

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PRACTICES IN REGULAR PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN SIAYA COUNTY, KENYA

Prof. Peter Oracha Adoyo

Department of Special Needs Education and Rehabilitation

Maseno University

KENYA

ABSTRACT

Inclusive education involves transformation of regular schools into barrier free environment to accommodate all learners. Its successful implementation is founded on policy which advocates for availability of trained personnel, zero discrimination on admission, school-community collaboration, curriculum differentiation, provision of related services and above all inclusive values. Although Kenya has for a long time advocated for inclusion, a number of reports have indicated that education leaders, school principals and other key players in the education system are not aware of inclusive education policy and practices. This has resulted into implementation challenges. Based on the foregoing, a study was set to investigate the implementation status of inclusive education in Siaya County, Kenya. This county had comparatively the highest number of teachers with inclusive education orientation. The purpose of the study was, therefore, to establish the extent to which teachers had implemented inclusive education practices. Specifically the study looked at the availability of policy and legal documents in schools, assessment of learners on admission, availability of trained personnel, school-community collaboration, curriculum differentiation and provision of related services. Descriptive Survey research design was used in the study. Target population comprised 216 teachers and 72 head teachers. Study sample comprised of 196 teachers and 65 head teachers selected through saturated sampling approach. Instruments for data collection included Questionnaires for teachers and head teachers, Interview Schedule for head teachers, and Observation Checklist. Results indicated that schools lacked policy documents on inclusive education in their custody, there was fair assessment on admission, the number of trained teachers were significantly low, the curriculum was not being differentiated in most schools, and there was lack of provision of related services. All these had implications on implementation of inclusive education. Beyond developing policies in inclusive education, educationists need to come up with implementation strategies as well as enforcement plans for successful uptake in schools.

Key Words: Inclusive Education, Inclusive Education Policy, Inclusive education Practices, Implementation status, Siaya County, Kenya

1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Inclusive education as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners, demands that the government develops and enforces relevant policies and legislation that facilitate effective implementation of inclusive education practices. A policy is a course or a principle of action adopted or proposed by an organization or government or an individual. They are synonymous with strategies, blueprints, approaches, programme or guidelines. The Kenyan government has domesticated policies from various international conventions which emphasize on the rights of learners with disabilities and special needs that leads to equitable, quality and accessible learning for all learners. These policies and legislation include the Children's Act, 2001; Persons with Disabilities Act, 2003; Sessional Paper No.14; 2012; Kenya Education Sector Support Programme, 2005; The National Special Needs Education Policy Frameworks, 2009; The Kenyan Constitution; 2010; Kenya Vision 2030, the Basic Education Act, 2014 and the latest, the Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities 2018.

The foregoing policies and legislation have articles and sections which guarantee the right to education for every child, for example, article 54 of the constitution 2010 provides that persons with disabilities have the right to access educational institutions and facilities that are integrated into society to the extent compatible with their interest and needs (GOK, 2010). This is equally echoed in other policy and legal documents addressing the learning needs of learners with diverse needs. The policies and legal frameworks emphasize the implementation of inclusive education, focusing on the following fundamental practices:- Access to free and quality education in schools, building the capacities of teachers through training, seminars and workshops, provision of resources differentiation of the curriculum to maximize the potentials of all learners and adaptation of physical and social environment.

Despite all the efforts which have been made by the government, implementation has become a challenge and the extent to which this has been done remain elusive. A number of studies have been carried out but none seems to have looked at where we are. Studies carried out by Wanjiku, 2004 on teachers attitude towards inclusive education revealed that many teachers were not of the view that a child with disability can benefit in an inclusive classroom. Although the foregoing study was on relevant, it focused on attitude of teachers towards inclusive education. Other studies on inclusive education in Kenya have been focused on Factors influencing inclusive Education implementation, (Mutisya 2004), Challenges facing implementation of Inclusive Education (Onyango 2014), Instructional Factors influencing Implementation of Inclusive education (Otieno 2014), Factors affecting Implementation of Inclusive Education (Maura 2004) and Challenges facing Implementation of inclusive education (Nadia 2012. There was therefore a need to carry out a study to establish the status of implementation of inclusive education, especially in Siaya, the county which was reportedly having the highest number of teachers trained in inclusive education.

The purpose of the study was to establish the extent to which teachers had implemented inclusive education practices as stipulated in the national policies and legal frameworks. Specifically, the objectives were to establish the availability of relevant policy and legal documents in the schools, determine the extent of assessment of learners on admission, find out the number of teachers trained in inclusive education and determine the level of classroom curriculum differentiation and establish the extent of school based in-service training on inclusive education. The study also made attempt to examine the extent of environmental adaptation, teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education as well as the level of provision of teaching and learning resources.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive Survey research design was used in the study. Target population comprised 216 teachers and 72 head teachers. Study sample comprised of 196 teachers and 65 head teachers, selected through saturated sampling approach. Instruments for data collection included Questionnaires for teachers and head teachers, Interview Schedule for head teachers, and observation schedule.

Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency count, percentages, mean and standard deviation while qualitative data was categorized into themes and sub themes and reported. Frequencies and percentages were computed in each variable of the survey. The five-level rating scale questionnaires were coded as follows: Very Large Extent=5 points, Large Extent=4 points, Small Extent=3 points, Very Small Extent=2 points and Not at all=1 point. Reverse coding was done for negative statements. For the interpretation of results, a mean of 4.5 to 5.0 represented Very Large Extent, mean of 3.5 to 4.4, Large Extent, mean of 2.5 to 3.4, Small Extent, mean of 1.5 to 2.4, Very Small Extent and mean of 1 to 1.4 represent Not at all.

3. RESULTS

The first objective was to establish whether schools had national policy and legal documents related to special and inclusive education.

Table 1: Head teachers' responses on availability of Policies and Legal documents in schools, (n=65)

S/N	Number of schools with policies and legal documents related to special needs and inclusive education	F	%
1	Children's Act (2001)	1	1.5
2	Persons with Disability Act (2003)	0	0.0
3	The National Special Needs Education Policy Framework (2009)	0	0.0
4	The Kenya Constitution (2010)	8	12.3
5	Basic Education Act 2015	23	35.4
6	Sessional Paper No.1 2005 on Policy Framework for Education and Training	0	0.0
7	A report of the task force on special needs education appraisal exercise	0	0.0
8	Public Service Commission Code of practice on mainstreaming	0	0.0
9	Kenya Education sector support programme (KESSP-2005)	6	9.2
10	Sector policy for learners and trainees with disabilities 2018	0	0.0
	Total	38	100.0

As is evident in table 1, 23(35.4%) schools had Basic Education Act, 2013, 8(12.3%) had the Kenya Constitution (2010), 6(9.2%) had Kenya Education sector support programme (KESSP-2005), 2(3.1%) had Sessional Paper No. 14 of 2012 and 1(1.5%) had Children's Act (2001). Results reveal that many schools in this county do not have the relevant documents within the schools and therefore the teachers may not know what is contained therein. This finding concurs with Mutisya 2004; Amalemba, 2013; Onyango, 2014 and Otieno 2014 who apart from other findings that they came out within their studies, also noted that teachers in the schools are ignorant of the policies and legal frameworks related to inclusive education. Lack of these policy and legal documents in the schools as revealed by the study apparently resulted into inadequate information among the school administrators and teachers who are key implementers of inclusive education practices.

The second objective was to determine the extent to which schools had implemented inclusive education practices as stipulated in the policies and legal documents. Teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which various inclusive education practices were implemented in their respective schools. Their responses have been captured in Table 2.

Table 2: Teachers responses on the extent of implementation of inclusive education practices in their respective schools. (n=196)

S/N		VLE	LE	SE	VSE	NA	M	SD
1	School admits all learners regardless of their individual differences	37(15.8)	38(22.4)	26(13.3)	48(24.5)	47(24.0)	2.82	1.43
2	School conducts needs assessment to learners	34(17.3)	30 (15.3)	0 (0.0)	56(28.6)	76(38.8)	2.44	1.44
3	School has a representative of persons with disabilities in the Board	50 (25.5)	18 (9.2)	21(10.7)	12(6.1)	95 (48.5)	2.57	1.716
4	Teachers differentiate the curriculum	32 (16.3)	38 (19.4)	29(14.8)	46 (23.5)	51 (26.0)	2.77	1.44
5	School's Physical environment is adapted.	32(16.3)	6 (3.1)	8(4.1)	79(40.3)	71(36.2)	2.23	1.397
6	School has committee of disability mainstreaming	33 (16.8)	18 (9.2)	2(1.0)	56 (28.6)	87 (44.4)	2.26	1.511
7	School allocates funds for implementation of inclusive education practices	34(17.3)	15 (7.7)	46 (23.5)	48 (24.5)	53 (27.0)	2.64	1.406
8	School provides training to teachers on inclusive education	16 (8.2)	34 17.3)	35(17.9)	45 (23.0)	66 (33.5)	2.43	1.321
Overall Mean						2.24		

As indicated in Table 2, appointment of representative of persons with disabilities in the Board of Management was (Mean=2.57), The study findings revealed that important requirements of inclusive education practices such as free access to school by all learners (M= 2.82), differentiation of the curriculum (M=2.77), adaptation of school physical and social environment (M= 2.33) as well as training of teachers on inclusive education (M= 2.43) were all implemented to a very small extent. The overall mean (M= 2.24) further attested to the fact that the practices were implemented below expectations.

Although there were attempts in admission and differentiation of curriculum as observed in the foregoing, schools did not meet the threshold required by the Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities 2018, which assert that for a school to be considered inclusive; there should be evidence of admission of all learners as well in the school regardless of their individual differences. This is evident in table three which shows a variance in the total numbers of learners with special needs referred by EARC (464) and the actual number admitted in regular schools (259). Evidently this seems to go against the policy which stresses the need to admit students without discrimination as this is hardly put into practice by most schools. Other aspects of inclusive education practices which were tested and yielded low scores were adaptations of physical environment mean (Mean= 2.23) and creation of opportunities for training of teachers in inclusive education within schools (Mean=2.43). These results concur with Oracha & Odeny (2015) findings which revealed that most of the regular primary schools environments in Kisumu County were not barrier free.

Table 3: Head teacher's response to status of implementation of inclusive education practices in their respective schools. (n=65)

	Inclusive Practices	VLE	LE	SE	VSE	NA	M	SD
1	Admits all learners regardless of individual differences	12(18.5)	4(6.2)	0(0.0)	48(73.8)	1(1.5)	2.66	1.23
2	Carry out regular needs assessment for all learners	9(13.8)	3(4.6)	0(0.0)	46(70.8)	7(10.8)	2.40	1.18
3	Appoints a representative of persons with disabilities in the Board	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(10.0)	22(33.8)	43(66.2)	1.34	.477
4	Teachers differentiate curriculum	10(15.4)	6(9.2)	4(6.2)	38(58.5)	7(10.8)	2.60	1.260
5	Adaptation of Physical environment	3 (4.6)	4 (6.2)	4 (6.2)	7 (10.8)	47 (72.3))	1.60	1.143
6	There is a committee of disability mainstreaming in the school	13(20.0)	17(26.2)	2(3.1)	31(47.7)	2(3.1)	3.12	1.293
7	School provides teachers with training opportunities on inclusive education	12(18.5)	24(36.9)	0(0.0)	26(40.0)	3(4.6)	3.25	1.287
	Average mean						2.42	

When head teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which their schools had appointed representatives of persons with disabilities in the Board of Management, results indicated a mean of (Mean=2.57), and the extent to which they were carrying out regular needs assessment to identify those who require interventions, a mean of (M=2.40) was realized. When they were asked to indicate the extent to which they admitted learners without discrimination, a mean of (Mean=2.66) was noted. Curriculum Differentiation had a mean of Mean= 2.60), while adaptation of physical environment had a mean of (Mean=1.60). Insets on Inclusive Education Practices indicated a mean of (Mean=2.42). These results concur with Adoyo (2007) findings which indicated that a number of inclusive education practices have not been implemented as expected in regular schools in Kenya. Document analysis guide used for triangulation of the data revealed that there were variation in the responses between teachers and Head teachers' on similar items. It was noted that teachers' observations were more accurate and realistic.

Results in Table 2 and 3 evidently show that there were challenges in the implementation of inclusive education practices. The study went a bit further to establish reasons for these challenges through an interview schedules organized for head teachers. Responses were ranked in this order: *Poor teacher motivation, Inadequate teaching and learning resources, large number of students in the classroom, Teachers' negative attitude towards learners with special needs, Rigid regular curriculum and Inadequate trained teachers in area of inclusive education.* To some extent, these results concur with Onyango (2014) findings, which revealed that teachers' and learners' attitudes, competence in curriculum differentiation, teachers' motivation, teachers' professional qualification, teaching and learning resources were critical for implementation of inclusive education practices.

Objective four attempted to establish the number and categories of learners with disability and special needs that were actually in the regular schools.

Table 4: Number and categories of learners with disabilities and special Needs enrolled in regular primary schools in Siaya County (n=65)

S/N	Categories	Number Referred	Number Registered
1	Learners with Mild Mental Disabilities	11	2
2	Learners with Physical Disabilities	101	56
3	Learners with Visual Impairments	56	22
4	Learners with Hearing Impairments	15	04
5	Learners with Chronic Health Problems	22	12
6	Learners with Emotional and Behaviour Problems	54	25
7	Learners with Learning Disabilities	205	138
	Total	464	259

While the total number of learners referred to regular primary schools by the Education Assessment and Resource Coordinators stood at 464, only 259 were in schools. A critical look at this data reveals that majority of learners who were registered in the regular schools were those with physical disability, Learning disability, emotional and behavioral problems and a few learners with visual as well chronic health problems in that order. The rest did not get registered in the regular schools and the question is; where are they? While the policy advocates for inclusion, this is not what is practiced in school. There is need to come out with strict implementation and enforcement strategy.

Observation was also carried out in 65 schools to establish the level of environmental adaptation that had been done in schools. The results are on table.

Table 5: Adaptation of the Schools Physical Environment (n=65)

S/N	Adaptation of the schools' physical environment	F	%
1	Ramps are available at the entrance of schools' buildings	8	12.3
2	Classrooms are spacious enough to allow for ease of accessibility	48	73.8
3	Toilets seats are raised, hand rails available and room spacious	12	18.5
4	Entrance are wide enough to allow access	9	13.8
5	Play grounds are well leveled	17	26.2
6	Parking are reserved for persons with disabilities	2	3.1
7	Floors are non-slippery	56	86.2
8	Paths within the school are free from harmful objects	38	58.5

Results as shown on table 5 indicate that 56(86.2%) schools had non slippery floors, 48(73.8%) schools had spacious classrooms to allow for ease of accessibility and 38(58.5%) schools had paths free from harmful objects. The least adaptation was on the parking reserve for persons with disabilities 2(3.1%), toilets not adapted as required, ramps not constructed at the doors to access movements. It was also noted that most schools did not consider to have wide enough entrances at the doors to accommodate wheelchairs doors. As previously noted in other tested variables, the level of implementation of the physical environment is still low. This needs great improvement.

4. CONCLUSION

Implementation of inclusive education practices is anchored on enforcement of existing Policy and Legislation related to inclusive education. Findings of the study showed that most schools in Siaya County did not have the documents within their custody. The number of trained teachers in the regular schools was significantly low. Although assessment was done at the Educational Assessment and Recourse Centers (EARC), school assessment that is usually carried out to establish functional levels of learners for intervention was hardly done. While records from EARC indicated that 464 learners had been referred for

placement into regular schools, only 25 were registered, indicating issues with either admission or retention. Physical environment was adapted to a small extent. Evidently schools hardly mainstreamed disability as expected by the policy. Qualitative data revealed that teacher attitude was far the most impediment to inclusive education implementation coupled with teacher motivation, teaching and learning resources as well as large number of pupils in classes.

5. RECOMMENDATION

Policy and legislative documents related to inclusive education needs to be available in the schools to enable the administrators and teachers be informed of what is expected within the schools. The government should come up with strategies of enforcing the policies. There is need to focus on the following areas. Differentiation of the curriculum to take care of learners individual needs, adaptation of schools' physical environment to create barrier free environment for ease of movement. There is need for school based In-service programmes on inclusive education for teachers in the regular schools. This will inform teachers of emerging pedagogical trends, including those that are technology based. Awareness creation through role models should be encouraged to enable teachers, learners, administration as well as the community members to develop positive attitude towards inclusive education which recognizes diversity as a fundamental value.

6. REFERENCES

- Adoyo P.O (2007). Educating Deaf Children in an Inclusive Setting in Kenya. Electronic Journal for Inclusive Education. Vol.2 (2)
- Amalemba, D.M. (2013.) An investigation of challenges facing implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools in Matete district, Kakamega County, Kenya. Nairobi: University of Nairobi.
- Government of Kenya (2003). *Persons with Disability Act, 2003*. Nairobi: Government printers
www.lcd-enar.org/.../Republic-of-Kenya- The PWDs- Act-2003.do . Downloaded on 15th May, 2017.
- Government of Kenya (2005) *The Sessional paper No1 of 2005*, Nairobi: Government Printers
www.parliament.go.ke/index . Downloaded on 12th July, 2017.
- Government of Kenya (2009). *National Special Education Policy Framework*. Nairobi: Government Printers.
- Government of Kenya (2010). *The Constitution of Kenya*. Nairobi: Government Printers
- Government of Kenya (2005) *The Sessional paper No14 of 2012*, Nairobi: Government Printers
www.parliament.go.ke/index . Downloaded on 12th July, 2017
- Government of Kenya (2001). *Children's Act*, Nairobi: Government Printers
www.chr.up.ac.za/undp/domestic/docs/legislation-. Downloaded on 15th May, 2017.
- Government of Kenya (2018). Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities
- Khaouli, P. (2007). *How elementary school teachers adapt their classroom environment and Instructional Strategies in General Classroom Settings for Students with Visual Impairment. An MEd Thesis, Unpublished, Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto.*
- Mutisya, C.M (2004). Factors influencing inclusion of learners with special needs in regular primary schools in Rachuonyo District, Kenya. Nairobi: Kenyatta University.
- Mwaura, J.W (2004). Factors affecting the implementation of inclusive education policy of children with special needs in public primary schools in Kikuyu, Kiambu district. Nairobi: Kenyatta University.
- Nadia S. J. (2012) Challenges Facing Implementation of Inclusive Education Programme in Public Primary Schools in Parklands District, Nairobi, Kenya. Masters Thesis, University of Nairobi
- Onyango, S. O (2014) Challenges Facing the Implementation of Inclusive Education Policy in Primary Schools and how these challenges can be addressed in Rarieda Sub-County, Kenya <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:no:ntnu:diva>
<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:no:ntnu:diva-25490>. Down loaded on 10th November, 2015.
- Oracha P.A and Odeny M. (2015). Emergent inclusive education practices in Kenya: Challenges and suggestions. International journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies. Volume 2, Issue 6. ISSN 2394-6288
- Otieno, J. O., (2014). Institutional factors influencing implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools in Ugenya district, Kenya' Master Thesis, Unpublished, Nairobi: University of Nairobi.
- UNESCO, (1994). *The Salamanca statement and framework on SNE*. Paris: UNESCO
- United Nations. (2006) *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Article 2*. New York: United Nations.