

# Secondary School Learners with Disabilities Challenges in Three Provinces of Zambia

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**Abstract:** The study was carried out in order to tap from teachers' experiences concerning the challenges faced by learners with disabilities while learning in an inclusive classroom and to determine the effects and ways of addressing these challenges.

The study was conducted in the three provinces of Zambia namely; Lusaka, Copper belt and Western province. The total number of schools were seven of which two schools were in Lusaka city, three schools from Copper belt of which two schools were from Chingola town and one school from Kitwe. The remaining two schools were from Mongu in Western province. The study had the sample of 35 teachers of which five were from each school. The study was qualitative and one research instrument namely semi-structured interview schedule was used with three questions. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis.

The study found that learners with disabilities faced challenges which affected them while learning in an inclusive classroom in arrears such as environment, infrastructure, curriculum, medium of instruction, seating arrangement, teaching and learning materials and equipment, academic subjects and non-academic skills, being taught by untrained teachers in special education, financial, learning at their own pace, technology, examination and memory, attention and communication and behavioral problem and ways of addressing these challenges were discovered.

**Key Words:** Learners with Disabilities, challenges, Inclusive Classroom.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Learning is a process of acquiring knowledge, skills and concepts. All learners face challenges in different forms. This study was focused on challenges faced by learners with disabilities in an inclusive classroom. This is supported by Ndlovu, (2008) who stated that learners with disabilities face challenges when learning in inclusive classroom such as non-user friendly infrastructure, inadequate appropriate teaching and learning materials and lack of skills.

When learners with disabilities learn together with those without disabilities in the same classroom it is termed as inclusive education. Inclusive classroom is a classroom in which learners with disabilities learn together with those without disabilities. The main idea of inclusive education is to bring about inclusion in education which is a process of enabling all children to learn and participate effectively within mainstream school systems without segregation, it's about shifting the focus from altering disabled people to fit into society to transforming society and the world by changing attitudes, removing barriers and providing the right support

Akinyi et al(2015). Furthermore, According to Ndlovu, (2008) inclusion is to be understood as a two way process; firstly it increases participation in learning and secondly it helps identify and reduce or remove barriers that inhibit the learning and participation of all learners. Ndlovu, (2008) went on to state that an inclusive school is therefore, a place where every pupil belongs, is accepted, is supported by his/her peers and other members of the school community in the course of having his/her educational needs met. In addition, Ndlovu, (2008) stated that, all pupils are provided with appropriate educational opportunities and resources within the inclusive school or class and care must be taken to avoid indiscriminate by including even pupils with severe disabilities. Ndlovu, (2008) further said that Children with disabilities could however, learn in an inclusive setting and teachers should allow the children to progress at their own pace.

Disability refers to the reduced function of a particular body part or organ. A disability limits the ability of an individual to perform certain tasks like reading, walking or talking. In this study the disability included learners with learning, physical, hearing, visual, communication, healthy, autism, emotional, behavioural, and intellectually challenged and multiple disabilities. World Health Organization and World Bank (2011) defines disability as a generic term that includes impairment in body functions and structures, activity limitation and participation restrictions. This implies that, disability as an aspect of impairment which is the lack of part or all of a limb, a defective limb, organism or mechanism of the body for example the missing of finger, leg, arm, deformed leg and the like which makes learners face challenges. Challenges are difficulties that learners with disabilities encounter while learning due to their disability.

Learners with disabilities experience a lot of challenges in inclusive classroom. For instance World Health Organization (2006) reports that the prevailing situation in most schools excludes a lot of pupils with disabilities from accessing education. In Zambia, the situation shows that a large number of persons with disabilities are also excluded from schools. For instance, the Central Statistics Office (2008) reported that there were 256,690 persons with disabilities in Zambia. Out of this number, 43.2% had no formal education, 39.7% had primary school education, 14.5% had secondary school education, 1.3% had A level and another 1.3% had attained tertiary education.

Ngulube, (2016) discovered that, learners with disabilities face challenges in the areas such as special equipment,

environment, special teachers, for being different from others, the care they need, not getting to school, failure to respond to learning. Akinyi et al (2015) also stated that there is inadequate specialized teachers. Ngulube, (2016) added that, other challenges are structure, approaches, curriculum content, negative attitude, and failure to use technology innovations. Akinyi, (2015) study revealed that the challenges faced by learners with disabilities in inclusive schools were the physical and learning resources which were found either dilapidated or inadequate as shown in the picture below.



Source: Akinyi et al (2015)

The inclusive education philosophy ensures that schools learning environments and educational systems meet the diverse needs of all learners irrespective of their learning difficulties and disabilities Akinyi, (2015). However, the challenges learners with disabilities experience in various ways affects them greatly and their needs are not fully met. This is supported by United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (1994) by stating that children with disabilities face different forms of exclusion which affect them in different ways due to factors such as the kind of disability they have, where they live and the culture or class to which they belong. For instance the children fail to access education for example in the U.S.A, educating children with learning disabilities is a modern day challenge for the people of America, only a small proportion (between 1%- 10%) of the children with special needs have ready access to schooling (Akinyi,2015). Furthermore learners with disabilities are affected by the challenges they encounter such that some end up being low achievers. For instance in British Columbia, students with special educational needs typically learn in the same classrooms as other students and the results show some of them having extremely and statistically significant effects on their achievements (Akinyi,2015).

According to United Nations Children's Fund (2018) teaching boys and girls with disabilities requires extra disability training and skills and that, some specific complex or severe impairment make it impossible for learners to achieve at the same rate as their non-disabled peers as a result, different provision is needed. Ngulube, (2016) stated that, there is need

for positive attitude for learners with disabilities and workshops on disabilities to help in the understanding of the different types and causes of the disabilities.

Akinyi, (2015) in their study suggested that the Government of Kenya through the Ministry of education should put in place adequate and appropriate physical and human resources to enhance education of learners with disabilities. Akinyi, (2015) further discovered that, for teaching and learning to be enhanced in inclusive classrooms, the teachers and learners should be trained in certain skills like sign language for the hearing impaired and the school should be equipped also with the right infrastructure and instructional materials such as the right text books and buildings for each case of disability. The study by Kristensen et al (2003) suggested that ministry of education which is responsible for education provision in the country, should design a system, structures, and capacity at all levels to facilitate this effect of training teachers.

Akinyi et al (2015) study revealed that there is need to embrace assistive technology that is, the use of computers and other modern technologies to facilitate learning in the inclusive classrooms. Akinyi et al (2015) further suggested that there is need to use talking calculators, talking books, screen reading and large prints on screen to assist learners with visual impairment. This was further acknowledged by Kiyuba, and Tukur, (2014) who stated that providing learners with visual impairment with adapted materials like Braille books and acquiring skills on how to use these materials can promote competition with their classmates.

Akinyi et al (2015) went on to propose that, remedial lessons is also needed as a way of giving these students extra lessons and time for the internalization of concepts taught in class and for any further simplification of concepts or on any difficult task for them in order to prevent problems like exclusion and dropout rates. Kiyuba and Tukur, (2014) narrated that, quality of the education, accessibility, change of attitudes and behavior, teaching methods, and curriculum, are the main focal points in meeting the specific needs of children with disabilities and a greater emphasis is on changing the environment rather than the child; a shift from exclusion to inclusion

#### *Statement of the Problem*

There have been challenges experienced by learners with disabilities when learning in inclusive classrooms. This is supported by Ndlovu, (2008) who stated that learners with disabilities face challenges when learning in inclusive classroom such as non-user friendly infrastructure, inadequate appropriate teaching and learning materials and lack of skills. There has been support toward learners with disabilities in inclusive classrooms in Zambia in terms of the educational policy. Despite this support challenges faced by learners with disabilities how they are affected and ways of addressing them when learning in inclusive classroom still remains undocumented and unknown. Therefore this study aimed at identifying the challenges faced by learners with disabilities

while learning in inclusive classrooms, how it affect them and how these challenges could be addressed.

#### *Objective of the Study*

The main objective of the study is to investigate learners with disabilities challenges in three provinces of Zambia. The other specific objectives are; to:

1. To establish the challenges faced by learners with disabilities while learning in inclusive classrooms
2. To access how these challenges affects learners with disabilities while learning in inclusive classrooms
3. To investigate ways of addressing these challenges faced by learners with disabilities while learning in inclusive classrooms

#### *Study Question*

1. What challenges are faced by learners with disabilities while learning in inclusive classrooms?
2. How these challenges do affects learners with disabilities while learning in inclusive classrooms?
3. Which strategies could be adopted to address these challenges faced by learners with disabilities while learning in inclusive classrooms?

#### *Significance of the Study*

The study was significant because it identified the challenges faced by learners with disabilities while learning in Zambian secondary schools in an inclusive classroom and how it affected their academic performance and how these challenges could be addressed.

## II. METHODOLOGY

#### *Research Design*

According to Bhat (2019), research design is a framework of methods and techniques used by a researcher to combine various components of research in proper manner so that the research problem is efficiently handled. In this study a case study was used in order to explore the challenges faced by learners with disabilities. With reference to Creswell (2007), a case study is a design of inquiry in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process or one or more individuals. A case study was used for it was appropriate and allowed the researchers to collect detailed information from teachers.

#### *Population of the study*

According to Kasonde (2013), target population refers to the group of people that the researcher wants to draw a conclusion about once the research study is finished. The population of this study comprised of teachers teaching learners with disabilities in the *seven schools*.

#### *Sample and Sampling Techniques*

The research sample comprised of 35 teachers teaching learners with disabilities of which 5 were from each school. In this study purposive sampling was used to identify

respondents from the target population. According to Kasonde (2013), purposive sampling technique is a deliberate choice by a researcher on the selection of informants due to the qualities the informant possesses. Purposive sampling was used in this study for it allowed the researchers to decide and pick respondents who had experience of teaching learners with disabilities.

#### *Research Instrument*

According to Roxana and Hidalgo (2017), research instruments are tools for data collection that enable the researcher to obtain relevant information or gain the experience from others. The study depended on the use of semistructured interview guide. With reference to Doyle (2019), a semi structured interview guide is an instrument with list of questions where the researcher does not strictly follow a formalized list of questions. A semi structured interview guide was used to obtain information from 35 teachers from seven schools and it uncovered rich descriptive data on the personal experiences of participants. Semi-structured interview helped researchers to gather focused qualitative textual data (Bernard (2000).

#### *Validity of Research Instrument*

Validity of instrument refers to the degree to which an instrument accurately measures what it intends to measure. To realize the validity of the instrument the researcher piloted the instrument among the three lecturers in the special education department. The lecturers were interviewed one by one and after the interview they were asked their opinion about whether an instrument measures the concept intended. It was reviewed that the intention was being realized.

#### *Reliability of the Instrument*

Reliability of the instrument concerns with the extent to which the instrument provides stable and consist result. Stability was tested in this study using test–retest reliability. Test–retest reliability was assessed when an instrument was given three times to be answered by the same three lecturers in the department. Afterwards the answers were compared. It was noticed that the reliability of instrument was realized.

#### *Methods of data collection*

Face to face interview was used as a method of collecting qualitative data for this study. Teachers were asked questions in line with the objective of the study. The interviewers were the ones that had control over the interview and kept the interviewee focused on the objective of the study and kept them on track to completion of the questions. It helped researchers to capture descriptive information from participants through their answers to the questions being asked which were expressed through their verbal and non-verbal ques, emotions and body language.

## III. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

#### *Challenges faced by learners with disabilities in inclusive classroom*



During data collection the researchers used the semi-structured interview schedule. When the first question was asked in order to find out if learners with disabilities were being faced with challenges while learning in an inclusive classroom the answers to the question are reflected in the following responses from the teachers. A response from teacher “A at sch 1” was stated that, ‘learners with disabilities learn in poor learning environment for instance some classroom infrastructure do not support their mobility especially those with physical disabilities who are on wheel chairs which leads them being absent from school. The participant further said “in terms of mobility they are challenged especially when the need for a call of nature arises, group activities, pair work for they are unable to do these activities for example they end up soiling themselves, join other activities late”.

The other challenge echoed by teacher “BBat sch 6” was that, “learners are mostly not taught by teachers who are specialized in special education who could address their needs effectively”. The other response from teacher “Catsch 1” was that, “learners lack enough appropriate and suitable learning materials, equipments such as hearing aids, computers, modified text books which suits their learning levels and it makes them not understand concepts easily”. It was also reported by teacher “Dat sch 1” that there is lack of appropriate technologies such as the use of JAWS for learners who are blind. Some learners with disability have a challenge to learn concepts being taught by teachers due to their memory problem especially mastering of concepts being taught there and then and they fail to learn to their full potential due to low retention span which make them easily forget what they have learnt as reported by one teacher. The other challenge reported by teacher “DD at sch 6” was that there is lack of sign language interpreters when learners with hearing impairment were taught by ordinary teachers.

Learners are faced with communication problem and they fail to get what the teacher is teaching and the teacher also fail to communicate to the learners effectively especially those who have hearing problems and speech problem as echoed by teacher “Kat sch 3”. Teacher “Fat sch 2” stated that “Those with multiple disabilities have a huge challenge to learn academic work due to their listening and understanding problem, vision problem, speech problem, logical thinking problem and mobility problems and some have a combination of two or more”. Another response from teacher “Oat sch 4” was that some learners are absent from school due to their poor health and their absence contribute to their poor performance.

Teacher “Hat sch 2” narrated that, uncontrolled behavior is another challenge especially of learners with autism it makes them not concentrate on their academic work or classroom activities. The other similar response from teacher “Jat sch 2” was that

*“ some learners with disabilities are faced with the challenge of inattentiveness, hyperactivity, inability to write, talk,*

*slowness in doing things, disruptive behavior, forgetfulness, low attention span, low concentration levels, wanting to do things at their own time, being un-controllable, and these makes them not take part in classroom activities fully”.*

Then teacher “Jat sch 2” stated that the challenge some learners face is poor attention span especially learners with autism, intellectual disability and those with learning disability.

The other challenge learners’ face is lack of attention from the teachers due to having a lot of learners with disabilities and other learners without disabilities in one class as reported by teacher “Kat sch 3”.

Then another challenge as mentioned by teacher “Lat sch 3” was that of learning using ordinary syllabus which is not modified to suit their needs. Some learners learn at a slow pace and not at the pace of a teacher as another challenge being faced with as narrated by teacher “Mat sch 3”. Teacher “N” stated that the challenge learners face is lack of enough time for learning. The most common challenge stated by most teachers “O to Z” “Oat sch 3”, “P, Q, R, S, T at sch 4” “U, V, W, X, Y at sch 5” and “Z at sch 6” was that learners with disabilities have different *levels* of understanding academic and non-academic work which makes some of them experience challenges in the inclusive classroom.

#### *The effects of these challenges on learners with disabilities*

When the researchers asked respondents the second question in order to find out if learners with disabilities are affected by the challenges they encounter in the inclusive classroom their answers were as follows; teacher “AAat sch 6” responded that, lack of teachers who are specialized in special education results in having needs of learners with disabilities not addressed effectively. Then teacher “BBat sch 6” reported that, lack of adapted materials makes them not understand concepts easily.

Teacher “CCat sch 6” echoed that the disability make them fail to grasp the concepts especially those who are mentally challenged due to amnesia and others because of being slow or below average in terms of understanding concepts and skills. Teacher “DDat sch 6” narrated that, absenteeism of some learners with disabilities resulted in poor performance. Another response from one teacher “EEat sch 7” was stated that at times performance was poor due to language barrier or sickness of some learners.

Yet another response from teacher “FFat sch 7” was that “forgetfulness of some learners with disabilities concerning what they learnt made them to perform poorly academically and also in non-academic activities”. The other similar response from teacher “GGat sch 7” was that, the disability make some learners perform poorly such as learners who are mentally challenged and other learners perform fairly good but not as they could have performed without it especially those who are visually, hearing impaired and with physical disabilities.

Teacher “HHat sch 7” narrated that, the disability affects most of them and they perform below average. The other response from teacher “IIat sch 7” was that, “despite learners having the disability in some academic subjects some of them perform better. It has been noticed that some learners perform well in some practical areas for example in subjects such as physical education, home economics and carpentry and other areas for instance weaving, cookery, sewing, electrification and metal work. However, in other academic subjects majority of these learners do not perform as expected such as mathematics and science due to their disability”. Another similar response from teacher “Aat sch 1” was that, some learners perform well while others perform badly for example in information subjects such as History, Religious Education, Civic Education, Zambian languages, English, Geography, Commerce and others learners with hearing impairment have a challenge of learning and understanding concepts and it affects them resulting in performing badly.

Due to the disability some learners perform according to their *level* of understanding as responded by teacher “Bat sch 1”. Teacher “Catsch 1” revealed that “some learners are resilient and their performance is exceptionally good despite having the disability such as some learners with visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical disabilities and autism”. The disability make most of the learners to be slow as reported by teacher “Dat sch 1”.

#### *Ways of overcoming the challenges*

When the researchers asked respondents the third question in order to find the ways of addressing the challenges learners with disabilities were being faced with in the inclusive classroom they responded as follows; teacher “Eatsch 1” voiced that, one way that can be used to overcome challenges faced by learners with disabilities is by training and deploying more special teachers to inclusive classrooms. “Another way of overcoming the challenge is by building conducive inclusive classrooms for instance this could be done by the building toilets inside the classrooms to easy mobility problem and soiling” as reported by teacher “Hat sch 2”. Then teacher “Kat sch 3” echoed that, some classroom infrastructure need to be modified for easy mobility of learners with disabilities such as those on wheelchairs and those with visual impairment and need to be acoustically treated in order to help learner with hearing impairment learn better as a way of addressing their needs or problems.

Then teacher “Nat sch 3” expressed that “there is need to take into account the arrangement of furniture for easy mobility or movement of learners with disabilities”. It was articulated by teacher “Patsch 4” that, there is need for modification of learning environment and learning materials for example the modification of text books into large print or braille in order to address all learners’ needs especially those who are partially sighted or blind. The other way which was reported by teacher “Sat sch 4” was that there is need to “provide enough appropriate and suitable learning materials and equipment such as braille frames, Perkins braille, hearing aids,

talking walls, computers, sewing machines and speech materials such as mirrors.”. Another response from teacher “Yat sch 5” was that, learners need to use concrete materials in all subjects as well as talking walls in order for them to learn and retain the concepts learnt in their memories. Teacher “AAat sch 6” mentioned that, “there is need for sensitizing teachers who are not trained in special education but handle learners with disabilities through workshops and also by motivating specialist teachers through salary increment”. Then teacher “EEat sch 7” expressed that, the other way would be by teaching learners effectively and efficiently for better learning.

Teacher “IIat sch 7” narrated that, teachers need to be patient and understanding of learners’ academic ability *level* and teach them according to their abilities. Teacher “Catsch 1” said that, even those specialists’ teachers should be having refresher courses in order to learn new more skill for effective learning of learners with disabilities. Teacher “HHat sch 7” added by saying that, “those who easily forget need a lot of effort from the teacher for example extra or a lot of attention, remedial work and more time of practicing or rehearsing what they have learnt”. Then teacher “Gat sch 2” reported that the “use of individual teaching and task analysis to some learner is one way of helping learners with disabilities learn better in inclusive classroom”. It was reported by teacher “Lat sch 3” that, there is need to make use of appropriate teaching methods such as total communication to learners with hearing impairment. Then teacher “DDat sch 6” expressed that “there is need to use appropriate medium of instructions while teaching learners with disabilities in an inclusive classrooms for example the use of braille when teaching learners with visual impairment and the use of sign language when teaching learner with hearing impairment in order to overcome communication barrier”. It was also echoed by teacher “GG” that, Some learners must only be taught skills and not academic work. In addition to this response teacher “Zat sch 6” added by saying that, “some learners with disabilities should only be given practical subjects than academic subjects because they are good when it comes to practical work, especially learners who are mentally challenged”. On the contrary teacher “Oat sch 3” clarified that, “some learners such as those with visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical disabilities need to be given more of academic work and at times practical work because they perform exceptionally good despite having the disability”.

The other response from teacher “Mat sch 3” was that, “learners need to learn using a modified curriculum which suits their abilities *levels*”. Teacher “Lat sch 3” added that, there is need to modify the curriculum in order to address learners needs effectively and efficiently. The response from teacher “Fat sch 2” was that, there is need to allow learners to play or relax for few minutes at times in order to boost their concentration levels. Some learners need financial support to buy food to eat in order for them to concentrate in the inclusive classroom as reported by teacher “CCat sch 6”. Teacher “Qat sch 4” revealed that, “learners with disabilities

really need special education services, encouragement and love for them to learn better in inclusive classroom". Teacher "Ratsch 4" revealed that, one way of helping learners overcome the challenge of forgetting what they have learnt is by repeating the work being taught. Then teacher "Wat sch 5" stated that, in order to overcome the challenge of poor academic performance there is need to examine some learners using modified or adapted examination which suits their ability levels and attention span. Another way of overcoming their poor academic performance as revealed by teacher "Vat sch 5" is by teaching them according to their pace of learning and by giving them enough time to learn.

#### IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The discussion was based on the challenges faced by learners with disabilities in inclusive classroom, how the challenges affect them and how they could be addressed.

##### *Challenges faced by learners with disabilities in inclusive classroom*

This study discovered some of the challenges faced by learners with disabilities such as un-conducive learning environment or poor infrastructure which were not in support of their mobility especially those on wheel chairs and blind or visually impaired, absenteeism, not being taught by specialized teachers in special education in most cases, lack of teaching and learning materials and equipment. The findings of this study were similar to the findings of Ngulube, (2016) who discovered that, learners with disabilities face challenges in the areas such as special equipment, environment, special teachers, for being different from others, the care they need, not getting to school, failure to respond to learning. The findings were also in line with the findings Akinyi et al(2015) whose study revealed that the challenges faced by learners with disabilities in inclusive schools were the physical and learning resources which were found either dilapidated or inadequate and inadequate specialized teachers. However, Ngulube, (2016) did not specify the types of equipment and materials as shown by this current study.

The other challenges discovered by this study were that learners lacked sign language interpreters especially for learners with hearing impairment, the challenge of memory problem, communication problem, uncontrolled behavior, curriculum problem because they were taught using ordinary syllabus, having different *levels* of understanding of what is being taught and lack of attention from most teachers. These findings were in agreement with the findings of Ngulube, (2016) who stated that, other challenges faced by learners with disabilities are structure, approaches, curriculum content, negative attitude, and failure to use technology innovations. Nevertheless, the study by Ngulube, (2016) did not discover the challenges such as learners lacking language interpreters especially the deaf, the challenge of memory problem, communication problem, uncontrolled behavior, having different levels of understanding of what is being taught and lack of attention from most teachers as compared to the discoveries of the current study.

##### *The effects of these challenges on learners with disabilities*

The study discovered some of the effect that the challenges being experienced by learners with disabilities had on them. For instance; lack of teachers who are specialized in special education resulted in having needs of learners with disabilities not addressed effectively, lack of materials made them not understand concepts easily, absenteeism of some learners with disabilities resulted in poor performance, at times performance was poor due to language barrier or sickness of some learners, The findings of this is in agreement with the findings of Akinyi et al(2015) who found that in the U.S.A, educating children with learning disabilities is a modern day challenge for the people of America, only a small proportion (between 1% - 10%) of the children with special needs have ready access to schooling. Though Akinyi et al(2015) did not bring out the effects that made the learners with disabilities have no access to education in the way the current study did.

The study revealed that the disability made learners with disabilities fail to grasp the concepts especially those who are mentally challenged due to amnesia and others because of them being slow in understanding of classroom activities. Furthermore it was discovered that the disability made some learners perform poorly such as learners who are mentally challenged and other learners performed fairly good but not as they could have performed without it especially those who are visually, hearing impaired and physical disabilities. Another response revealed that the disability affected most of them and they perform below average. These findings of the current study is in agreement with the findings of the study by United Nations Children's Fund (2018) who stated that children with disabilities face different forms of exclusion which affect them in different ways due to factors such as the kind of disability they have. However United Nations Children's Fund (2018) did not bring out the effect of poor performance resulting from the disability in the way this study did.

The study found that despite having the disability learners in some subjects performed better and practical areas for example in subjects such as physical education, home economics and carpentry and other areas for instance weaving, cookery, sowing, electrification and metal work while in other subjects or areas due to their disability majority of these learners did not perform as expected such as mathematics and science. It was further revealed that some learners performed well while others performed badly. The other finding was that learners with disabilities performed according to their level of understanding. The finding was that "some learners are resilient and their performance was exceptionally good despite having the disability such as some learners with visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical disabilities and autism". The other finding was that the disability made most of the learners to be slow. This findings are partially similar to the findings of Akinyi et al(2015) who found that in British Columbia, students with special educational needs typically learn in the same classrooms as other students and the results show some of them having extremely and statistically significant effects on their



achievement. Although the current study has revealed not only negative but both positive and negative effects of the challenges on learners with disabilities in a more elaborative way.

#### *Ways of overcoming the challenges*

The study discovered that one way that could be used to overcome challenges faced by learners with disabilities is by training and deploying more special teachers to inclusive classrooms. Another way of overcoming the challenge is by building inclusive classrooms that are conducive for instance the building of toilets inside the classrooms. Then some classroom infrastructure needs to be modified for easy mobility of learners with disabilities such as those on wheelchairs and those with visual impairment. There is also need to take into account the arrangement of furniture for easy mobility or movement of learners with disabilities. The findings of the current study are in line with what was discovered by Akinyiet al (2015) in their study who suggested that the Government of Kenya through the Ministry of education should put in place adequate and appropriate physical and human resources to enhance education of learners with disabilities. Nonetheless the current study discovered the need for arrangement of furniture for easy mobility which was not discovered by them.

Then the study found that, in order to overcome the challenges there is need for modification of learning materials for example the modification of text books in order to address all learners needs. There is need as well to “provide enough appropriate learning materials and equipment such as braille frames, Perkins Braillewriter, computers, sewing machines, use of concrete materials in all subjects as well as talking walls in order for them to learn and retain the concepts learnt in their memories. The findings of the current study is acknowledged by Kiyuba, and Tukur, (2014) who stated that providing learners with visual impairment with adapted materials like Braille books and acquiring skills on how to use these materials can promote competition with their classmates. However Kiyuba, and Tukur, (2014) did not discover the need to provide computers, sewing machines, use of concrete materials in all subjects as well as talking walls in order for them to learn and retain the concepts learnt in their memories as compared to the finding of this study.

The study revealed the other way of addressing the challenges and this was by sensitizing teachers who are not trained in special education but handle learners with disabilities through workshops and by motivating specialist teachers through salary increment. This is similar to what was discovered by Akinyi et al (2015) who confirmed that teaching and learning to be enhanced in inclusive classrooms, the teachers and learners should be trained in certain skills like sign language for learners with hearing impairment. However the current study brought out the issue of holding workshops and motivating specialist teachers through salary increment which was not highlighted by Akinyi et al (2015)

Another way which was discovered by this study as way of overcoming challenges was by teaching learners effectively and efficiently for better learning, there is need for teachers to be patient and understanding of learners’ academic ability level and teach them according to their abilities. Then it was found that “those who easily forget need a lot of effort from the teacher, extra or a lot of attention, remedial work and more time of practicing or rehearsing what they have learnt”. It was also discovered that, there is need to allow learners to play or relax for few minutes at times in order to boost their concentration levels. Some learners need financial support to buy food to eat in order for them to concentrate in the inclusive classroom. It was further discovered that even those specialists’ teachers should be having refresher courses in order to learn new more skills for effective learning of learners with disabilities. The use of individual teaching and task analysis to some learner was found to be one way of helping learners with disabilities learn better in inclusive classroom. The study revealed that there is need to make use of appropriate teaching methods such as total communication to learners with hearing impairment. It was also discovered that some learners must only be taught skills and not academic work. The study found that “some learners with disabilities should only be given practical subjects than academic subjects because they are good when it comes to practical work, especially learners who are mentally challenged”. On the contrary it was revealed that, “some learners such as those with visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical disabilities need to be given more of academic work and at times practical work because they perform exceptionally good despite having the disability”. This is similar to what was discovered by United Nations Children’s Fund (2018) who stated that teaching boys and girls with disabilities requires extra disability training and skills and that, some specific complex or severe impairment make it impossible for learners to achieve at the same rate as their non-disabled peers and that, as a result, different provision is needed. The argument by the researchers is that the current study is more specific and has given the balanced picture of different needs and ways of addressing them, that is to say both positive and negative effects of challenges on learners with disabilities are taken into account.

Another way of addressing the challenges faced by learners with disabilities which was discovered was as follows; it was suggested that there is need to use appropriate medium of instructions while teaching learners with disabilities in an inclusive classrooms for example the use of braille when teaching learners with visual impairment and the use of sign language when teaching learner with hearing impairment in order to overcome communication barrier. The finding of Kiyuba, and Tukur, (2014) was that, quality of the education, accessibility, change of attitudes and behaviour, teaching methods, and curriculum, are the main focal points in meeting the specific needs of children with disabilities and a greater emphasis is on changing the environment rather than the child; a shift from exclusion to inclusion. The current researchers argues that medium of instructions is equally the

focal point for overcoming communication barrier in promoting inclusion.

The study found another way of addressing the challenges faced by learners with disabilities for example it was proposed that learners need to learn using a modified curriculum which suits their abilities, in order to address learners needs effectively and efficiently. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Kiyuba, and Tukur, (2014) who narrated that, curriculum, is one of the main focal points in meeting the specific needs of children with disabilities. Though the current study discovered that the curriculum needs to be modified.

The study further discovered that in order for learners with disabilities to overcome the challenges they encounter in inclusive classrooms they really need special education services, encouragement and love for them to learn better. The study furthermore revealed that, one way of helping learners overcome the challenge of forgetting what they have learnt is by repeating the work being taught. Then it was discovered that in order to overcome the challenge of poor academic performance there is need to examine some learners using modified or adapted exams which suits their ability *levels* and attention span. Another way of overcoming their poor academic performance as revealed by this study is by teaching them according to their pace of learning and by giving them enough time to learn. The findings of this study are not similar to the finding of Akinyiet al (2015) who stated that simplification of concepts or on any difficult task for learners with disabilities is needed in order to prevent problems like exclusion and dropout rates.

#### V. CONCLUSION

Based on these empirical findings it was discovered that learners with disabilities faced challenges while learning in inclusive classroom. For example they were using poor learning environment of unmodified infrastructure, there was poor seating arrangement, there was lack of modified and appropriate teaching and learning materials and equipment, some of them were learning academic subjects instead of non-academic skills, some learners were being taught by untrained teachers in special education, some were not being understood, loved, some of them had financial challenge, some of them were not given chance to learn at their own pace or level of understanding, they were using unmodified curriculum, some were learning without the use of appropriate medium of instruction and new technology, some were tested using un-adapted examinations. Some learners faced challenges due to their memory, attention and communication problem and uncontrolled behavior which affected their learning

The study revealed how these challenges affected learners with disabilities. For instance learners needs were not addressed effectively, they failed to understand and grasp concepts easily, most of them performed poorly, below average and some of them did not learn at their own pace or ability level. Some learners with disabilities were resilient and performed better despite the challenges they encountered.

The study unveiled the following ways to be used in order to address the challenges faced by learners with disabilities while learning in inclusive classrooms, modification of infrastructure, consideration of their seating position or arrangement, modification of teaching and learning materials, provision of appropriate equipment and materials, the use appropriate medium of instructions, training of more special education teachers and motivating them through salary increment, orienting untrained teachers in special education through workshops, teachers to be patient, understanding, love and give the learners with disabilities enough time to learn and relax, by supporting them financially, by teaching some learners academic subjects others practical subjects, modification of the curriculum, repeating work for those with memory problem and use adapted examinations.

#### VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The seating arrangement should be taken into account for instance; those having hard of hearing should sit in front so that they can hear accurately from the teacher, those with short sightedness should sit in front and those with long sightedness should sit at the back of the classroom in order for them to see clearly the writings on the board. The those on wheel chairs should be given enough space for mobility within the classroom.
2. There is need to modify teaching and learning materials such as transcribing text books into braille form because it would help learners who are blind to access and understand academic information with less difficulties and ultimately perform well academically.
3. There is need to use appropriate teaching method such as individualized teaching method
4. Training of more special education teachers and motivating them through gradual salary increment. Training of more teachers would make learners with disabilities access education as their human from well trained teachers who will meet their individual needs. Then motivating trained teachers in special education would make them be motivated and this would result in good performance among learners with disabilities.
5. There is need of re-orienting untrained teachers in special education through workshops so that they can be patient, understanding, loving to learners with disabilities and give them enough time to learn and relax.
6. The learners need financial supports from well-wishers because of socio-economic status of majority of their families
7. There is need to modify and implement the modified curriculum that will address learners needs for instance by teaching some learners academic subjects others practical subjects, repeating work for those with memory problem and use adapted examinations or exams written in their mode of



communication such as braille, or considering their level of ability.

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