, this principle may support steps that are meant to close the achievement gap between the disabled people and their counter parts without any visible and identified disabilities. If the Rawlsian principle of FEO is applied to inclusion, it may lead to the elimination of the effects of all forms of barriers that may impinge on achievement. Fair equality of opportunity therefore offers a transformation of the environment, programmes, teaching approaches and policy issues on equality of educational opportunity to include people with disabilities.

Further analysis of the theory uncovers that inborn obstacles such as disabilities negatively affect achievement and they are a source of inequalities that affect human potential. Unfortunately, Rawls' theory of fair equality of opportunity does not directly deal with disability it is implied in this study. The reason for using this theory in the study was based on issues that drive people into begging which are social class, talent and wealth. These were raised continuously by disabled people who believed systems closed them out as they felt that social class, talent and wealth were key obstacles that made it difficult for them to have access to education.

Critics of the theory point out that potential is not predetermined and measurable, hence it could not be a basis for investing resources to remove barriers to equality of opportunity for disabled people. In view of this critic FEO should be understood in the context of human rights and social justice theories. Equality in education requires the accommodation of differences.

Exclusion and social stigma that reduces people with disabilities to objects of poverty was violation of human rights that should be redressed. In light of this view, inclusive approaches that recognized and promoted full participation of all persons with disabilities in all aspects of life was most suitable. Mitigation is achieved through awareness of acts and statutes governing the disability issues on inclusion to minimize exclusion, marginalization and violation of rights of people with disabilities in all aspects of life.

1.8 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

There are several international instruments that promote equality and prohibit discrimination in every society. The following are some of the international instruments that to which Zimbabwe is a member: The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); The International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); The Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); The Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) (McConnachie, 1994). Disabled people fall in any of these categories and have the right to social inclusion.

Although Zimbabwe was signatory to all the above conventions, it did not have specific legislation for inclusive education (Mpofu, 2004). Government policies consistent with the intent of inclusion were defined through Zimbabwe Education Act (Education Act, 1996) and Disabled Persons Act (Disabled Persons Act, 1996) and various Ministry of Education circulars for instance (Education Secretary's Policy Circular No. P36, 1990) that were poorly enforced. Apart from the aforementioned documents, vision2030 which spelt out agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) limited countries to recommendations from conferences and conventions. Investigating needs of disabled people who were begging could provide information that might buttress the movement to establish key performance indicators and deliverables for a practical skills curriculum

to enhance participation. In addition, sentiments from the persons with disabilities who were out begging could offer appropriate opportunities from which to examine needs and experiences which could inform a skills development curriculum from the perspective of disabled people who felt the system excluded them.

The social and human rights philosophy of inclusion encourages removal of barriers and alignment across the areas of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment to enable persons with disabilities to survive on their own. The assumption was that for persons with disabilities to be independent they needed to be equipped with skills not only to move freely but to interact freely with members of the society and apply acquired skills to create their own employment instead of being subjects of sympathy as in the case of those who were begging in public places. The current study was focusing what practical skills curriculum could do to transform the lives of people with disabilities in order to reduce the number of beggars from public places and how this could be achieved. People with disabilities were to be helped to best cope with differences in the institutions they attended, in society and in the employment industry. The social and human rights paradigm spoke to implementation of the right policy measures at both institutional and community level.

2.1 BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE INCLUSION

The literature review is based on ideas derived from the three sub research questions which are: the issues that forced disabled people to opt for a life of begging, how the life of begging affects the welfare of the families of disabled people and the extent to which needs of disabled beggars can inform an inclusive practical skills development curriculum in tertiary institutions.

2.1.1 Issues that forced disabled people to opt for a life of begging

There is no bright future without the right kind of education and practical skills in any normal society (UNICEF, 2013). Although the focus of the current educational pedagogy was to ensure that the majority of the people were skilled, research indicates that this claim was not true for the disabled people who opted for life as beggars on the streets (Ngoda, 2016; Chimhenga, 2016). Studies have identified several impediments that may include among others, the need for well-established support

systems and related funding mechanisms, highly qualified professionals teachers, intervention strategies and reliable data that inhibit disabled people from drawing enough help to ensure that they also live decently (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2013). Therefore, without well-established support systems and related funding mechanisms, highly qualified professionals, intervention strategies and reliable data on the needs people with disabilities, policy driven initiatives to address the needs of disabled people would be minimal.

Research has established that as a result of poverty, an increasing proportion of families with visually impaired people; take along their children of school going age on their trips to beg (Corina & Singleton, in press; Hauser, Lukomski & Hillman, 2008). It appears, in most developing countries, visually impaired parents take their children along with them because of limited mobility options. For example, the built environment, including buildings and transportation systems, has been designed and constructed for the average person. This challenge contributes immensely to the creation of a cycle of poverty as children from these families naturally drop out of school. Although countries such as Zimbabwe have BEAM (Basic Assistance Module) to assist disadvantaged children to access education (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2015), there is no legislation to enforce compliance on the parent who has no alternate ways of sourcing food in the hard economic environment.

The funding of programmes ear marked for disabled people was very thin. Thus, without enough funding products, artefacts and skills were not sustainable outside the institutions. The people who left these centres with practical skills would go into begging because they had no mechanisms to set viable business entities.

Another study (Zimbabwe Census Bureau, 2014) shows that a proportion of disabled people who have left their homes to beg has increased dramatically. For example, it has been estimated that 600 blind and disabled Zimbabweans are begging on streets of Johannesburg since 2004 from a mere twenty. With such a number in mind, if people with disabilities are not skilled fully to participate in the main stream economy and create their own employment they would eventually end up on the streets increasing the number of homeless people (Zimbabwe Census Bureau, 2014).

It has also been observed that apart from South Africa, Zimbabwean and other countries of the SADC region are not very proactive in legislative framework on inclusion (Mpofu, 2004). Pronouncements by United Nations declarations give all people the right to receive appropriate education (UNESCO, 1994; Chimhenga, 2016). Appropriate education should enable those who receive it to function effectively in society. This is not the case that was why the number of disabled people who ended up begging was increasing.

Another study of carried out in Zimbabwe by Nyanga and Nyanga (2013:167) and in South African by Pottas (2005:66), and Hay, Smit and Paulsen (2001:216) established that the current teachers who are of an academic orientation may not be the right people to implement an inclusive skills development curriculum due to lack of the relevant skills, training and attitude. As a result of unavailability of teachers with relevant skills, training and attitude (Engelbrecht, 2007:3; Beachman & Rouse, 2011:4), most disabled people are dropping out of mainstream institutions mainly because these institutions not inclusive in nature. Hence, they end up on the streets begging for survival because they do not have any skills for effective participation in society. Thus, a cycle of poverty is created as more and more people with disabilities leave the educational institutions without having acquired the basic skills for self-reliance.

Social stigmas that project disabled persons as objects of mercy originate from the same society that is supposed to support the marginalized members of society. This is a result of limited awareness and education programmes. There is very little effort being directed at removal of the critical barriers to pay way for inclusion in the community. Research studies revealed that build environment has been identified as one factor that forced parents with disabled children to keep their children at home and avoided taking them to school (Majoko, 2013:174). The built environment, including buildings and transportation systems, has been designed and constructed for the average person (Majoko, 2013:174). In fact, since handicaps have traditionally been considered to be the product of something within the person as opposed to being the product of external factors, consideration for the disabled has been completely absent from the design and construction.

Majoko (2013:174) revealed that government attitudes towards disabilities impacted negatively on addressing inclusion if there were no policies to encourage all stakeholders to implement inclusive practices to people with disabilities. The basis of inclusion is that inclusion promotes right to the benefits and experience, including modifications and supports to address diversity (Mukhopadhyay et al., 2012:2). However, not all of these statutes provide affirmative measures to ensure accessibility because they are merely declaratory, rather than affirmative.

In a study of challenges faced by people with hearing impairments, Musengi (2017) established that individuals with hearing impairment are often segregated because the majority of people could not communicate with them. As a result, these people appear to be excluded from society from early stages of life. The way a society interacts with deaf has an impact on what these deaf individuals learn and know, and consequently on their attitudes, interests, and values (Hauser, O'Hearn, McKee, Steider & Hackett, 2010). Ordinary schools and institutions do not have trained people with the knowledge of sign language which may be the only vehicle to be used to instil knowledge and skills. Any idea to design curriculum should draw from such experiences in order to enable ordinary schools to receive and assist such people. By virtue of their biology, deaf individuals live their lives in a visual reality, which leads to the acquisition of a knowledge base that is different from that of hearing individuals through vision (Hauser et al., 2010).

2.1.2 The effect of begging on the welfare of the families of disabled people

Education has both instrumental and intrinsic value for individuals and societies (Shields, Newman & Satz, 2017). Based on this claim it can be concluded that without education, no child is expected to succeed in life. Through education, individuals are bound to develop a better life. By this, it means that individuals who go through the entire education system up to higher education have better opportunities for developing diverse competencies and acquire better skills to survive than those who are incapacitated by circumstances that are beyond their control. Both parents and children caught up in the disability cycle would not access higher education and would eventually end up in the streets to beg like their parents.

Individuals with cognitive and physical disabilities have been marginalized, denied resources, and denied some form of education suitable that skill them. Research studies show that higher educational levels are correlated with a healthy lifestyle and better living conditions. The social ills and unhealthy lifestyles being led by disabled beggars needs affects the psycho-social wellbeing. They live in perpetual distress and abuse by the public.

The life of beginning has ripple effects on the culture and interaction patterns of the vulnerable people. Studies by Pretorius and Le Roux (2014) established that street life to which disable people and their children are exposed to make them soft targets substance and sexual abuse.

A life of begging out in the streets does not offer both parents and their children a safe and supportive environment. The children and parents from disabled families are generally distressed due to continuous exposure to both physical and emotional abuse. Studies show that abused people internalize abuse as a way of interaction and eventually they identify with their abusers (Pretorius & Le Roux, 2014). Thus, life of abuse naturally nurtures abuses who may be a danger to colleagues and the society.

Families of disabled beggars are emotionally draining. Parents keep their children isolated from others for long periods only to send them to school when they are too old to adjust psychologically, ordinary citizens shun socializing and sharing skills with disabled people leaving them isolated and policy makers have no legislation (Mpofu, 2004) in place to mitigate barriers to inclusion. Studies show that a loveless family with critical shortages of basic needs such as food and security create a neurotic psych that leads to unstable personalities (Pretorius & Le Roux, 2014).

As has been alluded to in the introductory remarks, when people with disabilities go out to beg they take along their young children or relatives of school going age with them depriving these youngsters of their right to education (Namwata, 2012). Persons are subjected to sufficient ego-destroying pressures to deter them from participating with other people in sustainable projects because they are not having relevant skills, environment and a place to receive them. In fact, disabled people are forced into limited lives and made to suffer more by man-made obstacles than by specific physical or mental disabilities. With an institute for inclusivity in place training for skills

development and short courses may filter society to enhance awareness and education to create a more receptive environment.

Inaccessibility reinforces the social stigma among persons with disabilities by further isolating or segregating them (Hull, 2006). Thus, people with disabilities are subjected ego-destroying pressures to demean them. Apart from clear legislative pronouncement (Burgdorf & Burgdorf, 1975), more people are forced into limited lives and made to suffer by these man-made obstacles that have not been corrected. Hence when considering curriculum there are other gaps within society that needs attention in order for lives of disabled people to be normalized.

Observations made in ZIMCARE schools were that even though intellectually challenged individuals had skills, the nature of their disabilities forced them to remain in the special school after reaching the cohort age of 25 years, the age at which they had to leave the Zimcare School, because they could not be integrated into society or mainstream environments.

2.1.3 How needs of disabled beggars inform an inclusive practical skills development curriculum in tertiary institutions

Studies show that there is a need to redefine the curriculum goals for sustainable education and rethink the skills required by people with disabilities so that they may be able to live on their own (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2013). To ensure that proactive intervention measures are taken, reliable data and evidence was needed to inform decisions. The people with disabilities and their families who were begging on the streets were a key source of important data. What drove them in their numbers to live off begging needed to be addressed.

Scruggs and Mastopieri (1996:63) observe that generally, the regular curriculum offered in schools did not suit students with individual learning needs. For instance, in Zimbabwe, organisations such as Jairos Jiri Association, Danhiko College, Henry Murry, Zimcare Trust schools and Zimbabwe council for the blind and other non-governmental organisations offered support towards acquiring practical skills such as basketry, woodwork, leather work, sewing and cookery. Thus, a universal practical

skills curriculum pioneered through research by a higher education institute could get to the bottom of the issue and provide meaningful solutions.

Scruggs and Mastopieri (1996:62) argue that mainstream schools generally lacked resources to include students with disabilities into their classes as a result the disabled people ended up dropping out of institutions. In addition, the meritocratic curriculum offered in institutions did not address diversity but promoted competition and exclusion. It is therefore assumed that mainstream institutions could not produce productive people who could manage to cater for diverse needs of disabled people hence the increase of beggars among disabled people. The situation makes it imperative to craft an inclusive practical skills development curriculum that flows incrementally primary schools, high schools until a higher education institute for inclusion.

The current trust which focuses on innovation and industrialisation offers opportunities for individuals who graduated from vocational education institutions such as Mupfure or Mushagage College to study inclusive education so that they can help to equip the people with disabilities with practical skills acquired from vocational institutions (Chinangure & Chindanya, 2019). Without professional inclusive education training it may be difficult for them to manage working in inclusive settings (Chinangure & Chindanya, 2019).

The large numbers of disabled people begging it is evidence that they are substantially excluded from society. Key stakeholders such as teachers, parents and ordinary citizens (Chimhenga, 2016**)** were to participate fully in supporting the initiative to remove the barriers on inclusion. An inclusive skills development curriculum should specify norms and standards for inclusion to promote mobility. Institutions should be compelled to make changes in their environment as a policy issue (Bothma, 1997:25).

Studies show that the current curriculum cannot uplift the disabled people to the level of equal participation as any other human being (Chinangure & Chindanya, 2019). It seems curriculum designers did not include these requirements in the mainstream curriculum. A gap remains in current curriculum that excludes the deaf from full participation in education. The idea of an inclusive curriculum should begin by an introduction of short courses in ordinary schools to enable every individual to communicate with hearing impaired people.

While inclusion was understood as the practice of including everyone irrespective of talent, disability, socio-economic background, or cultural origin in supportive mainstream environments (Swart, Engelbrecht, Elloff & Pettipher, 2002:176), the nature of disability made inclusion very tricky especially among intellectually challenged individuals. After reaching cohort age two options remained either to leave special school and find their way into the society or remain in the school because this is the only family they knew.

But without adequate funding, these individuals had no option but to go begging to survive. Higher education and ministry of education had no universal curriculum to be pursued by these individuals. According to the Salamanca Statement (1994:7) differences were normal and that learning was to be adapted to the needs of the individual rather than the individual fitting into the preordained assumptions regarding the pace and nature of the learning process (The Salamanca Statement, 1994:7). The provision of skills cannot be an issue for charitable organisations and churches but a responsibility of the state through a universal practical curriculum. On the basis of this observation an institute for inclusion may be a coordinated response to the challenge. However, the absence of policy makers in symposiums and meetings to address inclusion was a stumbling block towards implementation of inclusion.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the qualitative research design. A convenient sampling strategy was found suitable as the researcher met and discussed needs of disabled beggars to suit his and their convenient times. As the researcher was travelling, along the high way and in the two cities people with disabilities who were begging were approached while they were collecting alms to respond to a few questions. After, permission was granted the interviews were held. To ensure validity and reliability (Maree, 2012) of data the department of social welfare was approached to corroborate some of the findings. To guarantee transferability, consistency and or dependability of the instruments a pilot study was carried out at a tax rank at Jerera growth point where the researcher lived. The next section briefly describes the demographic attributes of participants.

3.1 THE DEMOGRAPHIC ATTRIBUTES OF PARTICIPANTS

The data for this study was elicited from disabled people who were met on the streets through unstructured interviews. Forty (40) disabled people who were begging were interviewed. 15 were females while the other 25 were males. Thirty of the disabled beggars were travelling either with their spouses or children who were not having visible impairments. The other 10 were moving alone those who had hearing impairments moved with cards written their names and the appeal for help from well-wishers. The males were helping to off load and load goods from cross border traders onto buses and the conductors requested travellers to give them something in return. Those on wheelchairs were pushed along pavements by their children. Some had sustained injuries from accidents. The visually impaired were moving alone at time in three's or in pairs with white canes. The visually impaired were singing church songs to draw attention of travellers asking for money. The hearing impaired would use sing language and most travellers never paid attention to them. The Masvingo Beitbridge road was used many mainly cross border traders and vendors. Interviewing the disabled participants 'rich data which yielded the following information where they were educated, the skills they acquired, their challenges, the alternative help they needed apart from the money and food they were asking for.

The findings were classified into several categories among them social, educational, material and the support they needed. Although the study did not focus on insults, abuse, attitudes of the public and how the disabled felt about society incidentally participants raised these issues. Being asked questions about their lives forced them to vent of their feeling and anger at the public. The last question that featured incidentally in the study was can inclusion work in this environment? The next section summaries some of the themes that emerged from the interviews.

3.2 FINDINGS FROM UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

The interviews resulted in several themes that helped the researchers to conceptualize the needs of people living with disabilities. Among the key themes identified were limitations associated with inclusive settings, lack of support from higher education, lack of practical and feasible empowerment strategies, pro-disability policy issues, lack of funding, perception of society towards with people with disabilities among others.

The next section discusses the themes and what was actually said by some of the interviewees.

There was a belief among most of the people who were begging that most institutions in higher education in Zimbabwe were excluding them because they did not have adequate inclusive settings. The only places for them were the streets and begging because the process did not burden any specific people. The following sentiments were given to support the claim:

> *There are very few higher education institutions that cater for children with disabilities (Participant 1)*
>
> *Most of us need to take along our aides to institutions that may offer us places for study. This is not easy as these aides may need accommodation and payments (Participant 3)*

Empowerment was lacking in most of the initiatives focusing on disabled people. Even if the disabled people who left Copota had productive skills they were not given funds and entrepreneurial skills to kick start their own projects. Without skills to market and enough funding people with disabilities were forced to go for begging to find something to etch living out of.

> *Without parents what we get from social welfare is not enough to sustain our needs as result we can go further than the A level* (Participant 7)
>
> *Universities are not inclusive, and they do not have our programmes (Participant 13)*
>
> *Having skills is one thing producing goods and services is another (Participant 30)*
>
> *Skills should be complemented by entrepreneurial skills (Participant 23)*
>
> *If we start our own things we get respect because people don't really like to see you begging every day (Participant 21)*
>
> *Most schools that admit people with disabilities are funded by churches and when you leave the school there is no funding to rely on to start new projects (Participant 24)*

Economic and political empowerment is important because it enables us to live productive and dignified lives (Participant 21)

Pro-disability policies were just talk shows and there was very little action taken to implement the policies. The people with disabilities who were begging also indicated that that the economic challenges made it difficult for government to prioritize disability issues because social welfare did not respond as before to needs of people with disabilities. The following verbal quotes help to explain the above views:

People with disabilities should be assisted to become employers through the enactment of pro-disability policies (Participant 21)

No measures are put in place to improve our livelihoods (Participant 21)

Most of the help that is given to the disabled is food and shelter not sustainable skills (Participant 38)

We need a kick-start whereby you will be given materials or inputs to do your own things (Participant 31)

People with disabilities believed they had skills that could make them get reasonable employment. Unfortunately, the current economic situation created unfair competition with people who had no visible disabilities. Companies were opting for people who had no disabilities as a result the people with disabilities were left in the cold. The following verbal quotes help to explain the above views:

To create employment people with disabilities, need skills (Participant 7)

Need for policies that encourage funding for individuals with disabilities (Participant 15)

There is not much investment in this area.

Existing legislation appears not to be effectively cushioning people with disabilities as far as empowering them through various programmes is concerned. This may be because the legislative provisions are not comprehensive enough or that persons with disabilities are not taking advantage of the legislation.

There are policies that take care of people with disabilities but a lot needs to be done at the level of implementation (Participant 5)

Perception of people towards people with disabilities was still negative. From family level to society people with disabilities opted for begging because they were dumped in special schools by their relatives. When they left special schools after reaching cohort age two options remained either to leave special school and find their way into the society or remain in the school because this is the only family they knew. The following verbal quotes help to explain the above views:

> *There was need to strengthen the family's competences in promoting the social inclusion of the family and the child (Participant 17)*

The people with disabilities felt there was no continuity in what was offered in their special schools and what was offered in higher education. The following verbal quotes help to explain the above views:

> *There is no signage between what universities offer and the basic skills acquired from Copota. Our practical curriculum begins at Copota and ends at Copota (Participant 11)*

The environments outside special schools were not lacked mobility and accessibility. In some institutions that offered Programmes for disabled people most of the disabled people were confined to disability centres and immobile as soon as they got outside the centres. The following statements help to explain the above views.

4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section of the study discussed findings under the subheadings derived from sub research questions; Issues that forced disabled people to opt for a life of begging; how the life of begging affected the welfare of the families of disabled people; the extent to which the needs of disabled beggars can inform an inclusive practical skill development curriculum in tertiary institutions.

The study established that the majority of the people with disabilities who were begging had been skilled at local institutions that were being funded by non-governmental organizations and churches. However, these individuals were dumped without any financial support to start their own projects after reaching cohort age. As a result, they had no option but to go back to the streets to beg. Literature supports the finding. A

study by *European Agency* (2010:7) found that disabled people who did not get support from government and the communities reverted to begging for survival. In a similar study, Nigeria disabled beggars left the streets to start their own projects to manufacture assistive devices after getting funding from their government (Joshi, Pahad & Maniar, 2006:39). With bright kind of support most disabled people had the potential to use their skills towards the development of communities and solving some of the community problems.

The study established that the success in promoting skills and helping the disabled people who were begging to realize their potential and live decent lives could be achieved through a collaboration and combination of resources from government, private funders and civil society organizations. However, literature also indicated that disabled people became vulnerable and decided to go to the streets to beg because they had no enough support from non-governmental organizations, civic organizations and social welfare (Ngoda, 2016; Chimhenga, 2016; European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2013).

The study established that people with disabilities had limited options because they could not be absorbed into higher education institutions because of the nature of curriculum that was offered there. The study further established that the institutions were built without the needs of disabled people in mind as a result these institutions could not manage to practice inclusion. Literature supports this view. Previous studies carried out established that intellectually challenged individuals could not be integrated into society or mainstream environments because of the nature of their disabilities. Research studies of homeless people in the United States of America and in Russian communities showed that intellectually challenged went through rehabilitation in specialized institutions funded by welfare agencies (Vetrov, 2006).This study found that in Zimbabwe intellectually challenged individuals were only accommodated to receive medication in hospitals and released into society. No one cared about the lives they went through after leaving hospitals.

The study established that higher education institutions could not implement inclusive practical skills due to lack of the relevant skills, training and attitude. As a result, disabled people had no other options except to go into the streets to beg. A study of carried out in Zimbabwe by Nyanga and Nyanga (2013:167) and in South African

schools by Pottas (2005:66); Hay, Smit and Paulsen (2001:216) supports this view. These studies, concurred that the current teachers who are of an academic orientation, were not be the right people to impart practical skills due to lack of relevant skills, training and attitude (Beachman & Rouse, 2011:4; Engelbrecht, 2007:3). Hence, most disabled did not seek further education because mainstream institutions were failing to cater for their diverse needs

The study established that most environments were inaccessible for people with disabilities as a result they ended up begging for survival. Literature supports this claim. Previous studies reached similar conclusions that inaccessibility reinforces the social stigma among persons with disabilities by further isolating or segregating people (Hull, 2017). Hence, people with disabilities succumbed to ego-demean pressures by opting to go begging. The findings of the current study were in contrast to the claim that differences were normal, and that learning was to be adapted to the needs of the individual rather than the individual fitting into the preordained assumptions regarding the pace and nature of the learning process (The Salamanca Statement, 1994:7; Watkins, 2007:22).

The study also established disabled people who were hard of hearing were continuously excluded from society due to communication challenges. In a study of challenges faced by people with hearing impairments, Musengi (2017) also established similar findings that individuals with hearing impairment were often segregated because the majority of people could not communicate with them. They could hardly fit into any environment even if they needed to apply their skills in community projects because basic communication was not mastered by ordinary society which could not understand basic sign language (Nyanga & Nyanga, 2013; Pottas, 2005:66; Hay, Smit & Paulsen, 2001:216; Engelbrecht, 2007:3; Beachman & Rouse, 2011:4). The same challenge was also found in a study which was carried out in the United States that over 95% of all deaf individuals are born into a family or a community that had no experience on how deaf people learnt and lived (Hauser et al., 2010:652). As such, the absence of a universal sign language to support and enhance inclusion hard of hearing people forced them to opt for begging.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings of this research, the following recommendations were made:

- Benchmarking marking skills acquired at special institutions such as Copota school for the blind and Henry Murray school to enable the disabled entry into higher and tertiary education institutions.
- Institutions of higher learning should have special practical skills programmes to support disabled people beyond secondary school with practical skills so that their potential is fully realized
- There should be collaboration and combination of resources from government, private funders and civil society organizations to support the disabled society
- The study recommended the creation of a institute for disability in higher education for assessment; for coordinating support for disabled people from one educational phase to the next until the individuals are channelled into self-employment.
- The study recommended to training of teachers who have received vocational training to provide rehabilitation of people with disability nationally.
- There was a need for compulsory training for mainstream teachers to promote inclusivity. Learners are never taught as a group because each one has unique needs. Focus to support this move should be a function of training by institutions of higher learning who training teachers.
- Universities focusing on inclusivity could start to develop effective human resource strategies for their staff as a whole, developing teachers and partnering with ministry of education to support schools with updated research-based methodologies.
- A skills development curriculum focusing on addressing inclusion should not only focus traditional medical diagnosis but on evaluation of the physical environmental factors that shape the experience of living with a disability including adopting of public laws and policies that require all buildings to be made accessible.
- There is a need for a universal sign language to support and enhance inclusion of hard of hearing people in the wide society.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The increase of people with disabilities begging in public place is a sign of existence of some serious social ills in the current society particularly the education system that is failing to equip people with disabilities with the skills to live independently. The response lays in a practical skills development curriculum for self-reliance and entrepreneurship.

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THE NEED FOR TEACHER PREPARATION FOR INCLUSION

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ABSTRACT

In Zimbabwe and the international fraternity, pre-service teachers continue to confront challenges in teaching modern-day regular classes that increasingly have escalating figures of learner-diversity. The government of Zimbabwe supports pre-service training of teachers for inclusion in education. It mandates its universities and primary school teachers' training colleges to provide pre-service teacher programmes aimed at the acquisition of pedagogy that caters for unique needs of diverse children in the mainstream classrooms. This is against a background that in 1994, the world shifted from exclusion to inclusion in education in accord with the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on special needs education. The statement reaffirmed the right to education of every individual as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948). This study adopted a qualitative approach with pre-service graduate primary school teachers. Data was gathered through individual interviews, non-participant observations and document analysis. The study results indicate that, while inclusion in education is a noble idea, pre-service teacher preparation in Zimbabwe does not fully address the phenomenon for its effective implementation. The problems cited include lack of information about inclusion, instructional methodology and inclusive practices. Participants were quick to point out that, a theory-practise gap existed as they also expressed their lack of exposure to reality in the mainstreams including special school visits to become aware of varied cases of disability. The current study concludes by suggesting a teacher preparation model that Zimbabwe can adopt to address the foregoing challenges in addition to reflecting on the need for further research on how best to support pre-service teachers in implementing inclusion in education.

Keywords: teacher preparation, human rights, inclusion, pre-service teacher

METHODOLOGY

In the current study, a qualitative descriptive case-study design has been adopted. A case study involves intensive analysis of an individual unit such as an organisation or community leading to the researchers obtaining an in-depth and holistic perception of the research problem (Kumar, 2011; Yin, 2012). This study posed and answered four open-ended questions (see section 1.7.1.). Employing both primary and secondary data from varied instruments triangulated including the document analysis, face-to-face individual interviews and non-participant classroom observations, responses have been solicited for the guiding questions in an endeavour to propose a model that could be adopted by Zimbabwe. Excerpts containing participants' views were used to illustrate the participants' different views which were subsequently interpreted.

The study was premised on establishing what was obtaining currently in a selected graduate pre-service teacher training university with respect to inclusive education, thus the qualitative case-study becomes the most appropriate research design. This method has been chosen also as it yields qualitative data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Creswell, 2014). To this end, the researchers were able to gather the requisite data from the sizable sample of graduate participants conveniently and purposely sampled from the selected university. The researchers utilized the thematic and interpretive techniques to analyze data gathered as they allowed them to reach to a conclusion for the phenomenon studied (Johnson, 2011).

BACKGROUND

Since independence in 1980, Zimbabwe prioritised education and considered it more seriously in her developmental plans resulting in it enjoying hefty budgetary allocations from the fiscas (World Data on Education, 2007). This financial support was granted after her realisation of education as a vehicle that takes up the youth and prepares them for economic independence and social mobility, thereby according to Cassar (2014), rendering them higher chances of employability and active participation in their communities post schooling. Inferentially, people with unique socio-economic backgrounds including those with disabilities make up part of those who require education which is a fundamental basic human right. Ten percent (10%) of children worldwide live with a disability (WHO, 2004). The principle of inclusive education was

heralded to the world in 1994 at the United Nations World Conference on Special Needs Education hosted by Spain in Salamanca where Zimbabwe was in attendance as a signatory member state. Back home in the same year, Zimbabwe adopted inclusive education by way of policy and attracted much attention of the government, educationists and the general populace (Mafa, 2012; Jenjekwa, Rutoro & Runyowa, 2013).

Inclusive education can only be achieved in Zimbabwe provided its teacher education system undergoes a methodological overhaul for it to meet international best practices. Persistent calls for the need to redesign the world's education systems resonated internationally in tandem with the UN 1994 Conference (Shield, 1996). The 21st Century is an era of transformation in the induction, preparation and development of both pre-service and in-service teachers (Pecheone & Whittaker, 2016). There is need therefore to closely and expertly examine contemporary practices to teacher training with a thrust on instructional pedagogy so as to meet the needs of diverse learners in inclusive settings (Mafa & Chaminuka, 2012). To the contrary, Zimbabwe is deficient of a comprehensive and supportive inclusive education policy in its teacher education system (Jenjekwa et al., 2013). Such a policy-practice gap is a major hindrance to achieving quality inclusive education. It is therefore critical to infuse or integrate inclusive education in the Zimbabwean teacher education system (Chikwature, Oyedele & Ntini, 2016) for effective implementation of inclusion.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Inclusive education is a reform process and an empowering strategy for a diverse student population that calls for learners with unique educational needs to learn with their peers in their neighbouring school doing the same curriculum (Urton, Wilbert & Henneman, 2014; Samkange, 2013). It is a rights issue that is premised on practising social justice advocating for equal access to education and equalization of opportunities through reduction of all forms of discrimination (Obi & Ashi, 2016). Inclusive education is a process aimed at providing quality education for all while celebrating and respecting diversity (UNESCO, 2009). Inclusive education is also hinged on the humanistic perspective that a single education system approach promotes inclusion more than the dualistic system where general education is taught parallel to special education (Sibanda, 2015). Based on the foregoing, inclusive

education is multifaceted in approach as it goes beyond placement of learners into regular classrooms to involving access, participation, achievement, presence, equality and diversity.

To this end, the focus of this study is not on inclusive education but on the need for teacher preparation for inclusion in education. It is therefore apparent at this point to now turn to 'teacher preparation for inclusion' in the Zimbabwean context for us to realize whether there is need to redesign and restructure our teacher education system taking cognisance of the fact that, quality higher and tertiary education is a major driver of economic competitiveness through training qualified personnel with a sound research-based knowledge (Alshamy, 2016).

Deborah Ball's Teaching Works organisation in California is on record in its observation that "GREAT TEACHERS ARE NOT BORN, THEY ARE TAUGHT" (Pecheone & Whittaker, 2016). If they are 'taught', the Zimbabwe teacher education system stands challenged to 'teach' great teachers for effective implementation of inclusive practices in mainstream classrooms. By so doing, the less privileged, marginalised, underachievers and those discriminated against would become active participants and independent in their communities. According to Hassard (2012), most teacher education programmes need to be redesigned and substantially changed as they are becoming more important today than they were in the past decades.

MOTIVATION

The Reformed Church University's (RCU) niche area is inclusivity, hence its buzzword aphorism: "building a legacy through inclusivity". This legacy can only be realized provided all relevant stakeholders, lecturers included, play their professional mandate in tandem with the 5.0 philosophy which requires all universities to provide quality education through research, teaching, innovation, industrialisation and community service. Now the question is: 'Is the RCU as an activity system walking its talk for it to retain its status as a world-class university of choice? The qualitative case study findings that these researchers gathered answer it all, informed by the Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) of Engestrom (1987). To this end, a snap-shot survey of this institution's community perceptions towards inclusion leaves a lot to be desired.

CULTURAL-HISTORICAL ACTIVITY THEORY

This theory, according to Hancock and Miller (2017), is a relevant framework to examine teacher preparation for inclusion given its seven elements that facilitate understanding of transformational action occurring in an activity system. A model of an activity system was developed by Engestrom (1987) comprising of seven interconnected elements that include the subject (educator), object or purpose of the activity (the deed or what is being done by the subject) (Abella, 2016), community (different actors in an activity system) and mediating tools or instruments (facilitating devices for execution of specific action (Er, 2017). Tools mediate the way in which the subject achieves an object and outcome (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013). There is also division of labour, rules (socio-cultural and historical factors or norms and values of a community), and outcome (intended or unintended) as illustrated in the diagram below (see Figure1).

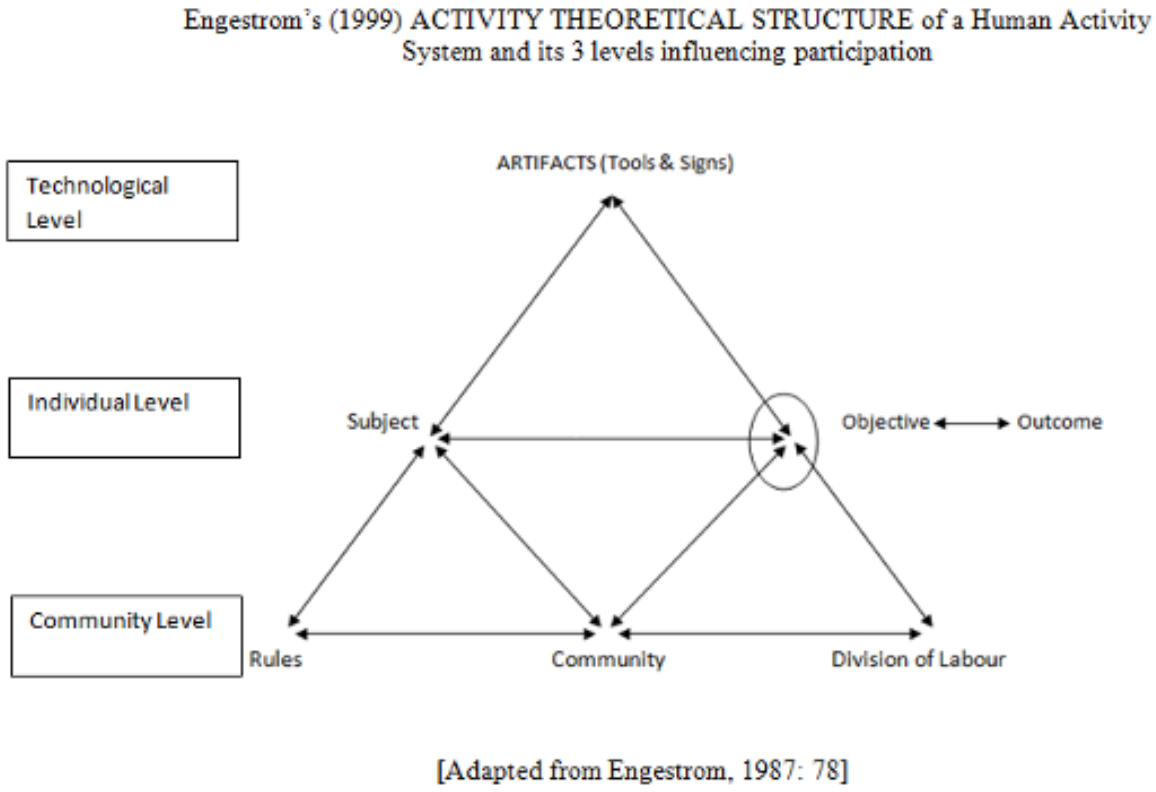

Figure 1: Engestrom's 1987 model

Central idea to CHAT is that human action is purposeful and is mediated by ecological artefacts to achieve the objective intended (Jones, Edwards & Tuim, 2014). Lampert-Shepel (2008) alluded that, an activity is a socially constructed and culturally mediated human action. University lecturers are therefore challenged to design appropriate artefacts and act purposefully to realize inclusion in education. On the other hand, CHAT's key principle is that of historicity (Hancock & Miller, 2017) which according to Anderson and Stillman (2013) concerns CHAT perceiving teacher education as an activity grounded within the social, cultural and historical context of its community. An activity is thus always influenced by past experiences thus in teacher education, there is need to look at history in order to understand the present and develop better activity systems. The vertices to Engestrom's triangle depict mediations taking place within an activity system: tools mediating interaction between the subject and object while rules mediate interactions between the community and the subject. In the same vein, the division of labour mediates interactions between the community and the object (Georg, 2011:2). This theory is an ideal framework to inform teacher preparation for inclusion since using CHAT, the interconnectedness between institutional challenges, teacher-trainees' actions and cultural factors can be examined (Anderson & Stillman, 2013).

In this study, the key below shows the elements of the CHAT as applied in the current study and expanded on Hancock and Miller's (2017) diagram:

- **Subject:** Teacher candidates / university lecturers
- **Object:** Learning to teach with inclusive practices
- **Mediating Tools:** Assignments; ICT devices; lecture notes or lesson plans; instructional methods; Course outline / curricula; materials; ZIMCHE standards
- **Rules:** Lecture/Classroom norms; University/school rules and regulations; Timetable/schedule; Ministerial requirements; teacher education requirements
- **Community:** Students; families; teachers; university supervisors; teacher education faculty; academic and non-academic staff and administrators
- **Division of Labour:** Teacher candidates; university lecturers and supervisors;
- **Outcome:** Prepared inclusive teachers
- **Historicity:** Previous university coursework and experiences; exposure to inclusive education.

THE NEED TO TRAIN TEACHERS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Sub-research questions:

To this end, the following were four sub-research questions that guided this study:

1. How do graduate pre-service primary school teachers at a selected university in Zimbabwe understand inclusion?
2. How do graduate pre-service primary school teachers at a selected university in Zimbabwe practice inclusion?
3. What strategies can be proposed to enhance the preparation of graduate pre-service primary school teacher preparation for inclusion?
4. What model can be proposed to enhance the preparation of graduate pre-service teachers for inclusion?

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Teachers' understanding of inclusion in education

All the participants struggled to clearly and comprehensively define or explain the concept inclusion with 63% of them expressing ignorance and cluelessness of it. However, with the clarification of the concept by the researcher on its meaning, these participants later responded more meaningfully to the rest of the questions associated with inclusion. Such a key finding is exemplified as expressed in the following excerpts:

Teacher Gwizo:

> *Inclusion, I don't know inclusion, neither do I know inclusive education. To make them learn about the new curriculum, in this case, we have a new curriculum issued by Dr Dokora. So, the inclusion of the new curriculum makes them (children) to grasp the new concept. It helps them in future to grasp especially the hands-on skills for example the visual and arts performance studies that were introduced in the new curriculum.*

There was high likelihood that inclusive education was not a compulsory part of the teacher education programme offered at the case study institution.

Teachers' inclusive practices

Individual interview data pointed to the fact that all the participants used different inclusion practices, be it teaching-learning methods or strategies with concepts taught and nature of children constituting one`s class with frequent descriptors pointing to use of media, learner-centred pedagogy, grouping, acceleration and change of sitting positions, discussion, differentiation, problem-solving and voice projection. The most common and specifically used strategy was that of changing the seating position of children with visual impairment, especially those with short sight. Participants emphasized use of instructional methods that meet individuality as reiterated by the following two participants:

Teacher Dhongi:

> *You must use methodologies which cater for all individual differences.*

Teacher Bere:

> *I try by all means to cater for those children. How? By doing individual teaching and pupil-centred learning, I try to cater for each and every learner according to his or her ability.*

Teacher preparation strategies

This section presents and analyses the current study findings that cropped up from the semi-structured individual interviews and non-participant lesson observations that were administered with 16 graduate pre-service primary school teachers. From the data analysis that was critical in facilitating a detailed explanation of the preparedness of the 16 participants for inclusion in their inclusive classrooms, multiple themes and sub-categories emerged. Based on these themes and categories, it was discernible that, graduate pre-service primary school teachers were not adequately prepared for inclusion in Zimbabwean inclusive classrooms.

By consensus all the 16 study participants pointed out the need to improve on teacher preparation for inclusion in order for the recipients to be adequately trained. Resultantly, many and varied suggestions and recommendations were forwarded for consideration by both the teacher training universities and the government. The

multiplicity of recommendations tabled is an indication of shortfalls in the teacher preparation curriculum for inclusion. Key among the recommendations was the need to address TP related issues in addition to provision of detailed and relevant IE information. Prolonging TP and the need to expose student teachers to institutions of children with disabilities were among the factors that would enhance inclusion practices when pre-service teachers are finally employed as full-time inclusive practitioners. This kind of attachment would allow student teachers to learn and equip-self for reality in the teaching field. This would make teachers understand diversity and use appropriate instructional methodologies for meaningful participation by all children.

Majority of the participants concurred that, teacher preparation for inclusion was approached by university lecturers more form a theoretical point of view than being practical. IE by nature is a practical process that demands a pragmatic approach given the fact that diverse children require practical solutions to their practical challenges. In light of this, some participants recommended skills training for successful management of diverse children. Furthermore, all the 16 participants acknowledged and confirmed that they were never exposed to coverage of both national and international policies pro-inclusion. Existence of policies is a sign of commitment on the part of the government to make provisions available to beneficiaries. Failure to study policies is a clear indication of incomplete and inadequate preparation of teachers for inclusion since such policies guarantee implementation if adopted.

Model of teacher preparation

An over-view of all findings of the current study that emerged from different opinions expressed by participants about their level of preparedness for inclusion in education underpin the need to propose a model for pre-service teacher preparation for inclusion in Zimbabwe. Over and above, views aired by respective participants are evidence enough of the fact that, Zimbabwe's graduate pre-service primary school teachers are inadequately prepared to carry out their professional obligation of accommodating all children in their diversity in inclusive classrooms. Following the foregoing concerns, sentiments and attitudes demonstrated by participants towards the idea of inclusion as well as their recommendations, one model of teacher preparation appear to be most preferred believing it can fully address their needs as inclusive teachers. This is the merged model, a collaborative type of pre-service teacher preparation programme

which brings together regular and special education into a single pre-service curriculum designed in such a manner that all course content focuses on a diverse student population inclusive of those with disabilities (Naukkarinen, 2010; Turner, 2009). This model will act as our lens through which teacher education should be designed for Zimbabwean pre-service primary school teachers taking cognizance of the fact that, the structure of the preferred model should factor in the complexity and context of the community in which teacher education for inclusion is practiced. In line with the foregoing, Blandon and Pugach (2017) concur that, ideal models of teacher preparation for inclusion are still to be established that fully account for both the structure and content of teacher preparation for inclusion that addresses the needs of inclusive teachers.

Majority of the study participants suggested, for example the need for resources (Teacher Shoko), more practical skills (Teacher Mhembwe, Teacher Gudo and Teacher Mhara) more exposure for hands-on training (Teacher Shumba) and motivation (Teacher Nhara, Gonzo, Mbizi and Shumba). These demanded factors constitute critical elements of the cultural, historical activity theory (CHAT). Their demands therefore are a clear indicator of the need for and fundamentality of this CHAT as a framework of the design for pre-service teacher education. The participants' way of thinking is in accordance with the researchers' perception of diversity as having children with disabilities as a component of it. The current study therefore interrogated disability from a view point of disability as a social construct having in mind that significant changes should occur in teacher education for prep-service teachers to be able to accommodate diverse children including those with disabilities. For an activity system, in this case the teacher training university, to fully and effectively operate from a merged model perspective of teacher preparation so as to produce the ideal inclusive education teacher, CHAT's three levels of operation (individual, community and technological) should be fully implemented.

The social and historical aspect of CHAT focuses on structural and environmental shortcomings (Roth & Lee, 2007; Tremblay, 2007). For purposes of this study, shortcomings are in the form of institutional activities which include among others inclusive education information, resources, instructional skills, knowledge of policy issues and motivation. These shortcomings ultimately influence effectiveness of pre-

service teachers' implementation of inclusion. In light of the above, teacher training universities should remove barriers that hinder implementation of inclusion by re-structuring their teacher education system. A holistic approach to teacher education is achievable provided teacher education institutions undergo methodological evolution (Tremblay, 2007). To this end, methodological evolution can be realized provided teacher educators employ transformative action or praxis which ultimately enables them to marry theory and practice (Etscheidt, Curran & Sawyer, 2012).

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE STUDY

The researchers came up with a number of conclusions on the current study following a critical analysis and interpretation of findings. All the conclusions stated below were made in light of the main research question that anchored this study viz: How prepared are graduate pre-service primary school teachers for inclusion from a selected university in Zimbabwe?

Most of the findings derived from data gathered for this study using triangulated instruments of semi-structured individual interviews, non-participant observations and documentary analysis converged to point out that,

- university teacher education for pre-service primary school teachers at the selected institution did not fully inform and equip them for inclusion hence not adequately prepared for this critical and global practice of inclusion in education as deemed by a number of international charters and conventions discussed in the foregoing.
- very little information if any, regarding instructional methodologies for diverse children in an inclusive classroom was received by graduate pre-service primary school teachers, thus, they were not adequately prepared for inclusion.
- there was conceptual confusion and misunderstanding of inclusion as teachers lacked strategies and skills to handle diverse children including those with disabilities.
- all the participants however, had appreciation of inclusion as a human right practice that promotes equality and participation.
- graduate pre-service primary school teachers hardly practiced best or inclusive practices since their lectures were more theoretical than practical in approach.

- pre-service primary school teachers should be rigorously and relevantly prepared to become effective inclusive teachers. Without proper preparation, the Zimbabwean government's vision and commitment to making education accessible to all would not be realized if inclusion is not meaningfully implemented.
- only one module out of the 42 courses offered, had related literature to the concept of inclusion as it focused on Special Needs Education, hence, pre-service primary school teachers educated at Zimbabwean universities are ill-prepared for inclusion.
- participants realized and appreciated the role of the government as a key stakeholder in inclusion in education but highlighted that inclusion in education was a challenge as teachers were 'half-baked cakes.' Inclusion therefore cannot become a reality if the government does not play its part to provide support services and ensure quality teacher education provision by its teacher training universities. Against these conclusions, the subsequent section presents pointers to why there is need to train teachers for inclusion.

WHY THE NEED TO TRAIN TEACHERS FOR INCLUSION?

The 10 international observations listed below all point to the need to train teachers for inclusion:

- **MALAWI:** While teacher preparation for INCLUSIVE EDUCATION is relatively new (Blanks, 2014), positive attitudes are critical for successful inclusion as they promote school policies and resources allocation to increase quality education (Komesaroff & McLean, 2006). Teacher education instils positivity.
- **CALIFORNIA:** 21st Century is an era of transformation in the preparation of would-be teachers where nations are institutionalising new policies that motivate and incentivize establishment of new standards for teaching (Pecheone & Whittaker, 2016). Teachers need to acquire new standards.
- **CHINA:** Pre-service teachers require socialization on information about attitudes toward inclusion for learners to benefit as they are directly influenced by it (Cheung, Wu & Hui, 2015; Obi & Ashi, 2016). Teacher education is a social agent.

- **COLOMBIA:** Appropriately prepared teachers are recognized as key players in buttressing the process that leads to inclusive educational systems (Navarro, Zervas, Gesa & Sampson, 2016). Teachers require relevant and appropriate training.
- **INDIA:** There is no better educator than an informed educator (Das, Kuyini & Desai, 2013). Teachers require current information to remain relevant.
- **USA:** Teacher education is drifting from a curriculum that is premised on knowledge domains to one that is organised around core practices for teaching, yet teaching is a complex profession that appears deceptively simple (Grossman, Hammerness & McDonald, 2009). Teachers need to be aware of changes in education.
- **HARARE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOLS-Zimbabwe:** Teachers need to acquire and develop skills and knowledge that are beyond subject area and content such as computer skills, diagnostic skills and a social background in learner support (Mafa & Chaminuka, 2012). Teacher preparation provides teachers with pre-requisite practical skills and knowledge.
- **MASVINGO-Zimbabwe:** A major gap has been created by non-existence of a vibrant inclusive education practice in Zimbabwe's teacher education (Jenjekwa, Rutoro & Runyowa, 2013). Teacher education promotes inclusive practices.
- **8 out of 10 PROVINCES OF Zimbabwe:** While Zimbabwe has no critical shortage of specialist teachers (Ncube & Hlatywayo, 2013) and despite IE attracting attention and focus of the general populace, the government and educationists, Zimbabwe continues to experience challenges of its implementation (Mafa & Makuba, 2013; Chikwature et al., 2016). Teachers are equipped with practical solutions to inclusive education challenges.
- **BULAWAYO METROPOLITAN-Zimbabwe:** Incorporating inclusive education in Zimbabwe's teacher training programmes remains critical (Chikwature et al., 2016). There are fundamental elements of inclusive education in teacher training.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the foregoing research findings, it is apparent that the Zimbabwean teacher education system needs to be re-aligned in tandem with international best practices for effective inclusion in educational settings. It is also prudent for educators at teacher-training institutions in Zimbabwe to explicitly, vividly and practically prepare teachers adequately for effective inclusive education. Policies supportive of this inclusive movement should be formulated after identifying the overall philosophy and goals of the nation taking cognizant of the fact that, no education system can be above the quality of its practitioners. Lastly, wholesome adoption of Western inclusive approaches at the expense of local and contextualized ones militates against successful implementation of inclusion hence the need to design and institute locally bred approaches.

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THE SOCIAL MODEL: A KEY DRIVER TOWARDS THE INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Inclusivity in education constitutes an international policy imperative that promotes the rights of disabled learners to be educated alongside their peers in mainstream classrooms. It is a strategy meant to contribute towards making education accessible to all by opening spaces, providing equal opportunities for the marginalised and creating inclusive communities, and ultimately promoting an all-inclusive society. The philosophy enables all children and adults, whatever their gender, age, colour, ethnicity, impairment, or HIV status, to access and participate in all aspects of the curriculum. In this study, the researchers focused on how the social model influences inclusion of students with disabilities (SwDs) at one higher education institution (HEI) in Masvingo Province basing on a qualitative study that attempted to close a gap in literature and to provide a deeper understanding of the challenges that students with disabilities (SwDs) encountered towards their inclusion and suggested strategies towards its promotion. Findings in this study reveal that generally SwDs encounter some barriers to their inclusion in higher education (HE) and concludes the same although there are noticeable efforts towards their accommodation. In light of the foregoing findings and conclusions, the researchers therefore recommend that HEIs embrace the social model of disability in facilitating inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education.

Keywords: Inclusion, social model, students with disabilities, higher education, accommodations.

BACKGROUND

The social exclusion of people with disabilities has always been a problem since time immemorial. In the education sector, they are denied meaningful formal education with the belief that it is not worth investing in their education, yet education and higher education (HE) in particular according to Mandela (2005) is the great engine of personal development, and the only means that could empower its citizens irrespective of their individual differences. In the same vein, Kochung (2011) associates education with specific outcomes such as good employment opportunities and high income. For example, in the Philippines, higher earnings amongst people with disabilities are associated with increased schooling generating returns of more than 25%, and in China each additional year of schooling results in wage increases for PwDs of around 5% for rural and 8% for urban residents (Saebones, Breler, Baboo, Banham, Scrighad, Howgego, McClain-Nhlapo, Riis-Hansen & Dansie, 2015). This has resulted in an academic revolution in HE in the past more than half a century which is marked by transformations unprecedented in scope and diversity (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2009). Despite the benefits attainment of higher education might bring to PwDs different surveys indicate that the number of students with impairments who are enrolled in higher education (HE) are less in comparison to their counterparts without impairments. However Gebrehiwot's (2015) study results indicate that there is a slight increase in number of SwDs admitted in HE and yet the quality of services they receive do not resonate with their inclusion in institutional activities in ways that ensure access, active participation and success. With the social model becoming the 21st century basis upon which government and society can devise strategies for meeting the needs of disabled people, it becomes imperative to investigate its influence towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education in Zimbabwe as the model is underpinned by the human rights approach.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK-THE RIGHTS MODEL

At the core of inclusive education is the human right to education, pronounced in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 (Gebrehiwot, 2015). Since the proclamation, "Everyone has the right to education", in article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) several decades ago, countries around the world have made significant strides to make education accessible to their citizens. The final

breakthrough came when the UN Commission on Human Rights, actively supported by the then UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, identified and recognised disability as a human rights concern in a series of resolutions adopted in 1998, 2000 and 2002. As a logical sequence of this development, in 2001 the UN General Assembly accepted a proposal by the Government of Mexico for elaboration of a UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Mutswanga, 2016). This development led to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006). The UNCRPD (2006) the first human rights instrument in the twenty-first century, is the major law that makes provisions for persons with disabilities at the international level and it has led to the confirmation of disabled people as rights-bearers and valued members of society (Magwa, Podzo & Shava, 2015). Article 24 of the CRPD provides for the right to education for all persons with disabilities and places emphasis on the need to ensure inclusive education at all levels for them (Mutswanga, 2016). In addition, the Article is framed in terms of 'persons with disabilities' as opposed to 'children with disabilities' first, because not everyone receives education as a child, and second, because education is a life-long activity. Thus, access to inclusive tertiary education for persons with disabilities (PwDs) is strongly supported by the UNCRPD Article 24 (para.5) which expresses that "States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others". To this end, states Parties shall ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities. However, despite the revolution in social and legislative policies on provision of equal opportunities for education and employment for people with disabilities, there is still a long way to go in this regard (Gebrehiwot, 2015).

WHAT ARE DISABILITY MODELS?

Disability models are ways of translating ideas into practice. Models are tools for defining impairment and providing a basis upon which government and society can devise strategies for meeting the needs of disabled people (Barnes, 2008; Oliver, 2013). In addition, they are useful frameworks in which to gain an understanding of disability issues, and of the perspective held by those creating and applying the

models. They reveal the ways in which our society provides or limits access to services (Oliver, 2013).

TYPES OF DISABILITY MODELS

There are many models of disabilities but the medical and the social models stand out as the most prominent ones (Gebrehiwot, 2015).

MEDICAL/INDIVIDUAL/TRAGEDY MODEL

The medical (also called the individual/personal tragedy model) came into being as a replacement to the traditional beliefs that an individual's physical or mental problems were caused by a curse or were a punishment from God or the ancestors. The medical view of disability tends to regard disabled people as having something wrong with them and hence the source of the problem (Podzo & Dzviti, 2017). This medical model sees disability as a personal tragedy which limits the capacity of the disabled person to participate in the mainstream society. From this perspective, it is the responsibility of those with disabilities to adapt and fit into the world of those without disabilities (UNESCO, 2002). This view of disability has influenced the development of rehabilitation approaches for persons with disabilities and ultimately the establishment of special schools where PwDs are expected to adapt themselves to fit into the mainstream school system unlike the social model.

CRITICISMS OF THE MEDICAL MODEL

The medical model has received criticism and outright rejection by PwDs themselves because of:

- its emphasis on diagnosis;
- focusing too much on the impairment and not enough on the person;
- its disregard of the disabling cultural and environmental barriers;
- its emphasis on biology and disregard for psychosocial dimensions;
- its failure to consider the unique personal attributes and subjective experiences of the person with an impairment in explaining disability;

- its influences on the way in which society views PwDs, for example educational institutions may perceive PwDs as individuals with limitations.
- the model locates differences within the individual and perceives their inability to perform some duties as something to be “made right” (Siwela, 2017).

THE SOCIAL MODEL

According to Barton (1993), social model, views disability as a form of social oppression and those with disabilities as an oppressed social group which calls for its liberation through the removal and dismantling of barriers and their empowerment through self-participation and involvement (Shakespeare & Watson, 2002). As such, disability needs to be understood as part of the wider set of inequality and oppressions (Barton, 1993). The social model of disability views disability as a social construct created by an ability-oriented environment that helps stakeholders view disability not as an individual problem but as a societal, economic, political, educational system and culture that fails to meet the needs of PwDs (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). The model acknowledges that obstacles to participation in society and its institutions are not a reflection of deficits in those with impairments themselves as purported by the medical model, but these reside in the environment and that such barriers can and must be minimized, eliminated or prevented (Magwa et al., 2015). This model is underpinned by the human rights approach hence, the management of the problem requires social action and is the collective responsibility of society at large, to make the environmental modifications necessary for the full participation of PwDs in all areas of social life (Chirwa, 2011). In view of this, Swds are excluded from accessing and participating in educational activities due to structural, systemic, epistemological and social barriers which can be in form of inaccessible buildings and terrain, negative attitudes, lack of policies, lack of human and material resources and academic practices that are exclusionary to mention some (Podzo & Chipika, 2019). According to Oliver (1993) education from the social model does not overlook the needs of students with disabilities but makes holistic transformation on environmental accessibility, training academic staff and in this case ensuring that the students’ teaching and learning resources were made accessible to them at no cost. Thus, adoption of the social model as a guiding principle in the practice of inclusive education entails addressing barriers

such as those mentioned earlier on thereby increasing access and participation of SwDs in educational activities.

Interactional/Psycho-social model

More recent scholarship has sought to link social, psychological and biological dimensions of disability in a holistic approach that acknowledges both internal and external factors (Schneider, 2006; Mckenzie, 2013). This approach attempts to overcome dichotomies between impairment and disability, individual and society, and mind and body. It acknowledges that different models of disability may be appropriate for different purposes and contexts.

Inclusion Experiences of SwDs at HEIs

Local and international literature on inclusion of SwDs in higher education reveal both positive and negative experiences. However, negative experiences out number positive ones. Chireshe's (2013) study highlighted lack of human and capital resources, specific policy and the existence of negative attitudes on inclusive education as some of the inclusion challenges being encountered by SwDs in HEIs. Similarly, Chiparaushe, Mapako and Makarau's (2011) study conducted at institutions of higher education in Harare, Bulawayo and Midlands provinces of Zimbabwe highlighted economic hardships, inaccessible information due to formats incompatible to the various forms of impairments, social and physical environmental barriers, lack of human and capital resources as some of the barriers hindering full participation of students with disabilities at these institutions. In the same vein Mafa's (2012) study highlights the overall challenges of implementing inclusion in Zimbabwe's education system as lack of policy on inclusion, negative attitudes of stakeholders, inadequate resources, lack of suitable facilities, teachers' limited skills and lack of support from instructional supervisors. Chataika's (2007) and (2011) studies' findings concur with the other research findings. The author cited the following as major barriers to educational inclusion of students with disabilities at institutions of higher learning negative attitudes, lack of disability awareness, inappropriate application and admission procedures, inappropriate teaching methods, inadequate support services, resources, inaccessible environments, absence of legislation and political will. Furthermore, the author expressed lack of coordinated disability activism by disabled

people's organisations as another barrier. Local and international inclusion experiences by SwDs seem similar as reflected by Leeuwen, Thijs and Zandbergen's (2008) study which established that social inequality, lack of willingness by educators to integrate students with disabilities, human and capital resources and expertise were the main barriers to inclusive education practices in the Netherlands.

Methodology

The qualitative research approach was used in this study because it provides rich textual descriptions of people's feelings, values, experiences and perceptions of a phenomenon under investigation in their natural setting (Cohen, Mannion & Morrison 2007). Data collection involved individual interviews with students with disabilities, lecturers who teach these students and the Dean Students Affairs. In addition, students with disabilities were observed during academic and social activities. Selection was purposive and participation was voluntary. Data collected was thematically analysed.

Findings and Discussion

The findings are presented based on categorized themes that emerged from the researchers' initial readings and later modified through the process of reading and re-reading of the interview transcripts and observational notes. The findings are supported by extensive verbatim quotations from the responses of the research participants. The findings with regard to each theme are followed by brief discussions that include the researcher's own reflections. The categories that are used for presenting and discussing the findings are SwDs experiences of:

- Environmental (social and physical) accessibility
- Academic (teaching and learning, assessment, library services) accessibility
- Social (sport) activities

Environmental Accessibility

Physical environment

Physical access to institutional buildings is an essential prerequisite for the inclusion of learners with disabilities. Findings of this research show that physical inaccessibility

was one of the barriers encountered by SwDs especially those with mobility challenges. These barriers were in form of buildings with steps only, rugged and uneven terrain, lack of rails, pavements in some places, no toilets for disabled learners and lack of elevators. Similar findings were made in the following studies Siwela (2017) and Gebrehiwot (2015). Student participants also expressed lack of orientation and mobility training which resulted in most of the students with mobility challenges facing difficulties in manoeuvring the environment.

One of the participants who uses a wheelchair for mobility had this to say:

> *We encounter a lot of challenges when it comes to accessing some of the buildings here as there are very few ramps in some places. Some of the ramps are not safe as one cannot negotiate them without assistance. The environment is so restrictive, I recommend that ramps and elevators be put in place so as to ease our mobility requirements at this institution.*

Another blind student indicates:

> *There are a lot of obstacles in the environment which hinder our mobility, like construction sites, some ditches, doors and windows that open into the corridors. There are no Braille labels on the lecture room doors for identification. All these create accessibility challenges on our part.*

A final year student reiterates:

> *We use the same toilets with other students and imagine how us as blind students can cope with such a situation. Surely, this is really unhygienic on our part taking into consideration that we have to touch all over. The institution should attend to this issue as a matter of urgency.*

Asked on how they think the institution should improve these issues, one student with visual impairment suggested:

> *The institution should modify and adapt the environment so that it becomes user friendly.*

Social environment

Most of the students and lecturers' attitudes were negative and that seem related to their lack of understanding or information about disability matters. Some lecturers and students do not tolerate SwDs. Some students call SwDs names, imitate how some of them walk or talk, laugh at them during lectures when they participate in discussions. These acts had emotional and social effects on SwDs which resulted in their withdrawal from participating effectively in both academic and social activities These findings concur with those by Siwela's (2017) study. However, some SwDs expressed that other non-disabled students and lecturers developed positive attitudes as they spend more time with SwDs at the institution.

One SwD had this to say:

> *We are called names so much that at times you feel if you had not enrolled at this institution. The non-disabled view us as less human. Some do not want us to join their groups for discussion.*

Another SwDs reiterates:

> *The way they treat us leaves a lot to be desired, I sometimes wish if I were not born as I did not apply to be born disabled. However, some seem to accept us as we spend more time together. Some students read for us and also assist us to move around the campus. I recommend that the institution hold awareness campaigns on disability issues so as to minimize attitudinal challenges.*

The study's findings concur with findings by Mosia (2017) and Gebrehiwot (2015).

Academic Accessibility

The teaching and learning process as well as assessment should be accommodative of SwDs's needs. Literature has shown that SwDs are being excluded due to teaching and learning styles which do not cater for the needs of SwDs. Instructors lack the necessary skills to cater for learners with disabilities. Assessment does not offer accommodations for SwDs. Studies by Chiparushe et al. (2011), Chataika (2007), Haihambo (2010), and Suubi (2013) reveal that SwDs are being excluded in academic activities, they are left to fit into the system rather than the system to be accommodative

of diversity. Findings of this research indicate that SwDs had challenges in how lectures were delivered. Lecturers were too fast so much that most SwDs could not cope. SwDs were not able to copy notes as they could not read work on the chalk boards. The participants recommended that the font could be large enough to cater for those with low vision. Further to that SwDs recommended that the institution secures interactive board more projectors, lecturers speak loud enough so that they are able to record everything and also provide interpretation services for those hearing impaired.

One blind student had this to say:

> *Some lecturers do not fully explain everything especially the notes they would have beamed as some of will be recording these for future use. I wish if they could send us soft copies well in advance.*

Another student with cerebral palsy implores:

> *Lecturers erase notes on the chalkboard before we would have finished copying them. It could be better if the institution buy us tape recorders for recording lectures as some of us can't afford buying mobile phones which we can also use for recording lectures like what other students do.*

A hearing-impaired student expresses:

> *Us hearing impaired students sometimes are left out as we are denied interpretation services and have to rely on colleagues to interpret for us. Communication is a real challenge as some staff members are not able to sign.*

Library Services

One important resource centre in HEIs where students are expected to access to a wide range of academic information and enrich their learning experiences is the library Podzo and Chipika (2019). Findings of this study reveal that learners with disabilities especially those with visual impairment had challenges in accessing information in the library. Most books were inaccessible formats with very little in Braille. Computers in the library were not installed with neither JAWS nor NVD software which made the situation even worse. This is reflected in the following excerpts:

One visually impaired student had this to say:

> *The library is meant for those without visual impairment as there is limited material in accessible formats. Sometimes I feel it is time wasting to go to the library since I don't benefit anything from it. I rely on information I record with my phone during lectures.*

Another student with low vision states:

> *I find it very difficult to access information as no reading material in our library is in large print, worse there is no assistive technology like magnifiers to use especially when there is no electricity for me to use a computer.*

Challenges in accessing information is a problem experienced by visually impaired students as is revealed by the following studies: Gebrehiwot (2015), Suubi (2013), Siwela (2017), Chiparaushe et al. (2011), and Podzo and Chipika (2019). Gebrehiwot's (2017) study established that most of the reading material available were meant for sighted students. There was lack of Braille and digital materials. Similarly, Suubi's (2013) highlighted that SwDs had difficulties in obtaining information inaccessible formats.

ASSESSMENT

The assessment tasks that lecturers provided to their students were both summative (end of semester examinations-theory or practical in some cases) to determine students' knowledge, skills and attitudes and contribute to their final grades and formative (continuous/ongoing) designed to provide feedback and enrich students' learning. The continuous assessment was informed of individual assignments, group assignments/tasks, presentations, in-class tests and Work Related Learning/ Teaching Practice. Participants expressed both positive and negative experiences. The study's findings indicate that the institution offered accommodations to SwDs in the assessment process although not well coordinated as there were variations in implementation. Accommodations offered varied from time concessions, sitting arrangements, provision of examination question papers in accessible formats to alternative examination writing modes depending on nature and severity of impairment. These findings concur with those for Gebrehiwot (2015), Suubi (2013),

and Siwela (2017). Gebrehiwot (2015) study established that students with visual impairment were granted extra time for writing examinations and assignments. Lack of Braille competency among lecturers is a challenge which is experienced in many educational institutions globally as has been reflected in the following studies (Mahanya, 2016; Gebrehiwot, 2015) which concurs with findings of this study. Students with visual impairment expressed that they were compelled to type their assignments because most lecturers lacked Braille skills. Participants suggested that staff members be equipped with Braille skills. Participants' views are as follows:

One blind participant had this to say:

> *I don't have any challenges as far as examination writing is concerned as we are granted extra time as well as examination papers in accessible formats basing on one's preferences.*

Another participant implores:

> *I find difficulties in typing my assignments as we are all required to do so despite some of us being proficient in Braille. I wish if we could be allowed to present our assignments in Braille.*

Participants who had gone through the teaching practice exercise expressed mixed experiences ranging from positive to negative. SwDs implored the institution for offering them continuous support throughout although they had challenges regarding stationery and day to day living as they did not have sustainable financial support. As such, their work output was affected. Despite all these challenges student participants managed to sail through. Students suggested that the government supports SwDs by paying them monthly grants to meet additional costs associated with some demands related to their conditions.

One participant had this to say:

> *It is very difficult for us especially us who are blind to survive when on teaching practice since you require an assistant, stationery and other basics to survive when you don't have any source of income. For example I am married with children going to school, really life was very tough for. I suggest that the*

government offers monthly pay-outs to SwDs especially those on teaching practice.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES-SPORT

Similar to their peers, participation in extracurricular activities gives students an opportunity for social networking and can help them build teamwork. It is part of the experience all students need from the college for social development and to unwind from academic workload. Denying students with disabilities participation in sports reflects an assumption that disability leads to life that is insignificant and not worthy to enjoy what the general population does (Finkelstein, 2001). The study's findings indicate that students with disabilities participate in sport although to a lesser extent due to lack of adequate equipment and facilities. Likewise, Kabuta's (2014) study established that 58.3% of the respondents indicated that they were involved in sports and games and 41.7% did not participate due to various reasons including lack of tools and playgrounds special for physically impaired students. This is reflected in the following excerpts:

One participant had this to say:

I enjoy participating in goalball although we lack proper facilities. It is good that we received a donation of the goal balls and blind folds. We only pray that proper facilities are established.

Another participant adds:

There are many clubs which are offered at this institution but unfortunately there are none we can participate in due to negative attitudes by the non-disabled. They always express that we waste their time as they think we are not as competent as them. This frustrates me a lot.

CONCLUSION

This research thus concludes that SwDs experience inclusion challenges with regards to environmental, academic and social accessibility. The researchers, therefore, recommend that HEIs adopt the social model which is underpinned by the human

rights approach as their guiding principle in offering educational services to SwDs so as to maximize their access, participation and success in HE.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. HEIs should ensure provision of reasonable accommodations which are intended to facilitate equality of participation in education through Universal Design Learning which refers to the design of curricula, teaching practices, assessment methods, support services and physical environments that can accommodate the ever-increasing diversity of students in higher education.
2. In order to ensure that appropriate support is in place, it is important that HEIs carryout needs assessment when they admit SwDs.
3. HEIs are encouraged to hold regular and compulsory training of staff on disability issues.
4. Institutions should invest in the provisions of assistive technologies and training in their use.
5. Libraries and other study centres should be equipped with computers with appropriate software and reading material in formats compatible with various types of impairments.
6. HEIs should establish Disability Resource Units which can offer comprehensive services to SwDs.
7. HEIs should ensure that the physical and social environment is user friendly through modification and adaptation of the physical environment as well as holding awareness campaigns so as to reduce negative attitudes, stereotypes, stigma and misconceptions about SwDs.

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21ST CENTURY INCLUSIVITY BENEFITS FOR LEARNERS WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES IN ZIMBABWE: A FACT OR FALLACY

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ABSTRACT

In Zimbabwe, there is a dominant problem in the field of education as there is lack of access for learners with disabilities. There is a dramatic difference in the educational opportunities provided for learners with disabilities and those without disabilities. It will simply not be possible to realise the goal of Education for All if we do not achieve a complete change in the situation. The dawn of the 21st century, witnessed a paradigm shift in educational approaches for people living with disabilities from special needs to inclusive education a sociological perspective of recognizing and promoting full participation of all learners in all aspects of schooling. This presentation examines inclusivity benefits, for learners with and without disabilities in Zimbabwe. The presentation focuses most explicitly on the issue of human rights but asserts that any major reform in an educational philosophy shift must ensure alignment across the areas of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. The presentation is based on a study which employed a mixed method descriptive survey that combined both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Questionnaires, interviews and auto ethnography were used to gather data to examine inclusivity benefits for learners with and without disabilities. Findings pointed to the fact that implementation of inclusion for learners with disabilities in a regular classroom did not only benefit learners with disabilities and their families, but all learners.

Key words: Inclusive education, disability, human rights, 21st Century, Special needs education

INTRODUCTION

This paper critically analyses the 21st inclusivity benefits for learners with and without disabilities in Zimbabwe. It commences with a historical background of the education system for children with disabilities in Zimbabwe, defining terms for common understanding. The paper further dwells on benefits of inclusivity, how it's being done and the challenges.

Inclusive education is a global phenomenon that arose as a response to the exclusion of students who were viewed as different in terms of colour, socioeconomic background or being disabled (Waitoller & Artiles, 2013). Inclusive education also seeks to ensure that learners with varied needs and preferences are provided equal opportunities in accessing learning resource, services and experiences (Florian & Linklater, 2010; Baldiris-Navarro, Zervas, Fabregat-Gesa & Sampson, 2016). Thus, inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that demonstrates universal acceptance and promotes a sense of belonging for all learners.

MOTIVATION AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The present study is motivated by the need to understand how inclusive education is being implemented in schools in Zimbabwe and whether it has benefits to the learners with disabilities and their peers. It is imperative to establish if there is inclusion after all in schools. If so, are there any benefits? The study is of significance to a large number of entities, some of these include the following: academia, school authorities, learners, researchers and government as these are central to the success of inclusive education in schools.

Children with disabilities are among the most marginalised and excluded groups of children; routinely, they are denied their right to quality education (WHO and World Bank, 2011). Policies vary considerably worldwide, with some countries prioritizing education for these learners in different settings; special schools and centres, special classes in integrated schools, or inclusive schools which work to identify and remove barriers, and to enable every learner to participate and achieve in mainstream settings. There is no specific legislation for inclusive education in Zimbabwe (Mpofu, 2004). However, a number of government policy issues are consistent with the intent of inclusive education.

Like most developing countries, the education of children with special needs in Zimbabwe was provided by charitable organisations and churches. Humanitarian organisations, like the Jairos Jiri Association and the council for the blind complemented the efforts of missionaries in providing special education services, especially for orphans. There was no national policy on special education, the Ministry of Education’s involvement before 1980 was minimal, any initiatives were generally

uncoordinated and children with special needs were usually placed in rural boarding schools or institutions. The aim of the early charitable and churches were religious and humanitarian and Religious education and training in practical skills such as basketry, woodwork, leather work, sewing and cookery formed the core curriculum. The education of children with disabilities was viewed more as a moral obligation than a right for the child to education.

Serious concern for the education of children with disabilities began at independence with the adoption of a national policy of universal primary education. The 1987 Education Act made education a right for all children, including those with various disabilities and several subsequent education policies addressed specific issues in special education; the National Disability Act of 1996 made provisions for the welfare and rehabilitation of disabled persons in all spheres. The Zimbabwe Chief Education Circular No3/89 (1989) addressed the subject of the curriculum to be followed in special needs education. Previously curricular issues in special education had been left to individual schools, and each school could choose whether or not to present its students for public examinations. Circular 3/89 required every child to follow the curriculum, designed by the curriculum development unit of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and advocated a curriculum for all which was broad enough to meet the special learning needs of students with disabling conditions. The introduction of a common curriculum made it possible for students to succeed in public examinations and to move more easily within the system from special schools to resource units or classes, all of which were following the same curriculum. The Zimbabwe Secretary for Education Circular Minute No. P36 (1990) prescribed the placement procedures in special classes, integration resource rooms and special schools and students were to be placed in one of these depending on the level of their disability. The Schools Psychological Services was responsible for assessment and placement into appropriate programmes.

Placing learners with disabilities within a mainstream setting is not sufficient to be called inclusion. Ngoda (2016) defines inclusive education as the pairing of philosophy and pedagogical practices that allow each student to feel respected, confident and safe so he or she can learn and develop to his or her full potential.

Establishing inclusive schools is widely regarded as desirable for equality and human rights, and its educational, social and economic benefits (UNESCO, 2011). According to UNESCO, every learner matters equally. Inclusion is based on a system of values and beliefs centred on the best interests of the student which promote social cohesion, belonging and active participation in learning as well as the fostering of a complete school experience characterised by positive interactions with peers and others in the school community.

Education For All (EFA), to which Zimbabwe is a signatory is concerned with equal access to education for all and is in sync with open access to education whereby the Secretary for Education ‘s directive for inclusive education requires schools to provide equal access to education for learners with disabilities, and admit any school-age child, regardless of ability.

Zimbabwean schools use up to four curriculum and instruction options to support school participation by students with disabilities: locational inclusion; inclusion with partial withdrawal from ordinary classroom settings, inclusion with clinical and unplanned de facto inclusion (Mutepfa, Mpofu & Chataika, 2007). Currently Zimbabwe follows a continuum by which inclusive education is being implemented. This continuum resembles what we have in SA, but this too is a western model taken from the wealthier countries from the global north. These countries have a well-established and well-resourced special needs education system, parallel to an equally well-resourced mainstream education system (Dreyer, 2019).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

There are different policies that have been put in place to promote inclusive education in Zimbabwe. These have included integrated approach to teaching and learning of students with disabilities. The study sought to establish benefits of including learners with disabilities in Zimbabwe. The study also sought to expose successes and challenges of inclusive education.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The different approaches to a large extent influence the way we view disability and as such the way we perceive inclusive education. The concept of inclusive education can

be embedded in different contexts that could be political, social, psychological and educational. Despite the way we perceive integrated education and inclusive education in particular, it is significant that we develop an understanding that helps the disabled and non-disabled in the inclusion process. Integration was criticized for continued support for the promotion and provision of segregated special education.

There are many factors that integrated education failed to address which were expected to be addressed by inclusive education. Such factors included the need to change the physical structures, the curriculum, teaching approaches, leadership styles. In the same vein inclusive education entails the following beliefs and principles:

- All children can learn.
- All children attend age appropriate regular classrooms in their local schools.
- All children receive appropriate education programs.
- All children receive a curriculum relevant to their needs.
- All children participate in co-curricular and extra curricula activities.
- All children benefit from cooperation, collaboration among home, among school, among community.

The above factors show clearly the major aims of inclusive education. It is clear that the issues at stake here have much to do with equality, human rights, creation of a conducive learning environment for all learners regardless of whether they have a disability or not, democratization of the education system, equitable distribution of resources and efficient management of learning

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A mixed methods descriptive survey was used as the research design as combining both quantitative and qualitative research approaches is complementary. Questionnaires, interviews and auto ethnography were used to gather data. The first-hand information from the informants themselves about the phenomena and its benefits was just at the heart of what the study was yearned for. Since I also have practical experience as a teacher in one of these schools, I decided to make use of data from my personal experience. I therefore gave an account of my own experiences of the benefits of inclusive education. The choice of the qualitative approach made it

possible to use the instruments that facilitated interaction with the informants and probed the informants to express their personal experiences. So, interviews and questionnaires, as the instruments, facilitated interaction and rapport between the investigator and the informants. Auto ethnography formed a self-reflection and writing that explored the researcher's personal experiences and connected this autobiographical story to wider cultural, political, and social meanings and understanding (Ellis, 2004).

Sample

The population included purposively selected schools with resource units, special classes, integrated units and inclusive classes in Zimbabwe. Purposive sampling was preferred to ensure that the participants selected possess the particular characteristics or knowledge being sought (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The representative sample comprised of school heads, teachers and learners. Open ended questionnaires and structured interviews were used to collect data.

Procedure

The researcher distributed and collected the questionnaire and carried out the interviews. She explained the purpose of the study to potential participants. Participants were informed that participation was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any stage.

Results

It emerged from this study that when all children are included, they learn acceptance of other people and that each person has unique abilities. Children learn from each other. The perceived social acceptance could have resulted from children with disabilities having developed social skills from the practice (Peresuh, 2000). Inclusive education increases appreciation and acceptance of individual differences. As such learners with and without disability appreciate and accept their differences and do have positive feelings of one another. UNESCO sees this as a reform that supports and welcomes diversity amongst all learners and eliminates discrimination that one type of learner is better than the other (Tuggar, 2014).

With inclusion in place, children with special needs are provided equal opportunities to participate in the same types of programmes and activities as children without disabilities. For both friendship skills, peer models, problem solving skills, positive self-image and respect for others are developed. Related findings were obtained by (Tuggar, 2014) who believed that inclusion promotes friendship among learners with disabilities who as part of inclusive setting have greater opportunities to learn and practice friendship so does learners without disabilities. This creates social awareness and acceptance of others, reduces their fear of human differences and helps them develop personal principles and friendships.

The study also revealed that inclusion provides peer role models for academics, social and behaviour skills helping the learners with disabilities to learn academic processes and to use peers to assist with instruction with little or no disruption to the lesson cycle (Brennet, Deluca & Bruns, 1997). Peers are able to act as conduits of information as well as of desired behaviour which in turn create the basis for preferred normative social behaviour, attitudes and beliefs (Bandura, 1997). Researchers have found that children with disabilities who interact with peers with higher- level social skills often imitate these behaviors and skills in the future (Banda, Hart & Liu-Gitz, 2010; Holahan & Costenbader, 2000).

Furthermore**,** inclusion gives room for interaction between learners with disabilities and those without disabilities to carry out their activities in common order to cultivate the spirit of belonging. Literature also reveals that learners with disabilities achieve high levels of academic and social achievement in inclusive setting than in segregated settings (Bunch, 2008). This was a positive development from previous Zimbabwean studies (Mpofu, 2000; Mpofu et al., 2000; Chireshe, 2011) where discrimination and stigmatisation against people with disabilities was very high. Related findings were made by (Mutepfa et al., 2007) who believed that regular class teachers were developing positive attitudes towards included learners. The good news is that children with disabilities who are included in high- quality classrooms with their typically developing peers stand to reap positive gains across developmental domains (Holahan & Costenbader, 2000; Odom, 2000; Rafferty, Boettcher & Griffin, 2001) and likely in the functional outcome areas mentioned earlier, as many parents and practitioners have noted (Rafferty & Griffin, 2005). There is a multitude of research that

has been accumulated over 3 decades showing that, when children with disabilities are included in general education settings, they are more likely to exhibit positive social and emotional behaviours at a level that is much greater than their peers who are relegated to programs that serve only children with disabilities (Holahan & Costenbader, 2000; Strain, Bovey, Wilson, & Roybal, 2009). The prevailing theory for this gap is that children in inclusive settings have a chance to interact with peers who demonstrate a broad spectrum of social-emotional abilities (Lamorey & Bricker, 1992; Odom et al., 2002), providing models from whom children with disabilities can learn appropriate social and emotional behaviours (Guralnick, 2001; Odom et al., 2002).

The study also revealed lack of specific policy on inclusive education this was perceived as a key challenge to successful implementation of inclusive education in Zimbabwe and hence hindering all learners from gainfully benefiting from inclusive education.

Lack of resources affected implementation of inclusive education. Previous Zimbabwean studies (Mpofu, 2000; Peresuh, 2000; Mpofu et al., 2007; Chireshe, 2011) lamented the shortage of resources as an impediment to the implementation of inclusive education. Similar findings were also obtained in Namibia (Zimba et al., 2007) and South Africa (Eloff & Kgwete, 2007). Dreyer (2019) concurs that African countries do not have financial, material resources needed by inclusive education. Related literature reveals that vast discrepancies still exist in the provision of the necessary support systems.

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HEARING POPULATION CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO SOCIAL INCLUSION OF LEARNERS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT IN INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

Social inclusion of learners with hearing impairment had been cause for concern globally. The study sought to investigate into inclusion nexus of Deaf learners that the hearing population can make a difference in regular primary schools. The plight of deaf learners in regular primary schools during play, in sporting activities as well as in academic activities was of great concern. The case study of Masvingo province in Zimbabwe was conducted to investigate into inclusion nexus at primary school level where these diverse learners acquire language and develop their mother tongue fully. The qualitative methodology was employed to source information about inclusion nexus in an effort to include diverse learners with hearing impairment. Teachers and school heads participated in the research study indicating their views towards inclusion nexus of Deaf learners. Purposive sampling was used to select a sample from regular primary schools that have resource units for learners with hearing impairment. A sample consisted of 36 teachers and four school heads. Constant comparative approach was used to analyse and present data. The study found out that social isolation was due to unavailability of specific indigenous Sign language to be acquired by both hearing and non-hearing people except the second language English Sign Language Dictionary. Another finding was that dominant group which is the hearing population can make a difference to social inclusion if they acquire a diverse minority sign language. Therefore, a recommendation to curriculum-designers was to develop a curriculum for indigenous Sign language. Also, a recommendation to policymakers was to develop an enforcing policy towards acquisition of indigenous Sign language by both hearing and non-hearing learners. Another recommendation was to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education that it should organise in-service training of stakeholders as well as intensive training of teacher at both teachers' college and universities to encourage reciprocal

communication for effective inclusion. The focus of the study was to fill a gap in literature about inclusivity that promotes social participation of Deaf learners in inclusive schools and the society at large.

Key words: Indigenous Sign Language, social inclusion, hearing population, inclusion nexus, hearing impairment, Deaf learners

INTRODUCTION

It was after the Millan Congress in1880 that teachers were encouraged to use oral approach as mode of communication (Lane, 2011). Therefore, it became a threat to deaf learners resulting in social isolation and poor academic achievement due to limited verbal language (Stronge, 2010; Marschark & Hauser, 2012; Marschark & Knoors, 2014). However, the Education for All Act emphasizes full inclusion of learners with diversity to address their social, psychological, physical and emotional needs. International declarations and conventions became influential pillars on the rights of persons with disabilities. The right to social life becomes one of the rights of Deaf persons. It is through language that persons live in harmony as they socialize in their day to day lives. Also, Associations like the Zimbabwe National Association of the deaf took responsibility of their language leading to recognition of Sign language in the Zimbabwean Constitution in 2013 as an official language. However, some contributing factors to inclusion nexus of Deaf learners were not put in place to support social inclusion in regular schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

From theories of language acquisition by Vygotsky and Chomsky, Deaf learners acquire language the same way as their hearing counterparts who also benefit from environmental input. Unfortunately, persons who are deaf have no access to environmental input since the hearing population lacks knowhow of Sign language hence social isolation. From research 90% of hearing-impaired learners is born to hearing parents who cannot contribute to the acquisition of Sign language (Hallahan & Kauffman, 2006). Lemetyinen (2012) purports that reinforcement of language acquisition becomes limited due to limited social interaction in Sign language at home and at school. Literature indicates that teaching and acquisition of Sign language to

Deaf learners is packed with huddles within the environment resulting in language impoverishment hence social exclusion during primary school education.

In compliance with the inclusive education policy, all school going children are to attend education at a nearest school to where they reside. As indicated earlier on, acquisition of any language according to Interactionism and Nativism theories input and collaboration of stakeholders is required. Furthermore, they concur that acquisition of language for communication is premised on family and community effort. However, Deaf learners come to school with Sign languages that differ from family to family blocking the extension of the family effort towards social interaction (Samukanga & Samukange, 2013). The hearing population was found to be the dominant group in the community, but it shuns acquisition of sign language for social interaction with the minority group. Deaf learners face language impoverishment and social isolation because of limited communication practice within hearing society (Khalid, 2018; Mpofu & Chimhenga, 2013).

Teachers struggle to lay a language foundation with limited support from peers, stakeholders, community members as well as family members. Literature has shown that working collaboratively with community has positive impact on social inclusion of deaf learners like any other persons (Scheetz & Martin, 2008). Effective pedagogy includes effective inclusivity that extends to the community through collaborative working with community members (Humphries, 2013). Also, several researchers indicate that incorporating parents is a noble idea in promoting social inclusion of their children (Lieberman, 2015; Fuandai, 2009).

The support from community and the parents hastens social inclusion of Deaf learners as they provide adequate practice on daily basis (Humphries, 2013). However, the practice should be on the indigenous sign language introduced at home then built up at school to avoid de-teaching (Namakoa, 2012; Humphries, 2013; Joel, Kochung, Kabuka, Charles & Oracha, 2013). Literature goes further indicating that there are various signs in the community and in families that make it difficult for inclusion nexus of learners with hearing impairment. According to reports from Fuandai (2009) varied sign languages from home affect continuation of the work introduced at school and vice versa. The first language introduced by the family is different from the Sign language at school. Inconsistence and lack of comprehensive support from parents

and the community through usage of same Sign language at home and at school creates a gap in social inclusion at school (Massa & Mayer, 2006; Ahmad, 2015; Namakoa, 2012). The primary school curriculum has to embrace indigenous Sign language than to focus on major indigenous languages Shona and Ndebele (Masuka & Peresuh, 2002). Inclusivity of diverse persons motivated the researchers to investigate into a difference that hearing persons can make to inclusion nexus of Deaf learners in inclusive schools as the foundation for inclusivity.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Achievement of full social inclusion is anchored on environmental involvement whereby the hearing population acquires the minority Sign language to accommodate Deaf persons. Learners with hearing impairment seem to face social isolation due to poor interaction within the environment. The hearing population can make a difference in inclusivity of persons with deafness in schools if they acquire Sign language.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To investigate the inputs from the hearing population in supporting inclusivity of the minority group with hearing impairment.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Do hearing parents have an effect on social inclusion of their deaf children at school?
- To what extent can the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education enhance inclusion nexus of deaf learners?
- How can stakeholders play a pivotal role in the inclusion nexus of deaf learners?
- What are the challenges faced by teachers in social inclusion of deaf learners in inclusive schools?

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The study was conducted in five schools from three different district of Masvingo. 40 teachers participated in the study from three rural schools in Gutu and Mwenezi districts as well as other two urban schools in Chiredzi district in Masvingo province of

Zimbabwe. The study was a qualitative case study design. Purposive sampling was used to select information-rich cases (Stake, 2005; Corbin & Strauss, 2008) where the researchers learnt a lot about the influence of hearing population in inclusion nexus of persons who are deaf. The study employed focus group discussions to capture detailed information (Barbour, 2007; Morgan, 2002) about the difference which the hearing population can make in social inclusion. As a way of analyzing and presenting data constant comparative approach was used (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Saldana, 2009).

Participants completed consent forms before they took part in the research as we assured them for privacy and confidentiality (Gray, 2009; Silverman, 2005).

FINDINGS/RESULTS

Contribution of parents to effective inclusion nexus of their deaf children

All teachers indicated that they lack support from parents as a reinforcement of their effort to fully include Deaf learners. Parents introduce different signs that mismatch signs introduced at school. Teachers fail to build on the child's language experience. The hearing parents' input was found to be limited with regard to Sign language for communication. Parents impoverished language of their children hence social isolation. The participants revealed that Sign languages from the community cause confusion to hearing population.

Participants have the following to argue:

> *We cannot have positive impact in the social inclusion of learners with hearing impairment because parents introduce different sign languages causing difficulties to communicate with the different learners. There is a lot of teaching and de-teaching between the school and community.*
>
> *Parents should be provided with the indigenous sign language and have uniformity in the country so that when they come to school, we reinforce the language. It is difficult to de-teach family sign language that would be in full use during critical stage at home.*

We found out that the homework we assign to our learners is not properly conducted by parents due to differences in signs.

The sentiments from participants have shown that the foundation in Sign language at home helps in social inclusion at school if seriously supported. Most participants argued for input from hearing parents to support inclusion nexus of deaf learners in inclusive schools. The findings indicated that parents have to contribute to positive impact of full inclusion because acquisition of any language is the responsibility of parents and teachers as they work collaboratively.

The extent in which the Ministry of Education can enhance social inclusion in schools

The majority of participants in this study complained about inadequate support from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary education since they do not have indigenous Sign language Dictionary in different vernacular to be acquired by the hearing population in different regions. Most participants revealed that what they had was an English Sign language dictionary. Participants have the following to share:

There is no teamwork in Sign language pedagogy because each school has a different sign language which is being taught. We once visited a special school and found out that the way they sign the National Anthem was different from us.

Mother language foundation need to be laid down at home but in consistent with indigenous sign language. We create own signs because we do not have indigenous sign language dictionary to focus on except the English sign language dictionary.

We are not comfortable to teach Sign language because there is no concrete foundation of the language like other mother tongues.

From the responses above participants indicated that the Ministry should treat indigenous Sign language like other indigenous languages. Participants have revealed that the hearing peers have to acquire Sign language in order to fully include non-hearing peers. Most participants showed confidence in what indigenous Sign language would contribute to effective inclusion nexus of learners with hearing impairment in schools. Furthermore, the findings indicated that there is no indigenous Sign language

that could be used by the community as well as the family, to build up a foundation for social interaction. Participants revealed that inclusion nexus is being affected by lack of consistence effort by the Ministry in providing indigenous Sign language curriculum for the Deaf population hence limited input from hearing population.

Stake holders play a pivotal role in social inclusion of deaf learners

Besides the contribution from the community and parents, teachers stated that in order to have teamwork remedial tutors and School Psychological Service (SPS) officials have to promote use of Sign language for communication and avoid employing interpreters during assessment of Deaf learners. Participants indicated that the SPS made use of interpreters due to communication barrier yet SPS officials should be exemplary in using Sign language as environmental input to social inclusion. Above all they should play a pivotal role in encouraging hearing population to accept Sign language as the birth right language of Deaf persons.

The statements from teachers to substantiate their views:

> *As teachers we feel that remedial tutors and SPS officials are the very people to contribute to social inclusion of Deaf learners. They have to acquire Sign language so that other stake holders do not shun signing. They can only exhibit effective social inclusion through adequate practice of the language.*
>
> *Most of the educational officials shun acquisition of Sign language yet they are pillars in inclusive education. They have a feeling that inclusive education is solely the responsibility of teachers.*
>
> *We would appreciate if all stakeholders are aware that social inclusion of Deaf learners is not for teacher but everyone who interacts with the learners. Although we are directly responsible for the social inclusion at schools, some stakeholders such as remedial tutors are indirectly involved but play a pivotal role.*

The sentiments above indicate that every hearing individual is responsible for social inclusion of Deaf learners and should contribute to effective inclusion nexus of the minority group. Participants revealed that most stakeholders do shun using Sign language as they communicate because they encourage Deaf learners to speech-read. The study found out that there is little contribution from most stakeholders.

Participants expected contribution towards social inclusion by health personnel, transport operators and judicial officials who have a role to play in the social life of Deaf learners. There is minimal interaction with Deaf learners as indicated by the study

Challenges faced by teachers in social inclusion of Deaf learners

The study found out that although teachers within the school have an input in effective social inclusion, they face challenges from hearing society. They revealed that social inclusion was not a one-man band. The hearing peers acquire language during play at an early stage while Deaf learners experience language impoverishment even when they come to school. Participants have the following to air out:

> *Our learners lack exposure even within the school environment because teachers and peers are not conversant in sign language. Regular schoolteachers are not committing themselves to encourage hearing peers to establish friendship with deaf peers.*
>
> *Hearing persons in the community are not free to interact with deaf persons because of communication barriers. Most of our hearing learners are having their first time to be with deaf peers in a school.*
>
> *It is sympathetic that hearing peers discriminate these non-hearing learners during social activities. As resource unit teachers we try to accommodate both the hearing and non-hearing learners during social and academic activities but still they continue to exclude them during play.*
>
> *We know that social inclusion requires mutual understanding in language, but it is difficult to mobilize teachers, stakeholders and community members because there is no particular indigenous sign language to focus on. If teachers could be proficient in sign language, then we can easily collaborate and reinforce inclusion nexus of Deaf learners.*

The findings have indicated that inclusion nexus is still a challenge in schools and in the community. The participants revealed that through friendship, group work and game play social inclusion is boosted. Lack of collaboration among teachers and hearing society as a whole was found to be a challenge also. Poor social interaction in Sign language with hearing population who are in vicinity at home and in the

community has a handicapping effect on inclusion nexus of Deaf persons in schools. The participants have aired out a number of challenges that militate against social inclusion of persons with hearing impairment in primary schools since the hearing population was reluctant to confidently respond to counterparts who are Sign language users. The study had shown that there is need for social input from hearing population towards inclusivity of non-hearing peers making a difference in the life of a Deaf learner.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Teachers had a desire for support from hearing population in order to make a difference in social inclusion of non-hearing peers. Sign language like any other languages is acquired through interaction with the environment whereas in this study the participants indicated that social interaction was limited with Sign language users. In agreement with literature (Vygotsky, 1985; Chomsky, 1959) document the significance of interaction to trigger the innate mechanism. On the same note Lemetyinen (2012) insists on qualities of an effective teacher to be effective communicator. Therefore, effective social inclusion of a deaf learner requires interaction with the environment as well as with the teacher. It was found out that lack of uniformity in sign language as a mother tongue was indicated to be a challenge in social inclusion. Findings concur with Samukange and Samukange (2013) that deaf learners acquire different signs from parents that affect consistent in acquisition of communication language. The mismatch of different sign languages from different families and communities affects inclusivity of Deaf learners (Ahmad, 2015; Massa & Mayer, 2006; Fuandai, 2009; Lieberman, 2015; Namakoa, 2012). At a further note, avoidance of interaction between the hearing and non-hearing population was viewed as an inflated disturbance to effective inclusion nexus.

Research indicated that acquisition of Sign language by all stakeholders could contribute a lot to effective social inclusion. The findings resonate well with recent research that doubted effective teaching of Deaf learners when someone is not fluent in Sign language (Musengi, Ndofirepi & Shumba, 2012; Mpofu & Chimhenga 2013). Teachers had a desire to be supported by remedial tutors, School Psychological Service officials, health sector officials and many other government sectors responsible for the social services of Deaf learners. These stakeholders were indicated

to be pillars in Special Needs Education who can make a difference in social inclusion. The argument was that many service providers employ interpreters instead of signing on their own giving practice to Deaf learners. Masuka and Peresuh (2002) as well as Mutasa (2006) in agreement with the findings document that dominant groups have negative attitude towards minority languages. The negative attitude towards non-verbal language affects success in social inclusion.

Inclusion nexus of Deaf learners in schools was found to be a challenge since most members of the society as well as teachers were illiterate in sign language as reported by Musengi et al. (2012). The desire of all participants was on collaboration among hearing population to effect inclusivity which was found to be a key input to social inclusion. The findings resonate well with documented literature that poor communication in the teaching of Deaf learners has an effect on acquisition of language for communication as well as for academic performance (Lieberman, 2015; Scheetz & Martin, 2008; Fuandai, 2009; Humphries, 2013).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research concluded that lack of environmental input affects effective social inclusion of deaf learners in schools. Furthermore, the study concluded that Deaf learners continue to be excluded during social activities if the hearing population does not make a difference towards inclusion nexus of Deaf persons. Another conclusion is that implementation of policy that mandates inclusion of learners with diversity needs becomes a dream that does not come true if hearing population does not acquire Sign language for social participation with Deaf persons, Also the study concluded that there is lack of political will to influence hearing population to enhance inclusion nexus of the minority group with its diverse needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is need for indigenous Sign language dictionary so that the hearing parents lay down a foundation in social skills in their children
- The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education has to organize workshops through schools at cluster and district level on awareness campaign about the significance of social inclusion of Deaf learners.

- Service providers have to interact in Sign language to enhance acquisition of sign language for communication during social activities with Deaf learners
- SPS has to play its pivotal role as a mediator between regular schoolteachers and other stakeholders to promote inclusion nexus of Deaf learners.

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LANGUAGE AND THE SOCIAL POWER BASE EMPOWERMENT APPROACH: AN INCLUSION APPROACH FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

In 1915, a mother fled to Chibi mission in Zimbabwe with her visually impaired son. She had been instructed by her husband to drown him in Tokwe River. The missionaries at Chibi mission – Rev and Mrs Hugo then took in the boy. In 1927 Mrs Hugo started to teach the visually impaired boy (Van Der Merwe, 1981). This was the inception of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission (DRCM) special needs education which has now evolved to inclusive education. Since that time, the Shona culture's approach towards disability has evolved from the killing of children with physical impairment to current practices which engender exclusion through the use of language. This research analysed language as a cultural tool in exclusion of people living with disabilities. A model on social powerbases was explored and its implications to Higher and Tertiary education in Zimbabwe in light of Education 5.0 model and the Heritage Based philosophy were finally examined.

BACKGROUND

The concept inclusion was founded as a proposal to transform entire educational systems out of a growing awareness and critique of inequalities that had been historically embedded in the socio-cultural conditions of nations (Artiles & Kozleski, 2016). It was evident that representation of people with disabilities (PWDs) in the various sectors of the economy was quite insignificant. This was in spite of the significant strides on policy initiatives taken by the International and local communities. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Report (2015) showed that there was need for responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision making at all levels. Five of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) highlight a commitment to inclusivity:

GOAL 4 – ensure inclusive and equitable quality education;
GOAL 8 – promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth;
GOAL 9 – promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation;
GOAL 11 – make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; and
GOAL 16 – promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development.

From the above noted SDGs it was clear that inclusivity should cut across all sectors of the economy: education, economic growth, industrialisation, innovation, human settlement and societies. The report noted that institutions that were not inclusive in one sphere could multiply disadvantage in other spheres. This called for a transformative approach towards equal treatment of people within societies. However in spite of these advances in inclusivity, it was noted that social and cultural practices and belief systems hinder the advancement of PWDs in realising their full potential. In the context of culture, it was realised that the full participation of PWDs in national and global economic and other activities rest on their empowerment through the types of socialisation they go through in their formative years of development. It was against the background of these views as well as inclusivity and exclusivity practices within the Shona culture that this research advanced a model for education empowerment for PWDs. This could craft ways for better educational practices since education was seen as a social, cultural, historical, political and anthropological reality (Sousa, *undated*).

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Disability: This is seen as any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in a manner or within a range considered normal for a human being (The World Health Organisation, 1980). In a similar definition by Zimbabwe's Department of Social Services (1982:8), disability was viewed as a, "physical or mental condition which makes it difficult or impossible for the person concerned to adequately fulfil his or her normal role in society." Thus, disability limits one's ability to adequately perform expected duties according to socially prescribed standards as a result of a physiological damage to a particular part of the body.

Empowerment: This is the intentional effort to help eliminate the causes of unwarranted alienation, domination and thereby enhancing opportunities for realising human potential (Stahl, McBride & Eldeltagi, 2005). Another definition of empowerment was taken from Whitmore in Lord and Hutchison (1993:3) who defines the term as “an interactive process through which people experience personal and social change, enabling them to take action to achieve influence over the organisations and institution that affect their lives and the communities in which they live.” Thus, empowerment entails the promotion of participation of all individuals towards the achievement of personal, organisational, community as well as national goals for improved social justice.

Inclusive education: For the purpose of this research, the term inclusive education followed the definition offered by Nasibullov, Kashapova and Shavaliyeva (2015) who noted that inclusive education is the process of educating children with special needs in general education schools despite their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic and other peculiarities. From this definition of inclusive education, inclusion can therefore be seen as practices which enable each person to be given a possibility to be included into the integral processes of development and socialisation therefore enabling the grown-up person to become an equal member of society and decrease risks of his or her segregation and isolation. Thus, the term inclusion reflects a new view not only on the system of education but also on the person in society (Nazarova, 2010).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept ‘power’ is integral to the development process in any society. It is inevitable that if power is denied to certain groups of people, they are susceptible to manipulation. The functionality of power dynamics within societies creates and recreate attitudes, perceptions, divisions, empowerment as well as disempowerment. Power is exercised not only through direct coercion but also through the way in which language shapes and restricts reality (Bakari, 1997). One impact of power dynamics within a society is reflected on its impact on the disability phenomenon and how it affects social location of PWDs. In order to understand the concept disability, one needs to look at cultural beliefs as well as do a contextual analysis in order to grasp the phenomenon in its full social and cultural contexts (Muderedzi et al., 2017).

In the context of the Shona people, language is used as a cultural tool to portray their thoughts, sensations, customs, habits and total experience in the political, social, spiritual, emotional and economic experience (Mutswairo, Chiome, Mberi, Masasire & Furusa, 1996:83). Thus, language is the vehicle through which attitudes, perceptions and philosophies are passed from one generation to the next generation. Within the Shona culture of Zimbabwe, proverbs are an integral part of the way they express themselves, they are a way they use to communicate about their own world. Some of the characteristics of the Shona proverb as highlighted by Mutswairo et al. (1996) are that they:

- Affirms definite viewpoints in life and regulates and standardizes the organization of activities of individuals;
- They are a set of guiding principles which define the underlying attitude of the Shona people; and
- They reflect the Shona's cultural elements and worldview, which give the Shona their philosophy of life.

Thus language use and discourses both have an unprecedented impact on social location and consequently empowerment efforts for PWDs as 'different discourses produce different effects' (Alvesson & Due Billing, 1997). The implication of cultural beliefs as conveyed in language and discourses was seen to result in negative feelings about the self and about communities for some people living with disabilities. This is as a result of the impact of stereotyping as a tool used in segregation of a particular group of the society. De Witt and Booysen (1995) postulate that when people are unable to react to a person as an individual, they resort to stereotyping. Language used about disability produces stereotypes about PWDs. Such stereotypes guide the way PWDs are treated and opportunities which are made available to them in the home and in the world of work. Because of such stereotypes PWDs may learn to play subservient roles and aspire for low status careers which give them very little power and opportunity. Stereotyping results in a person adopting a feeling of being rejected by the community and this result in social isolation for the individual. Social rejection occurs when an individual is deliberately excluded from a social relationships or social interactions. Social rejection breeds social isolation and the learned helplessness disposition.

According to Nash, Stoch and Harper (1990) a person needs stimulation to aim towards higher ideals. However, due to isolation a person can become suspicious of everyone around her/him resulting in the further entrenchment of the isolation and consequently feeling helpless. The person questions her/his competencies, values, expectations in line with social experience. The individual's perception of him or herself is questioned, thus affecting the individual's aspiration level. Social isolation poses a threat to four fundamental human needs: the need to belong, the need for control in social situations, the need to maintain high levels of self-esteem and the need to have a sense of a meaningful existence. A threat to these needs produces psychological distress and pain. Social isolation is a significant threat to self-esteem, self-confidence, self-worth and self-perception. All these affect a person's drive towards self-development as the inner person will be at conflict with desires for the realisation of full potential.

When an individual feels he/she has no control over events and therefore no responsibility, they are no longer motivated to achieve. This is learned helplessness. Diener and Dweck (1980) argue that when individuals view their actions as irrelevant to subsequent outcome, they are said to display learned helplessness. Seligman's theory on 'learned helplessness' show that helplessness is an intuitive notion that entails the belief that nothing one does will matter; one believes that their actions are futile (Knowles, 2018). Seligman's personality theory shows that a person develops helplessness if he adopts a pessimistic explanatory style. In this style one attributes challenges in their lives as permanent, pervasive and internal. On the other hand, people with an optimistic explanatory style attribute challenges in their lives as temporary, specific and external (Knowles, 2018). A learned helplessness orientation is the perception that is acquired through negative experiences that effort has no effect on outcome. Therefore, this research explored how the creation of social powerbases through the use of language, influence PWDs' orientation towards learned helplessness.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was done on the theoretical basis of critical theory which lays claim to reflexivity and sensitivity (Stahl et al., 2005). Klein and Myers in Stahl et al. (2005) show that research on empowerment is more inclined to critical theory. The study was

approached from a qualitative dimension. The researcher elicited accounts of meaning, experience and perceptions from interacting with the research participants in their communities. Qualitative research enabled the researchers to uncover the lived experiences of individuals through enabling them to interpret and attach meaning to their experiences and in the process construct their worlds (Merrian & Simpson, 2000). A phenomenological design was used as the study was concerned with the descriptive analysis of experience. Marshall and Rossman (2006) define phenomenology as the study of lived experiences and the way we understand those experiences to develop a worldview. Phenomenology was the most appropriate method which could unmask the phenomenon through focusing on experiences and their meanings through the views of the affected people themselves. Grounded theory was triangulated with phenomenology as research designs for this study. Eaves (2001) noted that grounded theory is a qualitative research method that was developed for the purpose of studying social phenomena from the perspective of symbolic interaction. Symbolic interactionism focuses on the inner experiential aspect of human behaviour or how people define events and reality and how they act according to their beliefs (Eaves, 2001). The researcher chose grounded theory as behaviour of people is goal driven, evolving from social interactions that are highly symbolic in themselves (Goulding, 2001).

Critical discourse analysis was used as a data generation technique. Van Dijk (1993) shows that critical discourse analysis is a socio-political analytic tool used to analyze how discourse enacts dominance and subordination. Silverman (2000) explains that discourse analysis emphasizes the way versions of the world, of society, events and inner psychological worlds are produced in discourse. The researcher sought to interrogate discourse because discourse constitutes society and culture, does ideological work and it is a form of social action. Other methods of data generation were ethnographic observations and typical case interviews.

FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY

The findings from this study showed that the Shona societies were divided according to a number of variables. These include gender, ability/disability dispositions of individuals and also according to affluence. PWDs were seen to occupy the various sections of the power divide i.e., the males and the females, the rich and the poor. In

the study most participants showed that disability demeans one to a lower level from the one that person was supposed to occupy if they were not disabled. The following example shows the way communities and families demean PWDs. This is the story of Paul (not real name) who is visually impaired:

Paul's story

I am married and have three children. I was married in church in 1993. Although I have a visual challenge, I married a wife who has normal sight. I noticed a challenge from the time I got married. Unlike other wives, my wife did not consult me on major issues of the family. At times I got embarrassed when my wife enquired about issues from my younger brother without even consulting me. Even now the same is happening with my children. They make their own decisions without giving any thought of my existence in their lives. I feel that my authority as the father of the family is being undermined.

The above typical case was seen to represent most cases of PWDs where they are denied their places in the socio-cultural dimension as a result of their physical challenges. Another woman with a hearing impairment also reflected the same where her position in her family as a mother was compromised because of her impairment. Her children could not communicate with her effectively, so they always resorted to communicating with other relatives about issues of their life.

LANGUAGE USED WITHIN SHONA COMMUNITIES

The Shona proverb as a means of transmitting meaning

The study found out that in the Shona culture the language conveyed in proverbs show distinct exclusionary tendencies. Quite a number of participants showed that proverbs are an instrument used to exclude some segments of the society from realising their full potential. One elder who had a physical disability noted the following proverb as demeaning the worth of PWDs: *Kune chirema hakuna mariro* translated to 'it is better to be crippled than to be dead''. This proverb is similar to proverbs like *'chembere mukadzi hazvienzani nekurara mugota* translated to 'an old woman is a wife, it is better than to be a bachelor', *'ane bonzo ane nyama, hazvienzani neasina'* translated to 'he who has a born has meat, it is better than having nothing'. The implication is that disability is seen as demeaning the personhood of the person towards a 'better than'

conception of the individual. The ‘better than’ conception sees the person as inferior to the people considered ‘normal’ by societal standards. They are not considered on equal scale by the society of which they are part. However other participant had an alternative version of the proverb ‘*kune chirema hakuna mariro’* as meaning that when a disabled person dies people do not mourn the way they mourn a person who is socially considered as having all human faculties.

One participant with a disability noted that as she was growing up she could notice that people treated her out of sympathy for her condition and she could notice regret in the family about having a child with a disability. Another participant said his father ran away from the family when his mother gave birth to him because of his disability. Both the participants showed that they suffered because of the indirect and direct rejection of their disposition by their families.

From these cases it is evident that the use of proverbs marginalised people with disabilities to the periphery of power and authority in each of the social power divisions.

Myths within the Shona culture on disability

Myths are also another part of language which is highly believed in Shona religion and culture. Leeming (2015:20) notes that myths in common usage “are generally held beliefs that reason tells us are untrue.” He goes on to show that myths are an attempt to explain natural phenomenon. The philosopher Plato also saw myths as metaphorical tales to explain reality beyond the reach of human knowledge (Leeming, 2015). On the same note Roman and Roman (2010) saw a myth as a belief that is demonstrably false yet has nonetheless achieved widespread credence.

Within Shona mythology there are several mythological beliefs about disability. A survey among the Shona people living in Mugabe communal lands in Masvingo highlighted some of these myths. There are generally two types of myths concerning disability: myths on causes of disability and myths on impact of disability on other people.

Myths on causes of disability: Results from interviews carried out in this study showed that people without disabilities believe that disability is generally caused by various negative forces e.g., witchcraft, curses, avenging spirits (ngozi), not being loyal to

one's ancestors, being rude to one's parents especially the mother, breaking sacred rules of the community etc. It is believed that in order to appease spirits that cause disability some rituals need to be done. This view on causes of disability marginalises PWDs to the periphery of social circles as other people see them as cursed. Most people see them as objects of pity that have to live through handouts from the community. This has resulted in a helplessness orientation which is evidenced by the high incidence of PWDs resorting to begging in the streets.

Myths on effects of disability: General findings pointed to the fact that PWDs might bring bad luck to other people around them. It was found out that there is a general belief within the Shona societies that a pregnant woman should not look at a person with a disability because the same disabilities would be transferred to the unborn baby (*nhodzera*). Such beliefs again cause social ostracism for the PWDs.

Such myths on causes and effects of disability have side-lined people with disability in the societies they live and grow up in. One church elder showed that although there are no set rules concerning the position of PWDs within their social circles, it is an unwritten rule and understanding among the Shona that PWDs were side-lined in decision making as well as power and authority positions within families, churches and other communities. It was seen that myths breed illusions about disability.

Metaphorical names given to people with disabilities

The Shona people have a culture of using metaphorical names, which are not real names of people concerned, to depict a certain characteristic of the person. In interviews carried out with some people with disabilities, it showed that the use of these names is a widespread practice. One grown up male with a malfunctioning leg is referred to in his community as 'Gabinzva*'* meaning the one who walks with a limp. Within the Shona it is untraditional to call a grown-up man without respect. However, within this community it was observed that the unrespectful reference to this man was not considered 'untraditional' as elders never prohibited their children from such language use. Other names referring to people with disabilities noted during this study were *'zovovo' (*someone who had a deficiency in speech*) 'Dzambai'* (someone who sees through touching – referring to a person with a visual impairment. These names demean the worth of PWDs in their communities. From the study results participants

showed that the nature of language plays a very crucial role in socially locating people who are differently abled into minor social spaces.

RESULTS OF LANGUAGE ON SOCIAL PERCEPTIONS OF PWDs

Social illusions about PWDs

The research concluded that use of language within the Shona context give rise to unjustified illusions about disability. Higgs (2004) postulated that cultural illusions are of interest to education as constraints that hinder the achievement of national goals and hinder the possibility for transformation. Illusions are false ideas about something. They may seem sensible and true to the senses but in actual fact they are wrong and false. Hazelton (2008) says cultural illusions give rise to mental constructs which may be unjust. Mental constructs shape a person's self-concept. Mental constructs according to Freud in Daniel (1991) affect behaviour, perception and self-concept. So, an environment should be created throughout an individual's life that allows one to see and accept self exactly as they are. The social self which was a concept explored by the psychologist G.H. Mead (1913) shows that, "... the self can be directly conscious of itself as acting or acted upon ... the self-acts with reference to others." This clearly showed the effects of other people on the social self which consists of those qualities a person displays as a result of encounters with other people. These illusions relegate PWDs to the periphery of all social organisation entities e.g., the family and communities.

Typical case 2 (Petro – not real name)

Petro who has a visual disability resorted to begging. He recounted his ordeal in an interview; "as I was growing up I was made to believe that I was useless. People almost forgot my existence as they made decisions. I felt less human as I was treated like an object. People took me where they wanted to take me, put me where they wanted to put me. I felt I was not in control of my situation as I was restricted because of my disability. Even now as a grown-up man with a family, I am left out in a lot of major decision making in the family. I feel that people around me think I have nothing to contribute because of my disability."

This typical case shows that communities inadvertently stigmatise PWDs from their actions and language at times in the name of sympathy. Communities were seen to lack awareness of the psychological impacts of the 'sympathy' they show to PWDs which has a disempowering effect. It was from these findings that the researcher identified the 'glass ceiling' concept as applicable to the situation of PWDs as they try to actualise their potential as they grow up.

The glass ceiling concept in the empowerment of PWDs.

In light of the above socially created barriers on PWDs, this study further explored the 'glass ceiling' concept as an impact of language on advancement of PWDs. The glass ceiling concept was analysed in order to conceptualise the barriers which are present in most cultures towards the empowerment of PWDs in all spheres- social, economic, political and religious. This concept explained that there was a socially created limit on how far someone can advance. To say the ceiling is glass implies that the barriers are very real but transparent i.e., they are not obvious to the casual observers (Boyd, 2008:549). They need critical observers to see them. Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia and Vanneman (2001:657) identify two aspects of the glass ceiling namely (a) it is the residual difference due to social differentiation, after controlling the following factors: education, experience, abilities, motivation and other job relevant characteristics (b) it is higher at the higher level of outcome than at the lower level. Glass ceiling is found in all areas of development: social glass ceiling, career glass ceiling, political glass ceiling and economic glass ceiling.

Thus, in the case of PWDs, there was seen to be a socially constructed 'glass ceiling' which hindered their progression socially, politically, economically as well as academically. A teacher from a special school in Masvingo argued that PWDs were rarely found in powerful positions across the social divide, not because they lacked the ability to lead but it is a result of social perceptions about disability. She went on to say that the negative perceptions created invisible barriers for PWDs to actualise their full potential in career, social, economic and political progression thus relegating them to the periphery in social organisations.

CREATION OF SOCIAL POWER BASES

In discussing the social power bases which came out of the findings of this research, it is important to understand the concept of personhood in the African context. In the Shona culture it is common to hear people saying *'uyu munhu chaiye'* meaning this one is a real person. This is said when a person has fulfilled some social requirements in line with such descriptions e.g., having fulfilled social agency like catering for one's family and the extended family. Wiredu (1992)'s description of personhood in Africa show that it is an important condition which is achieved when a person has the ability to act on the basis of rational reflection. Experience and agency develop from the complex ways in which social structures enable and constrain people in and across cultures (Jones, Bradbury & Le Boutillier, 2011:220). The complexities of these social structures create inequalities as we perceive them in different societies. It is only after understanding the social dynamics that affect social positioning of people that we can come up with practical models of addressing inclusivity concerns.

From the perspective of African conception of personhood, it was seen that it is difficult for PWDs to fulfil the requirements due to their dispositions. The researcher noted that some disabilities like mental retardation (MR) would disable a person from fulfilling the obligation to act 'on the basis of rational reflection'. It was also noted that some forms of impairment would disable a person fulfil one's social agency. A question was then raised on the conception of African personhood on PWDs. Such conceptions of being 'munhu chaiye' (a real person) in the Shona culture affect the social location of PWDs to the periphery of power in society.

EDUCATION EMPOWERMENT APPROACH

The social powerbase approach shows that there is need for social repositioning of people with disabilities. Educational interventions should facilitate the development of positive images on what Harre (2004) referred to as the autobiographic self, the social self and the self-concept. The autobiographic self refers to the person's story of who they are, the social self refers to the qualities the person displays in encounters with other people and the self-concept is the belief about who one is. The attitude displayed by the society was seen to contribute to the positioning of PWDs in lesser social positions than their counterparts. This was seen to generally create negative views of

them. Thus, it was seen that there need to be educational effort towards the repositioning of PWDs as a means of empowerment. There need to be two approaches to the empowerment of PWDs: a) efforts directed towards empowerment of the PWDs themselves and b) efforts towards community empowerment to positively integrate PWDs in all social sectors.

PROPOSED EDUCATIONAL EMPOWERMENT MEASURES FOR PWDS

This study proposed that there be efforts by the education sector to take PWDs through a process of empowerment which involve the following stages:

STAGE 1 – Stage of self-realisation. This stage entails overcoming the socially prescribed self (can be characterised by internal conflict). This stage is important in the realisation of the autobiographic self. The person needs to rewrite their own stories of who they think they are in order to realise the self in the community.

STAGE 2 – Resocialisation of conscience into accepting that they can do the best according to their ability. This entails redefining who they are and where they stand in society and institutions. (This can be a stage of resistance as the prescribed self resists the discovered self.) The concept 'self-efficacy' is important in this stage. It entails the belief that one can do something no matter what the hindrances are. According to Bandura's social cognitive theory self-efficacy encompasses beliefs about one's capability. It is not enough for individuals to possess the requisite knowledge and skills to perform a task, they must have the conviction that they can successfully perform the required behaviour (Artino, 2012).

STAGE 3 – This is the stage of action where they seek to do the unprescribed behaviour. This may include seeking to enter domains previously closed to them. In this stage self-esteem in heightened in the previously disempowered individual. Self-esteem entails the value one places on one's identity. It encompasses self-knowledge, self-evaluative feeling and worthiness to the group.

STAGE 4 – Fourth identifying and overcoming external resistance from their environment to take up positions of power over the self and the environment. They realise their global self-worth, their role in society as equal human beings. Global self-

worth constitutes the individual's positive or negative attitude toward the self as a totality. This is relevant to the psychological wellbeing of an individual.

IMPLICATION IN LIGHT OF EDUCATION 5.0

In considering solutions to the challenge of repositioning PWDs within communities Mead's (1913) idea on the social self is important. Mead said, "The fundamental difference between the scientific and moral solution of a problem lies in the fact that the moral problem deals with concrete personal interests, in which the whole self is reconstructed in its relation to other selves whose relations are essential to its personality." The implication is that Higher Education institutions should follow appropriate education designs for inclusivity which should reconstruct positive identities of the self in PWDs and increase community knowledge about disability. These designs include activities within the institution and activities outside the institution. There is need for an integrated, multi- dimensional approach which encompasses the educational system, the social system and the cultural system towards the realisation of holistic inclusion.

PROPOSED EDUCATIONAL EMPOWERMENT MEASURES FOR COMMUNITIES

Inclusive communities

Together with inclusive education, there should be advances in the creation of inclusive communities, an inclusive moral ethic and inclusive culture. This will ensure that the inclusion mindset is inculcated from the early socialisation stages in the communities. It is the role of higher education institutions like the RCU to find ways of spearheading programs on inclusive communities and inclusive cultures from a heritage-based focus. The concept of inclusive communities must be spearheaded through 'community-based education for inclusion'. In the African context, the community offers people the psychological and ultimate security as it gives its members both physical and ideological identity. Thus, in any intervention it is imperative that social organisation, economy, languages, common problems, local politics, opinion leaders, community structure, community culture, shared values and traditions are understood. This forms a strong base for community-based interventions to be a success.

In spite of the transcendence of the community over the individual, Ray in Kunhiyop (2008:23) acknowledges that, “African thought recognizes that each individual is a unique person endowed by the creator with his own personality and talents and motivated by his own particular needs and ambitions.” Individual achievements should be encouraged, acknowledged and interpreted in the context of the whole community. It is this view of African communities which should guide activities of empowering communities for inclusion of PWDs.

Ubuntu as a moral philosophy

The inclusivity challenge can be approached from an African morality ethic perspective. The unhu/ubuntu moral philosophy should guide the conception of inclusive communities and inclusive cultures. The philosophy provides an African proposal for resolving global problems. Mbiti (1970) in Kunhiyop (2008:21) asserts that an individual in the African context does not and cannot exist alone. He owes his existence to other people ... only in terms of other people does the individual become conscious of his own being, his own duties, his privileges and responsibilities towards himself and towards other people. The African unhu/ubuntu ethos is guided by the communitarian principles of fellow feeling, selflessness, and interdependence, principles of communality, egalitarianism and solidarity. Menkiti Ifeanyi (1984) a Nigerian philosopher argues that communitarianism emphasizes the ontological primacy of the community over the reality of the individual. Within the unhu//ubuntu philosophy values and goals of the community are supreme and the overriding consideration for morality and social justice. According to Mbiti (1969) in Verhoef and Michel (1997:17) the African view of the person can be summed up in the statement “I am because we are and since we are therefore I am.”

It is the understanding of the Ubuntu philosophy which should guide community empowerment towards inclusivity. Higher Education initiatives should guide the conceptualisation of ubuntu in the various communities for the realisation of community obligation towards inclusive communities.

Transformative language and discourse

Abdullah, Abdullah and Hoon (2008) argue that discourse reveals hidden ideological assumptions and related discursive sources as well as formations of power,

dominance, inequality and bias, and how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced and transformed within specific social, economic, political and historical contexts. Allamin M Mazrui in Abdullah et al. (2008) says, “African languages, while being mobilised in the struggle against imperial domination, have also been transmuted into instruments of domination.” Thus, any transformation targeted at changing people’s perceptions and world views cannot be complete without a direct intervention on language and discourse. Thus, there need to be interventions targeted towards the reconceptualisation of language use as a cultural tool that has been used in deepening exclusion within the Shona cultural contexts. This can be done through a community-based curriculum for inclusion. There is therefore a need to plan for a systematic targeted community educational process to meet the needs of all categories of people. The community syllabus should target culture and language and discourse transformations to make them more inclusive.

CONCLUSION

This paper has explored the impact of language as a cultural tool on the empowerment of PWDs. It was noted that language marginalises PWDs to the periphery of power in Shona communities. It was proposed that the empowerment of PWDs be approached from two dimensions: from the perspective of PWDs themselves as well as from the perspective of community empowerment. In their drive towards inclusive practices, it is apparent that Higher Education institutions should find community-based initiatives in order to start from the formative stages of development for PWDs. This would go a long way in realising the goals of inclusion.

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UBUNTU IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: A MALAWIAN EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Ubuntu in African culture emphasizes commonality and interdependence of members of the community. It is underpinned by the values of respect, collectivism, social cohesion, consideration for others and respect for a life tied to the principles of inclusivity. This study investigated collaboration of mainstream teachers and parents of children with physical disabilities and how they ensure full participation of their children in education to achieve their full potential. The research sample consisted of four primary schools, two rural and the other two urbans in Lilongwe, Malawi. The participants and sites were selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The research design was participatory action research tied to a social constructivist paradigm in order to understand the stakeholders' lived realities of implementing inclusive education. Indigenous knowledge (data) was generated through individual and dyadic semi-structured interviews as well as focus groups and field notes. Collected data were analysed thematically. Several themes emerged from the data. One of the key findings suggests that both teachers and parents are feeling discomfort with moving away from the dominant medical model, which views a child with disability as a problem as opposed to the society. This inhibits them from sharing indigenous knowledge that could help in implementing inclusive education. This disengages both groups from actively participating in inclusive education. In view of the above, it can be argued that many of the challenges facing most African countries with inclusive education stem from the elevation of Western ideologies at the expense of African values and beliefs.

Key terms: ubuntu, culture, inclusive education, medical model

INTRODUCTION

There is ample empirical research conducted with teachers around their experiences of implementing inclusive education. However, while this issue has been addressed extensively internationally, there is paucity of literature on the perceptual and experiential viewpoints of mainstream primary school teachers and parents of children with disabilities in a Malawian context. Relatively little research has been conducted regarding their perceptions of inclusive education.

According to research, the conceptualization and practice of inclusive education in different countries are shaped by the complex histories and social-cultural conditions of existence (Engelbrecht & Green, 2018; Walton & Nel, 2012; Kozleski, Artiles & Waitoller, 2011). However, a growing body of research evidence suggests that inclusive educational practices and ideals in most Sub-Sahara African countries including Malawi are shaped by Western perspectives and practices with little recognition of indigenous knowledge and ways of being (Kalyanpur, 2016; Mukhopadhyay, 2015). Consequently, implementing inclusive education strategies designed for wealthy western countries is problematic in many countries in the Global South including Malawi.

It is thus imperative that a contextually appropriate understanding of the implementation of inclusive education is pursued through research. Recently there has been an upsurge of voices of African scholars to recognise indigenous knowledge and philosophies (Phasha, 2016; Akinsola & Chireshe, 2016). They agree that the concept of inclusion is not new in African societies and that inclusive education principles seem to resonate with the African philosophy of ubuntu (Phasha & Condy, 2016; Phasha, Mahlo & Dei, 2017; Mpofu, Chireshe & Mpofu, 2018; Walton, 2018).

It is acknowledged that most African cultures are grounded in the philosophy of ubuntu. According to Phasha (2016), Ubuntu is founded on collectivism which is consistent with the agenda of inclusive education. It is further grounded in several aspects including humanness, interdependence, and communalism. Phasha (2016) refers to ubuntu as “morality of care”. In other words, it resonates with the principles of inclusive education. The core principle of inclusive education is the right of all children to education. The core human rights principles for inclusive education are: 1) universality

(education for all children); 2) children's entitlement to education; 3) participation in the education process and 4) the provision of quality education (Pasha, 2018:9). Central to establishing an inclusive education system is the notion of support. Support within inclusive education is a two-pronged approach whereby support need to be provided to schools and teachers. The aim for support measures and provisions must enable teachers to provide support to learners who experience barriers to learning and development. The support provided to learners must not be confused with remedial education. Remedial education is rooted within a medical perspective. Remedial education focuses on the specialised individual diagnoses and treatment which is fragmented and inadequate to the needs of many. Support within an inclusive education system is evident of a social model to disability in which collaboration between professionals collaborate.

MALAWIAN CONTEXT

It is well documented that for many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), including Malawi, access to primary education remains a daunting challenge, especially for children with disabilities. Research have shown that "many children with disabilities in this region never enrol in school or drop out prematurely […] and they also learn less in schools" (Wodon, Male, Montenegro & Nayihouba, 2018:1). According to Mitchell (2017:4) historical, cultural, and material barriers hinder the participation of children with disabilities in education. It is therefore important to recognise that inclusive education in Sub-Saharan countries' context, is generally a means of expanding access to educational opportunities to the diversity of children, including those marginalised on the basis of disabilities and other circumstances (Naicker, 2018; Srivastava, De Boer & Pijl, 2015; Singal, 2016; Mukhopadhyay, 2015).

Like most colonised countries, the provision of education for learners with disabilities in Malawi, was initiated by charitable and religious organisations. It is therefore logical that several missionaries began special education for learners with disabilities in Malawi (Winzer, 2014). More recently, several policies have been introduced to promote the education of people with disabilities entrenched in the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi (Government of Malawi, 1994) which provides for the right to education for all citizens, including those with disabilities. The National Strategy on Inclusive Education (NSIE) (MoEST, 2016) guides the process of implementing

inclusive education in Malawi. However, currently the education policies in Malawi continue to segregate learners with special educational needs arising from disabilities. Despite the move towards inclusive education, most of these children still attend school in special schools and resource centres (Chataika, Kamchedzera & Semphere, 2017; Chavuta, Itimu-Phiri, Chiwaya, Alindiamao & Sikero, 2008).

However, in Malawi there are more than 6 000 mainstream primary schools across the country. In 2017, only 146 out of the 6 065 public primary schools had a resource centre and/or resource room in accordance with the NSIE. According to the Chief Training Officer in the Department of Special Needs Education within the MoEST, an estimated 1 700 special needs education teachers are available in active service in Malawi. The small number of children with disability who attend school, do so in impairment specific schools and resource centres, while some receive limited support from itinerant teachers within mainstream schools (Luker, 2012).

PURPOSE AND AIM

The purpose of the study was to gain insight into the perceptions and experiences of mainstream teachers in implementing inclusive education in Malawi.

The study aimed at amplifying the voices of teachers and parents as key role players in the implementation of inclusive education at primary school level. Therefore, the research question that guided this study was: What are the experiences of teachers tasked with implementing inclusive education in mainstream primary schools in Malawi?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was directed by two theoretical frameworks, i.e., Social Constructivism and the Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) (Vygotsky, 1978). These were used as theoretical lenses for understanding teachers and parents' experience in the implementation of inclusive education and how they made meaning of the world in which they worked and lived.

It is acknowledged that there are different interpretations of some CHAT concepts. In this study, Lev Vygotsky’s (1978) interpretation of CHAT is used.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research design is tied to the constructivist paradigm in the methodological position assumption that reality is socially constructed by individuals through interaction. In addition, this is aligned with the researcher's ontological belief that there are many constructions of meaning as there are many individuals engaged in the social construction of meaning (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, Participatory Action Research (PAR) was selected as research design in order to find answers to the research question. PAR is a qualitative approach, which creates space for participants to become co-researchers that are able to voice their experiences of the phenomenon under investigation. In so doing, the researcher and participants produce knowledge collaboratively to address problems that affect them (Wimpenny, 2010; McIntyre, 2008).

Purposive sampling technique was employed to select schools and teachers who had previously received training in implementing inclusive education.

DATA GENERATION AND ANALYSIS

Data for this study was generated through individual semi-structured interviews, focus groups, creative activities, and field notes. In addition, creative methods were used for tapping into the participants' experiences, perceptions and emotions (McIntyre, 2008). Data was generated in three phases. In phase one, individual semi-structured interviews with teachers and parents were conducted, phase two comprised of individual and dyadic semi-structured interviews and lastly focus group discussion were conducted. Field notes were made throughout the data collection process.

The generated data were analysed using the iterative thematic data analysis process.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

For the purpose of this paper, we focus on the following two themes that have emerged during data analysis:

1. Overlooked voices
2. Implementation informed by ubuntu philosophy

DISCUSSION

The findings clearly indicate that teachers are of the opinion that their voices and experiences were overlooked when it came to addressing the challenges in implementing inclusive education. This resonates with Mukhopadhyay's (2015) assertion that indigenous knowledge and ways of being are not recognised as Western models are to be implemented. Teachers in this study gave the following responses: "… they think we are not the right people to these things; rather, it is done by people who are always in their offices who do not know how to support a learner". Another responded indicated that "… if they are to call me to be part of curriculum developers, I will remember the special needs learners. I will remember those leaners who do not do well despite that they are given everything to search for answers". One other respondent implies that the department of education does not take into consideration specific contexts as she explains that "… it is like they just adopted the methods of teaching from white people where they have a few leaners without telling us how to use such methods when teaching about 200 learners, they are just imposing.

Teachers have indicated that if their voices were heard, they would have requested thorough training before being expected to implement legislation for inclusion. One of the participants voiced it as follows: "If we were asked, we would have asked them to train us first … before teaching them [the learners] so that we should be able to help the learners effectively. But because it is a law, we just accepted it. They just impose [it] on us. So, we just follow because it is the law".

From the data collected it seems like teachers in general feel that they have no say [voice] with regard to what they are to be implementing in an inclusive education system, specifically in class as they teach learners. Policies that are informed by western educational models seem to be enforced without taking cognisance of the contextual factors teachers face. From the responses it is clear that teachers are feeling despondent about the situation they are in.

UNESCO have committed to promote inclusive education systems "that remove the barriers limiting the participation and achievement of all learners, respect diverse needs, abilities and characteristics and that eliminate all forms of discrimination in the learning environment" (https://en.unesco.org/themes/inclusion-in-education). Inclusive

education is thus guided by the principles of equal educational opportunities for all and that schools need to adapt in order to address the needs of all learners. As a fundamental African philosophy, ubuntu is increasingly acknowledged as being similar to the principles of inclusion. African scholars are increasingly drawing in parallels between the principles on which inclusive education is built and the ancient African philosophy of ubuntu. As mentioned earlier, Ubuntu originated from collectivism and is grounded in several aspects including humanness, interdependence, and communalism (Phasha, 2016).

Under the theme on UBUNTU, teachers were of the opinion that when UBUNTU ceases to exist, the implementation of inclusive education will fail. One of the respondents' related the notion of ubuntu with the Christian philosophy of humanness as he explained how one of his colleagues' approach to teaching: "You know Mr. xxx, teaching is Jesus Christ's work … it is a calling from God. It requires umunthu [humaneness]. If a teacher lacks umunthu, love and care it does not work". This response confirms Pasha's (2016) notion that ubuntu can be related as the "morality of care".

The theme of compassion for learners within the teaching context came through quite strongly. One responded was of the opinion that "… I can say that, a teacher who has compassion gets concerned upon seeing a learner performing poorly. This makes her to thinks about ways of how to help this the learner to improve the performance. A compassionate teacher does not say, 'whether the learner performs well or not I will still receive my salary anyways'. That teacher lacks compassion. We need to take these children as our own".

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has highlighted the need be contextually relevant as internationally driven educational approaches are to be implemented. This is particularly important when foreign western models and strategies are proposed to implement educational renewal in African countries. In order to promote and advance inclusive education in Africa, indigenous philosophies and knowledge should be recognized. This can be accomplished by involving teachers and acknowledging their contexts as they experience and voice it.

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