Full Length Research Paper

Inclusion and the world of disability: A case study of Zaka Central Cluster, Masvingo, Zimbabwe

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This paper discusses research carried out to investigate the effects of inclusion on children with severe intellectual disability who are in the mainstream system or in six ordinary regular rural primary schools in Zaka Central Cluster, Zaka District, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. The study adopted the descriptive survey method. Three schools were randomly selected from the six which make up the cluster. The study targeted twelve students with severe intellectual disability .These were placed accordingly in these schools after having been diagnosed by the schools psychological services. Thirty-three teachers were randomly selected from the three schools. Stratified random sampling was employed for teachers to ensure that views from both infant and junior departments were captured. These responded to the researchers' questionnaires and interviews. Three School Heads, an educational psychologist and two assistant psychologists were purposively selected. These respondents provided interview data with regard to the adaptation challenges faced by pupils with severe intellectual disability included in their schools. The study revealed that pupils with severe intellectual disability are still being shunned, ridiculed and labelled by peers and other members of the community. It was also established that most schools lack specialist teachers and school administrators and this has exacerbated the plight of these pupils. It is recommended that schools implement the policy on Inclusive Education [Policy No.36/2005] stringently.

Key words: Curriculum; disability; inclusive education; severe intellectual disability.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Intellectual disability is a term used when a person has certain limitations in mental functioning and in skills such as communicating, taking care of him or herself, and social skills. These limitations will cause a child to learn and develop more slowly than a typical child (National centre for Children with Intellectual Disability, 2011).

Whilst intellectual disabilities vary (depending on the IQ) from mild to profound, severe intellectual disability is defined as having an IQ score of between 20-35 as well as learning and adaptive behavior problems (Mentaline. com; Zindi, 1997). According to Heward and Orlansky

(1988), the first public school class for children with severe intellectual disability was formed in 1896 in the Providence, Rode Island in America. Thus, the beginning of special class movement, which saw eighty–seven thousand and thirty children enrolled in special classes in 1948, seven hundred and three thousand eight hundred pupils in 1969 and one million three hundred and five thousand pupils in 1974.

Historically, according to Zindi and Makotore (2000), in the 1960s, children with severe intellectual disability were not considered for educational placement. In fact, most societies offered them protection and not education as they mainly kept them in asylums. They thought that, if a

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child with severe intellectual disability was born in a family, it was regarded as a form of punishment to the parent of that child for disobeying ancestral spirits or God. Children with severe intellectual disability were regarded as dull, passive and incompetent. Most of the earlier definitions of severe intellectual disability were quite dehumanizing and suggested an illness rather than retardation. Slowly as more scientific methods of observing and investigating human behavior were developed it became apparent that their condition was improvable These children may also live a fulfilling and productive life (Mentaline.com).

World conferences were held to discuss as well as improve the welfare of children with severe intellectual disability. The World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (1983) urged its member states to adopt policies of democracy and human rights. In 1990, the Jomtiem conference was held. The conference agreed on education for all. This was a move towards abolition of discrimination of learners according to their mental ability or physical appearance. It further stressed that the education of persons with disabilities, should as far as possible take place in general school system. The Salamanca Conference which was held in 1994, also agreed on the policy of inclusion. Thus, a shift of attitudes towards integrating them into the society emerged. Advocates for human rights led to the expansion of special education and special training facilities to improve the teaching and learning of pupils with severe intellectual disability. Changes came about when charity organizations such as churches (e.g The Dutch Reformed Church, now the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe), non-governmental organizations such as Zimbabwe care trust (Zim-Care Trust) and the government started placing children with severe intellectual disability into institutions of learning.

Recently, educational programmes for children with severe intellectual disability have changed significantly for the better. In Zimbabwe, most communal and urban schools have started enrolling students with severe intellectual disability in ordinary schools. Some are included in the ordinary regular classes, learning the same curriculum as the non-disabled whilst others have a special unit of their own at an ordinary regular school where they learn slightly modified curriculum.

In Zimbabwe, a policy directive (Secretary's Circular Minute No. P36 of 1985) was made through the School Psychological Services Department to encourage schools to establish resource units in a bid to lessen the challenges experienced by both teachers and pupils with severe intellectual disability. These children tend to suffer from inferiority complex and labeling. Inclusive education was meant to curb these problems. Through inclusion, children would be prepared for life. However, this practice has its own challenges particularly on the learner. The present curriculum seems to be too general and needs

some modifications. There is need to change instructional methods to suit the demands of special learners. There is no ideal curriculum specifically for children with severe intellectual disability. Every aspect of the ordinary curriculum, including lesson content, teaching methods, attitudes, relationships, staff management, parental involvement and contribution of support services need to be re-adjusted to suit the demands of children with severe intellectual disability. Schools need to provide adequate and suitable learning –teaching materials to cater for pupils with severe intellectual disability.

Apart from lack of specialized trained teachers, school administrators and suitable infrastructure most pupils with severe intellectual disability seem not to be accorded quality tuition and this study is premised to unravel the effects and challenges faced by pupils with severe intellectual disability included in the ordinary schools through the inclusive policy directive.

Statement of the problem

This study investigates problems faced by pupils with severe intellectual disability in the mainstream with special reference to Zaka central cluster. Questions which sought to be addressed were:

1. What adaptation challenges are faced in dealing with children with severe intellectual disability in the teaching-learning process?
2. What perceptions do teachers and school administrators have on inclusive education?
3. Is the present curriculum suitable to both peers and those with severe intellectual disability?

Theoretical framework

The study was rooted in the field of inclusive education. Inclusion in education is an approach to educating students with special educational_needs. Under the inclusion model, students with special needs spend most or all of their time with non-disabled students. Implementation of these practices varies. Schools most frequently use them for selected students with mild to severe special needs.(Wikipedia,the free encyclopedia) In the Zimbabwean context, inclusive education involves the identification and minimization or elimination of barriers to students' participation in traditional settings (i.e., schools, homes, communities, and workplaces) and the maximization of resources to support learning and participation (Chimedza and Peters, 1999; Mpofu, 2004).

Inclusive education differs from previously held notions of 'integration' and 'mainstreaming', which tended to be concerned principally with disability and 'special educational needs' and implied learners changing or becoming

'ready for' or deserving of accommodation by the mainstream. By contrast, inclusion is about the child's right to participate and the school's duty to accept the child. Inclusion rejects the use of special schools or classrooms to separate students with disabilities from students without disabilities. A premium is placed upon full participation by students with disabilities and upon respect for their social, civil, and educational rights.

Fully inclusive schools, which are rare, no longer distinguish between "general education" and "special education" programs; instead, the school is restructured so that all students learn together. In the "full inclusion" setting, the students with special needs are always educated alongside students without special needs, as the first and desired option while maintaining appropriate supports and services. Some educators say this might be more effective for the students with special needs. At the extreme, full inclusion is the integration of all students, even those that require the most substantial educational and behavioral supports and services to be successful in regular classes and the elimination of special, segregated special education classes. Special education is considered a service, not a place and those services are integrated into the daily routines and classroom structure, environment, curriculum and strategies and brought to the student, instead of removing the student to meet his or her individual needs. However, this approach to full inclusion is somewhat controversial, and it is not widely understood or applied to date (Kavale, 2002).

Smith and Hilton (1997), cited in Mpofu (2000), on the other hand say that partial inclusion involves withdrawal of the student with disabilities from the ordinary class to a specialist unit or resource unit for part of the time in order to meet needs that may not be adequately met within the ordinary class.

According to the Salamanca 1994 report, inclusion is a human rights issue which addresses the question of human dignity, self reliance and active participation in the society. Inclusion is based on the philosophy that recognizes and accepts the range of human differences in culture. It fosters full participation of people with severe intellectual disability in their communities. In support of inclusion is the Universal Declaration of Human rights as stipulated on December 10, 1948 by the General Assembly of the United Nations, which stipulates that every child has the right to education and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) which calls on all States Parties to ensure an inclusive education system at all levels.

A key argument to inclusive education is that everybody benefits from inclusion. Advocates for inclusion say that the long-term effects of typical students who are included with special needs students at a very young age have a heightened sensitivity to the challenges that others face, increased empathy and compassion, and improved leadership skills, which benefits all of society

(Trainer,1991). A combination of inclusion and pull-out (partial inclusion) services has been shown to be beneficial to students with learning disabilities in the area of reading comprehension and preferential for the special education teachers delivering the services (Marston, 1996).

Inclusive education can be beneficial to all students in a class, not just students with special needs. Some researches show that inclusion helps students understand the importance of working together, and fosters a sense of tolerance and empathy among the student body (Gillies, 2004). Proponents also argue that culturally, inclusive education is good for all students because it builds a caring community where everyone's experiences and abilities are valued.

However, critics of full and partial inclusion include educators, administrators and parents who argue that full and partial inclusion approaches neglect to acknowledge the fact most students with significant special needs require individualized instruction or highly controlled environments. Thus, general education classroom teachers often are teaching a curriculum while the special education teacher is remediating instruction at the same time. Similarly, a child with serious inattention problems may be unable to focus in a classroom that contains twenty or more active children. Although with the increase of incidence of disabilities in the student population, this is a circumstance all teachers must contend with, and is not a direct result of inclusion as a concept (Patton, 2011).

Although inclusion is generally associated with elementary and secondary education, it is also applicable in postsecondary education. According to UNESCO 2009, inclusion "is increasingly understood more broadly as a reform that supports and welcomes diversity amongst all learners." Hence, steps should also be taken to eliminate discrimination and provide accommodations for all students who are at a disadvantage because of some reason other than disability.

The philosophy of inclusion calls for teachers to know more about education of the disabled including children with severe intellectual disability. Teachers should possess as well as acquire knowledge and skills to help pupils with severe intellectual disability develop cognitively, socially, emotionally and physically. According to Mpofu (2000) pupils with severe intellectual disability should learn the same content with other learners but with minor modifications. Curriculum content should not be altered but methods and activities as well as models of instructions should be changed to suit the demands of the special learners. In these cases, Individualized Educational Plans (IEP) should be prepared for each child with severe intellectual disability that is to cater for individual differences purported by educationists. Teachers should give more emphasis on functional life skills designed to help students learn to work, do domestic

Table 1. Age proportion of children with severe intellectual disability :(N=12).

Age range	Number of pupils	Percentage (%)
0-5	0	0
8-10	3	25
11-15	6	50
16-19	3	25
20 and above	0	0

Table 2. Severe intellectual disability in cormobid with other health problems (N=12).

Other health problems/disabilities	Number of pupils	%
1.Speech problems	4	33.3
2.Hearing impairment	3	25
3.Visual impairment	1	8.3
4.Other related diseases	4	33.3

activities or leisure skills needed for independent living. If possible the ordinary regular teacher should try to change the classroom environment to suit the needs of these particular students. Pupils with severe intellectual dis-ability require individual attention and their work should be presented in small teachable units. On the other hand, pupils with severe intellectual disability should be taught functional academics which focus on activities like reading, writing and basic mathematics.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey approach was found most suitable for this study. The study was confined to Zaka central cluster only and it sought to establish the challenges faced by the twelve pupils with severe intellectual disability in these schools. Consent to carry out the study was obtained from both the respondents and the local school authorities. Babbie (1992:262) argues that, 'surveys are chiefly used in studies that have individual people as the units of analysis'. The researchers used thirty- three teachers and three school heads from Chinyaradza, Mashingaidze and Murerekwa. The teachers were stratified randomly selected to ensure that views from both infant and junior teachers were captured. All the thirty-three teachers responded to the questionnaires and only five randomly selected from the thirty-three were interviewed. The school heads, the psychologist and two assistant psychologists from the School Psychological Services purposively selected were all interviewed. To complement data, the researchers also observed the interaction pattern between pupils with severe intellectual disability and their counterparts (non-disabled). These observations were done formally and informally, during lessons and out of lessons. This permitted researchers to gather data in as natural way as possible. Thus, language used and pattern of play were captured. Observations enabled the researchers to get first hand information on children particularly where verbal reports could not be sought. Documents such as the attendance registers and

individual record books were also analysed. These records provided researchers with information pertaining to the age, sex, background, health problems and performance of pupils.

FINDINGS

Data indicate that twelve children (58% being females) from the three schools had severe intellectual disability. They were in the age range 8-19 years (Table 1). The reason being that pupils with severe intellectual disability start schooling later than non-disabled pupils .This could be due to some developmental challenges such as sitting, intellectual deficits and adaptive behavior, talking, speaking, interaction, self care, competency, social orientation and limited communication. It has also been noted that because of their low IQ (25-40), these pupils spend a longer time in school than their counterparts.

Data indicate that all the children with intellectual disabilities in the cluster under study had other disabilities .Most of them had speech problem such as stammering and other related diseases (Table 2).

Distribution of teachers in the three schools

The three schools had a staff compliment of thirty-three teachers. There were more female teachers (73%) at the three schools than males (27%). Most teacher respon-dents were also in the age range twenty-five to forty, assuming that there were young and also aware of innovations such as inclusive education. In addition to that, most respondents' teaching experiences ranged from six to twenty five years. Teaching experience might

Table 3. Meaning of severe Intellectual disability (N=33).

Item	(%)
Low intelligence	51.5
Mental disorders	100
Low thinking capacity	100
Cognitive disability	100
Abnormality	100
Intellectual deficits	100

be a crucial phenomenon in the learning and teaching of pupils with severe impairment or difficulties.

Whilst most teachers (94%) had requisite qualifications, that is, a basic academic education of ordinary level and at least a teaching certificate, all the respondents however, had not received specialist training, that is a certificate or diploma in special needs education. The education they received during their training as teachers only equipped them with basic skills in Special needs education. Since the data indicate that the teacher respondents had not received special needs education training, it implies that inclusion has many challenges.

Most respondents felt that severe intellectual disability entails a cognitive disability (100%) which leads to low intelligence (51.5%) (Table 3). Thus, most of the respondents had a positive conception of what severe intellectual disability is. There is co-relation of their conception as to what severe intellectual disability means. The implication here is that if teachers, other learners and educationists have a positive conception of what severe intellectual disability means, they would be in a better position to support their inclusion and not shun or regard them as inhuman figures.

Nature of inclusion (N=33)

It was evident that most respondents agreed that inclusion is about human rights, integration, full participation and appropriate educational placement. The results imply that most respondents felt that inclusion is a necessity and the best way to ensure maximum participation of people with intellectual disability in their schools is to involve them in the mainstream. The implication is that the more positive ideas from parents, other students, educationists and other stakeholders in education have on inclusion, the more willing they will be to implement and adopt it.

Who should teach children with severe intellectual disability? (N=33)

Data indicate that all respondents (100%) felt that pupils

with severe intellectual disability should be taught by specialist teachers. Only three (9%) indicated that parents should teach such students and all the thirty-three (100%) respondents agreed that ordinary class teachers can handle them properly in their classrooms.

Appropriate placement for children with severe intellectual disability (N=33)

Data indicate that thirty (91%) respondents believed that special schools are the most appropriate educational settings and all the thirty-three respondents (100%) agreed on including these pupils in ordinary schools. Only a few respondents (9%) felt that resource units in ordinary schools are the most appropriate places for children with severe intellectual disability. What it indicates is that, all the respondents were of the idea that ordinary schools are appropriate places for children with severe intellectual disability. However, a good number of the respondents felt that special schools have more to offer and are better equipped and well suited for such students they regard as rejects. This clearly indicates another challenge to inclusion of children with severe intellectual disability into ordinary schools. The fact that most respondents had mixed feelings with regard to the placement of children with severe intellectual disability may imply also different attitudes towards inclusion and pupils with severe intellectual disability. This also concurs with results from interviews with the assistant psychologist. She stated that the policy of inclusion is facing resistance from most of the school inspectorate. One of the assistant psychologist retorted:

Those who are supposed to supervise teachers are talking negative about the policy. How can you expect it to be effectively implemented if they are found labeling these children? They are even cases of parents who still keep their children (with intellectual disability) in asylum.

What it means is that administrators, teachers and parents as well should be sensitized on the need for inclusive education as well as respect for children with intellectual disabilities.

Implication of inclusion of children with severe intellectual disability in ordinary schools (N=33)

Eighty-eight percent of the respondents views inclusion as burdensome to ordinary teachers whilst 100% believed that it promotes acceptance and valuation of human rights. All the respondents (100%) also felt that inclusion can be successful with support. The general consensus amongst all the respondents was that inclusion is a socialization agent and it permits students to share life experiences. Some respondents also argued that

Table 4. Problems that affect the inclusion of children with severe intellectual disability in Zaka Central Cluster (N=33).

Item	Percentage (%)
Lack of knowledge by teachers and society	100
Limited learning resources	100
Teacher-pupil ratio which is too big	100
Negative attitudes of teachers and the society at large	100

Table 5. Teachers' feeling on teaching children with severe intellectual disability (N=33).

Item	No. of respondents	Percentage
(i)Yes	2	6
(ii) No	31	94

inclusion can be burdensome to ordinary schools while others felt that it promotes acceptance and valuation of human rights. This indicates that, mere inclusion into regular ordinary classes with no support does not yield positive outcomes.

All the respondents agreed that lack of knowledge about inclusion by teachers and the society, limited learning resources, negative attitudes towards inclusion and heavy teaching loads for teachers (a teacher –pupil ratio of 1:40) were the major challenges of inclusive education (Table 4).

Measures to ensure successful inclusion of children with severe intellectual disability in schools and communities (N=33)

All the respondents (100%) indicated that they would look for resources while seventy-five percent (75%) of them suggested that in-service training be held for teachers. However, all the respondents supported the inclusion of children with severe intellectual disability.

The implication is that most people are not worried about their contribution towards successful inclusion, but were quite ready to support inclusion. Only eight (24%), remained neutral on measures to ensure successful inclusion.

A small number of respondents (6%) said that it feels comfortable to teach children with severe intellectual disability and a large number (94%) does not want to teach children with severe intellectual disability (Table 5). This implies that because of these challenges most teachers are not willing to teach children with severe intellectual disability in their classes, since they think that children with severe intellectual disability are not teachable.

Teachers' feeling on how children learn in regular ordinary schools (N=33)

The findings show that only one (3%) of the teachers interviewed thought that pupils with severe intellectual disability can learn well in ordinary regular classes while a large number (97%) thought that children with severe intellectual disability can not learn well in the mainstream, hence they need special education in separate special classes. So these findings might mean that their inclusion in the mainstream is mere dumping of these exceptional learners.

Matters addressed by the regular curriculum to children with severe intellectual disability

Most respondents (94%) felt that the regular curriculum does not address the learning problems of the students with severe intellectual disability. This implies that the regular curriculum is designed for able-bodied or non-disabled students and does not cater for pupils with severe intellectual disability. The fact that the regular curriculum is not suitable for pupils with severe intellectual disability poses another challenge to inclusion. Inclusion means that the curriculum for the disabled should be similar to the curriculum for the non-disabled but as long as it is not accessible or properly implanted it is not inclusive.

Do children with severe intellectual disability have rights to education like others (N=33)?

All the respondents indicated that pupils with severe intellectual disability have the same rights as other children. The rights include education, equal treatment and employment. This implies that pupils with severe intellectual disability should be included in ordinary regular schools and any challenges that may threaten inclusion should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Other challenges faced by children with severe intellectual disability in mainstream classes (N=33)

Most respondents (80%) cited lack of specialist teachers

and knowledgeable school heads as a great challenge faced by inclusion. Children with severe intellectual disability feel inferior because they are being labeled for their low mental capacity. They also face /experience rejection and discrimination by other classmates, teachers and society. The time-table is also not user friendly.

Allocation of learning resources

Although children with severe intellectual disability enjoy the same rights as other children, they need learning resources different from others in the main stream. However, it was felt that these children require more resources than their counterparts. Their abnormalities require more learning resources in order to realize their full human potential. They should learn at their own pace and the curriculum should be modified to suit them. Because of these challenges respondents felt that inclusion can only be effective when these challenges are overcome.

Sharing of the same sporting facilities, dinning facilities and hostels, including sporting attire with others in the main stream (N=33)

All respondents (100%) indicated that all pupils should be equally treated when they participate in school activities. They should mix and share everything in order for them to socialize with others and build their self-concepts. Sporting facilities should be modified in order to meet their intellectual abilities and rules should be changed accordingly. Both children with severe intellectual dis-ability and the non-disabled should share equipment so that they do not feel discriminated and different from each other. Respondents however warned that although both children should share the same facilities children with severe intellectual disability should not be subjected to segregation so that they would not feel shunned and inferior to other members of the society.

DISCUSSION

Inclusion is being implemented in most ordinary regular schools as evidenced by the number of pupils with severe intellectual disability found in three selected schools. This is in line with the Secretary of Education Sport and Culture Minute Number P36 which was circu-lated to all registered schools in Zimbabwe in 1985 with guidelines on identification and placement of educational subnormal children. This was also in line with the policy of "Education for All" which was launched at that time. This is why each of these schools in the sample had a

representation of these special pupils with severe intellectual disability. However, most of these schools did neither have qualified teachers nor school heads implying that inclusion may be a lip service. The provisions of the Secretary's circular minute number P36 which amongst others provide guidelines on provisions for special needs education in Zimbabwe as well as overcoming barriers and challenges of implementing inclusive education in rural areas were far from being met.

Severely intellectual disability pupils are still being shunned and discriminated by both teachers and other pupils. Discrimination and shunning go beyond sharing of school facilities and equipment. Tolbert (1999),cited in Mpofu(2000) argues that severely intellectual disability pupils suffer from labeling and these labels as observed are limiting their chances of excelling in their academic carriers. This study established that labels such as "Mazundu","Matununu" and "Vanodhunya" (*meaning, "cow dung worms","fools" and" Mad"respectively*) were commonly used to those who were intellectually less talented or relating to mental deformities. Ironically, these labels were given mostly by old people and some officials who are supposed to supervise the implementation of the policy of inclusion. What it implies is a reeducation of all the people in the community and the education system as a whole. It was observed that children had no problems of integrating with others. They could be seen running, chasing and cuddling each other amicably.

It was also evident that pupils with severe intellectual disability remain in the primary school for longer periods due to repeating grades. These findings concur with what Mittler (2000) found out in Tunisia, Ethiopia, Uganda and Lesotho. Okech (1999) in his study in Uganda also found out that children with severe intellectual disability can stay in ordinary primary school for sixteen years. Zekele (2000), cited in Mittler (2000) in a study in Ethiopia established that most pupils with severe intellectual disability took about eighteen years in ordinary primary schools as compared to thirteen years taken by someone without disabilities.

Documentary evidence from Individual Record books indicate that pupils with severe intellectual disability take a long time to grasp concepts and eventually fail to achieve better results at the end of the year. Evidence from the same records revealed that severe mental retarded pupils start school at the age of eight or nine years as compared to their non-disabled peers who start at the age of five or six. Reasons for starting school late being that most of them experience developmental milestones in speaking, talking and walking. Most of these children can co-exist with other disabilities or health problems such as hearing, visual, epilepsy, speech and other health related problems. In most cases these children have psychological disorders.

Whilst most teacher respondents were aware of the definition of intellectual disability and welcome the idea of

inclusion, most of them were not willing to teach children with intellectual disabilities. They preferred specialist teachers to do so. However, these children can be assisted to realize their full potential in life.

Most respondents argued that inclusive education can be a burden to some extent on regular ordinary teachers since it retards smooth flowing of events. This is contrary to assumption by researchers that it promoted acceptance and valuation of human rights by peers, educators and other members of the community. Thus, inclusive education can only be a success with the full support of all stakeholders in education. Pupils with severe intellectual disability are said to be included theoretically but in reality, they are totally excluded. Inclusive education is affected by teachers and school heads' attitudes, lack of knowledge as well as limited learning and teaching resources. One teacher interviewed bemoaned "*it requires a human heart, very big heart to teach these children!"."Yes, true Christians can handle them*". Thus, attitude, espoused in the philosophy of "unhuism" is very crucial in teaching children with disabilities particularly severe cases.

In all the schools studied, the ordinary regular curriculum was observed not to be user friendly to the learner with severe intellectual disability, there is need for educators to breakdown the curriculum into Individualized Teaching Programmes [ITPs] to cater for individual differences. Mere inclusion without prior consideration as to how much work the teacher will have is mere child dumping in classes.

Severe intellectual disability is a disability which can be easily handled by an ordinary regular teacher if specialists training in form of in-service courses are provided. Most teachers indicated that they are prepared to include children with severe intellectual disability in their regular ordinary classes as long as they get sufficient support.

Conclusion

Pupils with severe intellectual disability are still being shunned, ridiculed and labeled by peers and other members of the community. It was also established that most schools lack specialist teachers and school administrators and this has exacerbated the plight of severely intellectual disability pupils.

The regular curriculum does not include self-help skills or abilities such as feeding, toiletry and hygiene which are important components to the curriculum of children with severe intellectual disability and therefore it is not inclusive. The Zimbabwean policy on Special Needs Education is not clearly defined so as to mandate for provisions and does not shoulder the full responsibility of providing for Special Needs Education therefore it can be concluded that inclusion is just but a lip service as very little is taking place on the ground.

The whole education system should be revamped in

order to benefit different learners in the mainstream. These findings also concur with what Mutepfa et al. (2007) established in their research in Zimbabwe. They stated that implementation of inclusive education is yet to be a reality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Every Zimbabwean school should implement the county's policy of education for all which stipulates that every child has a right to education and this implies the adoption of an inclusive type of education in Zimbabwe.

Children with severe intellectual disability should move to the next grade when they have fully mastered the concepts.

There should be communication among other professionals such as medical doctors, psychologists, speech therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, educational therapists, educators and parents because intellectual disability can co-exist with other problems or disabilities, which cannot be addressed by the regular ordinary teachers.

Regular ordinary teachers should make Individualized Educational Plans [IEPS] to cater for the learning needs of students with intellectual disability and the learning material should be presented in small teachable units. Thus, they should adopt authentic assessment practices.

It is also recommended that each school should have a specialist teacher who would work in collaboration with regular class teachers to constantly monitor and evaluate inclusive programmes.

The government should supply adequate financial assistance to all schools, so as to procure suitable learning resources and assertive devices for successful inclusion to take place.

The teacher-pupil ratio should be reduced in a class where a child with severe intellectual disability is present in order to allow the teacher enough time to cater for individual differences.

In-service training and awareness programmes on inclusive education should be held regularly so as to equip teachers and parents with skills on how to implement a successful inclusive programme. Every teacher should be given basic knowledge to handle children with intellectual disability.

School structures and the curriculum should be modified so that children with severe intellectual disability are properly accommodated. Self help skills should be a central part of the curriculum to help pupils with severe intellectual disability.

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