Model for Implementation of Inclusive Policies among the PLWD in Zambia's Education Sector

Mwalula, M. Y.[1*], Simui, F.[2], and Muleya, G.[3]

[1]Doctoral Student at the University of Zambia, Institute of Distance Education

[2,3]Senior Lecturer at the University of Zambia, Institute of Distance Education

[*]Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to design framework for implementation of inclusive policies among the PLWD in Zambia's education sector from the qualitative data gathered for the study. The study was qualitative and employed a phenomenological research design. The study sample size for this research was broken among the following: Three (3) policy makers, (3) Government Ministries, three selected Schools with Three (3) Teachers and (3) Pupils each (9 teachers and 9 pupils), two (2) people from organisations dealing with PWDs, 1 from UNICEF, Three (3) Ministry from the General Education (MOGE) officials. The total number of the sample size targeted was Thirty-two (32). This sample was sufficient as it exceeded the minimum number of 15 and a maximum of 45 where saturation can be eminent in a study. In order to collect research data, the study used interview guide, Focus Group Discussion (FDG) and documents. The study developed a model of implementation called Mwalula Couch Model which proposed that in order to promote inclusivity, there is need to involve all stakeholders who should be assigned job description to avoid waiting and expecting other persons to perform their mandate and obligation. Secondly, there is need to foster community initiatives that can aid the development of positive attitudes towards the protection of the disability rights. Furthermore, the government should legislate laws that can enhance the political will which will adequately address the needs for persons with disabilities in our communities. Therefore, this Mwalula Couch Model is critical in solving the current existing gaps on policies and provisions for persons with disabilities since all the factors are considered and the proposal for the development of better laws to protect and enhance the welfare of the disabled will bring about better understanding.

Keywords: inclusive policies, people living with disabilities, Mwalula Couch Model

BACKGROUND

Being hidden and isolated is not an easy or pleasant situation for one to be in. Unfortunately, this has been experiences of some of the children and people with disabilities throughout Zambia. According to the World Health Organization estimates, about 2 million people in Zambia, or 15 per cent of the population, have a disability. A majority of Zambians with disabilities live in poverty and generally have proportionally low literacy levels compared to persons without disabilities with a higher percentage of people with disabilities live in rural areas and peri-urban areas where access to basic services is limited (WHO, 2011). This is why it is common that most of the disabled persons often opt to street begging as a means of their livelihood and survival.

With all the many policies and acts on Disabilities in place, Zambia still experiences some challenges in the area concerning service provision stigma and other social aspects for people with disabilities. Lack of inclusive policy and legal framework were pointed out as disablers to inclusion. Consequently, discrimination and exclusion tendencies were manifested in matters related to admissions, access to lectures, assessment and examinations, access to library services, halls of residence, and other disability support services (Simui et al. 2018). Other challenges include inadequate policies and standards. Policy design does not always take into

account the needs of people with disabilities, or existing policies and standards are not enforced. There is often inadequate funding or resources to implement policies and plans. Although many policies mention disability, yet funding towards the same is almost always meagre. Other gaps include negative attitudes, beliefs and prejudices from citizens; The exclusion of PwDs from social and economic development in Zambia and there seems some exclusion of certain disability such as deaf-blind, and that PwDs are more likely to experience this exclusion, poor access to health, education, employment and social protection programmes in Zambia, government ministries' failure to work with communities in sensitizing communities on disabilities.

The study by Muzata, Simui, Mahlo, and Ng'uni (2021) examined the status of inclusive education in Zambia, learning from teachers' perspectives about how inclusive education is being implemented and whether teachers receive adequate support to implement inclusive education to learners with disabilities. The study employed a concurrent mixed design approach in which both quantitative and qualitative data were generated and applied. Open and closed ended questionnaires were used to collect data from teachers that were upgrading their qualifications via distance education at Kwame Nkrumah University, University of Zambia and Chalimbana University. Findings indicated that Zambia practices partial inclusion in which only the mild and moderate learners with disabilities are included in classrooms. Inclusive education is understood by teachers in the context of disability and teachers reported that they did not receive adequate support to implement inclusive education effectively. It is recommended that the Government of the Republic of Zambia through the Ministry of General Education should focus on training teachers in inclusive education and its methodologies to meet the learning needs of learners from different circumstances. The study under review did not develop a framework for the disability in the Zambian schools.

Another study by Kaumba, Mphahlele, Muleya, and Simui (2021) interrogated disablers and enablers in the uptake of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) in five rural primary schools in Mwinilunga district. A qualitative research methodology and descriptive research design were applied. Interview schedule and Focused Group Discussions were used as research instruments to interrogate the research problem. Findings of the study reviewed that the teaching of the ICT component particularly in Creative and Technology Studies in rural schools of Mwinilunga district faced a lot of challenges such as lack of ICTs equipment, poor internet connectivity, limited skilled human resource and lack of supportive infrastructure. To overcome the disablers, various strategies were applied by schools such as use of personal cell phones as teaching devises, use of zonal schools for capacity building points in ICTs and use of ICT expert teachers as resource persons among others. The study under review was relevant to the study because they both worked on disablers and enablers. This study was on the basis of developing a framework for the disabled children in in Zambia.

Stough & Kang (2015) conducted a study on the Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction and persons with disabilities. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (SFDRR) is evaluated with respect to its ramifications for persons with disabilities. In the SFDRR, persons with disabilities were referenced either directly or indirectly as part of the preamble, the guiding principles, the priorities for action, and the role of stakeholders. In addition, the 2015 World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, during which the SFDRR was adopted, incorporated explicit recommendations toward a disability-accessible and inclusive environment not evident in previous disaster risk reduction conferences. The infusion of disability-related terms and concepts such as accessibility, inclusion, and universal design throughout the SFDRR document was significant. These concepts, which have their origin in disability studies, are used in the SFDRR document to refer to the needs of all in disaster, not only to people with disabilities. These disability-related concepts will now serve the field of disaster risk reduction as important overarching disaster-related principles. The authors conclude that the SFDRR has firmly established people with disabilities and their advocacy organizations as legitimate stakeholders and actors in the design and implementation of international disaster risk reduction policies. Therefore, this study supports the need to design a framework for inclusive education in the Zambian context. The current study used qualitative method for this action.

In dealing with disability children, there is need for educators and teachers to be use the language of the classroom so that the learners can feel comfortable in schools. Nyimbili and Musonda (2023) argue that language inefficiencies have been linked to academic failure and the inability to use one of the seven languages, or English has been used as a yardstick to eliminate students from the Zambian education system which is against human rights especially for the disabled. Further, Tembo and Nyimbili (2021) concluded that

the teachers' perception on the implementation of the use of familiar was positive because of the sociolinguistic situation in the classrooms and this led to the teachers and learners preferring to use Nsenga as their language of instruction. Therefore, there was need to also think of the disabled children and how they can learn using the language of instruction which is familiar to them.

Persson, et al. (2015) conducted a study on universal design, inclusive design, accessible design, and design for all showing different concepts with one goal. Accessibility and equal opportunities for all in the digital age have become increasingly important over the last decade. In one form or another, the concept of accessibility is being considered to a greater or smaller extent in most projects that develop interactive systems. It can be concluded that there is little or no consensus regarding the definition and use of the concept, and consequently, there is a risk of bringing less accessibility to the target audience. Particularly in international standardization the lack of consensus is striking. Based on this discussion, the authors argue for a much more thorough definition of the concept and discuss what effects it may have on measurability, conformance with standards and the overall usability for the widest possible range of target users. Despite these studies being conducted with the disabled, there was no reference to policy and practice in education which this study looked at in the Zambian education system with a view to improve the status quo.

Finally, Muzata (2017) conducted a study on curriculum implementation for learners with special education needs. This study sampled one hundred and twenty (120) special education teachers, twelve (12) Education Standards Officers and two (2) Curriculum Specialists for special education. Results were triangulated to come up with a consolidated conclusion. It was established that special education teachers were not involved in the CDP except at implementation and they were implementing the revised curriculum amidst numerous challenges. Lack of involvement in the curriculum development process was linked to special education teachers' lack of understanding of key concepts necessary for curriculum implementation for LSENs. Therefore, this study calls for the provision of necessary specialized and adapted materials for effective implementation of the revised curriculum.

Smyth, et al. (2014) conducted a study on inclusive education in progress, a policy evolution in four European countries. The comparison highlights the different manifestations of inclusive education current in each country and also explores the challenges which have arisen as individual countries attempt to align international policy with provision in existing education systems, each with their own legacy interests, pressures and priorities. UNICEF (2013) highlighted that another reason for institutionalization is a belief in the medical model of disability, meaning children with disabilities can only be cared for by trained professionals. Examples of 'gaps' in this alignment are where learners with disabilities/SEN are likely to be failed and represent the critical points at which barriers to fully inclusive education arise and negatively impact opportunity over the life course. From the foregoing, it is evident that there is a lacuna between policy and implementation of the disability policy in the Zambian education system and social services which needed to be resolved using a framework designed for implementation of inclusive policies.

There are different models which are used on studies on PLWDs. McClure (2007) laments the devastating influence the thinking characteristic of the moral and/or religious model of disability has had on preaching. These preachings include how some forms of Bible interpretation exclude PWDs by directly or indirectly equating '"blindness", "lameness", "deafness", "uncleanness" (chronic illness), mental illness (demonic possession), and other forms of disability . . . with human sin, evil, or spiritual ineptitude'. In addition, Bryan (2011) stated that some people, if not many, believe that some disabilities are the result of lack of adherence to social morality and religious proclamations that warn against engaging in certain behaviour. However, this model applies to the religious views of disability and not from a scholarly point of view.

Medical professionals who subscribe to the medical model tend to treat people as problems to be solved, often failing to take into account the various aspects related to the person's life as a whole (Thomas & Woods 2003). Kasser and Lytle (2005) highlight the medical model's exclusive focus on the limitation(s) associated with a person's disability, which essentially disregards environments that might intensify or adversely affect a person's functional abilities. The medical model tends to regard the person with disability as the one who needs to change or be fixed, not the conditions that might be contributing to the person's disability. Personal tragedy model by (Thomas & Woods 2003), because it defines disability in a fundamentally negative way.

They argue that disability is regarded as objectively bad, as a pitiable condition, 'a personal tragedy for both the individual and her family, something to be prevented and, if possible, cured'. This model however, has not provided relevant use to the Zambian communities since its view is more a medical lens than a practical view through research.

One of the most important documents in the development of this approach is the Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation's (UPIAS) manifesto document, Fundamental Principles of Disability (1976). Fundamental to the social model of disability is the notion that disability is ultimately a socially constructed phenomenon. The social model by Oliver (1981) who stated that disability is a situation, caused by social conditions, which requires for its elimination, (a) that no one aspect such as incomes, mobility or institutions is treated in isolation, (b) that disabled people should, with the advice and help of others, assume control over their own lives. This model views disability as a social thing instead of considering it as a condition. Therefore, there was need to explore and develop a Zambian model from the findings of the study.

Policies are considered to be very important aspect of society and are conceived as problem solving to many issues that affect a group of people. The term policy process suggests that there is some sort of system that translates policy ideas into actual policies that are implemented and have positive effects (Thomas, 2015). The core of inclusive education is the human rights to education, pronounced in the Ministry of education's educational for all policy and by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 (UNESCO, 2000). Arising from the UNESCO inclusive education description, it is not clear the extent to which inclusive education policy is implemented and benefits accrued to PWD. Therefore, this study was set to develop a framework for implementation of inclusive policies in Zambia's education sector.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to design framework for implementation of inclusive policies among the PLWD in Zambia's education sector.

Objective

  i. To design framework for implementation of inclusive policies among the PLWD in Zambia's education sector.

Significance of the study

The establishment of gap between policy and practice could help in the improvement of approaches to implementing disability policies more effectively and help to affirm the basic human rights of people with disabilities to equal access to education and social and economic opportunities. The study may also help the policy implementers to enhance their operations holistically without leaving anyone behind especially People with Disabilities (PWDs). The study may further contribute to a body of knowledge and literature that already exist on the issue of disability policies and practice in Zambia through the framework.

METHODOLOGY AND MATERIALS

The study was qualitative and employed a phenomenological research design. The population sample size for this study was broken among the following: Three (3) policy makers, (3) Government Ministries, three selected Schools with Three (3) Teachers and (3) Pupils each (9 teachers and 9 pupils), two (2) people from organizations dealing with PWDs, 1 from UNICEF, Three (3) Ministry from the General Education (MOGE) officials. The total number of the sample size targeted was Thirty-two (32). This study sample was sufficient as it exceeded the minimum number of 15 and a maximum of 45 where saturation can be eminent in a study. In this study, the researcher narrowed down the sample to only those who are of great interest to this study being conducted. Participants were interviewed because their personal views and experiences were important for this study as the study objectives needed specific cases and experiences to be explored. Through interviews, experiences in dealing with people with disabilities were explored and recorded. Participants were not

mentioned in the study, their views are not recorded under their names which would recognize them in any way.

In order to collect research data, the study used interview guide, Focus Group Discussion (FDG) and documents from different institutions and Organizations that look into the welfare of People with disabilities (PWDs). These participants were homogenously sampled (Nyimbili and Nyimbili. 2024) because of their experiences and work with the disabled children. Thematic analysis was used to understand the large volume of qualitative data of the study. From the interviews and focus group discussions, a model was developed for the study.

Findings from interviews with different stake holders highlighted some identifiable resources, capacities, and technical needs that must be sought to enact and implement the policy. The National Policy on Disabilities speaks of instilling in citizens that PWDS are valuable human resources for the country and such policies must seek to create an environment that provides equal opportunities, protection of their rights and full participation in society. The conducting of the Interviews and Focus Group Discussions on this study brought out the participants experiences and understanding of the implementation of the disability policies in Zambia. This is why the Mwalula Couch Model becomes so relevant for this study because it brings out a better understanding of the implementation of the disability policies at different levels.

How can a framework be designed for implementation of inclusive policies in Zambia?

This qualitative interview question was asked to participants in order to understand how a framework can be designed for implementation of inclusive policies in Zambia.

Findings from Interviews with community development officers

Participants were asked to mention how the framework could be designed to ensure meaningful participation and engagement of diverse stakeholders, including persons with disabilities, in policy development and implementation. Participants established that there was need for Zambia to ratify key international policies on disability and the need to add value to the existing disability policy documents. Further it was revealed that in order to have functional disability policy, there was need to draw a plan that offers guidance on implementation benefits such as short term, intermediate and long-term benefits. Com/Dev. 1 said:

In order to design a framework for implementation of inclusive policies, there is need for Zambia to ratify key international policy documents on disability such as the UNCRPD which is quite inclusive of the needs of persons with disabilities. This brings about awareness and sensitization about the PWDSs to the communities and the whole country.

Com/Dev 2 observed that:

There is need for value addition to the policy to persons with disabilities when it comes to implemented, a written piece of material alone without its implementation serves no purpose. There is a value addition for instance in the educational policy of 'educating the future' and 'inclusive education' which have helped to reduce the illiteracy levels in communities, reduce stigma and discrimination for children with special needs and help break the gap between PWDSs and the 'normal'. Policies such as inclusive education when implemented help the learners to have access to quality education, socialization, and better community integration.

Short Term Benefits

The ministry of education and other stakeholders from other line ministries supporting people with disabilities identified some short-term benefits of the policies. The findings from the interviews will be presented according to the participants' responses.

Findings from interviews with community development officers.

Participants under community development were asked to mention the key principles and values that should guide the development of inclusive policy framework in Zambia. It was established from participants that

communities needed to be sensitized on people with disabilities so that the physically challenged are accepted by communities. Com/Dev. 1 observed that:

Policies and provision on people with disability bring about awareness and sensitization about the PWDSs to the communities and the whole country. Sensitization will enable the communities accommodate the physically challenge.

Com/Dev. 2 observed that:

Policies offer guidance and bring more people with disabilities into the limelight of society. For instance, in this regard, more children with special needs are brought into schools.

Findings from interviews with District Education Board Officers

Participants from the ministry of education were asked to mention the key principles and values that should guide the development of inclusive policy framework in Zambia. Participants revealed that the disability policies help physically challenged people to fit into the society. Furthermore, policies and provisions showed that they increase care and protection for people with disabilities in the communities. DEBS 1 observed that:

There is need for continuous community sensitization on the importance of inclusivity. For example, inclusive education policies and provisions support students with disabilities to access quality education, promoting socialization and skills development. These policies and provisions play crucial roles in supporting people with disabilities for fully participate in society.

DEBS 2 said:

The need for social protection can easily be achieved by every stakeholder who is supposed to protect people living with disabilities. Policies and provisions increase care and protection for people with disabilities in the communities. This reduces poverty and promotes community engagement.

Intermediate Benefits

Ministry of education and Stakeholders from other line ministries identified some of the intermediate benefits of the policies.

Findings from teachers

Participants were asked on the key principles and values that guide the development of inclusive policy framework in Zambia. Findings from interviews with teachers on the intermediate benefits revealed that people living with disabilities need to build self-esteem and believe in themselves as human beings and need to accept their condition understanding that though differently abled, they have the academic and employment conditions. In addition, it was established that policies and provisions advocate for improved care and protection for PWDSs. Participant 1 observed that:

Policies and provisions on PWDSs build self-esteem and belief in themselves as human beings. They too have the ability to develop social and intellectual skills. Self-esteem makes them improve their interaction with the community and thereby equally enhancing improved interactions among learners in school.

Com/Dev. 2 said:

Inclusion of PWDSs concerns in education, employment and legal sectors. PWDSs experience the same type of conditions and benefits in schools, workplaces. There is no difference between the physically challenged persons and the abled persons.

Com/Dev. 3 observed that:

The policies and provisions make easier accessibility to buildings and public facilities. They advocate for improved care and protection for people with disabilities. Therefore, these implementations of these facilities

can be done gradually depending on the need of the community and school and the type of disability exhibited by society.

Long terms

Participants from the department of social warfare, community development and ministry of education were asked to mention the key principles and values that should guide the development of inclusive policy framework in Zambia. The findings revealed that policies and provisions on people with disability should be sustainable which may have long term benefits. Participants established that PWDs should be given equal opportunities and there should be improved accessibility to all buildings and other menaces. Further, it was found that alignment of different legislations such as the Police Act was needed. Participant 4 Dept. Social/W observed that:

The policies and provision should provide PWDs for better interaction and fitting in society. Further, the policy makers should ensure that PWDSs are cared for and protected and are given equal opportunities.

Com/Dev. 1 observed that:

There is need for improved accessibility to all buildings and infrastructure which may include provision for facilities to use at crossroads and resting places in towns for PWDSs.

DEBS 1 observed that:

There is need for alignment of different legislations such as the Police Act, containing derogatory references to PWDSs. Further, there is need to inculcate positive change attitude towards the PWDSs by community members.

DEBS 2 explained that:

There is need for increased funding and increased support towards the welfare of PWDSs and increased opportunities such as learning, training and employment for PWDSs.

Unintended Negative consequences of the policies

Findings from interviews with different stakeholders revealed unintended negative consequences of the policy and provision on people with disabilities. Participants were asked how the framework can ensure meaningful participation and engagement of diverse stakeholders, including persons with disabilities in policy development and implementation. It was established that lack of funding leads to frustration and lack of commitment. Further, it was found that relatives/parents slacken in their responsibility of taking care of their people with disabilities when the government commits itself. Participant 3 Dept. Social/W stated that:

The implementation of disability policies requires a commitment to funding. Lack of funding may lead to frustrations and a lack of commitment to policy.

Com/Dev. 1 observed that:

There are not enough specialists in the country in the area of disability such as education, hospitals, etc. to fully implement the provisions of the policies. When government or institutions take care of PWDSs, the consequences are that relatives/parents slacken in their responsibility of taking care of their PWDSs.

DEBS 2 explained that:

Inclusive policies like in education may lead to PWDSs not being given adequate attention because of not being treated in the same way. Additionally, there is labelling and negative attitude by service providers to PWDSs.

Positives Consequences

Participants were asked to mention the essential elements that should be included in the framework to ensure accessibility and inclusivity in areas like education, healthcare, and employment. Participants established that

persons with disability were likely to develop social skills through interaction with confidence and there would be improved livelihood. Teacher 1 observed that:

The positive consequence of the policy is that PWDSs will have more access to services and support. PWDSs can interact with other 'normal' people and are likely to develop social skills through interaction, Self-awareness and confidence at an even faster rate.

Com/Dev. 3 observed that:

When well implemented, the policy will accord more freedom and independence to PWDSs in society and will develop self-awareness and confidence. There will be positive improved livelihood for those who live with disabilities as a result of access to better conditions, health education, equipment and facilities.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings from interviews with different stake holders highlighted some identifiable resources, capacities, and technical needs that must be sought to enact and implement the policy. The National Policy on Disabilities speaks of instilling in citizens that PWDS are valuable human resources for the country and such policies must seek to create an environment that provides equal opportunities, protection of their rights and full participation in society. In this regard, De Beco (2014) Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) provides not only that children with disabilities should not be discriminated against but also that they should be able to participate in the general education system. Children with disabilities should therefore be educated in mainstream schools. On the contrary, Simui et al., (2020) observed that accessibility of public buildings in Lusaka lacked ramps, handrails, elevators and other requirements. This had restricted their enjoyment of the rights to independent living, inclusion in society and equality of opportunity (Chilufya, 2013). Therefore, there should be a deliberate move to making public buildings accessible whether by universal design or reasonable accommodation to persons with disabilities regardless of the geographical location. To this, it can be argued that the disabled are policy discriminated as some facilities are beyond their access and use which needs to be harmonised. If not, the discrimination gap will widen making them complain regarding the harsh treatment given.

The findings established that in order to design a framework for implementation of inclusive policies, there is need for Zambia implement key international policy documents on disability such as the UNCRPD which is quite inclusive of the needs of persons with disabilities. This brings about awareness and sensitization about the PWDSs to the communities and the whole country. In line with the current findings, the study by Stough & Kang (2015) in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (SFDRR) is evaluated with respect to its ramifications for persons with disabilities. In the SFDRR, persons with disabilities were referenced either directly or indirectly as part of the preamble, the guiding principles, the priorities for action, and the role of stakeholders. In addition, the study shows that the 2015 World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, during which the SFDRR was adopted, incorporated explicit recommendations toward a disability-accessible and inclusive environment not evident in previous disaster risk reduction conferences. The infusion of disability-related terms and concepts such as accessibility, inclusion, and universal design throughout the SFDRR document was significant. The implication of this is that as long as the people who deal with the disables are not pushing for policy change from the current exclusion to inclusion, there will be perpetual discrimination both at policy and implementation level. The results will be that the current model on which the policies were designed and implemented would be rendered not useful since they would have failed at implementation level. This then brings in the proposed model for implementation in the Zambian context.

In addition, the findings established the need for value addition to the policy to persons with disabilities when it comes to implemented, a written piece of material alone without its implementation serves no purpose. Value addition for instance in the educational policy of 'educating the future' and 'inclusive education' may help to reduce the illiteracy levels in communities, reduce stigma and discrimination for children with special needs and help break the gap between PWDSs and the 'normal'. Policies such as inclusive education when implemented help the learners to have access to quality education, socialization, and better community integration. In contrast to the findings, Further, Persson, et al. (2015) opined that design for all, universal

access and inclusive design are all different names of approaches that largely focus on increasing the accessibility of the interactive system for the widest possible range of use, but in what way do all these concepts differ and what is the underlying philosophy in all of these concepts. The implication of the foregoing is that the current pieces of policies are not helping the current crop of disabled people realise that there is a way through which they can be helped. They have lost hope in the current institutions set up by the government which is not a good signal. The results are that the community may develop a negative attitude towards the line ministries and departments, yet they have fewer powers to control the implementation of the fault policies.

It was established that household, and communities have limited interest to foster care or adopting children with disabilities, thus children spend their lives in institutions. In certain instances, children with disabilities are locked inside homes and rarely allowed to come out side for fear of discrimination and stigmatization. In support of the current findings, UNICEF (2013) highlighted that another reason for institutionalization is a belief in the medical model of disability, meaning children with disabilities can only be cared for by trained professionals. However, the life in institutions is not always kind, children with disabilities living in institutions are at higher risk for neglect and abuse and may only be given the most basic care from caregivers with little training on feeding, nutrition and development. Therefore, there is need to look at the existing gaps between practice and policy on the implementation of the disability policy in education. If this is not done, parents who have a child with a disability may have to forgo work to care for the child resulting in economic hardship for the family. The combination of stigma, lack of adequate transportation, poor educational opportunities, lost income and poor social service support forces families to make difficult decisions about the care of their child with disabilities. This then mean that the current model for policy formulation and implementation for the disabled needs remodelling and shaping. Because of this, the following model was proposed on how to implement the disability policies in the Zambian communities so that inclusivity is maximised.
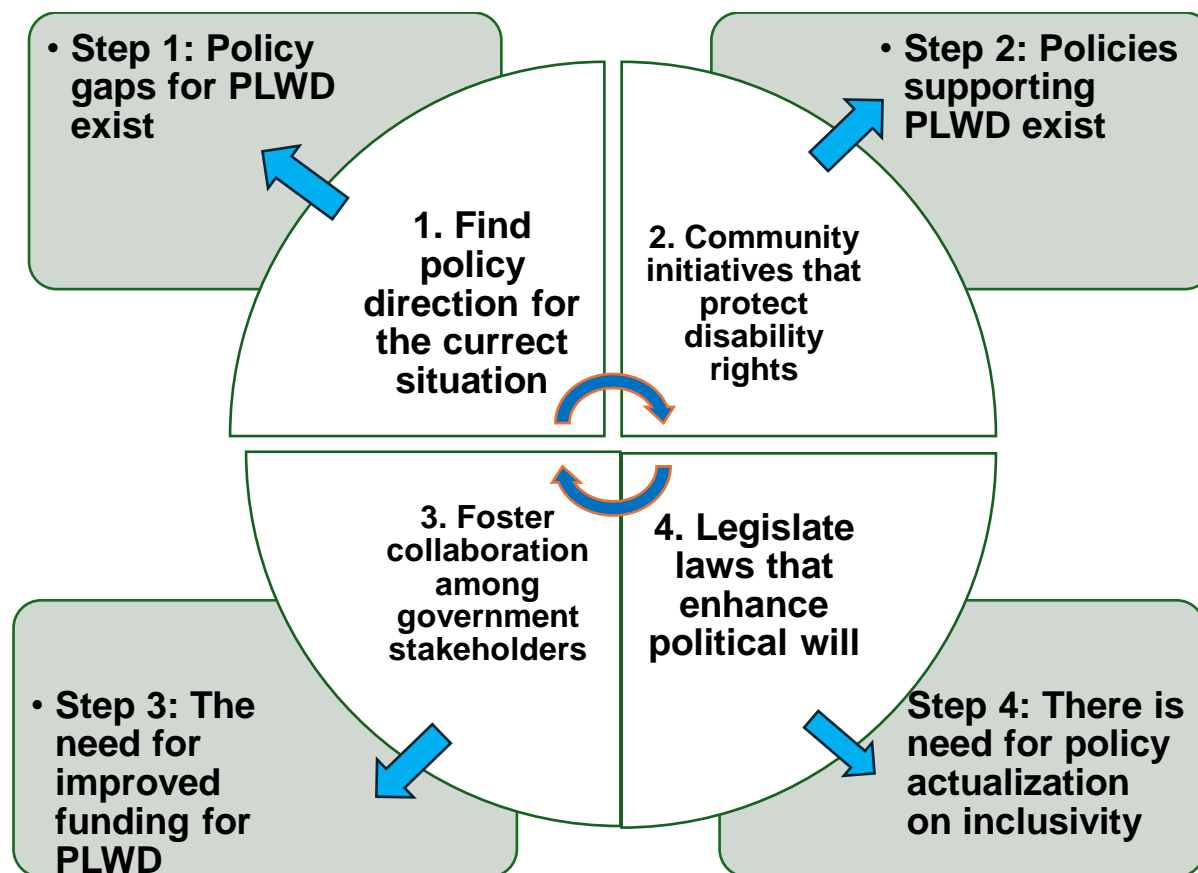

Figure 1: The Mwalula Couch Model

In line with the model development, the Mwalula Couch Model, improving the welfare of the disabled starts with identifying gaps in policies which the PLWD are using. This helps to find the new policy direction

because the implementers and the people around would have developed trust in the solutions. This model provides the practical steps of dealing with challenges the PLWD face and disputes the view of Bryan (2011) who stated that some people, if not many, believe that some disabilities are the result of lack of adherence to social morality and religious proclamations that warn against engaging in certain behaviour. The fact is that the disabled did not choose to find themselves in the current situation but they should be helped out through the line ministries. This will bring about help for humanity if the model is followed.

Secondly, the new policy direction will then have to support the PLWD. This will then bring about different community initiatives that protect the rights of the disabled. The third step will call for increased funding for the PLWD so that they lack nothing. Through this, there will be need to ensure that there was a strong collaboration with the government and stakeholders. This model refutes the personal tragedy model by (Thomas & Woods 2003), because it defines disability in a fundamentally negative way. They argue that disability is regarded as objectively bad, as a pitiable condition, 'a personal tragedy for both the individual and her family, something to be prevented and, if possible, cured'. However, the Mwalula Couch Model has come to state that policy direction and funding are rather very cardinal factors if PLWD are to be helped and appreciated in the communities. The Mwalula Couch Model does not support the physical look of the disabled but looks at the potential help which should transform their lives in the society. This should be the basis for any model as they are already vulnerable in state, yet they are strong in spirit.

Lastly, inclusive policy actualization would be achieved coupled with pushing for legislation amendment which will also enhance political will. This model will then bring about reliable engagement, contribution to the Zambian way of dealing with people with disabilities in a systematic manner. This model is supported by the social model by Oliver (1981) who stated that disability is a situation, caused by social conditions, which requires for its elimination, (a) that no one aspect such as incomes, mobility or institutions is treated in isolation, (b) that disabled people should, with the advice and help of others, assume control over their own lives. Through meaningful engagement and collaboration, it can be argued that disability is just a condition like being rich or power hence policy and legislation development should factor how they need to help the PLWD unlike creating aid for the abled. Therefore, this Mwalula Couch Model in critical in solving the current existing gaps on policies and provisions for persons with disabilities since all the factors are considered and the proposal for the development of better laws to protect and enhance the welfare of the disabled will bring about better understanding.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the Mwalula Couch Model can be used to solve the implementation of inclusive policies in Zambia. In order to promote inclusivity, there is need to involve all stakeholders who should be assigned job description to avoid waiting and expecting other persons to perform their mandate and obligation. Further, there is need to foster community initiatives that can aid the development of positive attitudes towards the protection of the disability rights. Furthermore, the government should legislate laws that can enhance political that will adequately address the needs for persons with disabilities in our communities. Therefore, this Mwalula Couch Model in critical in solving the current existing gaps on policies and provisions for persons with disabilities since all the factors are considered and the proposal for the development of better laws to protect and enhance the welfare of the disabled will bring about better understanding. This will bring about value addition to the PWD to the communities and the whole country. It can be stated that policies such as inclusive education when implemented help the learners to have access to quality education, socialization, and better community integration, therefore, the need to redesign its implementation framework to benefit the intended persons.

RECOMMENDATIONS

i. The ministry of education should provide specialized training for teachers to support students who are living with disabilities in the Zambian schools so the inclusivity can be realised.

ii. Social warfare department should provide community based programs including rehabilitation and support services to the communities and the schools since they are specialists in handling such cases.

REFERENCES

1. Bryan, K. (2011) Introduction to American deaf culture, Oxford University Press, New York
2. Chilufya, F. (2013). Barriers of persons with physical disability over accessibility and mobility to public buildings in Zambia. Indonesian Journal of Disability Studies, 6(1), 53-63.
3. Kaumba, M., Mphahlele, R. S. S., Muleya, G., Simui, F. (2021). Disablers and enablers in the uptake of information communication technologies in rural primary schools of Mwinilunga District, Zambia. Journal of Educational Technology and Online Learning, 4(1), 1-10
4. Kasser, S. & Lytle, R., 2005, Inclusive physical activity, Human Kinetics, Champaign, IL. McClure, J., 2007, Preaching words, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, KY.
5. Muzata, K. K. (2017). Curriculum implementation for learners with special education needs: the case of selected inclusive and special schools in Zambia (Doctoral dissertation, PhD Thesis, University of South Africa, http://uir. unisa. ac. za/handle/10500/24571).
6. Muzata, K. K. Simui, F., Mahlo, D., and Ng'uni, P. (2021). Inclusive Education Status through the Lenses of Teachers in Zambia. African Journal of Teacher Education, 10 (1):1-20
7. Nyimbili F. and Musonda, K. M. (2023). Language Policy Inclusivity and Exclusivity in Zambian Primary Classrooms. (pages 91-101). In D. Sikalumbi, A. W. Phiri and B. Chirwa. Inclusive Education: Unlocking the Potential of Every Learner. Mission Press: Ndola.
8. Oliver, M., 1981, 'A new model of the social work role in relation to disability', in J. Campling (ed.), The handicapped person: A new perspective for social workers, pp. 19–32, RADAR, London
9. Persson, H., Åhman, H., Yngling, A. A., & Gulliksen, J. (2015). Universal design, inclusive design, accessible design, design for all: different concepts one goal? On the concept of accessibility historical, methodological and philosophical aspects. Universal access in the information society, 14, 505-526.
10. Simui, F., Sakakombe, L., Muzata, K. K., & Mtonga, T. (2020). Disablers to Academic Success of Learners with Special Education in Selected Higher Education Institutions in Zambia. Zambian Journal of Educational Management, Administration and Leadership (ZJEMAL) 1(1), 21-38.
11. Smyth, F., Shevlin, M., Buchner, T., Biewer, G., Flynn, P., Latimier, C., & Ferreira, M. A. (2014). Inclusive education in progress: policy evolution in four European countries. European Journal of Special Needs Education, 29(4), 433-445.
12. Stough, L. M., & Kang, D. (2015). The Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction and persons with disabilities. International Journal of Disaster Risk Science, 6, 140-149.
13. Tembo G. M. & Nyimbili F. (2021). "The Practicality of using Indigenous Language (Nsenga) as Medium of Instructing at Grade 1-4 in Selected Primary Schools of Petauke District." International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL), 9(10). pp. 1-10. doi: https://doi.org/ 10.20431/2347-3134.0910001.
14. Thomas, H. (2015). Helping Hand to the Disabled in Africa. Journal for Humanities, 8(2): 58-78
15. Thomas, D. & Woods, H., (2003). Working with people with learning disabilities, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London.
16. UPIAS, (1976). Fundamental principles of disability, Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation, London.
17. UNESCO. (2000). Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. UNESCO
18. UNICEF. (2013). Laws for the Disables. Geniva.
19. WHO. (2011). World Disability Statistics. New York: WHO.