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**“CRITICAL BARRIERS TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION:  
INTERVENTION STRATEGIES FROM A KENYAN CONTEXT”**



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## Abstract

This study assessed the challenges in the implementation of inclusive education (I.E) for Special needs learners (SNE) in mainstream primary schools. It focused on the use of teaching and learning resources, assessment and placement strategies and instructional approaches. A descriptive survey design was adopted whereby, out of 150 schools that had integrated Special Needs Learners in Bungoma County, Kenya, 20% were stratified proportionately and randomly sampled. Purposive sampling was then used to obtain the participants; head teachers, regular, and special teachers. The sample comprised of 30 head teachers, 120 regular teachers and 8 special teachers (total 158). Data were collected using questionnaires for 30 head teachers, 120 regular teachers, and interview schedules for 8 special teachers. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study findings revealed that inadequate government resources and infrastructure, inflexible curriculum, inadequate time, negative attitude, high pupil to teacher ratio and lack of skilled power are the most significant challenges facing the implementation of Inclusive Education (IE). The feedback from respondents however indicated a disconnect between the Head teachers and Regular teachers For instance, with regard to constraints encountered in the use of learning resources for learners, the response was 10% and 48% respectively for skills and 14% and 42% respectively for resources. Additionally, curriculum and staff development needs were identified as the most appropriate interventions for constraints in instructional approaches. A ranking analysis from mainstream and special teachers indicated negative attitude to be the most significant challenge facing implementation of IE, with lack of skills deemed the most insignificant. It is thus recommended that there is need for a sensitization programmed to demystify the concept of special education to allow IE to take root. Similarly there is need for curriculum modification, teacher capacity building, collaboration between special and regular teachers and allocation of adequate resources in line with IE.

**Keywords:** Inclusive Education, Barriers, Intervention Strategies, Special Needs Learners

## 1. Introduction

Globally, education systems were constructed to include some children and not others and in the past this differentiation meant that some children because of individual deficits ‘could not cope within the ordinary educational system (UNESCO, 1994). The traditional development programs were not in line with the universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations

Assembly 1948, Article 26) which states that everyone has a right to education. With the world declaration on Education For All (EFA) 1990 at Jomtien, reaffirmed the notion of education as a fundamental human right and provided strategies for addressing the basic learning needs of all as an investment in the future necessitated reform in the education sector. In addition, delegation of World Education Forum in Dakar Senegal, established the new Millenium Development (MDGs) of providing every girl and boy with the primary school education by 2015 and assessing progress towards EFA since Jomtien. EFA also identified Inclusive education as one of the key strategies to address issues of marginalization and exclusion. The government of Kenya has been implementing measures to improve participation of Special Needs Learners in Mainstream Primary schools. Under Free Primary initiative, capitation grants are provided to the Special Needs Learners (SNE) to begin removing existing barriers that make the school environment unfriendly. Despite this effort by the government, access to education by those with special needs remains limited as contended by Njoka et al (2012) in their study of equitable basic education in Kenya, found out that special needs education had not been given adequate attention. Only 39 out of the 96 sampled schools were implementing special needs intervention. It is to this effect that this study sought to identify the most significant challenges affecting implementation of inclusive education for SNE as an intervention to improve inclusive practices in mainstream primary schools.

According to a study by Hodtkinston (2010), the last stop on the Journey to successful inclusion depends, firstly on teachers attitudes to its implementation and secondly upon their competencies to deliver. Research suggests that while a majority of teachers support inclusive education they do so with a lot of reservation. Teachers support inclusion if it relates to children with mild mobility and sensory difficulties. These studies suggest that for these children, teachers believe that exclusion is necessary on practical grounds. If schools have to become inclusive, then they should be enabled to develop an ethos that not only enables all pupils to be supported but also provides for the needs of teachers (Forlin, 2010).

A study by Malatsi and Okumbe (2007) revealed that the biggest challenge in implementing inclusive education is to change teachers attitude .According to UNESCO (2007), The Baseline study carried out on inclusive education in Nuba Mountains , Southern Sudan indicated that majority of the teachers were for inclusive education and the few that were

against had the fear of lack of skills. Training teams over individuals, and providing training that motivates, defines actions that make up the intervention, provides tools to perform the actions (Kealey, Peterson, Gaul, & Dinh, 2000), and enables practitioners to gain confidence – are more likely to result in practice change. Such training must be followed by ongoing coaching and mechanisms for sharing and learning from peers and others. These features of professional development are most likely to positively affect implementation of an education innovation as the teachers would have gained confidence and hence form a positive attitude towards an innovation. Other challenges identified in this study included inadequate government resources, inflexible curriculum, teacher-pupil ratio, inadequate time and lack of skilled manpower.

A study by Epari (2005) revealed that 95% of the respondents indicated that funds received from FPE kit for primary schools were not adequate to cater for learners with special needs and thus negates the current policy of inclusive education. This study looked at identifying sources of funding for SNE in both separate and integrated schools. Whereas, this study sought to assess the adequacy of this funds in implementing inclusive education of children with special educational needs in public primary schools. However, a number of countries have broadened their approach to funding and resourcing education. They have developed responses to learning difficulties, which are not dependent on additional funding. These responses include: collaborative work by students; parental involvement in the classroom; and teacher problem-solving and mutual support (Booth and Ainscow, 2006) several cost-effective measures to promote inclusive quality education have been developed in countries with scarce resources. These include training-of-trainer models for professional development, linking students in pre-service teacher training with schools and converting special needs schools into resource centres that provide expertise and support to clusters of regular schools (UNESCO, 2003)

## **2. Research Design**

The study was exploratory in nature. This is best when used to discover ideas and insights. The method yields useful information concerning the nature of a phenomenon (Cohen et al, 2000) the study adapted a survey study design that helped to obtain pertinent and precise information concerning the current phenomena. This design was considered appropriate to collect information, gather opinions and record attitudes from head teachers and teachers

regarding the most significant constraints in relation to the implementation of inclusive education for Special Needs Learners in Mainstream primary schools in Bungoma County, Kenya. The approach of the study was more of qualitative than quantitative as the ultimate concern was to probe into the various unexplored dimensions of a phenomenon rather than establishing specific relationship among the components. The study was carried out in Bungoma County as it seemed to have a record of more special needs programs compared to other Counties in the Western region of Kenya.

### **3. Research Context and Sample Selection**

The participants were recruited from public primary schools that had integrated learners with special needs in Kenya from ( Bungoma County) of Western region. 20% of 150 schools were stratified ,randomly and proportionately sampled within the 8 administrative districts of the county basing on Gay (1992) who considers the percentage as minimum for smaller samples. The schools were stratified according to the 8 administrative districts and proportionately randomly selected according to the number of the schools in each district. This procedure brought on board 30 schools for the study. The participants in this study were purposively sampled. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique that allows a researcher to use respondents that have the required information with respect to the objectives of the study (Cohen et al, 2000). The participants included: Head teachers, as they are in charge of the implementation of inclusive education programmed, class teachers of lower primary (standard 1-4). Criterion sampling was used to select 8 special teachers in charge of resource rooms representing 8 administrative districts of the county using the results of the survey. The technique sets forth criteria before selecting the participants (Creswell, 1998). This method was useful for identifying cases from a standardized questionnaire. The selection of schools depended on the results from the questionnaire data with maximal variations in responses to variables in the study.

### **4. Data Collection Tools**

Data collection consisted of an open-ended questionnaire and individual semi-structured interviews. The open ended questionnaire was completed by 30 head teachers and 120 teachers, while 8 special teachers were interviewed by a means of semi-structured interviews. Open-ended questionnaire contained questions such as, e.g. 'what constraints are encountered by teachers in the use of teaching and learning resources?', 'What recommendations can you

give to improve the use of teaching and learning resources?’ Sample interview related questions were, ‘Rank the most significant challenges in your school and explain’. Probing was also employed to further explore responses of participants during the interview.

## **5. Data Analysis**

Data analysis was done both quantitatively and qualitatively. Qualitative data were analyzed and coded by using the suggestions of Creswell (2003). The data was transcribed and then reading the same transcription several times. While reading, codes in symbolic form were assigned to aspects that the data suggested. Each code was written on a piece of paper and the symbol associated with it adjacent to it. The codes were written down and grouped into similar categories by combining similar codes. Data were then presented as category, with each category explained as qualitative narrative. Interpretations followed by linking the findings to the literature and the researchers’ interpretation based on the data. For quantitative data, descriptive statistics for the questionnaires and observation schedule items were summarized in the text and reported in tabular form. Frequency analysis was conducted to identify valid response percentages for all questions in the survey. The results were tabulated and summarized in tables and graphs.

## **6. Results and Discussion**

The tables and descriptions were for two categories of participants. These were regular teachers and special teachers. The responses were grouped under the following themes:

- i. Use of available teaching and learning resources,
- ii. Learner assessment and placement strategies
- iii. Instructional approaches employed
- iv. Identification of the most significant challenge by rank.

### **6.1 Barriers Encountered in the Use of Available Teaching and Learning Resources**

The head teachers and teachers gave the following responses regarding the challenges encountered by teachers in using teaching learning resources in Table 1.

Barriers	Head Teachers		Teachers	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
Inadequate resources	14	46.7	42	35.8
Inadequate skills	10	33.3	48	39.2
Storage	6	20	30	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 Head teachers and Teachers’ Perspectives on Barriers Encountered in Using Teaching/Learning Resources for SNE learners

From Table 1, the findings revealed inadequate resources as the main constraint inhibiting the implementation of inclusive for SNE learners cited by a majority 14 (46.7%) and 42 (39.2%) of the participants and lack of technical skills cited second by 10 (33.3%) of the head teachers and majority 48 (39.2%) of the of the teachers while lack of storage facilities was cited by a few 6 (20%) and 30 (25%) of the participants in third position. The findings are consistent with Gronland (2010) articulates that IE requires support of both equipment and skills to cater for diverse needs of learners. However, Ochieng (2010) noted that the provision of teaching /learning resources is not enough for successful inclusion, but the utility and proper maintenance of these educational resources could ensure the success of the achievement of the desired results. It therefore seems that, perhaps, the use of available teaching and learning resources and maintenance of these resources is key to successful inclusion.

Head teachers and teachers gave the following responses on possible ways of improving the use of available teaching /learning resources in Table 2

Barriers	Head teachers		Teachers	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
Improve funding	16	53.3	58	48.3
Capacity building	10	33.3	16	13.4
Establish resource centres	4	13.4	46	38.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2: Head teachers and Teachers' Perspectives on Improving the Use of Teaching/Learning Resources

From Table 2, the findings indicate improved government funding proposed by 16 (53.3%) head teachers was rated as a first solution and teachers 58 (48.3%) to the constraints

mentioned in Table 22, while training of teachers to equip them with required skills was rated second by 10 (33.3%) of the head teachers, while the teachers 46 (38.3%) felt that establishing resource centres was crucial than capacity building. These findings stand to agree with a study by Epari (2005) who indicated that funds received from FPE kit for primary schools were not adequate to cater for SNE learners. It therefore seems that improvement in funding by the government may enhance the implementation of IE for SNE learners in mainstream primary schools. However, government improvement in funding may not be sufficient as these schools would require varied government support such as mandatory policies and laws necessary for implementation of the successive inclusive program and the rights of the beneficiary to secure specific services. This initiative would create room for litigation, accountability evaluation and monitoring procedures and financial backing (Ochieng, 2010).

## 6.2 Barriers Encountered in Assessment and Placement of SNE Learners

Data was generated from questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire administered to 120 teachers in the study population elicited responses indicating the challenges encountered in the assessment and placement of SNE learners. Below are the responses shown in Table 3.

Barriers	Frequency	Percentage %
Heavy workload	16	13.3
Diverse challenges	5	4.2
Inadequate facilities	23	19.2
Lack of skills	16	13.3
Uncooperative parents	60	50
Total	120	100

Table 3: Teacher Responses on the Barriers encountered in Assessment and placement of SNE learners.

Findings from the Table 3 reveal that 60 (50%) of the teachers cited the problem of uncooperative parents or negative attitude followed by 23 (19.2%) on inadequate facilities/tools. The third problem was 16 (13.3%) on inadequate skills of assessment and heavy workload from the curriculum activities respectively. The fourth issue indicated by teachers was diverse challenges which had 5 (4.2%). The results indicated that negative attitude being a major uncooperative stance shows that the matter of assessment and

placement has not been well clarified to the communities. Remember that negative attitude was ranked the highest problem as a main challenge in the process of moving towards inclusive education. The issue of heavy workload and the inadequacy of skills in identification and placement of SNE learners came third and is in tandem with Commigham & Edwards (2003), who said the challenge educators and researcher face is to discover what works with which students in what contexts. The most effective method of assessment and placement of SNE learners is the Response to intervention mode (RTI) which is based on the idea that instructional practices or interventions at each level should be based on scientific evidence of what counts as effective practice. With the current emphasis on using evidence based interventions, it is essential to ensure that decisions about instruction should not be based on assumption that one size fits all (Jimenez & Graf 2008, p.150). Therefore these technicalities support the expressions of the teachers about the barriers encountered in the identification and placement of SNE learners.

### 6.3 Recommendations of Teachers on Barriers Encountered

When regular teachers were asked to give recommendations on challenges encountered, they gave the following responses as in Table 4 below.

Recommendations	Frequency	percentage%
Parental involvement	40	33.3
Capacity building	36	30
Allocation of more time	28	23.3
Improve funding	16	13.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4: Regular Teachers' Recommendations on Barriers encountered

From Table 4 the teachers proposed parental involvement 40 (33.3%) as the most important solution to the problem followed by 36 (30%) of the teachers mentioning capacity building of teachers on techniques and skills of assessment and eventual placement of the SNE learners. Finally, 16 (13.3%) of the teachers suggested improvements on funding. The recommendations of these teachers are quite in tandem with (Jimenez & Graf, 2008, p.162) who noted that when children and their parents are respected and valued, the entire learning environment benefits by creating and supporting improved school climate." "Educators often miss opportunities to form strong connections with parents when they do not acknowledge

that both parents and educators must work together as a team in order to attain what is best for children. These facts show that teachers lack skills assessment and placement such that responses to intervention model have not been applied in the study population. For that method to apply, it requires full support and collaboration from parents so that early identification is possible. Information from the eight special teachers indicates that most of the common methods used fall in a class of model technically called discrepancy model which has several weakness in itself as it clearly stated by Jimenez & Graf, 2008 p.169). They state in part “the states must not require the use of severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement in academic performance for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability and that states must permit the use of a process based on the child’s response to scientific research-based intervention”. In other words these researchers recommend the use Response to Intervention (RTI) model.

The teachers other recommendation was on capacity building which is a very necessary resolution. Though the effect of additional training may be difficult to predict, Pijl and Frissen (2009) noted that the Dutch government in 1980s had set up a large scale additional in-service training for teachers in regular education to combat a growing number of referrals to special schools. The effect was disappointing as teachers used their newly acquired skills to detect symptoms of impairment in students with special needs even earlier, yet still referred them to special schools. However, Pijl and Frissen (2009) felt that the best recipe was to train, motivate and influence these teachers in schools. The findings may imply that the provision of capacity building coupled with teacher motivation and embracing these new models of SST and RTI may ensure effective and efficient assessment and placement of SNE learners. The third recommendation of teachers was the allocation of more time 16 (13.3%), which in part, is connected to government policy guidelines and curriculum adaptations.

#### **6.4 Barriers Encountered at EARC in the Assessment of SNE Learners**

The interview was carried out to determine the challenges encountered at EARCs in assessment of SNE learners. The participant reported that teacher attitude was a significant barrier. The participant further pointed out that parents were willing to bring their children, but mainstream teachers had refused to accept them because they thought that they were better off in special schools. Administration attitudes were also mentioned as barriers. The participant reported that the Education office gives minimal support because they see nothing

out of it, that the Educational Act 2013 is silent on management of EARCs and, furthermore, that the SNE is not represented at the decision making level. These findings seem to concur with Njoka et al (2012) about vagueness of legal framework in integration of inclusive education program.

The participant also mentioned lack of funds as another challenge. Initially, EARCs were funded as an entity until 2008. There has been no funding to do outreach programmers since that time. Assessment tools and equipment were found to be outdated. The participant gave an example of a sole audiometric tool which required annual calibration that had not been maintained since 2008. This finding further confirmed results from the demographic data. Specifically, there was one sensitization intervention only. The interview revealed that funding for that programmed was not simply reduced, but was cut completely. No other sensitization trainings were offered or other capacity building efforts done.

On the way forward, the participant strongly asserted for the need for structural support with regard to: decision making, collaboration with regular schools and other professionals, programming, monitoring, capacity building and funding. The participant was particular with the need of reviewing of assessment tools such that current available technology for assessment could be incorporated for greater efficiency, such as audiometric tools which are automatic. Advocacy for special needs learners. Free drugs for children presenting epileptic symptoms could go far to reducing the number of mentally impaired learners in the County. Participant informed the researcher that untreated epilepsy was the primary cause of mental impairment. The findings revealed that mental impairment comprised the highest frequency subgroup of SNE learners in this study. Early intervention, including sensitization training, education and medicine, can go far to prevent the occurrence of severe symptoms in children exhibiting this disorder.

Interview findings confirmed that successful implementation through the support of CBOs such as ICEFM school sponsors, which, in this case, are the Salvation Army and the Association of Physically Disabled Persons. If the government also comes in, working in partnership, there is every reason to expect the harnessing of greater expectations in inclusions.

### 6.5 Barriers Encountered in the Instructional Approaches in Inclusive Classroom

Regular teachers were asked to give barriers encountered in instructional approaches. The summary of the results is shown in Table 5.

No	Constraints	Percentage %	
1	Negative attitude	17	14.3
2	Facilities/tools	20	16.7
3	Inadequate skills	31	25.8
4	Inflexible curriculum	52	43.2
	<b>Total</b>	120	100

Table 5: Regular Teacher Responses on barriers in Instructional Approaches

The results in Table 5 indicate that inflexible curriculum scored the highest with 52 (43.2%) while inadequate skills 31 (25.8%) was rated second from the teachers perspective. Facilities/Tools with 20 (16.7%) were rated as a third constraints as perceived by the teachers whereas negative attitude with 17 (14.3%) was rated last. This indicates that teachers felt that an inflexible curriculum was the biggest hindrance on the application of instructional approaches.

These findings are in accord with Malatsi and Okumbe (2007), who pointed out that the curriculum for inclusive education, had been found faulty since the government embraced the idea of integration and, therefore, could not take special needs learners on board. The teachers gave the following solutions to the challenges mentioned as indicated in Table 6

No	Recommendation	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Improve on finding	20	16.7
2	Teacher/Staff Development	46	36.7
3	Sensitization	7	5.8
4	Curriculum Modification	42	35
5	Undecided	5	5.8
	<b>Total</b>	120	100

Table 6: Teacher Responses on Recommendations on Barriers encountered

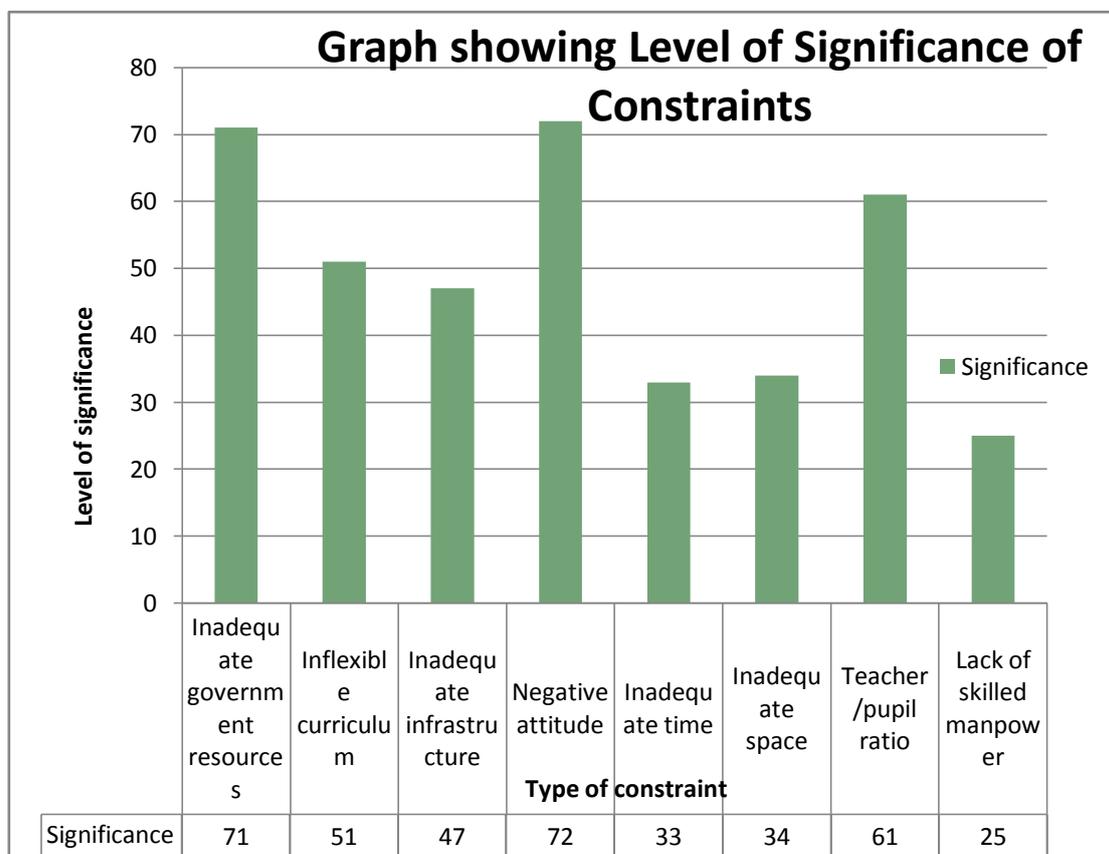
Table 6 shows the teachers highest recommendation was teacher development with 46 (36.7%) followed by 42 (35%) curriculum modification. The third recommendation was improving on funding to acquire the required facilities 20 (16.7%) while sensitization was the

fourth. The ranking of staff/teachers development concurs with Rombo (2007) who asserted that concepts of “special” and “inclusive education” were not adequately understood therefore this had negatively impacted on the roles and practices in schools. Though teacher development is central to IE practice, Mitchel (2008) observed that collaboration of special education teachers and regular teachers is vital in teacher development. Collaboration enables groups of diverse expertise to combine their resources to generate solutions to problems over a period of time. It encompasses: co-teaching, consultation and partnerships. It was found out that collaboration permitted both the special and regular teachers to combine their expertise to meet the needs of all learners.

### 6.6 Level of Significance of Barriers by Rank

Participants were asked to show the most significant barrier by rank as identified from the teachers’ perspective in their order of priority as indicated in Figure 1

Figure 1: Level of significance of barriers



Source: Field data

Figure 1: Level of significance of barriers

The findings of the graph show the most significant challenge by rank as identified from the teachers' perspective in their order of priority as below.

Barriers	Percentage %
Negative attitude	72
Inadequate government	
Resource	71
Teacher/Pupil ratio	61
Inflexible curriculum	57
Inadequate infrastructure	34
Inadequate classroom space	33
Inadequate time	41
Lack of skilled manpower	25

Table 7: Regular Teachers' perspective on priority Ranking of Barriers

From the perspective of teachers, as shown in Table 7 negative attitude was perceived as the main barrier in the implementation of the inclusive education. However, it is also important to note that lack of skilled manpower was rated last. The research sought to clarify the results by asking the same question to eight special teachers during their interview. Results of the interview are in Table 8 below. The responses of these eight special teachers from their perspective as specialists were then further analyzed using matrix ranking tool. All challenges were assessed in order to rank the perception of challenges from the greatest to the least. Below are the results of the special teachers' perspectives as shown in Table 8.

Challenges	Position
Teacher/pupil ratio	1
Negative attitude	2
Lack of skilled manpower	3
Inflexible curriculum	4
Inadequate infrastructure	5
Inadequate government	
Resources	5
Inadequate classroom space	6
Inadequate time	7

Table 8: Special Teachers' Priority Ranking of Barriers

Table 8 indicates that while the 120 teachers saw negative attitude as the main problem, the special teachers saw the teacher/pupil ratio as the main challenge. They seemed to look from

the technical process point of view where the inception of Free Primary Education resulted in the doubling of the pupil population, exceeding the previous ratio within the regular education system. With the introduction of inclusive education, the problem further escalated because teacher responsibilities had increased substantially. These findings stand to agree with Gyimah (2011), who noted that there were large populations in the classrooms. This implies that teachers selected tasks that SNE learners could do versus training them with new skill acquisition, posing a challenge on the implementation of inclusive education. Negative attitude was rated number two. Lack of skilled manpower positions number three, though it had been given the last position, number eight, in the 120 teacher respondent perspectives. This was because the eight special teachers were providing a professional and technical perception as experts in the realm of special education. Inflexible curriculum was position four and also came to be in the same position from the special teacher's perspective. Inadequate classroom space was position six similar to what was originally seen by the teachers in the first phase. Position seven was inadequate time in the quantitative study. The last challenge from the special teachers' perspective was inadequate time.

To get the final position of the significance of the impact of these barriers in the implementation of inclusive education, there seemed to be slight variations when comparing the perception of the teachers and the special teachers in the study. The researcher further used the technique of getting the average means of the frequencies of the teachers and the special teachers on the challenges. Below, Table 9 shows the average means of the priority positions as perceived by groups in the study.

Barriers	Position by 120 Teachers	Position by 8 special Teachers	Average mean Position
Inadequate government Resources	2	5	3.5
Inflexible curriculum	4	4	4
Inadequate infrastructure	5	5	5
Negative attitude	1	2	1.5
Inadequate time	7	7	7
Inadequate classroom space	6	6	6
Teacher/pupil ratio	3	1	2
Lack of skilled manpower	8	3	5.5

Table 9: Regular and Special Teachers Priority Rankings of Barriers

From Table 9, negative attitude has an average mean position 1.5 which is position one. Teacher/pupil ratio had an average mean position of 2 which is barrier number two. Inadequate government resources had an average mean of 3.5 which is barrier number three. Inflexible curriculum had an average mean position 4 which is barrier number four. Inadequate school infrastructure had an average position mean of 5 which became constraint number 5. Lack of skilled manpower had an average mean of 5.5 which become constraint number six. Inadequate classroom space had average mean position of 6 it became constraint number seven while inadequate time had a mean of 7 which became constraint number eight. Another very important point to note is that though these challenges are ranked in this order, there exists a relationship between most of them.

For example, the issue of Government resources, school infrastructure and inadequate classroom space are different aspects of the same issue only looked at from different perspectives. Constraints like inflexible curriculum, inadequate time and teacher/pupil ratio are inextricably connected. The findings imply that negative attitude is perceived as the most salient variable in terms of challenges to the implementation of IE for SNE learners in mainstream primary schools.

### **6.7 Negative Attitude towards SNE Learners**

The final results of the study identified negative attitude as the most significant challenge to the implementation of inclusive education. The findings confirm Hodkinston (2010), who pointed out that the last stop on the journey to successful inclusion, depends, firstly, on teacher's attitudes to its implementation and, secondly, upon their competencies to deliver the integration of the new programmed. Research suggests that, while a majority of teachers support inclusive education, they do so with a lot of reservation (Scroll and Moses, 2000, Hodkinston 2005). On the other hand, Ochieng (2010) also affirmed that removing the barriers to effectiveness of the integration of inclusive education program is a long process that requires attitude change.

Teachers support inclusion if it relates to children with mild mobility and sensory difficulties. The above studies suggest that for children with severe impairments, teachers believe that exclusion is necessary on practical grounds. According to (Hodkinson, 2010), for schools to become inclusive, they should be enabled to develop an "ethos" that not only enables all

pupils to be supported, but also provides for the needs of teachers. According to a study by Malatsi and Okumbe (2007), the biggest challenge in implementing inclusive education is to change teachers' attitude. Based on the findings from the demographic data in questionnaires to head teachers, it was revealed that, of all head teachers in the 30 primary schools under study, none had training in special education orientation.

Roach (1995) pointed out that all the teachers in the classroom received their training at a time when services for the SNE learners occurred in separate settings and instruction for these students was provided exclusively by trained specialists. Roach's sentiments seem to agree with demographic findings of teachers and head teachers who had many years of service. This implies they were trained long ago before these findings. It is true that the negative attitude of the head teachers who are the school administrators and most of the regular teachers remain a big barrier to the implementation of IE for SNE learners. Though the negative attitude of parents was also highlighted as a problem, this was a spill-over from the teaching fraternity whose duty it is to enlighten the society. It is practically impossible to create an inclusive school culture, design policies and implement practices that are not in favour with one's principles and values. According to this study, it is reasonable to conclude that the successful inclusion of SNE learners depends on the head teacher and teachers' attitude towards its implementation.

### **6.8 Teacher/Pupil Ratio**

Teacher/pupil was identified barrier no. 2 in the final analysis, which stands to agree with Gyimah (2011), who noted the high population in classrooms as a hindrance to the implementation of inclusive for SNE learners in mainstream settings. However, this scenario has been aggravated by Free Primary Education, which leads to the high number of pupils in the classrooms. The high classroom population inhibits the teachers' time to use all the instructional approaches required to ensure that SNE learners acquire the appropriate education. The findings from the study on instructional approaches indicate that this barrier can be overcome with the use of differentiated instruction

### **6.9 Inadequate Government Resources**

Inadequate government resources were perceived to be the third most significant challenge in the implementation of inclusive education. The findings seem to agree with Epari (2005), who revealed that 95% of participants indicated that funds received from the FPE kit for

primary schools were not adequate to cater for learners with special needs and, therefore, negates the implementation of inclusive education policy. This was also clarified by results from the teachers who reported that lack of resources was a major setback. Findings from the observation data revealed that the resources available were below 30%. Without the necessary resources, it is not possible to realize the policy of inclusive education as envisaged in both national and international conventions. This study revealed that these challenges can be addressed by government and schools working in cooperation with associations such as the Association of Physically Disabled Persons of Kenya (APDK), Sight Savers and school sponsors such as Salvation Army. These established organisations assist in acquiring resources as well as the mentoring and training of teachers.

#### **6.10 Inflexible Curriculum**

This was challenge number four from the analysis. The findings are in tandem with Malatsi and Okumbe (2007), who said the curriculum was faulty and therefore a hindrance to implementation of inclusive education. The findings of this study particularly reveal the inflexible curriculum as the most significant challenge in the instructional approaches required to ensure that the SNE learners receive the appropriate education. This is also in accord with (Both & Ainscow, 2002), who asserted that an inflexible and content heavy curriculum is a challenge for SNE learning in inclusive settings. On a positive note, data from instructional approaches revealed that these barriers could be overcome if teachers were trained in differentiated instruction to address variance in their regular education classroom, modifying the curriculum to include all learners.

#### **6.11 Inadequate School Infrastructure**

This challenge was rated number five and stands to agree with the findings from the observation analysis which revealed that infrastructure was inadequate in all schools under study. This inadequacy impedes the professional teachers from effectively performing their responsibilities as required by their profession. The findings from this study indicated that buildings, fields, classrooms and facilities such as desks and toilets had not been modified to accommodate the SNE learners.

#### **6.12 Lack of Skilled Manpower**

This was identified as barrier number six contrary to Awoninyi (2015) who found teacher competency to be the most significant barrier. This is however a big challenge to the overall

implementation of inclusive education. The findings revealed that the availability of teachers was inadequate and those available were not competent to effectively use the available teaching and learning resources, make assessment and placement of SNE learners or use evidence-based instructional approaches in an inclusive classroom.

### **6.13 Inadequate Classroom Space**

Inclusive education requires SNE learners to be in a spacious class to allow for free movement to ensure their security. This was challenge number seven, however, it is in accord with Chimweza (2015) and Rombo (2007) who suggested that provision should be made for SNE learners to have an open access to facilities and premises. The results of the observation data analysis revealed that only 30% of the schools visited had spacious classes.

### **6.14 Inadequate Time**

The issue of heavy content and inflexible curriculum had an influence on time as the last identified challenge. Document analysis revealed that the timetables are developed in connection with the syllabus as provided for by the Ministry of Education. Therefore it makes time a challenge in the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream primary schools as SNE learners require more time due to their slow pace in the learning process. The findings stand to agree with Jimenez and Graf (2008), who noted that assessing SNE learners was time consuming and required a lot of collaboration. Hence, schools needed to assess their schedules and make drastic changes so as to implement inclusive education. This challenge can be overcome if head teachers would provide time for teachers to reflect on issues that affect SNE learners.

## **7. Conclusion**

The findings revealed that the challenges facing implementation of IE for SNE learners include: inadequate government resources, inflexible curriculum, inadequate infrastructure, negative attitude, inadequate time, pupil teacher ratio and lack of skilled manpower. The findings from regular teacher perspectives showed negative attitude as the most significant constraint, rated at 72% while lack of skilled manpower was rated last at 25%. The findings from special teacher perspectives indicated teacher/pupil ratio as the most significant barrier to the implementation of inclusive education while inadequate time was rated last. The results from the average means of regular and special teacher perspectives revealed negative



attitude as the most significant challenge in the implementation of inclusive education, and the least ranked was inadequate time. This reiterates Ochieng (2010), who noted that removing the barriers to effectiveness of integration of IE program is a long process that requires attitude change. Inadequate government resources, inadequate school infrastructure and inadequate classroom space are three sides of the same problem. The problems of inflexible curriculum, inadequate time and the teacher/pupil ratio are so inextricably related that handling one issue involves solving the others.

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