Inclusive Education for Learners With Disabilities in Botswana Primary Schools

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Abstract

Based on the findings of a qualitative case study, this article describes the experiences of key stakeholders about the inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular schools in the South Central Region of Botswana. Multiple stakeholders, such as school-heads, general education teachers, learners with disabilities, and their peers, from six elementary schools participated in this research. The data collection methods included focus group discussions, school and classroom observations, and document analysis. Findings indicate that most of the teachers preferred to include learners with mild disabling conditions compared with learners with severe to profound disabling conditions. School-heads raised concerns such as inadequate training in special education, lack of resources, and high student–teacher ratio as barriers to successful implementation of inclusive education. In contrast to this, the students' peers expressed high levels of acceptance of learners with disabilities. This reflects Botswana's history of diversity and culture incorporating regional ethnic differences. It is a real strength to build on in the movement toward fully inclusive education.

Introduction

In the last few decades, educational provisions for learners with disabilities have changed. More learners with special needs are studying side by side in regular school with their peers who do not have disabilities. This concept is commonly known as inclusive education. It is based on the principle that all children regardless of ability or disability have a basic right to be educated alongside their peers in their neighborhood schools (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 1994). This concept was implemented in Western countries in the 1980s, and it has become a matter for the global agenda (Singal, 2005). As one of the signatories of "Education for All," Botswana is committed to enhancing access to education to all her citizens, and inclusive education is perceived to be the most effective approach in reaching this goal (Mukhopadhyay, 2009).

Educational Provisions for Learners With Disabilities in Botswana

Educating learners with disabilities began about 40 years ago in Botswana. Missionaries from the Dutch Reformed Church started the first school for children who were blind or had severe visual impairments in 1969, and missionaries from the Lutheran Church opened the first school for children who were deaf or had severe hearing impairments in 1970. Botswana developed its first policy on education in 1977 which is commonly known as *Education for Kgahisano*

(Government of Botswana, 1977); it recommended that each child should have the right to education regardless of his/her disability, race, ethnicity, culture or background, but it was not enforced consistently (Government of Botswana, 1993; Otlhogile, 1998). The Second National Commission on Education was established in 1992 to review the education system in Botswana and to address its shortcomings. Following the submission of its report in 1993, the Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE) was formulated and approved by the National Assembly as Government White Paper No. 2 of 1994 (Government of Botswana, 1994). The RNPE lists specific provisions for the education and training of all children and young people, including those with disabilities. In the RNPE, the goals of special education include the following:

> to ensure that all citizens of Botswana including those with special needs have equality of educational opportunities.

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to prepare children with special educational needs for social integration by integrating them as far as possible with their peers in ordinary schools.

to ensure a comprehensive assessment that is based on the child's learning needs, and not on group norms, and which is followed by individualized instruction.

to promote the early identification and intervention which will ensure the maximum success of the rehabilitation process.

to ensure the support and active participation of the children's parents and community through an education and information campaign. (Government of Botswana, 1994, p. 38)

Two other key recommendations are worth noting. First, each school has a senior teacher who is responsible for learners with special educational needs and who will coordinate a school intervention team. Second, all teachers have elements about special needs education as a part of their preservice or in-service training.

Practice of Inclusive Education in Botswana

Although inclusive education has been rapidly gaining acceptance in Botswana academic circles, government texts, and mass media, there is a lack of shared understanding of the implication of the concept, as neither the government nor academics have been able to engage critically with the meanings and relevance of the concept within the context of Botswana (Mukhopadhyay, 2009). Empirical studies in this area have been scarce and the small amount of existing published literature largely consists of personal opinions. The limited research (Gaotlhobogwe, 2001; Masimega, 1999) that is available in Botswana has concentrated on the inclusion of learners with specific categories of disabilities. Researchers (Brandon, 2006; Mangope, 2002) examined attitudes of Botswana teachers toward inclusive education and found that teachers held nonfavorable attitudes toward inclusive education. In addition, synthesis of these research studies also indicates a gap between recommended practice and the reality of implementation of inclusive education. However, most studies have focused on teachers' perspectives and have ignored other critical stakeholders' involvement in the process, such as learners with and without disabilities.

Method

This report is based on qualitative methods employing a multiple–case study approach. In the rest of this section, we describe the design of the research, the research settings, the participants and participant selection process, the interview procedures, and the approach to data analysis.

Research Design

A multiple–case study approach was employed to gain insights into the practice and process of inclusive education in the South Central Regions of Botswana. Qualitative research traditions are investigations of lived experience of the participants in their naturally occurring environments. Given the focus on multiple stakeholders' views and experiences, it was possible to construe the methodological approach of the study as *phenomenological* in nature. In general, phenomenological research aims at clarifying individuals' situations in everyday life (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). In this study, the specific aspects of everyday life that were of interest to the researcher were the processes and practices of inclusive education. Using this approach enabled the researcher to explore the perspectives of participants and to examine their experiences in the contexts in which they occurred.

Research Settings

Schools in the Republic of Botswana are grouped into 10 administrative regions. This study was carried out in selected primary schools located in the South Central Region. The medium of instruction in these schools was predominantly English, but the local language, Setswana, was also used in the classroom for ease of understanding. The South Central Region consists of schools in the following districts and city council: South-East, Kgatleng, Gaborone City Council, and Kweneng. In terms of the location, the schools were categorized into three groups, namely, urban, semiurban, and rural. Schools from each of the three groups were selected purposively.

Participants

The population of government-aided primary schools of the South Central Regions of Botswana totaled 165 schools. A sample of schools was selected purposively from among those that already included learners with disabilities. A total of 6 schools were selected, 2 schools from each of three types of location (urban, semiurban, and rural). Initially, six school-heads were chosen; thereafter, learners with disabilities, their peers, and general education teachers were selected using snowball sampling. Snowball sampling was used because the potential teachers under investigation were "hidden," due to low numbers of learners with disabilities in regular primary schools (Kath, 2005). Careful attention was paid to the process of gaining entry to the schools, selection of informants, developing and maintaining rapport, and

Table 1. Number of Participants and Methods of Data Collection

Participants detail	Number	Data collection method
1. Learner with disabilities attending in regular school	Five learners from each school	Total six focus group discussions
2. Learner without disabilities placed in a class with learners without disabilities	Five learners from each school	Total six focus group discussions
3. School-heads	One school-head from each school	Total six individual interviews
4. Regular teachers experienced in teaching learners with disabilities	Five teachers from each school	Total six focus group discussions

maintaining ethical protocols. Table 1 displays the participants and methods of data collection.

Procedure

Each school formed a case and presented a unique ecology of classrooms and school culture. The researchers described the similarities and differences from those classroom/school communities to explore the factors that influenced the practices of inclusive education. In-depth focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews were employed to collect information from the participants. A total of 18 focus group discussions (6 for teachers, 6 for students with disabilities, and 6 for students without disabilities) and individual interviews for the six school-heads were carried out at that stage. The following four content questions were designed to elicit opinions from the focus group members on factors and skills that contributed to the successful social and academic inclusion of students with disabilities.

- What does successful inclusion of students with disabilities mean to you?
- What are the barriers that may limit access to successful inclusion?
- What are the most important skills that inclusion team members need to make the inclusion of students with disabilities possible?
- What are the strategies that should be used for successful implementation of inclusive education?

All focus group discussions and individual discussions were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim for later analysis. The meetings took place at the staff room. The participation in this research was voluntary and without any compensation. The focus group discussions helped the researchers capture opinions about inclusive education from the various stakeholders. All focus group discussions were conducted in English. While interviewing the learners with and without disabilities, a translator (MEd student) was engaged. The translator was conversant with the native language and research methods, and was experienced in teaching in primary school, and the researchers trained the translator on the purpose of the research and the interview guide.

Six nonparticipant classroom observations were also undertaken by one of the researchers. These observations focused on classroom interactions by teachers and learners, peer interactions, instructional deliveries, lesson content, classroom accommodation, adaptations of learning materials, language of instruction, and overall classroom management strategies. The purpose of these observations was to gain insights into the inclusive practices used in classrooms. In so doing, the researcher was able to collect in-depth and authentic data to understand the culture and practice of inclusive education in each school. Classroom observations took between 35 and 40 min. The researchers took reflective field notes using an observation guide specifically prepared for this research. After each observation, the researchers had informal follow-up conversations with teachers about the classroom instructions for clarification purposes.

Furthermore, one of the researchers also conducted school observations to inspect infrastructure facilities such as buildings, toilets, and sports and recreation facilities. Access audits were carried out to find out the types of provisions that were made to enhance access and participation of learners with disabilities. The observations were noted in the observation guide. In addition, the researchers took photographs of various facilities and activities in the school, and reviewed the documents, referral notes, curriculum, individualized educational plan (IEP), and assessment reports (medical and psychoeducational) to gather information about the practice of inclusive education in each school.

Data Analysis

The data gathered from the multiple sites, sources, and methods were triangulated to "shed light on a theme or perspective" (Creswell, 1998, p. 202). During this stage, responses of the stakeholder groups were compared within and across the groups. In this study, the combination of document analyses, interviews, and observations provided a relatively potent means of assessing the degree of convergence and complementary findings as well as elaborating on divergences between results obtained (Atkinson & Coffey, 2002). For example, on one hand, interviews improved understanding of the inclusive process and on the other hand, observations added to a richer contextual understanding of

the inclusive practices. They were used to help make sense of the other observations and helped validate the other observations. Data triangulation was carried out using the following steps: (a) identifying the key question, (b) finding the trends within and across all data sets, (c) generating initial codes, (d) searching for similarities and differences to identify the initial overarching themes, (e) reviewing the themes, (f) defining and renaming the themes, and (g) writing a report. Throughout this process, the aims and objectives of the research were used to guide the organization and interpretation of data.

After the preliminary analysis, the researchers presented for review the major themes that were identified to the key informants. This stimulated recall evoked further discussions and added to the existing information. This review process enhanced the validity of the themes.

Results

The process of thematic analysis described above led to the development of a theoretical framework for understanding how stakeholders respond to their experience. The framework consists of three major themes and several subthemes. The major themes were teachers' experiences, teachers' and school-heads' concerns, and learners' experiences.

Teachers' Experiences

Inclusive education is a relatively new concept in Botswana. Participating teachers had limited experiences managing learners with disabilities. However, some teachers were highly enthusiastic about the goals. One of them said,

> I think it's a good idea. Previously learners with disabilities did not have opportunities to attend normal schools; they were mostly hidden and were isolated. The little experience that I gather teaching these students, I think some of them could be successful in our school provided we are ready to support them. They need lots of support. Some children are especially difficult; including children who use sign language (we don't know sign language). They may be better placed in special schools. (Teacher, rural school)

Such comments suggest that teachers prefer selected categories of learners with disabilities. The majority of teachers preferred students with learning difficulties to those with any other disability. Teachers reported less preference for learners with physical disabilities, deafness or blindness, and those with emotional problems. The reason for this preference for learners with learning disability was expressed as learning disability "is easy to manage and accommodate." Mobility impairment was the category next most frequently endorsed by teachers. It emerged from the data that learners with mobility impairments did not create serious demands on

the part of teachers in the lines of instructional accommodations. The least preferred categories were visual or hearing disabilities and students with emotional disorders. Participants of the study believed they could not effectively accommodate these learners in regular classrooms. It could be deduced that the teachers preferred selective inclusive practices rather than the fully inclusive model.

During the focus group discussions, some teachers were concerned with the practicalities of including learners with disabilities at the classroom level:

> It is very difficult since most of them cannot write; some of them are very playful and disruptive. They even fight with other learners. They need attention all the time. It is not easy to teach them in a regular class. (Teacher, urban)

> Teaching students with disabilities is quite challenging; first of all, you have to ensure that the child is safe, and accepted by others; meaning one has to collaborate with parents, students and others; it means extra work. Moreover, we are not trained. I don't have adequate knowledge and skills to manage such children. (Teacher, semiurban)

> Students with disabilities need extra help. They need more attention, support and time than other children in their academic work; moreover, we need finish the year's curriculum. I think, children with disabilities should be taught by special educators, or at least a teacher assistant should be given. Although we have one special educator in our school, she is not trained in special education. She also has to teach her regular class, and so how is she going help me? This is not working. (Teacher, urban)

It was clear from the above statements that teachers are deeply concerned about the issue of inclusion of children with disabilities in their schools. They highlighted the need for professional development:

> We do not have skills to work with learners with disabilities. We should be trained to work with these children and learn to accommodate them as far as possible. (Teacher, semiurban)

Teachers' and School-Heads' Concerns

School-heads who took part in the research were of the opinion that a "full inclusive education model might not work in Botswana." One school-head was concerned about the inability of teachers to meet the learning needs of those students with disabilities who are currently placed in her school. On a related issue, one of the school-heads expressed concerns about lack of trained special educators about their

already heavy workloads. Highlighting these problems, she lamented that "in our school there is a post called Senior Teacher Advisors for Learning Disabilities [STALDs]; she has to teach a class and at the same time assist other teachers who have disabled students." Echoing the same sentiments, another school-head reported that "STALDs are not trained in special education, in my opinion it is not proper, I think they should recruit people who are qualified for such positions."

A pervasive barrier to including learners with disabilities in regular school classrooms was a lack of trained special educators. The next most often mentioned barriers were lack of resources and lack of funding; these were followed in frequency by lack of personnel, lack of time, lack of parental involvement, and large class sizes.

Workload and Class Size

The participants expressed frustration about the workload they have to contend with in primary schools. Their frustration was reflected in the following remarks:

> We are teaching large classes because of specialization, it's a lot of work. You have to make sure that all children are catered for. This is not easy. (Class teacher, urban)

It appeared that the teachers' workloads were increased by large class sizes. One of the participants was explicit about class size:

> Student teacher ratios are not favorable. We teach large numbers of students. Having a child with a disability is a real problem. It is impossible to give equal attention to all students. (Class teacher, semiurban)

It seems things have been worsened by the coincidence of high class sizes and piloting testing of specialization in primary schools. This has created major time constraints for teachers to meet the learning needs of students with disabilities. During lesson observations, it was observed that the teacher:student ratio was 1:38. The school-heads also expressed concern about large class sizes and felt that including learners with disabilities in regular classrooms created more burdens for the teacher(s). Teachers and school-heads felt that the large class size was one of the predominant barriers to the successful implementation of inclusive education in their schools.

Support Mechanisms for Implementation

The Division of Special Education of the Ministry of Education and Skills Development is charged with the responsibility of supporting the implementation of inclusive education. The interviews indicated that this organization has not adequately supported teachers. Consider this statement made by a teacher:

> We do not have any resource materials, books, infrastructure to implement inclusive education. Children with disabilities do not have access to computers or TV. (School-heads, urban)

Although it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Skills Development to support implementation, workshops appear to be lacking. This seems to be a discrepancy with one of the recommendations of the RNPE that calls for regular in-service training for practicing teachers. None of the school development plans reflected plans for implementation workshops on inclusive education. Instead, what was observed were efforts by schools to organize workshops on inclusive education. Such efforts were frustrated by lack of funds and shortage of resource personnel to mount workshops.

Collaboration Among Stakeholders

Participating teachers felt that there was too little collaboration between special educators, regular teachers, and parents. Highlighting the importance of collaboration, one of the teachers said,

> Collaboration is important when you place a child with a disability in a regular class. Teachers need time to prepare, they need to have an individualized education plan, and they need to pass the plan on to the next teacher at the beginning of the next school year. (Class teacher, rural)

She proposed that "special educators should teach learners with disabilities in a special unit to solve some issues."

Inadequate Infrastructure and Resources

Teachers who had learners with disabilities in their classrooms emphasized the need to address the structural problems to facilitate effective implementation of inclusive education. These findings were corroborated by data from classroom and school observations.

Lack of classrooms. An acute shortage of classrooms and necessary facilities to support inclusive education was found. It was observed during fieldwork that most of the primary schools in urban and semiurban areas of the South Central Region did not have adequate classrooms to accommodate their relatively large numbers of students. In one urban primary school where a learner with hearing impairment was attending, the classes were conducted under a tree. It was also observed that the class was situated next to the school-head's office where there was a lot of movement and traffic noise. This scenario provides an understanding of the lack of classrooms and need for more supportive teaching environments for students with disabilities.

Physical access to school facilities. In most schools, there had been some structural modifications made such as ramps and assisted toilets. However, the gradients of the ramps were too

steep for learners with physical impairments, who needed assistance from other students to enter the buildings. In one of the rural schools, the new classrooms that were built did not create any provision for learners with physical impairments. In one school, there were no ramps and so students with physical impairments had to depend on peers for accessing the toilets. This finding seemed to negate the RNPE's recommendation on the provision of "necessary support services" and indicated how learners with disabilities were excluded from gaining access to buildings. This finding provides an understanding in which implementation of inclusive education could be assessed and measured in primary schools in the South Central Region of Botswana.

Lack of funding. It was learned that direct funding is not allotted to primary schools for buying equipment and structural modifications to support students with disabilities. When one of the school-heads was asked about this issue, she confirmed,

> Primary schools don't have a vote, we are not given any funds. We are given a fund just for small maintenance work; we call it handyman's job. We are mostly dependent on the city council for structural modifications. (School-head, rural)

Generally, there were no funds for school-based in-service training and for procuring curriculum support materials.

Learners' Experiences

The study also sought to gain insights into how students with and without disabilities understand the concept of inclusive education. The dominant responses from most of the students without disabilities were, "We are friends." "We are the same." "I respect him or her, and he or she also respects me." "I don't have any problem studying with him." Younger learners with disabilities were not clear about the meaning of the concept of inclusive education; to them it was just schooling with the children they grew up with. One of the seventh-grade learners with visual impairment who took part in the focus group discussion said,

> I enjoy studying with my friends. They help me with my studies, and I help them with their schoolwork. They don't discriminate me because I am an albino. I respect them and they respect me. I don't have any problem. (Student With Physical Disabilities, rural)

It emerged from the data that learners without disabilities would restructure the rules of the games to include their peers with physical limitations. It was observed during tea break that students with and without disabilities share their meals without any problem. In one of the classes visited, learners without disabilities explained concepts in "home-signs" to a student with hearing impairment, to help their friend understand. During focus group discussions, students without disabilities revealed that they usually help the learners with hearing impairment. The class teacher for that particular class confirmed, "Since I am not trained in sign language I am depending on these kids to explain the concepts to her."

Students without disabilities seemed to have no problem with those with disabilities. During classroom and school observations, it was found that learners with and without disabilities freely interacted with each other during group work tasks and outside the classroom as well. From these observations, one can see that peer acceptance is a positive indicator, not an obstacle. It is supportive of the practice of inclusive education in the primary schools in the South Central Region.

Discussion

In this study, it was found that learners with disabilities are already included in primary schools in the South Central Region. Nonetheless, there are serious limitations to how inclusive education is practiced. The class sizes were larger so that teacher interactions with learners were limited. Large class sizes also were thought to diminish the adaptation of learning materials, use of differentiated instructions, and peer-assisted learning. This finding is affirmed by the findings of a study in Lesotho that revealed that large class sizes tend to take a toll on the social and intellectual growth of students with and without disabilities (Johnstone & Chapman, 2009).

Johnstone (2007) employed a multimethod case study to explore the challenges of inclusive education in Lesotho. She found that although there was a policy for inclusive education in Lesotho, its implementation was uneven. Teachers' attitudes toward students with disabilities were favorable, but they did not make instructional adjustments to meet the learning needs of students with disabilities.

Mostert et al. (2002) and Naanda (2005), as cited in Zimba, Mowes, and Naanda (2007), investigated the factors influencing successful implementation of inclusive education in Namibia. They found that the attitudes of teachers in Namibia toward learners with disabilities were not favorable. The magnitude of disabling conditions was found to be the main factor, which influenced teachers' attitudes toward learners with disabilities. Some teachers stated the opinion that the responsibility for teaching learners with disabilities lies with special educators in special schools. Naanda as cited in Zimba et al. recommended that teacher preparation at all levels (early childhood to secondary) should be oriented toward inclusive education for its successful implementation. This kind of training was viewed as one way of facilitating learning for all learners and eliminating negative attitudes toward learners with disabilities.

In Zimbabwe, researchers (Mpofu, 2003; Mpofu, Kasayira, Mhaka, Chiresh, & Maunganize, 2007) have embarked on studies about the attitudes of Zimbabwe's school personnel

toward inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular schools. The findings of these studies reported negative attitudes of teachers toward including such learners in general education classrooms. Principals of schools were found to show more favorable attitudes toward students with disabilities than was shown by classroom teachers.

The teachers and school-heads of the current study were very concerned with the lack of support and nonavailability of resources in primary schools. To be specific, educators indicated that there was a lack of appropriate instructional materials needed for students with disabilities. In addition, they regretted the insufficient time available for collaboration and consulting with other teachers, parents, and professionals to meet the learning needs of students with disabilities. The findings of this study resonate well with the study carried out by Ocloo and Subbey (2008). They found that Ghanaian teachers were well aware of the concept of inclusive education, but inadequate infrastructure and teachers' lack of training impeded the implementation of inclusive education.

The finding of this study is consistent with the findings of studies conducted by Masimega (1999) and Gaotlhobogwe (2001) in Botswana. Over a period of 10 years, very little has been done to provide appropriate resources for learners with disabilities. Given the fact that there is a dearth of resources required for successful implementation of inclusive education in developing countries, teachers should be trained to be innovative so that they can produce their own instructional materials and adapt them to suit the needs of learners with disabilities. This can be achieved through in-service training, possibly in conjunction with teacher training institutions. These findings have been corroborated by other studies in developing countries, including Alur (2002) and Singal (2005, 2006) in India, and Johnstone and Chapman (2009) in Lesotho. These researchers expressed concern about the dearth of resources as one of the challenges for the successful implementation of inclusive education. This important aspect needs to be built into the guidelines for inclusive education.

It is our opinion that the current situation is appalling because most urban primary schools do not have sufficient classrooms to accommodate learners. Some schools have resource rooms, but because of the shortage of classrooms, they are used as regular classrooms. In one school, learners with hearing impairments were forced to attend classes outdoors next to a noisy, heavily trafficked area. The majority of the classrooms were inaccessible to learners with physical disabilities; for example, although some schools had ramps, some of the ramps were too steep for students with physical disabilities to move up them independently. Necessary facilities such as toilets were inaccessible. Structural barriers tend to limit independent access to classroom and school activities, and impact negatively on participation and competence in the curricular and cocurricular activities.

Collaborative activities among general and special educators are essential in developing a work environment that fosters inclusive practice. Data from this study suggest that regular education teachers did not collaborate as much as special educators in developing instructional plans, in team-teaching in the regular classroom, and in providing assistance to each other regarding students with disabilities. This finding was corroborated by studies carried out by researchers such as deBettencourt (1999). These findings reflect that major obstacles to inclusive education at the primary school level often result from pragmatic factors such as limited time, large class size, heavy workload, existing regulations, and insufficient institutional support. Thus, it is important for school systems to encourage teachers to work cooperatively, and also to provide them with opportunities to plan and share information if students with disabilities are to be successfully educated in inclusive classrooms (Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, & Lead, 1999).

It also emerged from the data that school systems and administrators do not provide the additional help needed by primary school special educators and general educators working in inclusive classrooms. According to researchers (Brownell & Pajares, 1999), successful inclusive efforts are associated with administrative support, adequate materials, and personnel resources. If inclusive education is to be implemented successfully, school systems need to involve parents, teachers, students, and key community members in districtwide planning.

School-heads seemed to lack administrative and decision-making powers such as arranging teaching schedules, reducing class sizes, providing in-service training, or appropriate use of specially trained teachers. There were no funds allotted to schools for inclusive education in-service training. It is the responsibility of the Special Education Division of the Ministry of Education and Skills Development to organize such training programs. Teachers who were qualified as special educators were frustrated because of inappropriate deployment. Teachers' views indicate that clear policies are needed to guide the implementation of inclusive education. Policy documents should outline relevant resources, support services, and service delivery for learners with diverse learning needs in an inclusive setup.

The results of the current study indicate that implementation of inclusive education is a complex process. Many factors operate at the macro, meso, and micro levels of educational systems (i.e., the level of the school system, the classroom, and the individual learner) and are closely nested around learners with disabilities. Therefore, active involvement of all stakeholders and positive interaction between multiple systems are important for successful implementation of inclusive education.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study established that students with disabilities pose challenges for teachers in the regular classroom. The present study indicated that there were some possible effects of program quality on individuals' beliefs about inclusive

education. Teachers in this study expressed the need for reduced class sizes, more resources, and additional support services. As most teachers did not receive any special education training in their university studies, they feel that they are not qualified to implement the inclusion processes. Despite positive peer acceptance, this study revealed that regular classrooms in Botswana failed to support the learning needs of all the learners with disabilities. It could be concluded that placement in inclusive classrooms is not enough; it is important to make sure that learners with disabilities receive all the necessary support and services for accessing the curriculum and cocurricular facilities. The findings of this study confirm the view that implementing inclusive education is challenging. Although the results of this study focused on Botswana, the suggestions may be useful for other developing countries.

Specialized Training Facilities

The Department of Teachers Training and Development in collaboration with regional in-service officers should organize continuous professional development opportunities on inclusion strategies of learners with special needs. However, it is important to note that in-service training programs alone rarely result in teacher behavior change (Kaikkonen, 2010). What is needed are multiple components of professional development that include training, implementation guides, classroom materials, instructional coaching, and performance feedback for teachers (Fox, Hemmeter, Snyder, Binder, & Clarke, 2011). In addition, these workshops should equip teachers with practical skills on instruction, collaboration, alternative forms of evaluation, classroom management, and conflict resolution, and on how to adapt the curriculum. At the same time, the teachers' initial training programs should incorporate inclusive education components (Forlin, 2010).

Resources

Provisions of human and material resources are also important for implementation of inclusive education. The Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation should provide more adequate resources, equipment, and teaching material for learners with diverse learning needs. The number of resource centers in Botswana should be increased, and they should provide advice to parents, educators, and others who are in need of information about regulations, evaluation, and support services for children with disabilities. Some of the special schools or special units may be upgraded to resource centers.

Special Education Teachers

Although Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD) have recruited STALDs to support learners with disabilities in every school, the majority of STALDs are not trained in the area of special education. Therefore, these teachers are failing to support teachers and learners adequately. MoESD should recruit trained STALDs, and those who are not trained should be trained through in-service training. Teaching Service Management and the Department of Support Services of MoESD should come up with clear job descriptions of STALDs to work effectively in inclusive classrooms.

Teamwork

It appears from this study that there is a lack of coordination among teachers, special educators, parents, and professionals. Stakeholders should be encouraged to participate in the implementation of inclusive education. Parent Teacher Associations might play a pivotal role in strengthening the teamwork.

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