



INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PRACTICES IN ZIMBABWE TEACHERS' COLLEGES

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Abstract:

This study sought to establish the extent to which Inclusive Education was being implemented in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe. The interpretivism paradigm, qualitative methodology and multiple case studies guided this study. Homogenous purposeful sampling and snowballing techniques were adopted to draw up a sample of eight (8) key informants and seventeen (17) participants. Data were generated using the researcher as a primary instrument, face-to-face interviews, direct observation guide and document analysis guide. Thematic data analysis and NVivo Qualitative software analysis were used to present and analyse data. The major findings were that students with disabilities were enrolled in teachers' colleges though there were no clear enrolment procedures differences. Further it was revealed that the curriculum in teachers' colleges was rigid and did not cater for individual needs. The major conclusions were that inclusive practices in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe were marred with non-uniformity as evidenced by variations in the implementation process. Further, that study concluded that due to the rigid curriculum and shortage of resources in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe, students with disabilities were not adequately catered for thereby affecting inclusive practices. The study recommends that the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development (MHTESTD) and University of Zimbabwe, Department of Teacher Education (DTE) should ensure that there was some standardisation in the way teachers' colleges implement inclusive education in Zimbabwe. Further, the MHTESTD and the DTE should revise the curriculum so that it becomes flexible and meet the individual needs of learners.

Keywords: inclusive education; inclusive practices; inclusion, inclusivity; teachers' colleges

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1. Introduction

Inclusive education (IE) is a contemporary issue in Zimbabwe and the world over. It is a current educational philosophy and a global trend which is meant to make education accessible to all people (Bryant, Smith & Bryant, 2008; Ahmed, Sharma & Deppeler, 2012). It is a standard that all educational managers should uphold for effective rolling out of educational programmes. The concept of inclusive education is anchored on the philosophy of Education for All people regardless of their individual needs and nature (UNESCO, 2009; Ainscow, 2010). Inclusive education is both a human rights and social justice issue which many societies are embracing as a way of meeting the demands of the cross section of the society (UNESCO, 2009; UNCRPD, 2006). As a human right issue, inclusive education is about ensuring that every child has access and opportunity to quality education without any form of discrimination whatsoever (UNESCO, 2017; UNCRPD, 2007). The aim of inclusive education is to enable students and teacher educators to feel comfortable with diversity and to see it as a challenge and enrichment of the learning environment, rather than a problem (Hlatywayo & Muranda, 2014).

There are a number of policies, frameworks and conventions that have been signed by the international community which inform inclusive education. These include, but not limited to, Sustainable Development Goals (2015); Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (2015); United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006); Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on special needs education (1994). Zimbabwe is a signatory to a number of these International Policies and conventions to which inclusive education is an obligation.

Like all other nations, Zimbabwe is working towards inclusive education. As such laws and statutes have been aligned to these agreements and conventions. With regards to law, the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No.20) Act (2013) provides for equal treatment, without discrimination of every citizen. Chapter 1 section 22 of the Zimbabwe Constitution refers specifically to persons with disabilities where the state and all institutions are obliged to treat such persons with respect and dignity and help them achieve their full potential. The Zimbabwe Education Act of 1987 as amended in 1996 and 2006 respectively states that every child has the right to access education at the nearest school. All students including those with disabilities have a fundamental right to education (Mutsvanga & Mapuranga, 2014). In addition, the Nziramasanga Commission (1999) recommended for an inclusive education system at all levels. The philosophy of inclusive education has been extended to all levels of education from ECD up to Tertiary and Higher Education.

Although there seemed to be lack of a specific inclusive education policy or legislation in Zimbabwe, there are various policies in place that support, promote and guide the inclusion of learners living with disabilities (Deluca, Tremonton & Kett, 2014). These are but not limited to Secretary's Circular number P36 of 1990, the Disabled Persons Act of Zimbabwe of 1996, the secretary's Circular number 2 of 2000, the director's Circular No. 24 of 2001 and the director's Circular number 7 of 2005. These policy

instruments and legislation are influential in guiding inclusion of learners with disabilities in the education system as they safeguard equity and equality of educational opportunities for people with disabilities (Chikwature, Oyedele, & Ntini, 2016). It is however unfortunate that they are mainly focusing on primary and secondary schools and seemed to be silent on higher and tertiary levels of education.

A number of students with disabilities of different nature have been enrolled in teachers' colleges as a way of complying with the Government standards and expectations regarding the philosophy of inclusivity. The students with disabilities are part of the mainstream classes and receive instruction alongside their peers without disabilities. Despite the enrolment of students with various disabilities, colleges seemed to be experiencing challenges in trying to meet all the educational needs of students with disability. This motivated the researcher to develop an interest in carrying out an empirical study that explored inclusive education practices in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe.

The researcher also noted that there seemed to be few students with disability in teachers' colleges. A comprehensive disability survey by MoHCC and UNICEF (2013) in Zimbabwe found out that less than 2% of persons with disabilities reach college level (tertiary education). In addition, Zimbabwe State Report on CRPD (2017: 61) noted that 1.1% of students with disabilities were enrolled in teacher education institutions by school term two of 2015. This percentage is far from being representative of the population of people with disabilities which stands at 15% according to WHO (2011).

Among the reasons for failure to enroll in tertiary institutions are disability related factors and the inaccessibility of educational institutions (MoHCC and UNICEF, 2013; Dutta et al., 2009 & Mpofu & Wilson, 2004). This shows that tertiary institutions, teachers' colleges included, could be lagging in terms of disability inclusion. According to Yusuf et al., (2009 p. 110) in Morley and Croft, 2011), more work should be done to ensure that participation is not just a question of a flood of students into increasingly dysfunctional institutions.

In their study, Allday, Neilsen-Gatti & Hudson (2013) found that teacher education programmes in the United States of America provided courses on characteristics of disabilities and how they are managed but, there were few specific programmes on disabilities in teacher education curricular in USA. In addition, UNICEF (2013) noted that inclusive education was part of the teacher education curriculum but was more theoretical than practical. In agreement to this, Kaplan and Lewis (2013) noted that the curricular in teacher education did not practice what it teaches.

In Asia, the emphasis on inclusive education called for teachers' colleges to restructure their teacher training programmes (Forlin, 2010). The process of restructuring teacher education programmes, however, resulted in inconsistencies between the Governments, structures and practices of teacher education programmes (Forlin, 2010). Australia has responded accordingly to inclusive education. Hitch, Macfarlane and Nihill (2015) established that a third of Australian universities had embraced inclusive education in their policies though there were variances in services provided.

According to European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (EASDNE) (2010), the idea of “Education and Training by 2020” focused on a reform on teacher education practices so as to produce teachers who could implement inclusive practices in schools (EADSNE, 2010). However, EASPD (2011) noted that in some European countries, teacher education curriculum still separates mainstream and special school sectors thereby training teachers differently. This perpetuates separation yet inclusive education should start during teacher training.

South Africa has not been left out in trying to achieve inclusive education. The White Paper 6 was meant to remove all discriminatory practices in the education system with the hope of creating an integrated education system for all learners including those with disabilities (Makoelle & Malindi, 2015). In Zimbabwe, Chiparaushe, Mapako and Makarau (2011) found out that there was inadequate support for students with disabilities in universities and polytechnic colleges. Phiri (2013) agrees that inclusive education at higher education level was not supported by proper attitudes, motivation and services. In addition, Sithole and Mafa (2017) established that there was a discrepancy between what was expected in terms of inclusive education and what was practiced in teacher education programmes in Zimbabwe.

It seemed as if there is limited research on inclusive education in tertiary and higher education; teachers' colleges being included. There seemed to have little research on the prevalence and experiences of students with disability and special needs in institutions of higher learning (Hadjikakou & Hartas, 2008 in Gebrehiwot, 2015). It could be noted that the studies conducted worldwide (Mclesckey & Waldro, 2015) on inclusive education showed that they were mainly focused on the primary, secondary schools and universities and less on teacher training colleges and other tertiary institutions. The major task was to find out how inclusive the teachers' colleges were. Hence, the focus was on holistic inclusivity in terms of the subject curricula, environment, infrastructure, attitudes and skills of stakeholders.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe are currently enrolling students with disabilities, yet the implementation of inclusive education might not be standardised due to the absence of policy guidelines. There is possible risk that student teachers with disability could just be physically placed without being included which could affect their effective development as professional teachers. Therefore, this study sought to establish the inclusive practices in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe.

1.2 Research Question

The following research question guided the study:

To what extent is inclusive education being practised in Zimbabwean teachers' colleges?

2. Methods and Procedures

The interpretivism paradigm, qualitative methodology and multiple case studies research design guided this study. Interpretivism paradigm was adopted because it supported the researcher's interest in understanding the social world of participants and key informants in relation to their experiences with regard to the way in which inclusive education was practiced in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe. The views of the participants and key informants in this study helped to construct the social world of inclusive education in teachers' colleges. Phenomenology philosophy allowed the researcher to get participants views and experiences in relation to the implementation of inclusive education in teachers' colleges (Creswell, 2009). The study was informed by qualitative research approach which is based on various meanings derived from the participants' experiences basing on the social and historical context in order to get a deeper understanding (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Multiple case studies research design was suitable in this study because the more than one case were studied, that is, three teachers' colleges and their informants and participants.

Homogenous purposeful sampling and snowballing techniques were adopted to draw up a sample of eight (8) key informants and seventeen (17) participants. The researcher had to purposively identify the research sites (three colleges) and to seek permission from the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development (MHTESTD) to gather and analyse data from the three teachers' colleges. Homogenous purposive sampling enabled the researcher to select individuals who had valuable information concerning inclusive education in teachers' colleges. In addition to homogenous purposeful sampling, the researcher also used snowballing sampling technique through the use of gatekeepers to reach the homogenous group of students with and without disability. Data were generated using the researcher as a primary instrument, face-to-face interviews and document analysis guide. Face-to-face interviews allowed deep engagement and interaction with participants and key informants on the inclusive practices. Interviews process took 20-49 minutes. Further, an observation guide was used to generate data on the physical environment of the colleges and the resources available for successful implementation of inclusive education. The researcher had an opportunity to observe directly what was happening in the physical and academic environment and not to rely on second hand information. Document analysis guide was also used to gather data on the background information and insights about inclusive education in teachers' colleges. Data gathered were analysed using thematic analysis and NVivo software.

2.1 Description of Participants

In this study, eight (8) students with disabilities (SWDs) were the key informants in this study. They provided in-depth information about their experiences in teachers' colleges which are critical to establishing how inclusive education is being implemented and managed in teachers' colleges. The seventeen (17) participants of the study were college administrators, lecturers and student without disabilities (SWnDs) of the three teacher

training colleges in Zimbabwe. Key informants and participants were drawn from the three teachers' colleges in Harare metropolitan province. All key informants were identified as Case 1 up to Case 17 depending on the chronological order in which they were interviewed.

3. Findings and Discussion

The inclusive practices are discussed under enrolment, curriculum, assessment, lecturing methods, treatment of students with disabilities, environment, resources and support services, and policy issues.

3.1 Enrolment

3.1.1 Enrolment process

Enrolment was derived as an important practice of inclusive education in teachers' colleges. This is because there could be no inclusive education in teachers' colleges without the enrolment of those students who should be part of the inclusive system.

When asked about the enrolment process, the key informants noted that;

"I applied normally and was already in the Information Communication and Technology (ICT) world. I was on number 3 on the list of those who had been interviewed." (Case 20)

The key informants agreed that there was no special procedure that was afforded to them during the enrolment process. If there was any, maybe they were not notified. They acknowledged that they applied like any other students and went through the interview process (Cases 6, 11 and 23. Findings from document analysis unearthed,

"There was no proper documentation that guides enrolment process of Persons with disabilities in colleges."

Therefore, the enrolment procedures were generalised to all prospective students and none were specific to individuals with disability as shown from the documents. Case 2 and Case 13, a college administrator clearly explained that;

"When they carry out the interviews, we expect them to pass just like anyone else and they should have the relevant qualifications, 5 O Levels including Mathematics and English. If someone doesn't have the qualification it doesn't matter whether they are disabled or not they don't qualify." (Case 16)

The expert shows that despite having a disability, a student has to acquire necessary qualifications in order to be admitted to a teachers' college in Zimbabwe. They have to go through the selection process just like other students. This clearly shows that there was no affirmative action to give persons with disabilities some advantage in terms of enrolling in teachers' colleges if they qualify.

The application forms from the three teachers' colleges had space requiring one to indicate if they had a disability. The idea of indicating a disability was meant to identify such persons and probably apply affirmative action. However, indicating a disability might not realise its use if the applicant was expected to pass the interview process in order to be enrolled despite having a disability.

Contrary, Case 15, an administrator had this to say;

"The Principal tasks us to consider that during interviews and asks the interviewers to note that features related to disabilities and this gives such students some advantages. Of course, the student should have some necessary qualifications." (Case 15)

The expert shows that students with disabilities would be accorded some advantage over other prospective students but should have the relevant qualifications. The findings support those of Chiparaushe et al. (2016) that there was no affirmative action when enrolling students for various programmes in tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe.

In as much as administrators claimed to be positive about enrolling SWDs, some lectures perceived their attitudes as negative. Case 1 explained;

"Most of the leaders do not want to enroll students with disabilities in their institutes. They only take a handful of such students in the college... The Principals that we have here negative attitudes... They think that it is a waste of resources... It's all because they don't understand the element of inclusivity." (Case 1)

The participant shows that Principals were negative and such negativity could be attributed to societal and cultural factors. However, basing on the researcher's interaction with administrators in teachers' colleges, the researcher derived that college Principals were developing positive attitudes towards enrolling students with disabilities as a requirement by the MHTESTD.

The researcher asked whether or not there was a clear policy guiding the enrolment process, the responses showed that there was no clear policy on enrolment of students with disabilities. It was further probed whether or not the advert encouraged PWDs to apply, Case 6 and Case 7 show that the advertisement for vacancies to train as teachers was silent about encouraging People with Disabilities (PWDs) to apply. One college administrator (Case 4) admitted that they had not been catering for PWDs in their college adverts for prospective student teachers.

It was noted that the 2018 adverts for two of the three colleges (College A and C) did not have a clause to encourage PWDs to apply. Both advertisements in part read, *"Interested persons should hand deliver their applications...."* This is silent on encouraging PWDs to apply.

The statement above may affect those individuals with mobility challenges who might not be able to deliver their own application letters. Such individuals might not apply and hence may feel being discriminated against. However, only one teachers'

college (College B) clearly specified in their advert that People with Disabilities (PWDs) were encouraged to apply. In part, the advert stated;

"People with disabilities are encouraged to apply".

This revealed a step towards accommodating PWDs in teacher education.

An interesting point on enrolment sufficed through one participant (Case 17) who explained;

"As we enroll, we take time to assess their disability so that we ascertain the capability to handle that kind of disability, the resources and the capacity. ... Sometimes we encounter a situation where students want to enroll with us and we discover that their disability is so severe that we will not be able to assist. While we appreciate that the intention is to be inclusive certain circumstances may force us to exclusivity. We end up excluding a student because you don't have the capacity to include them..."

The fact being raised by the participant above is that some students might not be enrolled not because the college did not want to accommodate them but because there are no facilities to cater for their various needs. Therefore, in as much as there is much talk about inclusivity, the facilities and resources in colleges may present barriers to inclusivity. The participant explained that severe and profound cases of disabilities might not be accommodated due to lack of facilities and resources. Lack facilities and resources in educational institutions had been unearthed by Reupert et al. (2010) that Australian universities failed to provide adequate resources and equipment to support inclusive education.

3.1.2 Number of students with disabilities

When asked about the approximate number of students with disabilities in the teachers' college, the participant gave approximations of 10-20, some 16, some 4, (Cases 2, 1, 15). The responses showed a lack of up-to-date statistics. One college leader openly admitted that there was no actual number but about four (4) in all intakes, Case 3 manager). However, it was questionable for administrators to profess ignorance of such important statistics which are necessary in determining the provision of resources for students with disabilities.

A key informant (Case 20) in the study noted;

"Our population is around 20 out of 2000 students- 1% which is not representative... considering that we are only 1% of the population we could sit and talk and produce a representative."

The fact that there were only about 1% of the student population showed how under represented students with disabilities were in Teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe. These findings concur with the findings by UNICEF and MoHCC (2013) and that there

are less than 2% of persons with disabilities reach tertiary education in Zimbabwe. It also concurs with the results of the Zimbabwe State Report on CRPD (2017) that 1.1% of PWDs were enrolled in Teachers Colleges by term two of 2015. As such, PWDs might remain marginalised with regards to access to tertiary education in Zimbabwe.

Document review established that there were no proper enrolment statistics except on gender and contact details of students. The researcher also found out that the unavailability of special education files and records from all the three Teachers' colleges contributed to inadequate records on statistics of students with disabilities in colleges. It could be noted that failure to have proper and accurate records and figures of students with disabilities Teachers' colleges might affect effective evaluation of Inclusive Education practices in Teachers' colleges.

3.1.3 Types of disabilities

The types of disabilities assisted the researcher to determine the extent to which students with disabilities' needs were met in teachers' colleges. On the types of disabilities that the students in the Teachers' colleges had, it was revealed that there were those with partial speech and visual impairments, severe visual and hearing impairments, physical disabilities in terms of deformities in limbs, back, those using wheel chairs, those with albinism. Most of these seemed to be manageable and might be ranging from mild to severe and not profound cases. The findings complimented those of Yeo et al. (2014) that teachers in Singapore generally felt that children with mild disabilities could be included in regular classes and not those with severe and profound disabilities. The teachers' colleges seemed to be ill prepared to accommodate other severe and profound cases of disabilities. The researcher established that there were no special education files and proper documentation where such information on types of disabilities could be derived.

3.2 Accessibility of the Curriculum

Curriculum came up as an important component in the implementation of inclusive education in teachers' colleges. The participants showed that inclusive education was taught in some sections as a topic. When asked how inclusive the curriculum was, the responses by participants were insightful as shown;

"Curriculum does not cater for individual differences; it is the same for all students...same expectations on the curriculum. Curriculum is rigid and lecturing methods are not inclusive." (Case 11)

The general concern on curriculum was that it is rigid and did not cater for individual differences. All students are expected to go through the same curriculum. Complimenting this were the documents reviewed (College curriculum) which clearly indicates;

"All students have to go through the curriculum subjects." (Document review)

It was highlighted that what might vary and which must be considered carefully was the methodology used by the lecturers in the teaching and learning process. The rigidity of the curriculum had been noted by Molina et al. (2016) that students with disabilities complained against a rigid curriculum which did not allow lecturers to diversify and accommodate their learning needs effectively.

On the adequacy of Inclusive Education training the student teachers were getting, Case 7 emphasised;

“When we are looking at the curriculum, we are preaching the gospel of inclusivity yet we are not practising it. We are not walking the talk. ... We are equipping them with knowledge on how to deal with learners with disabilities and failing to realise that they should be included in the curriculum.... they should be included first and after being included, we give them knowledge to go and teach those who are living with disabilities. They should live in inclusion first before being given knowledge.... “

The foregoing excerpts showed that there is more focus on theory and not the practical aspect of inclusive education. The findings are in line with those by Kaplan and Lewis (2013) and UNICEF (2013) that inclusive education in teacher education curriculum is more theoretical than practical. The document analysis reviewed that inclusive education was offered as a topic for one and half lecture and two-hour lecture for first year students in College B and for the third-year students in College A.

3.3 Assessment of student teachers

Another important component of inclusive practices in teachers' colleges is assessment. When asked on how inclusive the assessment methods administered on student teachers, the participants revealed;

“Assessment is equal for all students and it does not cater for individual differences.”
(Case 1)

“They (lecturers) assess us like any other students.” (Case 11)

From the sentiments of the participants, assessment of student teachers is similar for all students and it does not cater for individual differences. The supervision instruments that were analysed showed that teachers' colleges used the same instrument for assessment and had the same expectations for all students. Using the same supervision instruments was a positive stride towards reducing discrimination. However, this might not apply to some form of disabilities such as hearing impairment where the individual could not be assessed on aspects such as voice projection which was part of lesson delivery during teaching practice. The findings established that there were some considerations which were allowed by the University of Zimbabwe; Department of Teacher Education (DTE) as indicated below;

"We are going to look at all forms of disability., in terms of assessment, we are trying to make sure that we identify such students early and help them. When they are about to be assessed, we write to the DTE because they are part of the process...So in terms of exams our DTE quality assurance department will assist us and we are doing a lot to accommodate such." (Case 4)

The foregoing experts reveal that considerations given to students with disabilities were in terms of more time given to write exams, providing large printed examination papers and using laptops for those who could not use free hand. The results resonate with the views of Majoko (2018) that examination arrangements for students with disabilities including extra time and separate examination venues are strategies to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities in higher education institutions in Zimbabwe. The researcher observed that all students write the same assignments and was marked on the same platform.

3.4 Instructional methods

In as much as the curriculum was the same for all students despite disability, it was noted by participants that the instructional methods should be accommodative and inclusive. The syllabus did not specify what was to be done in accommodating students with disabilities and it was left to the lecturer on how to do deliver their lectures if they happen to have such a student in their classes. Therefore, it was the prerogative of the lecturers to plan their lectures accordingly so as to cater for students with disabilities in lecture rooms. One participant noted;

"They all take part to the same activities. We use same methods that we use for other students because they are taught in the same lecture rooms as other students, for example lecture method and group work, they (students with disabilities) are part of the group. They are given same projects like other students and are given the same assignment as other students." (Case 5)

The excerpt shows that there was no discrimination in terms of having separate classes for students with disabilities. All students were treated the same and belonged to same classes. However, it was noted that the same old instructional methods such as lecture method might not be appropriate for some students especially those with hearing and visual impairment, for example, lecturing and dictating notes. This appeared to tally with the findings of Reupert et al. (2010) who established that mass lectures were commonly used in Australia to which lecturers tried to make interactive and engaging.

Generally, the key informants who were satisfied with the instructional methods were those with other disabilities except for the one with hearing impairment who claimed that he/she did not hear what the lecturers say during lectures. The key informant said;

"During lectures, I won't hear what is being said. I copy from my friend who will help me after the lecture. But the friend is also a student and will be busy with their own work. Lecturers are not able to communicate with me. A few are able to." (Case 8)

When probed on how the student communicates with other lecturers, the key informant revealed that other lecturers appeared not to even notice that there was a student with hearing impairment in class. The fact that lecturers tended to ignore the presence of a student with hearing impairment in lectures might be explained by failure to use Sign Language which is one of the skills required to manage students with disabilities. The researcher can use sign language and could understand the key informant.

3.5 Treatment of Students with Disabilities at Teachers' Colleges

It was important to investigate how students with disabilities were treated as part of inclusive practices at teachers' colleges. The treatment of students with disabilities in teachers' colleges varies according to participants perspectives. One participant (Case 12) narrated;

"Most of the Lecturers treat everyone as an individual.... despite being disabled everyone has a right to education and everyone is equal... should be treated the same."

The views of the participant showed that students with disabilities were treated fairly and were not discriminated against despite their disabilities. When further probed on how satisfied they were, the participant showed that they are comfortable working with what they have and not to bring unnecessary burden to the college leaders. Another key informant buttressed;

"They (the administration) are trying but it is not what one would really want, because if you are categorised as having a disability, you definitely need some help with other things that you want so you must go and ask or work without." (Case 6)

The foregoing excerpt showed that there are special requirements for specific disabilities. Thus, corroborating with the view of Tugli et al. (2013) that students with disabilities require special support depending on the disability. In as much as there might be equal treatment for all students, it could be borne in mind that each individual is different and that such difference must be addressed so that no one is left out. Molina et al. (2016) stated that despite the need for equal treatment, students with disabilities have special learning needs which present a barrier to learning if they are not met. Nevertheless, one administrator revealed that they tried, as much as possible, to accommodate students with disabilities in their colleges. They did this by listening to their concerns and trying to provide them with necessary resources where possible. However, one administrator noted that some students with disabilities do not complain;

“Not complaining, meaning that they are comfortable or they may be afraid of the responses, considering the struggle to get places”. (Case 21)

When students with disabilities did not complain, it might mean that they were comfortable or they might be afraid of the responses from the college leaders, considering the struggle they would have had to get places. This implied that the college social environments were not friendly enough to accommodate complaints from SWD. The results complimented the observations by Tugli et al. (2013) that the social environment in higher education in South Africa was not accommodative to students with disabilities.

3.6 College environment

The environment was a critical component among inclusive practices in teachers' colleges. When asked about how accessible the physical environment was, key informants and participants established that the physical environment was accessible. Availability of pathways and shades was a step towards inclusivity as they protected students against extreme weather conditions. Some key informants noted that they were given preferences in hostels by having single rooms on ground floor. When probed whether or not having single rooms was discriminatory, one participant explained that PWDs have individual characteristics which demands privacy, Case 20 said;

“To protect their privacy, students with disabilities have some things that they do that want privacy for example removing a leg before they sleep. They have their rights and practices which do not want other to know or to witness.”

The participant implied that students with disabilities have their right to privacy which must be upheld. Thus, using private rooms was not discriminatory but away to ensure their right to privacy and confidentiality.

It was revealed that there were still challenges in accessing sports fields. The sports fields were constructed several years ago before inclusive education and this might explain their inaccessibility. The pace to adapt the physical environment seemed to be slower than expected. Such revelations appear to be in line with the report by EASPD (2011) that inclusive education is an on-going process, but the progress might be slow in some European countries. Hence, if progress on inclusive education might be slow in some European countries, then in African countries such as Zimbabwe might be affected as well.

Furthermore, the researcher observed that there were ramps in some parts of the college B and C and no ramps in some parts. Some offices are accessible with ramps and others are not. The administration blocks of college B and C were accessible with ramps. However, in one college (college A) there were passageways and there were no ramps which make it inaccessible to wheelchair users. It was further observed that the library in two of the teachers' colleges (College A & B) had bookshelves upstairs where there were no ramps or lifts and were not accessible by those students with mobility difficulties. Nonetheless, one participant (Case 17) referred to the social environment and said;

"By bringing in staff with special needs background, we are trying to create a student friendly environment."

The views showed that having qualified personnel in colleges could help create a student friendly environment. The people in the environment are important in developing a conducive social environment which is important for implementing Inclusive Education in Teachers' colleges.

3.7 Resources and support services

When asked whether teachers' colleges had adequate resources to cater for students with disabilities in their colleges, all participants noted that there was lack of resources. This was complimented by the fact that there were no resources centres in all the three colleges. Participants (Cases 3, 5, 10 and 22) noted that they are in the process of establishing resource units where special services for students with disabilities would be rendered. There were no assistive devices in the colleges and students brought their own devices and resources and worked with what they had. It was noted that there were no books in the library that could be used by students with low vision, braille books or facilities (Case 1). Another participant (Case 7) noted;

"For the partially sighted, the lecture room are not suitable, the need for shatter glasses, limited light, there are no wide door for student with wheel chairs. The library situation, those with partial visual need special computers. There are no computers and don't have software for those living with disabilities such as the talking software and computers. The entire computers are for students without disability."

From the observations made, it was noted that;

"Computers have general software that are not specific for students with disabilities. Library book shelves on the first floor and have standard print... doorways are standard size...no assistive devices... only one wheelchair...no resource room. No shatter glasses in lecture rooms." (college A)

These sentiments showed that resources for meeting the needs of students with disabilities were scarce in all the teachers' colleges. Despite lack of resources, there were some plans to establish a resource centre in the three colleges. One key informant (Case 11) noted that there were no extra resources offered. A key informant (Case 20) propounded that there were no Jaws and NVDA's software. If there was need, they catered for themselves. Case 6 bluntly stated that;

"I don't know and I could work without. I only know that if I want something or I am down with something could go to someone and it is social especially counselling."

The informant noted that they relied on friends. Nevertheless, one participant (Case 21) noted;

"Because they (students with disabilities) are helping each other, the administration tends to be reluctant and feel it is happening and as long as they are being assisted."

Reluctance by the administrators in rendering necessary support to students with disabilities is detrimental to the implementation of inclusive education in teachers' colleges. However, another key informant (Case 2) noted that he/she was assisted by the Principal to get an artificial leg from an organisation. If administration is supportive, the students with disabilities would get the best services. Without necessary support, students with disabilities are more likely to withdraw from colleges than those without disabilities (Quinn, 2013).

Other services offered in the colleges were the clinic but might not be well resourced. There were also medical services which were a facility that was designed for all students to have medical aid. The researcher could testify (from the observations made) that all the colleges had clinics which were staffed with qualified nurse though they were limited on the treatment and care they could offer.

Further, the participants (Cases 12, 13 and 14) noted that there were counsellors in the college who offered counselling services who are part of the lecturing staff. However, there were no properly furnished counselling and the counsellors used their offices as counselling rooms. Absence of counselling rooms may affect effective counselling services which might be offered to students with disabilities.

3.8 Inclusive Education Policy

Inclusive education policy was an important element in implementing effective inclusive practices. Participants agreed that there might be no guiding policy from the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development (MHTESTD). They bemoaned the lack of policy which should guide and direct their activities and conduct. One participant (Case 22) echoed;

"Policy is not pronounced loudly on IE and it appears as something that is remote or removed from the Education system. It should be enforced in all sectors and all stakeholders."

There was no clearly pronounced policy. However, one administrator established that despite lack of a national or ministerial policy, the college had a working policy which gave SWD a proportion in enrolment. However, there was no written document to that effect.

Another participant (Case 3) established that the issue of policy was now in progress by the MHTESTD and was expected to be in use soon. It was noted that some organisations were working with the MHTESTD and the teachers' college Principals to

come up with a clear policy that would guide the implementation of inclusive education in Teachers' colleges.

However, the researcher noted that inclusivity was not in the mission statement of college B from which Case 18 was from but comes up in the college values. One of the college values is *"tolerance"* which may mean need to tolerate diversity among other things which is relevant with the concept of inclusivity. Other values noted are *"inclusivity"* as clearly stated in College C, and *"Diversity of thinking and Equality"* stated in College A. These might be related to inclusive education. Therefore, there was need to revise the mission statements so that they are specific on inclusivity. Nevertheless, the mission statement for college A is inclusive of all student teachers. It reads;

"To afford every student teacher on teaching practice an opportunity for a face to face interaction with supervisors at the service delivery point." (Document review)

The term *"every student teacher"* was all encompassing and might include those with disabilities. However, the statement is not specific on how to include students with special needs.

The absence of a policy makes it difficult to coordinate, to monitor and evaluate inclusive education practices in teachers' colleges. In the views of Chataika (2007), lack of a guiding policy and clear structure of what is to be done, by who, when and how makes it difficult to be accountable in implementing inclusive education. Availability of a policy could compel teachers' colleges to be inclusive and to be accountable. From the participants' and key informants' views, it was noted that there are variations in terms of how inclusive education is handled in Teachers' colleges due to lack of clear guiding principles.

4. Conclusions on inclusive practices in Teachers' colleges

Eight conclusions were derived from the findings on inclusive practices in Teachers' colleges as follows;

- Firstly, the implementation of inclusive education in teachers' colleges was marred with non-uniformity as evidenced by variations in terms of how inclusive education was being implemented in teachers' colleges. This was influenced partly by the absence of inclusive education policy by the MHTESTD. This affected the implementation of inclusive education as there was no accountability and clear monitoring procedures.
- As a result of clear enrolment procedures, students with disabilities were underrepresented in teachers' colleges and thereby affected the inclusion of such students in teachers' colleges.
- Due to the rigid curriculum in teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe, students with disabilities were not adequately catered for thereby affecting the implementation of inclusive education.

- Inclusivity of teachers' colleges was affected by traditional instructional methods which were used by lecturers and the same assessment procedures were not very inclusive and might not be appropriate to other students with special needs. Thereby affecting inclusivity of teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe.
- Measures such as providing braille examination paper, large print and time allowances, special examination arrangements for students with disabilities including extra time and separate examination venues made by University of Zimbabwe, Department of Teacher Education (UZ, DTE) were a necessary step towards inclusivity in teachers' colleges.
- Despite equal treatment, students with disabilities still had their special needs depending on the type of disability which teachers' colleges were failing to meet.
- Despite strides by college leaders to accommodate students with disabilities in terms of amenities and tuition, the physical and social environment were not accessible by all students.
- Due to lack of resources, implementation of inclusive education in teachers' colleges of Zimbabwe was restricted to social inclusion.

5. Recommendations

The following recommendations were derived from the conclusions made above;

- The MHTESDT should ensure that there was some level of standardisation in the way teachers' colleges implement inclusive education. This could be done through an established policy or guidelines.
- Teachers' college administrators should have clear enrolment procedures to ensure the increase proportional representation of students with disabilities in colleges. They should establish a quota system when enrolling students with disabilities. The college managers should ensure that college adverts encourage PWDs to apply.
- College lecturers and administrators should offer practical approach to Inclusive Education which includes practical skills and practical attachment in inclusive school.
- The MHTESTD and the Department of Teacher Education should revise the curriculum so that it becomes flexible in terms of subjects offered, timetable and assessment so as to meet diverse needs of students.
- Lecturers should adopt interactive and collaborative methods of instruction as well as adapting assessment criteria that meet the needs of all students.
- College administrators should improve on infrastructure adjustments so as to make it accessible by all students which the MHTESTD should monitor.
- College administrators should embark on various avenues and projects as well as network with Non-Governmental Organisations so that they avail resources that were necessary for inclusive education to be successful.

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