

Challenges Teachers Encounter In Implementing Inclusive Education In Public Primary Schools In Nyamira County, Kenya.

Peterson Ondieki OSERO

Doctorate Student, Department of Curriculum and Educational Management, School of Education, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology, Kenya. Box 390 – 40500, Nyamira, Kenya.

Email: ondiekipeterson@yahoo.com, Phone number: +254721718506.

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to determine the challenges the teachers encounter in implementing inclusive education in Nyamira County, Kenya. The location of the study was Nyamira County in Kenya. The objective of the study was to find out challenges teachers encounter in implementing inclusive education in Nyamira County, Kenya. The study was limited to challenges teachers encounter in inclusive education. Challenges discourage teachers from carrying out teaching tasks as stipulated in the inclusive education programme. The study targeted all teachers 4000 and 5 education officers in Nyamira County. Teachers were targeted because they were implementers of inclusive curriculum and therefore better positioned to share experiences they undergo. Data was analyzed and results presented in tables, graphs and percentages the study found that teachers faced such challenges as: teachers lack of knowledge of the types of learners, indiscipline cases, heavy workload demanding more time, teachers' negative attitude towards disabled, no facilities for teachers and learners, disabled have low self-esteem among others. The study concluded that the challenges were contributing to the negativity of teachers towards inclusive education and hence hindered the implementation of inclusive education. The recommended that teachers should plan to have more time to remedy the children such as slow learners and they should maintain class control by involving all learners within each learning experience. It also recommended that teachers should be encouraged to develop positive attitude towards the implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools in Nyamira County, Kenya.

Key words: Challenges, implementation, change, inclusive, settings, disability, attitude

Introduction and Background

One of the most likely challenge teachers may encounter is to change from the previous setting, where learners have been for a long time placed in special schools designated for certain specific disabilities, for instance special schools for the deaf, blind or mentally challenged. It may be both a challenge to parents and even the members of the society. This challenge has been so due to the fact that education for learners experiencing disabilities is undergoing a revolutionary change. Inclusive education of all learners together in classrooms of regular public schools is replacing segregated settings which are normally on full-time. Segregated settings were applied previously because they seemed to be most appropriate but today it is slowly being discarded for inclusive education. The study adopted a descriptive survey design.

Booth (2005) cites Sankull (2005) who notes that ‘the perception of what human rights really mean in practice is by and large not clear to most practitioners and especially planners and decision-makers in the Ministry of Education. In addition, there is no explicit acceptance of using human rights in the policy and planning process.’ Booth continues to say that the concept “disabled” only describes one aspect of a person’s identity and one set

of discriminatory pressures. Disabled people are male and female, Hutus and Tutsis and Inuit and gays and lesbians, Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus, Brahmins and Dalits, and people living with HIV and AIDS. Pressures to include disabled people will have limited success if they are not also concerned with issues such as gender, caste, class, religion, ethnicity, background, poverty and sexual orientation.” The understanding of inclusion is inclusion of all regardless of race, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation, language, socio economic status and any other aspect of what composes a person’s identity that might be perceived as diverse.

The development of the six ways typology of thinking about inclusion by Ainscow *et al* (2006) that is: inclusion as a concern with disabled students and others categorized as ‘having special educational needs; inclusion as a response to disciplinary exclusion; inclusion in relation to all groups seen as being vulnerable to exclusion; inclusion as developing the school for all; inclusion as ‘Education for All’ and inclusion as a principled approach to education and society, indicate different interpretations of inclusive education and that there is conceptual confusion surrounding this issue, but perhaps also that it necessarily takes different forms, depending on contextual concerns. Essentially it is a process of challenging exclusion in schools and communities and of being vigilant about threats to equity (Dyson, 2004).

Education for All (EFA), as a means towards inclusive and equitable society, needs to take into account diversity, which is by no means limited to disability. The mission of EFA/IE is to address issues of social justice, inequality, human rights and participatory democracy. Booth further argues that failure of crossing boundaries towards a broader spectrum of inclusion by disability advocates leaves them in alliance with special education systems that serves to limit the participation of disabled children in education and to segregate them in special settings (Polat, and Kisanji, 2009).

Inclusive education aims to build a society that promotes equal opportunity for all citizens to participate in and contribute to the development of the nation in Tanzania (Tanzania United Republic, 1999). In 2001, the Government launched the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP), which sought to provide equitable, quality, basic education and vocational skills to all. This is to ensure, among other factors, adequate provision of quality teachers, a conducive environment for stakeholders willing to participate in providing education and vocational skills, efficient management in education delivery, and a conducive learning/teaching environment for students and teachers at all levels. The Tanzanian government has committed to EFA goals, and EFA goals cannot be met unless inclusion is given a priority. According to a UNESCO Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2009) the number of out of school children in Tanzania fell by over 3 million to less than 150,000. The National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction in Tanzania reported that less than 2% of school age children with disabilities enroll to primary school (United Republic of Tanzania, 2005). Reduction of poverty levels in Tanzania will also influence pupils’ attendance to school. This shows how the Government of Tanzania has endeavored in her efforts to promote education for the children with disabilities despite the challenges that have been outlined. Participants from 16 schools were involved in Dar es salaam and coastal regions to launch a project referred to as ‘Developing an Index for Inclusion in Tanzania’, based on information sharing and awareness creation among education stakeholders as well as seeking for collaboration from national and local level stakeholders. A one day seminar held in Tanzania grouped overall barriers to inclusion under four key themes. These were:

- Infrastructural barriers (such as, water, sanitation, health, inadequate facilities and school buildings).
- Classroom learning environment (for example, large class sizes and lack of teaching materials).

- Policy and human resources(such as, limited number of qualified and trained teachers both in general and special education, limited policy priority towards IE, lack of communication between key stakeholders, and negative attitudes towards students with disabilities), and,
- Community barriers (such as, cultural barriers, lack of community awareness and negative attitudes towards IE). (Filiz and Kisanji, 2009)

Poverty, in countries of the South, is very much linked to globalization, cost-sharing programmes and structural adjustments, which affect disabled people the most resulting in poorer living conditions (DfID, 2007). This calls for a global institutional reform, changing global capitalism (Sen, 2002) and restructuring a fairer global economy to poor and countries of the South (Nussbaum, 2006). Global capitalism is much more concerned with expanding the domain of market relations than with, say, establishing democracy, expanding elementary education, or enhancing the social opportunities of society's underdogs. There is an urgent need for reforming institutional arrangements in order to overcome both the errors of omission and those of commission that tend to give the poor across the world such limited opportunities.

In terms of attitudes within local communities, Avoke (2002) suggests that community elders and churches can play a vital role in the drive towards radical changes in attitudes and that they must participate in policy development as well as practical implementation. The success of inclusive education depends on implementers and consumers of the programme developing the positive attitudes towards it. Teachers are the implementers while the learners and members of the society are the beneficiaries of inclusive education. When the attitude is not positive the curriculum fails to take off and all efforts spent in entrenching Inclusive Education becomes meaningless and a waste of resources. To convince people to accept a new programme becomes a challenge more specially when are used to and prefer the status Quo. Kenyan citizens have been, for a long time, used to children with special needs learning in segregated institutions. It would be necessary to persuade the public and teachers to accept inclusive education, that inclusive education can benefit children with special needs and have no negative impact on children without special needs.

Kenya, for instance, has shown some willingness, at least on paper, to implement inclusive education in all public primary schools as from 2011. The Sessional Paper on A Policy Framework for Education, Training and Research (No. 1 of 2005) indicated that there were challenges ranging from excluding some children with certain handicaps to lack of space. This necessitated a programme that would incorporate all handicaps, hence inclusive education. Although the government declared that all public schools should practice inclusive education, there is need to investigate how teachers feel and whether they were incorporated in designing the strategies that would ensure successful inclusive education.

The challenges facing successful implementation of inclusive education may be summarized as: challenges related to change from segregated settings to inclusion, meeting needs of both children with disabilities and the less challenged learners in regular classes, equity, infrastructural barriers, classroom learning environment, policy and human resource, community barriers and poverty. This study's core intention was to find out how these factors influenced the process of implementing inclusive education in Nyamira County.

In Kenya, the preparation of teachers takes two main forms, that is, pre-service and in-service (Shiundu and Omulando, 1992). Pre-service teacher education targets those in colleges of education and faculties or schools of education in universities. In-service teacher education targets those teachers who are already practicing in the field. In-service teacher education aims at acquainting the practicing teacher with the latest innovation in the curriculum of his/her subject area. Inclusive education is one of the recent innovations in the Primary school

curriculum to have learners with special needs learn with the less challenged learners and do away with discrimination or segregation of those with disabilities. This study investigated whether teachers handling inclusive education were trained to boost their positive attitude towards improving the well-being of children with special needs.

Radical changes are required in education systems, and in the values and principles of the people involved in delivering education, if the world's most vulnerable and disadvantaged children are to gain access to their local school. Singal (2004) has argued that inclusive education is not only about addressing issues of input (for example, access), and those related to processes (for example, teacher training), rather inclusion involves a shift in underlying values and beliefs held across the system. As these values and beliefs are reflected in the policies that are designed frame at national, school and classroom level, and the education systems that we build. All these are issues that are supposed to be entrenched in the curriculum designed and delivered to learners in schools.

Cheng (2000) emphasizes the social, rather than isolated, nature of learning. In order to develop an effective learning community we must foster a community of effective learners. To achieve the aims of democracy and social action through the curriculum, all educators need to be prepared to recognize and respect the unique attributes of every learner. From that values-laden stance, educators can attempt to develop shared perspectives and alignment of pedagogy to promote effective teaching and learning. If we are to bring about real change in our education system and create a model that is more closely aligned to inclusive ideals, then universities must work in close partnership with the profession to formulate and integrate new knowledge about inclusive learning management, particularly in the hearts and minds of those entering the profession. To cultivate critical awareness and potential attitudinal change, educators need to understand the social and political context in which schools operate. This mission can only become a reality when the tenets of inclusive education are entrenched in the curriculum delivered to learners in schools.

Not only is lack of access to schooling a violation of Article 28 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which provides for the right of all children to free primary education, but this lack also potentially maintains the cycle of poverty, as without education an adult may not be able to work to earn a living, or participate in political processes (Tomasevski, 2003). Despite this, there is no indicator in the Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Reports for enrolment, drop-out, or attainment of disabled children. In fact, there is no disability indicator at all, which is potentially excluding millions of children from a high-profile global campaign in which they were vaguely included in the category of "children in difficult circumstances" in EFA goal two at the Dakar Conference (World Education Forum, 2000) where the drive for Education For All was finally agreed by 92 countries. Hence, although EFA is about 'all' children, it appears that children with disabilities do not count in the final analysis (Tomasevski, 2003).

Studies focusing on the perception of children with disabilities on inclusive education revealed that they like to study with other children but are unsure of their capabilities and fear the reaction of other children. Hayat (1994) found that most children who have disabilities were eager to attend ordinary schools as they found it pleasant to study and play with other children. They believed that this would improve their academic achievement and remove the stigma associated with disability. However, they feared that they might be teased or not be able to keep up with the class leading to most of them not enrolling in regular schools. The teachers in schools are the protectors of vulnerable children. Their attitudes towards these children would determine how much they do this. The consequence would be to retain the children in school, or dropouts.

Miles (2002) found that the attitude of society towards children with disabilities was not considerate and has led to many such students not being enrolled in regular public schools. The reasons for this are mainly superstitious. Disability is seen as a curse or punishment from God, and sometimes it is associated with invasion by an evil spirit. While studying the attitudes of literate and non-literate persons, Akhtar (1994) reported that most literate respondents believed that children with disabilities could lead a successful life. Non-literate respondents, however, often believed that disability was a curse. They believed that children with disabilities were a burden on society and therefore saw little need to take them to school.

In another study, Akhtar (1994) found that most teachers of mainstream schools felt unsure about teaching these children leading to many hearing impaired students being turned away from such institutions. Teachers in special schools believed that the most appropriate education for these children could only be provided in special schools. Nawaz and Saeed (2009) conducted a study of perceptions of primary school teachers and found that they were willing to include children who had difficulties in hearing in their schools in separate classes, if resource teachers were available for support. Teachers also sought government support for training, financial incentives and provisions for inclusion in the educational policy.

Hussain and Javed (1997) attempted to develop a plan for the mainstreaming of children with hearing impairment. They observed that inclusion of these children in regular classrooms was acceptable to many education experts in Pakistan. The strategy for inclusion, however, varied from one expert to another. They found that the special education experts, who were administrators and senior teachers of children with hearing difficulties, were not ready to accept that there were deep-rooted and widespread negative effects of special education institutions on the education of children with hearing impairment and thus advocated for hearing impaired children to be enrolled in special schools. According to the findings by Hussain and Javed (1997), implementation of inclusive education needed proper orientation for regular classroom teachers. Special schools were ready to initiate mainstreaming in their school (reverse mainstreaming). The local context of special institutions was often threatened, politicized and overprotective in connection with innovative plans such as inclusive education.

Sharif and Naz (2002) found that print media had not changed public attitudes to people with hearing difficulties. It is clear that lack of awareness and education among the general public have been mainly responsible for the misconceptions and negative attitudes towards disability leading to low enrolments in regular learning institutions. Parents have mixed opinions about supporting education in special schools and inclusive education settings, whereas most teachers are in favor of providing education in special education settings. This is perhaps as a result of the lack of proper training and perceived barriers to dealing with the diverse needs of children in ordinary schools. The current study will therefore seek to establish the extent of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education which in turn will motivate the public on the need to enroll learners with disabilities in regular schools.

The quality and adequacy of resources such as physical facilities, equipment, teaching and learning materials have a direct bearing on quality of education, as they determine how effectively the curriculum is implemented, (Republic of Kenya, 1999). Many factors, not least limited resources, have resulted in provision to meet special needs being expressed either in general terms of what is available rather than what is needed. Recommendations after assessment are usually very broad and the choices offered relate to location and what is available rather than to what is needed. Services must be more precise about the different types of support they can give to children with different kinds of special educational needs, (Allen and Schwartz, 2000).

Over time, there has been a major backlog of infrastructure provision and a shortage of permanent classrooms, particularly in poor communities. At the same time, existing infrastructure is generally in poor condition due to lack of investment capital, poor construction standards and inadequate maintenance. The result of the sharp rise in numbers is poor conditions and overcrowding that are not conducive to good learning environment, (Republic of Kenya, 2005). The learners with special needs have not had specific resources put in place for them. Classrooms are not put in place to suit their needs. This denies them accessibility and equalization of opportunities, (Republic of Kenya, 1999).

Marked progress has been made in getting new buildings, classrooms and teachers for a rapidly increasing child population. This in itself is a highly significant accomplishment. However, in the planning of new buildings and in the securing of school facilities and equipment, the tendency has been to make only minor changes from the arrangements of the past, on the assumption that the same equipment and instructional materials could serve equally well for the nurturance of all forms of abilities in all children, (Klausmeier & Goodwin, 1976).

The Taskforce on special Education in Kenya (2003) on implementation of free primary education highlights a description of some modifications needed for inclusive education such as:

- Provision of barrier free environment within compounds used by children who are deaf, blind, mentally handicapped and physically handicapped.
- Build adapted toilets, bathrooms and bars to assist the children to hold onto while bathing, showering and toileting.
- Avoid doorsteps; instead have ramps with recommended gradient, dormitories and playgrounds.
- All classrooms should be spacious, well lit and well ventilated, (Republic of Kenya, 2003).

Children with special needs often need specialized aids to move about, to read and write or to hear. For example, children with severe hearing impairments require hearing aids where necessary, (Republic of Kenya, 1999). KISE (2007) gives a comprehensive summary of special equipment and devices that may assist learners with hearing impairment as Audiological equipment such as individual hearing aids. Teachers should ensure that material and equipment are in good working order. It is frustrating for any child to try to steer a wheel toy that has a bent axle. Teachers must make sure that everything has a place and, when not in use everything is in its place, (Allen & Schwartz, 2001).

Once children with disabilities have been assessed at Educational Assessment and Resource Centres (EARC) and the outcome referred to medical doctors for confirmation, it is the parents who decide whether they wish their children to attend a residential school, integrated programme or regular school. Choices are limited because demand is higher than existing facilities can meet, (UNESCO, 1995). This further negates the idea of integrating students with special needs in ordinary schools, (Karanja, 2003). Organizations such as the National Council for persons with disabilities (NCPWD) have initiated a programme where needy learners with special educational needs are supported to access educational programmes. The current study therefore seeks to investigate the extent to which provision of facilities is a management challenge facing the implementation of inclusive education for learners in Nyamira County, Kenya

Parents have a crucial responsibility of providing basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter among other provisions. The parents train their children on how to speak, walk and even control and manage other basic biological activities such as calls and proper usage of toilets. They introduce them into the environment and at

the first time control their interactions with the environment. At early years of the child's growth and development the parent is the first trainer of the child. The teachers and other members of the society in which the parents of the child live are merely in the second position and level in providing training to the child. The school is the second and new environment from which to learn new knowledge and skills that will be useful in solving his problems now and in future.

Although the social disadvantage may not be strongly related to attitudes to learning among children, studies of selected groups of disaffected and underachieving pupils show a much clearer link between negative school attitudes and disadvantaging factors, including a lack of educational support at home. Keys and Fernandes (1993) list the following student-home related factors which tend to be associated with early school leaving and drop out, based on their review of the literature:

- disillusionment with and dislike of school;
- belief that school would not improve their career prospects;
- low educational aspirations;
- interest and effort in class and less time spent on homework;
- disruptive behaviour and resentment of rules;
- poor academic achievement;
- poor attendance and truancy;
- lack of parental interest and support; and
- low socio-economic status

In their own attitude survey Keys and Fernandes found that pupils expressing negative attitudes to school were more likely than other pupils to have negative views of their own abilities and perseverance, to behave badly in school and to judge that they received lower levels of support from their parents. In their exploration of the school views of 12- to 14-year-old-pupils Rudduck et al. (1996) found that, compared with other pupils, students who were judged by their teachers to be disengaged from their school work differed in the way they perceived themselves as learners and in the way they tackled their work. In particular they showed lower self-esteem and poor self-concepts, poor strategies for coping with school work and poorer relations with their teachers and their peers. Despite this they still expressed the desire to do well in school.

In terms of attitudes within local communities, Avoke (2002) suggests that "community elders and churches can play a vital role in drive towards radical change in attitudes" and that they must participate in policy development as well as practical implementation. For instance, the church would discourage her members from attitudes that are of or encourage irresponsibility and in the divert attention from living them acceptable Christian and societal morals. The studies by Blatchford (1996) and Tower Hamlets (undated) described earlier found that the attitudes to school and learning of ethnic minority children in their research samples were distinctly more positive than those of white children. As well as assessing and monitoring children's general attitudes towards school and learning, it is equally important to listen to their views on particular aspects of their education so that these can be taken into account when improvements are planned, whether at a national, local authority or school level. Also the understandable desire of students for acknowledgement of their work and effort was reflected in the finding of Keys and Fernandes (1993) that only half of the sample of pupils said that teachers praised them for good work. Their further finding that nearly one-quarter of the pupils felt that their teachers were easily satisfied with their work, suggests that pupils probably appreciate work which challenges them appropriately. The more disadvantaged the pupil's personal circumstances, within home, school and community, the greater the risk that she/he will become steadily more disillusioned with school learning and will then opt out of it either actively or passively.

Whilst research has consistently demonstrated links between the home environment and attainment, we know less about the processes that might explain this association. However, the Effective Provision of Pre-school Education project (Sammons *et al.* 1999) has examined the associations between a range of personal, family and home environment characteristics and cognitive attainment of children aged around 3 years at entry to pre-school. Sammons *et al.* (1999) found that a number of measures of home environment had an independent association with cognitive attainment. The frequency with which parents reported reading to their child was significant, with those who read twice a day showing the most impact, though reading daily or several times a week also showed a positive relationship compared with reading less than once a week. The frequency with which children were taken to the library also showed a significant positive association, with weekly visits showing the strongest relationship. In addition, children whose parents reported that their child frequently played with letters or numbers also showed higher scores, as did those who reported that they taught their child the alphabet, and those who taught a variety of songs to their children.

However, what is particularly interesting is that these aspects of the home environment remained significant after having taken account of parents' educational level and occupational status. The parents' educational level and historical background as Measor and Sikes (1992) point to the long history of education and schooling being closely tied up with views of femininity and masculinity and the sexual division of labour.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this was to find out challenges teachers encounter in implementing inclusive education in Nyamira County, Kenya.

Limitations of the study

It covered only the challenges teachers' encounter in inclusive education. Challenges discourage teachers from carrying out teaching tasks as stipulated in the inclusive education programme. If the challenges were known and eradicated, then teaching of inclusive education would satisfy the needs of both learners and the teacher.

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. This design was the most appropriate since it allowed the researcher to study a relatively large population for accuracy of findings and was concerned with describing, recording, analyzing and reporting conditions that existed (Orodho, 2008).

Location of the Study

The study was carried out in Nyamira County. The transport means in the County was the road, which consisted of one tarmac road, which bisects it almost half-way and a few feeder roads which were impassable during rainy seasons. The main economic occupation of the residents of the County was peasant farming with tea being the major cash crop and maize being the main food crop.

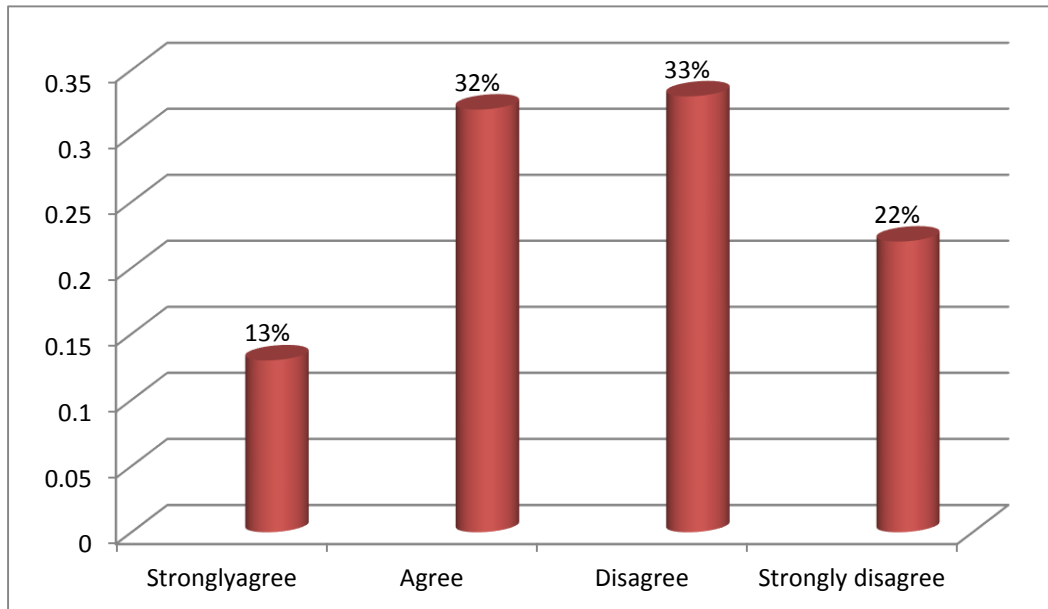
Target Population

The study targeted all teachers 4000 and 5 education officers in Nyamira County. Teachers were targeted because they were implementers of inclusive curriculum and therefore better positioned to share experiences they undergo. They are also involved in the implementation and delivery of the curriculum. The head teachers were targeted because, apart from being classroom teachers, had administrative role of coordinating and supervising teaching and learning activities in the schools.

Results and discussions

Teachers were asked to respond to various areas that were more likely to present challenges to both teachers and learners in inclusive education. Table 4.3 shows responses of respondents on whether the learners in inclusive education classes interacted freely.

Figure 4:3 Interactions of learners in inclusive education



45% of the respondents agreed that the learners in inclusive education were interacting freely in various activities, whereas 55% of the respondents disagreed that learners were interacting freely. The study, following the large number of respondents who felt that learners were not freely interacting, concluded that the learners' interaction may to some extent impact negatively on the implementation of inclusive education. Interaction brings about two or more people together enabling them to share ideas, skills and knowledge, thus achieving higher achievements in learning. Such teaching and learning strategies as group work, discussion, role-play, story-telling would not be used appropriately in learning situations because of lack of interaction. The study considered free interaction as one of the challenges of inclusive education. Teachers, non-teaching staff and the school management may have a big role to play of encouraging learners in inclusive settings to co-operate and freely interact amongst themselves without segregation or discrimination.

To find out challenges teachers encounter, respondents were requested to identify challenges they encountered in implementing inclusive education and their responses were as shown in table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Challenges teachers encounter in inclusive education

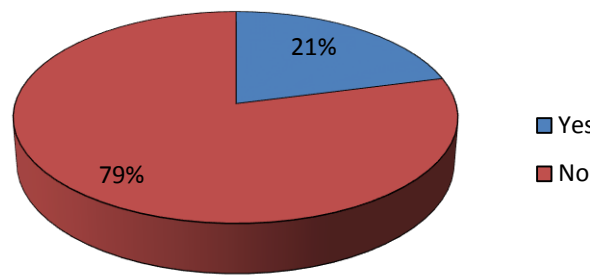
Variable	Frequency	Percent
Teachers lack knowledge of types of learners	152	12.3
Indiscipline case	197	15.9
Heavy workload	56	4.5
Teachers’ negative attitude to SNE	169	13.6
No facilities for teachers	202	16.3
SNE have low esteem	67	5.4
Time consuming	110	8.9
Absenteeism of learners	28	2.3
Make class control difficult	73	5.9
Opposition of parents on classification as SNE	32	2.6
Lack of communication- teachers & learners	45	3.6
Financial problems	24	1.9
Lack infrastructure	15	1.2
Syllabus coverage impossible	58	4.7
Discrimination of SNE children	12	1.0
Total	1240	100.0

The study found out that some challenges were more common and affected many respondents than others. This was indicated by the high number of respondents who enlisted them. The study also found out that lack of teaching and learning facilities (16.3%) ranked highest in the list of challenges facing inclusive education. Teaching and learning resources may remain to be very important in enhancing teaching and learning activities. It also helps learners to retain the content learned for a long time. Teaching and learning resources make learning real and enables learners to connect. They make what may otherwise be abstract concepts have meaning.

In terms of percentage, the other factors identified by the respondents were indiscipline at 15.9%; teachers’ negative attitude at 13.6% and teachers’ lack of knowledge in special needs education at 12.3%. Other challenges that were identified in order of prevalence included: inclusion was timing consuming (8.9%); it makes class control difficult (5.9%); disabled children have low self-esteem (5.4%); syllabus coverage became difficult (4.7%); heavy work load in the part of teachers (4.5%); lack of communication (3.6%); opposition of parents on classification of learners (2.6%); absenteeism of learners (2.3%); financial problems (1.9%); lack of adequate infrastructure (1.2%) and discrimination of special needs education (1%). This implies that implementing inclusive education in public primary schools may call for joint efforts among all stakeholders, who may include teachers, parents, members of society, education officers and any other interested party or organization like religious organization.

A question was also asked to the respondents to establish whether the curriculum was relevant to both the special needs children and “normal” children in an inclusion setting. Figure 4.4 show the results on relevance of the current curriculum for implementation of inclusive education.

Figure 4.4 Relevance of current curriculum



79% of the respondents stated that the curriculum was not meeting the needs of learners in inclusive education, while 21% of the respondents said the curriculum was relevant. Since the bigger portion of the teachers stated that the curriculum was not relevant, it means that the curriculum had not been accepted by the implementers (who were teachers) and because teachers held this attitude, it might be possible that even parents, children and members of society would be have a negative attitude about the current curriculum. An adequate curriculum guides teaching and learning activities, it therefore needs to meet the needs of the consumers of education. A curriculum that does not enable the learner to solve his / her problems would not be considered an adequate curriculum. The study, therefore, concluded that there was need to review the current curriculum if inclusive education would be implemented appropriately.

Responding on whether teachers were trained in special education, the head teachers said that there were no trained teachers except in quite few schools. For instance, one teacher angrily exclaimed:

“Ntobwati baarimu basomerete binto ebio! Naki torasomie totamanyeti? (We have no teachers, how will we teach what we don’t know?)”

In fact 87% of the schools involved in the study, that is, 135 out of 155 did not have a trained teacher in special needs education. This did not mean that there were no children who were challenged in the schools, children who needed help to reach their full potential. The schools might become institutions of misery instead of being places of joy and hope for the children through educational opportunities that schools offer. Only 13% of the head teachers interviewed stated that there were very few teachers in the schools especially those with special education units. The head teachers reported that teachers were unwilling to have both less challenged and special needs children in an inclusive education class. Since the teachers were not trained they had a negative attitude towards the implementation of inclusive education. This was a hindrance for successful implementation of inclusive education in primary schools.

To establish whether inclusive education had been fully implemented in public primary schools, Education officers were asked to highlight on implementation of inclusive education. All the education officers said that inclusive education had not been fully implemented because there were no trained teachers and facilities and this enhanced teachers negativity towards inclusive education. One of the education officers retorted:

“Implementation of inclusive education will realized when the government would train teachers and provide required resources.”

They also said that the government’s intention to have all schools implement inclusive education seemed impractical since it didn’t provide or ensure that there were trained teachers and the school wouldn’t provide the required learning environment for both those with special needs and the other less challenged children. Dorn *et al.* (1996) warns that focusing on inclusion may mean that the positive action accumulated over decades in favor of children with disabilities and learning difficulties may evaporate. The study concluded that inclusive education had not been fully implemented and the government should ensure that the curriculum is implemented.

Conclusion and recommendations

Concerning challenges teachers encountered in teaching inclusive education, the study found that teachers faced such challenges as: teachers lack of knowledge of the types of learners, indiscipline cases, heavy workload demanding more time, teachers’ negative attitude towards disabled, no facilities for teachers and learners, disabled have low self-esteem, time-consuming, absenteeism of learners, make class control difficult, opposition of parents on classification as SNE, financial problems, lack of infrastructure, syllabus coverage impossible, discrimination of SNE children, current curriculum not meeting the needs of the learners in inclusive classes. The study concluded that the challenges were contributing to the negativity of teachers towards inclusive education and hence hindered the implementation of this programme.

The recommended that teachers should plan to have more time to remedy the children such as slow learners and they should maintain class control by involving all learners within each learning experience. It also recommended that teachers should be encouraged to develop positive attitude towards the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools in Nyamira County, Kenya.

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