

The Impediments in Implementing Inclusive Education in Two Special Schools in Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Impediments and Recommendations

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Abstract:-

➤ *Background:*

The implementation of successful inclusive education our special schools is still a challenge as there are numerous impediments that hinders such implementation.

➤ *Objectives:*

To explore impediments in the implementation of inclusive education in two special schools in Dr Kenneth Kaunda District.

➤ *Method:*

To archive stipulated objectives, a qualitative research approach was employed. The population of the study was made up of two special schools in Dr Kenneth Kaunda District. Data was collected using semi-structured interviewed. Data was collected through interviews that were collected from learners who are identified with learning barriers and request for placement in special schools. The data was gathered from the participants and analysed in thematic manner.

➤ *Results:*

The study revealed that there are numerous impediments that hinders the implementation of inclusive education, inter alia, safety and security in schools, lack of parental involvement, learner's drug abuse, shortage of therapists, teacher's qualification, overage learners and shortage of special schools. The study also outlined factors curbing the implementation of inclusive education.

➤ *Conclusion:*

The study concluded that indeed the stipulated impediments hinders the successful implementation inclusive education.

➤ *Contribution:*

The suggested strategies will enhance the successful implementation of inclusive education in schools.

Keywords:- Barrier, Special School, Inclusive Education, Impediments to Inclusive Education, Learners with Education Special Needs.

I. INTRODUCTION

The implementation of inclusive education in South Africa must be seen in the context of the country's broader political, social, and cultural developments since 1994, particularly the systematic and progressive transformation of education in congruence with Constitutional values and ideals. As a result, the move towards inclusive education has been primarily justified on educational and social grounds. Using a three-step linear process, this paper systematically reviews relevant peer-reviewed research studies and research reports on inclusive education policy enactment in South Africa, to identify both challenges and successes in implementing inclusive education in South Africa

In this study two special schools were selected, inter alia mild to moderate intellectual disability (MMID) school and the MMID was school A. The second selected school was severe intellectual disability (SID) school and was school B. Both schools are situated in well-developed town where they both admit learners from mainstream school in the nearby township. Both school receives section 21 allocation for purchasing learner teaching and learning material and assistive devices. There are learners who hostels dwellers where they are provided with food and overnight security. Below is the school staff establishment and learner's classification and type of disability.

➤ *Research Questions*

- What are the impediments in the implementation of inclusive education in two special schools?
- What support do educators in special schools need from the district based support team (DBST)?
- What measures to be implemented to enhance learner’s achievement and performance in special schools?

➤ *Research Methods and Design*

In this study the qualitative method was used. It is an inquiry application useful for exploring and understanding a central phenomenon, which are the impediment hindering the implementation of successful inclusive education in full service schools. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed; that is, how they make sense of their world and the experience they have in the world. Qualitative researchers collect data in the form of written or spoken language or in the form of observations, and analyse the data by identifying and categorising themes.

➤ *Ethical Consideration*

This study intends to be obliged and adhere to the ethical policy. In making sure that the study intends to be obliged and adhere to ethical policy, the researcher requested permission from the department of education to conduct the research. Permission was granted from the district office where selected school are situated permitting

the researcher to proceed with the study. To observe the protection of personal information act (POPIA), pseudo names will be used.

• *The Right to Withdraw:*

Participants were made aware of the purpose of the study, the aim it intends to archive and the time it will take. Their right to decline to be participants and to withdraw from the study at any given time should they wish to withdraw.

➤ *Study Population and Sampling Strategy*

Purposive sampling was employed in this study to select the participants. The participants were selected due to some defining quality that makes them holders of the data needed for the research (Human, 2010).

➤ *The Guidelines for Selection were:*

- Two special schools in Dr Kenneth Kaunda district area
- Two learners from MMID school
- Two learners from SID school
- Two teachers from MMID school
- Two teachers from SID school
- Two principals (one (from each special school)
- 2 District based support team (DBST)
- SBST coordinator from MMID school
- SBST coordinator from SID school

Table 1 Outline of the Participants in Two Special Schools

Participants		Number of participants
Schools: MMID	School SID	2
Learner 1 MMID	Learner 1. SID	2
Learner 2 MMID	Learners 2 SID	2
Teacher 1 MMID	Teacher 1 SID	2
Teacher 2 MMID	Teacher 2 SID	2
SBST cordinator1 MMID	SBST coordinator 1 SID	2
Principal: MMID	Principal MMID	2
DBST District	DBST District (district)	2
TOTAL		16

➤ *Data Collection Technique*

The participants in this study consists of 2learners from each school, 2 teachers from each school and 2 SBST coordinators from each school. This study adopted two basic data collection procedures, inter alia, observations and interviews. The first and basic data collection procedure encapsulated observation where observation was conducted participants were observed in the classroom. Notes were taken as the impediments in the impediments in the implementation of inclusive education were the main bone of contention.

➤ *Data Analysis*

Data analysis is a systematic process of selecting, categorizing, comparing, synthesizing and interpreting to provide explanations of the single phenomenon of interest (MacMillan & Schumacher, 1993). It refers to the act of transforming data with the aim of extracting useful information and facilitating conclusions. In this study the researcher implemented thematic analytical system. The researcher found it useful and advantageous because qualitative method was used and was also found flexible.

➤ *Classification of Two Selected Special Schools*

Table 2 Classification of Two Selected Special Schools

School A: MMID	School B: SID
1. School situated: Well developed town	1.School situated: Developing township
2. Staff establishment:	2.Staff establishment:
3. Learner enrolment:	3.Learner enrolment:
4. Transport provision: Available	4.Transport provision: Available
5. Curriculum and assessment:	5.Curriculum and assessment:
6. Type of learners disabilities:	6.Type of learner disabilities:
7. Subject offered:	7.Subjects offered:
8. Learners abusing drugs	8.Learners abusing drugs:
9. Learners pass rate 2023:	9.Learners pass rate 2023:
10. Availabilities of policies:	10. Availabilities of policies:

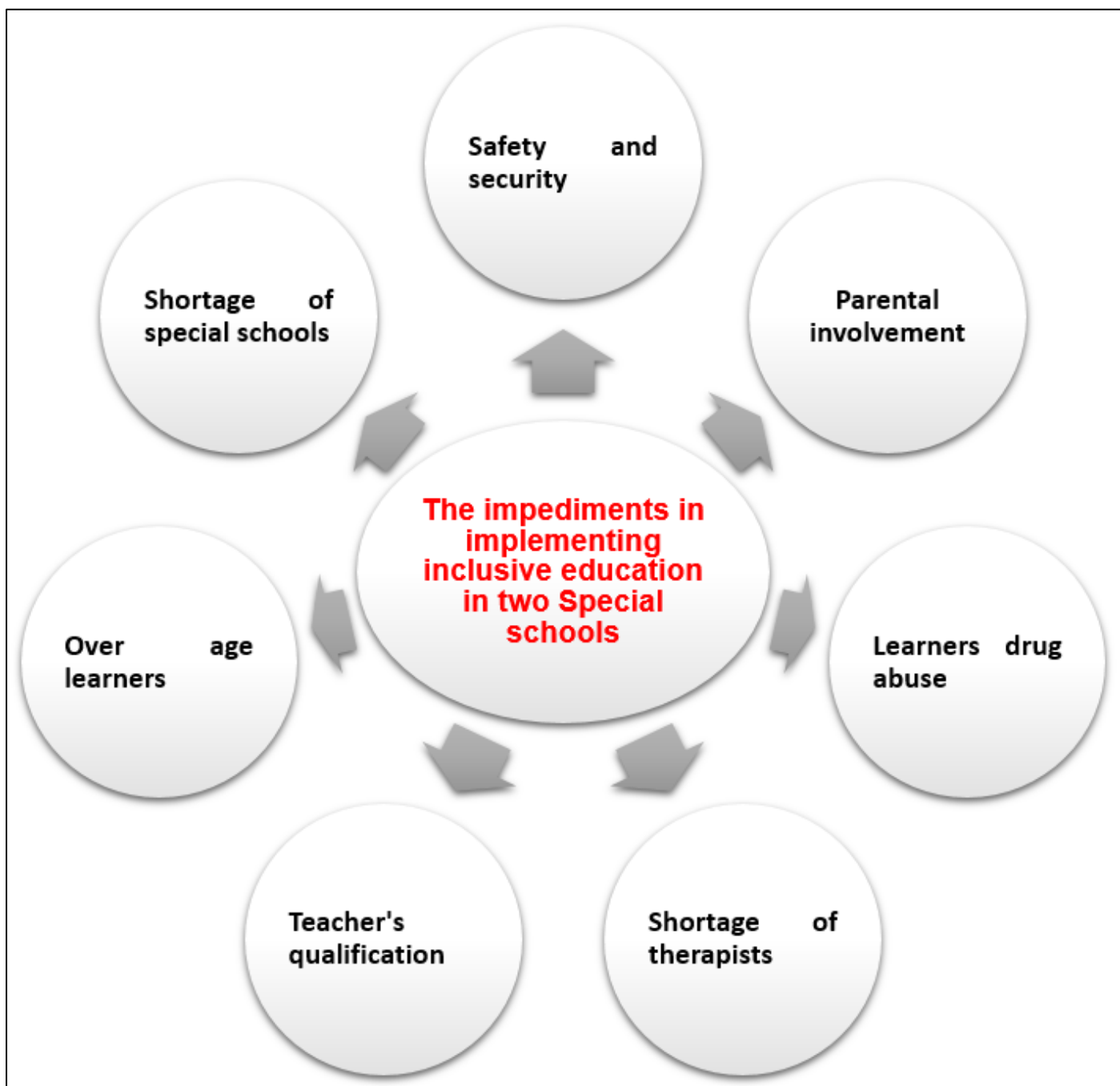


Fig 1 Mind map below represent brief impediments in implementing inclusive education in two special schools.

II. THE IMPEDIMENTS TO SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

➤ *Safety and Security in Special Schools*

There has been a lamentation emanating from several special schools that security is not up to standard. Although all special schools are been allocated funds to pay security personnel, they are not part taking in the process of selection and recruitment. The hired security personnel are said not to be having necessary ammunition as they have to protect the school that has expensive resources. The contract between the school and security was said to be two months in school A and three months in school B, which according to the principal it is very inconveniencing as at times the are some months waiting for the Basic education to complete with recruitment and selection of such securities.

➤ *Parental Involvement*

Researchers around the world acknowledge the importance of parent involvement in their children’s education (Bakker, Denessen & Brus-Laven, 2007; Chowa, Ansong & Osei Akoto, 2012; Johnson & Hull, 2014; Luxomo & Motala, 2012; McDowall & Schaughency, 2017; Mncube, 2010), and the desire to ensure that these children

succeed in schools. Lack of parental involvement may hinder the learner’s participation as they may lack moral support, lack of belongings and self-actualisation. Learners are to participate more in their school activities when motivated and encouraged by their parent thus boost their morale, self-esteem, derive positive behaviour and self-respect.

➤ *Learner’s Drug Abuse*

South Africa has a high rate of substance abuse among young people, which includes both in and out of school youth. Despite reported stigma and associated reluctance to seek treatment for substance abuse, an increase in young people aged 20 years seeking treatment for substance abuse, is an indication of the gravity of the problem, (Mokwena & Setshego 2021). The legalisation of Marijuana/Dagga was one of the factors that increased the drug intake in our schools. According to (Mokwena & Setshedi, 2021) the consumption of alcohol among school going age learners is rapidly increasing in schools.

The prevalence of substance use among the study participants was 47%, and of those using substances, the highest proportion consume alcohol (87%) followed by cigarette (45%) and (24%) dagga smoking (Table 3).

Table 3 Prevalence and Types of Substance use among Learners (n = 295)

Substance	No	%
Alcohol	256	87
Cigarette	134	45
Dagga	72	24
Nyaope	11	4
Cocaine	7	2
Ecstasy	6	2
Other	18	6

- *The above Stipulated abuse of Drugs is for Learners between the Age of 14-20.*

➤ *Shortage of Therapists*

Learners in special schools are said to be those with specific learning barriers therefore special needs is essential in enhancing their participation in their daily activities. Therefore enough teachers, support staff and educator assistants is critical in enhancing successful implementation of inclusive education in special schools. Although the National department of education has provided schools with additional Educator Assistants, it is not enough as learners in special schools are vulnerable learners who needs rapid assistance.

The availability and involvement of therapists in enhancing successful implementation of inclusive education in special schools is very significant. Therapists in this study includes speech therapist, occupational therapist, physio-therapist and this therapists plays a major role in the implementation of inclusive education in special schools. In

the two selected special schools it was stated that shortages in school psychology, like shortages in other related education and mental health professions, have the potential to significantly undermine the availability of high quality services to students, families, and schools.

➤ *Teacher’s Qualification*

The successful implementation of inclusive education lies solemnly on the level of knowledge of teachers in a specific school. Teachers are the key role in making inclusive education possible and accessible to all learners irrespective of the level of barriers. Teacher with more knowledge in subject specialisation are ought to implement differentiated teaching strategies thus enhancing learners maximum participation.

Teachers in special school do not have relevant qualifications to teach in such special schools, such teachers are taken for in-service training to enhance them to have appropriate knowledge to teach even subjects they are not trained for. Some teachers were trained on a new inclusive

education strategy called Screening, Identification Assessment and Support (SIAS) introduced in 2008 (DoE). After the workshop, the teachers were expected to implement these strategies in their respective schools. All teachers, whether trained or not, are to screen the learners in their classes.

➤ *Over Age Learners*

Generally school A admitted that learners who are from the mainstream school in the township are from families who are vulnerable as most learners are without any form of income. Such learners were identified as learners who qualify to be admitted in special schools but there are challenges that hinders the implementation of successful implementation of inclusive education. Several researchers divulged that most learners spend more time repeating grades in the foundation and senior thus retards the implementation of inclusive education as they were supposed to be identified as learners with learning barriers, (Mulenga, 2019). In 1998, the Department of Education adopted the Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools which stipulates that the guideline for repetition is “one year per school phase where necessary” (Department of Education, 1998). This implies that a learner who fails any grade in a single phase for the second time, cannot be retained in that grade, and should be allowed to progress to the next grade. This makes learners on the other hand to spend more years in one phase but in contrary it advantages them to be progressed to the next grade. Spending more years in one or two phases results in them being overages and that retards the implementation of inclusive education in special schools

Progression can, therefore, be used to prevent a learner from being retained in a phase for a period exceeding four years, in the light of above policy learners were found to be averaged to be admitted in special school thus hinders the implementation of inclusive education in such schools. This was exacerbated by parent’s denial to accept that their children are identified with learning barriers and must be placed in the school where the identified learners will be able to learn according to his ability, thus retard the implementation of inclusive education in special schools.

III. STRATEGIES IN RESPONDING TO THE IMPEDIMENTS IN IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The study intended to explore the impediments in implementing inclusive education in special schools in Dr Kenneth Kaunda district. The study outlined that indeed there are several challenges that impedes the implementation of inclusive education. In responding to the first impediment, principals indicated that even though they are been provided with funds to pay security companies, they are not given opportunities to be encapsulated in the recruitment and selection processes.

In the second impediment principals concurred that participation of parents in the entire school activities is pivotal. As learners in special schools are vulnerable and

need support and assistance regularly this calls for active involvement in learners school activities.

Learners are at different levels of learning, as some might have higher and some have lower learning readiness, and all this should be taken into consideration when planning and mediating lessons (Tanjung, 2019), therefore parental participation in these regard is essential. One special school principal lamented that the only time they see parents is when they are at school seeking for learner admission. The principal also divulged that even when they are called they seldom avail themselves to respond to the call.

The teachers are not adequately trained and supported, and not all stakeholders are participating sufficiently to give learners in special school the necessary support within the teaching and learning environment. The introduction of learning support teachers may also play a pivotal role in enhancing learners’ true inclusion and thus promote positive relationship within the classroom, school and community. They may “promote social and relationship development by modelling through their interaction and language usage respect for difference, interdependence and conflict resolution skills” (Donald *et al.* 2004:190). Schools and communities also profit. Schools that work well with families have:

- Improved teacher morale;
- Higher ratings by teachers and by parents;
- More support from families;
- Higher student achievement, and
- A better reputation in the community, (Morelle, 2016).

As parents become more involved in their child’s school, they begin to develop more confidence in the school, which then results in parents participating in all school activities.

The shortage of therapist in mentioned special schools has been a challenge that retards the successful implementation of inclusive education in Dr Kenneth Kaunda district. In school A teachers and the principal concurred that they have only limited number of therapist and at times they have to refer their learners to public hospitals thus results in learners being absent during consultation.

For successful implementation of inclusive education in special school teachers needs to work closely with other specialists (such as occupational therapists, speech therapists, and psychologists) to provide holistic support for their students’ unique needs. Their dedication contributes significantly to the growth and development of learners with disabilities.

A **special school teacher** often engages in various forms of therapy to support students with diverse needs. Here are some common therapeutic approaches that special educators may use:

- **Behavioural Therapy:**

Special school teachers employ behavioural techniques to address challenging behaviours and promote positive ones. They create individualized behaviour intervention plans (BIPs) to encourage appropriate conduct and reduce disruptive actions.

- **Speech and Language Therapy:**

For students with communication difficulties, speech and language therapy is crucial. Special educators collaborate with speech therapists to enhance language skills, articulation, and social communication.

- **Occupational Therapy (OT):**

OT focuses on developing fine motor skills, sensory processing, and self-help abilities. Special school teachers incorporate OT strategies into classroom activities to support students' functional independence.

To enhance successful implementation of inclusive education there are other therapist that assist vulnerable learners in improving motor skills, sensory processing challenges, social skills, management of anxiety and the utilisation of assistive devices.

- **Physical Therapy (PT):**

PT helps students improve gross motor skills, balance, and mobility. Teachers work alongside physical therapists to integrate movement-based exercises and adaptations into the curriculum.

- **Sensory Integration Therapy:**

Students with sensory processing challenges benefit from sensory integration therapy. Teachers create sensory-friendly environments and implement sensory activities to regulate sensory input.

- **Social Skills Training:**

Special educators teach social skills explicitly. They facilitate peer interactions, role-playing, and social stories to enhance students' social competence and build meaningful relationships.

- **Counselling and Emotional Support:**

Teachers provide emotional support, active listening, and coping strategies. They help students manage anxiety, stress, and emotional regulation.

- **Adaptive Technology:**

Special educators incorporate assistive technology (such as communication devices, screen readers, or adaptive software) to enhance learning experiences for students with disabilities.

- **Visual Supports:**

Teachers use visual aids (such as schedules, visual cues, and social stories) to reinforce learning, improve communication, and reduce anxiety.

- **Individualized Education Plans (IEPs):**

While not a specific therapy, IEPs are essential tools. Teachers collaborate with other professionals to develop and implement personalized educational plans for each student.

IV. CONCLUSION

The aim of the study was to explore the factors impeding the implementation of inclusive education in two special schools in Dr Kenneth Kaunda district. The study divulged several impediment that obscures the successful implementation of inclusive education. There were several impediments that were outlined in the study, inter alia, the shortage of occupational therapist was found to be the most significant factor that hinders the implementation of inclusive education. Shortage of special schools was also identified as the factor that also curb the implementation of inclusive education. The study concluded by outlining Strategies in responding to the impediments in implementing inclusive education.

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