

Community and School Partnerships in Inclusive  
Education: An Evaluative Study of Primary  
Schools in Kasama, Zambia

By

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University of Zambia  
Lusaka  
2015

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A Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the  
Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Special  
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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I, **Joseph Mwape Mandyata**, do declare that this piece of work, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Thesis, represents my own work, and that it has never been previously submitted for a degree at the University of Zambia or any other University or institution.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

## **APPROVAL**

This thesis by **Joseph Mwape Mandyata** is approved as a fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Special Education at the University of Zambia.

Signed:..... Date:.....

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my late parents: Margaret Bunda and Samson Mandyata who showed me the way to school, and have remained as a source of inspiration in my academic and professional achievements.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I am sincerely grateful to my supervisor Dr S. Kasonde-Ng'andu and co-supervisor Dr O.C. Chakulimba for the academic and professional guidance they provided to me, with dedication, throughout this study. They were encouraging coaches and educationalists who were always available for me for guidance and consultations.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study evaluated community and school partnerships in the learning of children with and without disabilities in inclusive primary school settings in Kasama District, Zambia. Working within the framework of the Ecological Model of Child Development, the purpose of the study was to establish the type of parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children existing in schools practising inclusive education. One hundred and eighty (180) respondents participated in the study, consisting of eighty-two (82) teachers; seventy (70) parents and twenty-eight (28) head teachers from selected parts of the district. Quantitative data was collected through use of self administered questionnaires while qualitative data was collected using face to face interviews. The quantitative data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to generate frequencies, percentages and Chi-Square test ( $\chi^2$ ) used in the study. The qualitative data were analysed using inductive analysis method. This involved coding, categorisation and placing of information into themes. These actions resulted in the revelation of lone and summated variables that supported the findings of the present study.

The study revealed that, although most of the head teachers, teachers and parents, favoured a partnership approach in the learning of children with and without disabilities in inclusive schools, there were significant differences in the way parents and teachers perceived or valued their collaborative partnerships in schools. Most of the parents and teachers who supported a partnership approach to learning of children, believed that partnerships positively contributed to school success; helped to increase access to education, promoted equalisation of educational opportunities; facilitated improvement in school infrastructure, led to social acceptance and changed attitude towards the learning of children. A small proportion of parents and teachers, however, disagreed with a partnership approach in the learning of children with and without disabilities in some classrooms and schools. Parents and teachers cited failure to meet goals and objectives of partnerships in the learning of children as evidenced by the continued existence of unfavourable legislation, policies and practices in education, ill-preparedness for partnerships, irregular interactions among stakeholders and indeed the increasing fears of government through the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (MoESVTEE) abdicating its prime responsibility of meeting the learning needs of every child in schools as some of the reasons for not supporting a partnership approach in the promotion of inclusive school practices.

Following these findings, the study recommended that,

- (i) parents and teachers should work together to address the barriers that have impeded the development and sustenance of a more proactive parents' and teachers' partnership in the learning of children in schools practising inclusive education;
- (ii) Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (MoESVTEE) should provide parents and teachers with relevant knowledge and skills through school based seminars and workshops on partnerships in the learning of children;
- (iii) schools should take a leading role in the promotion of changed perceptions and values on parents' and teachers' partnerships by holding regular meetings, school open days, and encouraging home-school visitations, and
- (iv) teacher training institutions, should recognize the need for teachers to acquire knowledge and skills on how to work with homes, families and parents of children and incorporate partnership in inclusive education in teacher education curriculum.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

CAMFED	-	Campaign For Female Education
DEBs	-	District Education Board Secretary
CSO	-	Central Statistical Office
EFA	-	Education For All
ECZ	-	Examinations Council of Zambia
FED	-	Free Education Policy
IEPs	-	Individualised Educational Plans
IFSSPs		Individualised Family Support Services
LRC	-	Learning in Regular Classrooms
IFPs	-	Individualised Family Programmes
MoESVTEE	-	Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education
NGOs	-	Non-Governmental Organisations
PTAs	-	Parents' and Teachers' Associations
SPSS	-	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UNESCO	-	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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## STATISTICAL SYMBOLS USED IN THE STUDY

df	- Degree of Freedom
$\chi^2$	- Chi-Square Test
$\chi^2$ obs	- Observed Chi-Square Value,
$\chi^2$ crit.	- Critical or Table Chi-Square Value
Asymp. Sig. (2-side)	- Assumption Significant Level for 2-sided test

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Overview**

Chapter One provides the background to the study. It begins with the highlights on the global, African and national trends on inclusive education before focusing on partnerships in inclusive school practices. The policy of inclusive education and how it has affected the education of children with disabilities in Zambia are discussed. The chapter further presents the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions and significance of the study. The chapter ends with a discussion of the delimitation, limitations, theoretical model, and treatment of theoretical model and provides operational definitions of words used before giving a summary of the salient points.

### **1.2 Background**

#### **1.2.1 Global Trends**

Over the past two decades, inclusive education has become a significant educational agenda in both developed and developing countries, including Zambia. The roots of this development in the provision of education has been associated with the emerging global and national trends in the education of vulnerable and children with disabilities. On the global front, for example, major international conferences have advocated for the inclusion of the vulnerable children and those with disabilities in the mainstream of education and training (UNESCO, 1994; 1999). Zambia was one of the countries that attended the UNESCO's *World Conference on Education for All* (EFA) in Jomtien in 1990. At this conference, attention was drawn to the basic learning needs of children, including those with disabilities. The conference called making education more accessible to all children as a means of improving their livelihood in the society (UNESCO, 1990; Forlin, 1997).

As a follow up to the 1990 World Conference on Education for All, in 1994, Zambia attended the *World Conference on Special Needs Education* in Salamanca, Spain, where all countries that were represented at this conference became signatories to the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Inclusive Education (UNESCO 1994; Mittler, 1995; Moberg 1997 and Avissar, 2000). The conference called for all governments to adopt, as a matter of law and policy, the principle of inclusive education as an attempt to provide education to all children. The resolution was on the premise that such an action would help to increase access to education, promote equalisation of educational opportunities and help to improve the quality of education for all children in the school system. According to the South African Human Rights Commission report of 2002 and Deng and McBrayer (2012) the shift to inclusive school practices is a responsive action towards empowerment of the large number of persons with disabilities through education and training. The move has the potential of providing more opportunities for persons with disabilities to access quality education and training through the mainstream institutions.

### **1.2.2 Trends in Africa**

As a result of the social and academic benefits associated with inclusive education and training, Senegal in 2000, adopted and pledged to meet the Education For All framework goal of having children with diverse learning needs accessing quality education by 2015 through the introduction of special education in regular classroom practices – inclusive education (Unesco, 2000). This meant that Senegal pledged to provide access to complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality to all children especially children with disabilities. In support of this commitment made by the Senegalese government to increase access to quality education, the state passed a law, '*Law of Social Orientation,*' in 2010 (ACPF, 2011b; Senate and National Assembly, 2000). The law gave children and youth with

disabilities the right to free quality education and a right to be educated in general school settings and a right to attend schools located as close as possible to their places of residence (Drame, and Kamphoff, 2014).

There are still many issues however, that seem to prevent children with disabilities from fully accessing quality education in Senegal, Africa. Drame and Kamphoff (2014) cite for instance, failure to promote a family-school centred approach to the promotion of inclusive school practices and government's inability to mobilise financial and material resources from various stakeholders to support the learning of all children through the mainstream of education. Parents and communities for example, have not been able to work and participate in the improvement of learning environments in schools. Despite the progress made by the Senegalese government to educate girls and ethnic minorities using the concept of inclusive education, there is still a long way to go regarding the inclusion of children with disabilities in the mainstream of education and training in Senegal just as it is the cases in many African countries (Drame and Kamphoff, 2014) as is the case in many other sub-sahara African countries.

A review of the current situation in Special Needs Education in Cameroon secondary schools, seems to show that many groups of children with disabilities are not being included in the mainstream education and training because of various factors. Although general teachers in Cameroon secondary schools are willing to teach students with disabilities together with their peers in inclusive classrooms and schools, lack of administrative structure to support inclusive school practices, inadequate learning resources, lack of trained personnel in special education and the persistent low community participation in the learning of children seem to

have negatively impacted on the promotion of inclusive education in Cameroon secondary schools (Arrah and Swain, 2014). Most of the general teachers in secondary schools in Cameroon were found to have no relevant qualification to support special-inclusive education practices. They did not have sufficient skills to teach students with and without disabilities in the same classrooms or indeed to work together with parents of children with and without disabilities to support inclusive education (Arrah and Swain, 2014). Consistent with Zalizan's study of 2000 collaboration among general teachers, special education teachers and parents of children in Malaysia, is a significant indicator for successful inclusive education. Zalizan (2000) found that there were no trained special education and formidable parents' and teachers' relationships to work with general teachers in the teaching of children with and without disabilities in regular schools. This situation made it difficult as may be the case in many African countries to effectively implement inclusive school curriculum.

In Namibia for example, inclusive education hardly featured on the agendas of parents' and teachers' meetings and conferences to discuss children's performance in public examinations (Zimba, Mowels and Naanda, 2007). The ministry of education as well as parents, homes and community were more concerned with failures of children at grade 10 and 12 levels of education without necessarily considering causes for the poor performance among children in schools. One reason is that the concept of parents' and teachers' partnerships in inclusive education and the social and academic benefits it could bring to the education of children with and without disabilities were not well understood by educators, parents and communities in Namibia (Zimba, Mowels and Naanda, 2007). In response to the poor performance registered by children in public examinations the Namibian government through its Namibian Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme of 2005-2020, introduced special education practices into the general system of education. The move taken by the Namibian

government also provided in its implementation of inclusive school practices for active participation of stakeholders such as learners themselves, teachers, parents, families and indeed the local communities in school improvement as well as resource mobilisation (Zimba, Mowels and Naanda, 2007). The shift in the provision of education to children with disabilities in Namibia, sawn partnership as a viable means of making quality education accessible to all children and as an important aspect of the emerging national education policy aimed at dealing with social and academic failures in the school system. The Namibian government saw good connections and interactions between teachers and parents on matter of education as being necessary in improving the delivery of school curriculum and improve the general performance of children with and without disabilities in inclusive classrooms and schools.

The role of parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children as seen by Engelbrecht and Green (2002) is to mobilise resources in homes, families, communities and schools to support the inclusive education initiative in South African education system. Engelbrecht and Green (2002) acknowledge the need to strengthen parents and teachers' partnerships and improvement of skills and knowledge on inclusive school practises. The researchers call for new ideas on how to provide quality education for all children within the framework of inclusive schooling in the South African education system. Tshifura (2012) observes that although inclusive education is a reality in most Southern African countries such as Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa itself, provision of full educational services to support the learning of children with and without disabilities in the general system of education remains a challenge. Tshifura (2012) notes that, there are obstacles which are still to be overcome such as fiscal constraints, negative attitudes, lack of support services, rigidity in teaching methods, lack of teacher expertise, large class sizes and limited

participation of stakeholders such as parents and communities in the education of children. The study further notes that managing of inclusive education especially in southern African countries, seemed to have been compromised by factors such poor school infrastructure, lack of learning resources and the persistent negative attitudes towards education of children with and without disabilities in schools in the sub-region. As a measure to minimise challenges associated with inclusive schooling in South Africa, Tshifura (2012) supported the introduction of internal workshops, mobilisation of resources through partnership with parents and communities as well as institutionalising of support service teams in schools practising inclusive education.

### **1.2.3 National Trends**

#### **1.2.3.1 Special Education in Zambia**

In Zambia, education for children with disabilities has been in existence since 1905. The type of education offered to such children however, was of a medical model as opposed to a social model (Kalabula, 2007). There is a difference between the 'social model' and the 'medical model,' as a mechanism of understanding, identifying and responding to disabilities of individuals. In reality, models of disability as applied in special education practice, are understood to be tools for defining the disability and strategies that can be devised to meet the learning needs of persons with disabilities. The medical model of disability in particular, seems to focus on the child's condition, seeing the problem within a child, trying to find a way of treating the child's problem in order to him or her to fit in the environment (Bickle, 1999). Disability Equality in Education (DEE, 2002) in fact, sees a medical model as being impairment focused rather than social adjustment based. In contrast, a social model of disability sees the problem in the environment and the need to change while, a medical model sees the problem in the child and not the environment. Alcott (2002) describes the social

model by explaining that the focus of attention is on the environment in which the child lives, making changes to it as well as changes to the attitudes of society necessary. Special education as practiced in Zambia takes the form of a medical model while inclusive education being advocated for focus on promotion of a social model of providing education and training to children and adults with disabilities as an aspect of preparing them for full inclusion in the Zambian society.

The establishment of the Education policies to guide the provision of education in Zambia, is more associated with the *Education Reforms of 1977*, *Focus on Learning of 1992* and the latest being *1996 Education Policy-Educating Our Future*. All these policies made attempts among other aspects, to change the way children with disabilities received their education in Zambia. These education policies emphasized the need to use the social model of disability rather than a medical model in the education of persons with disabilities. This meant that children with and without disabilities where possible and practical, were to receive their education in the same classrooms and schools with their peers (MoE, 1977; 1982; 1996). Previous to this change in the education policy the medical model was adhered to though it focused on a person's disability, labeling and in most cases ignoring social and academic needs of the individual. Disability under medical model was seen as a problem to be cured, fixed by therapy, medicine, surgery and special treatment and not necessarily a social problem which could be arrested through inclusive practices (DEE, 2002; Kalabula, 2007).

It is through the medical model of special education however, that first attempts to educate children with disabilities were made by Christian Missionaries starting from the eastern part of Northern Rhodesia (Eastern, Zambia). The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) as pioneers in

the education of children with disabilities, established a first school at Magwero, Fort Jameson (Chipata) to educate blind children in 1905, later another school was established at Madzimoyo, Fort Jameson (Chipata) in 1914 and Nyanje (Petauke) in 1923 in Eastern Zambia (Snelson, 1974). The education provided through these schools was without government, parental or community participation. It was however, aimed at enabling the blind and hearing impaired persons read the bible and follow religious instructions (Kalabula, 1991; 2007).

Following the widespread of the success story of making blind children learn to read and write in Braille in Magwero in North-Eastern Rhodesia (Eastern Zambia) many Christian Missions established schools for children with disabilities in various parts of Zambia. The Roman Catholic Church started schools at Luela, Fort Roseberry (Mansa) in 1930; St. Mary (Kawambwa) in 1961 and Mporokoso in 1963. The Christian Missions in Many Lands (CMML) established a school for the handicapped at Jonstone's Fall (Mambilima) in 1940 while The Universities' Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) established Chipili, Fort Roseberry ((Mansa) school for the handicapped in the late 1940s. In Mongu the Paris Evangelical Mission Society (PEMS) established Sefula School for the blind in 1955 (Northern Rhodesia, African Education Report, 1953; Snelson, 1974; Mwanakatwe, 1984). The main aim of establishing special schools by the Christian Missionaries was to provide basic literacy skills and bible knowledge to children, youths and adults with disabilities and not necessarily to empower them with vocational skills to support their life in the community.

It is important to note that the religious groups running schools for the disabled at that time also owned the curriculum as well as mode of implementation. The curriculum did not

provide for the needs of individual learners, parents, families or local communities but focused on the need of the church (Kalabula, 1989). The communities from which the learners were drawn and required to serve upon completion of education were not involved in the designing or implementation of the curriculum. Snelson (1974), reports that early special education was quite divorced from the individual and community needs but focused on enabling persons with disabilities learn to read and follow religious instructions.

### **1.2.3.2 Problems in Special Education**

McGregor Report of 1967 on education of the Handicapped in Zambia noted that parents of children with disabilities generally believed that, a disabled child had very little chance of success in education. Often parents felt that placing children with disabilities in the school system, was a waste of school places and learning resources which could better be used to support the education of their peers without disabilities who were more likely to succeed than those with disabilities (Northern Rhodesia, African Education Report, 1953). As a result of this, parents were not willing to invest in the education or training of children with disabilities because of low socio-economic returns associated with education of the disabled (Kelly, 1998). Parents were therefore more willing to support the education of children without disabilities whose turn-over was much higher than children with disabilities. Hence, such children do not easily access education in schools closer to their places of residence.

It is worth noting that at this time, the needs of learners, parents and communities were not significant in the curriculum offered to children with disabilities. Education for children with disabilities was further complicated by limited qualified personnel, non-availability of specialized equipment and materials and negative attitudes towards education of the disabled which all contributed to the low enrollment of children with disabilities in the school system

(Mandyata; 2002; Kalabula, 2007; Manda, 2013). Kalabula (1991) notes that besides the non-involvement of parents, families and communities in the education of persons with disabilities at this time, there was no active participation from government and other charitable organizations apart from Christian churches. Provision of education to children with disabilities remained, for a long time, a responsibility of churches until much later when the government and charitable organizations like the Lion's and Rotary International clubs got involved in support of efforts of the churches (Snelson, 1974). The status of education for children with disabilities in the pre independence era and the 1960s was further worsened by inadequate school infrastructure, limited instructional resources and failure to adapt teaching approaches to suit the needs of children.

Note-ably, Chilufya (2005), attributes the limited access to education among children with disabilities to a number of factors like lack of parental and community involvement; scarcity of regular and specialized resources and presence of disability- unfriendly school infrastructure in the school system. Kelly (1998) and Kalabula (2007), further add the high cost of learning resources, high population growth and rapid urbanization, stagnation in the Zambian economy, ill-preparedness of educators and indeed to the long distance to available few special schools which significantly limited participation of children with disabilities in education.

Reviewing special / inclusive school programmes and activities on behalf of Irish Aid, Zambia in Kasama and Mbala districts of northern, Zambia, O'Keefe (1998), cites additional factors such as lack of assessment services and lack of statistical information on number of children with disabilities requiring rehabilitation and educational services to support planning

of special education delivery. This made it difficult to make education accessible to more children with disabilities in Kasama and Mbala districts in Northern Province. The 1996 Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) Report on Special education in Zambia, explains the limited participation in education and training of persons with disabilities to lack of donor involvement in special education in Zambia. As a result special education remained undeveloped in the country. Kelly (1998), noted that many donors in the field of education often viewed special education as a '*bottomless pit*' with little or no immediate returns to show to the public on donor inputs in education (p.118). The donors were therefore not keen at investing in the education of persons with disabilities whose benefits could not easily be seen or quantified for the public to value their contribution to Zambia's overall national development. Majority of donors chose to invest in areas of education provision such as girl child education, general school infrastructure development where impact was more visible and easily quantified than special education (Kelly, 1998; Kalabula, Mandyata and Chinombwe, 2006). As a result of these limitations in education of persons with disabilities, Mandyata (2011) reports that special educational services have continued to face the problem of erosion in quality of education offered, slow growth, low retention, graduation and progression to higher education among children and adults with disabilities in Zambia.

### **1.2.3.3 Integration Based Education**

Following the Presidential decree of 1971 which made the ministry of education become responsible for the education of children with disabilities, followed by the pronouncements of the Education Reforms of 1977, there was emphasis on use of unit based integration in the education of children with disabilities. The policy recognized the need for most of the children with disabilities to be educated together with their non-disabled peers or if this was not possible interactions between special and regular schools be allowed to take place on regular basis (MoE, 1977). Through integration approach to education of children with

disabilities and as a matter of children's right, more children found themselves in special education units located in regular schools. The McGregor Report on Education of the Blind and the handicapped of 1967, endorsed the thinking that the most important effect of an open education system involving children with disabilities, is not the disabled persons themselves but the people with whom education allows children with disabilities to come into contact and interact with (p.53). Through regular interaction, the environment tended to help the disabled to prepare adequately for life in the community unlike special education learning environment. The report further agreed with the principle of integration with integration in that it allows children to use every opportunity to make contact with other children and the local communities thereby effectively preparing for life in the society (GRZ, 1967).

By definition, a unit is a special class attached to a regular school that caters for children with disabilities for part of the school day (Mandyata, 2002). Under this arrangement, children are made to receive specialized teaching from teachers. At times, children with disabilities show signs of improvement in their academic work hence are allowed to join their peers in regular classrooms from units while those in regular classes not doing well are allowed to be receiving specialist teaching in units. Avramids, Baylis and Burden (2000) state that the principle behind the promotion of integration in the education of children with disabilities is that, integration allows besides academic work, social interactions between the children with disabilities and the non-disabled children in the schools. Through integration, children are given a chance to share knowledge, skills and experiences and learn from one another which contributes to the overall performance of children.

Focus on Learning Education of 1992 as a transitional education policy in Zambia, supported a unit based integration of children with disabilities as a mechanism of increasing access to education. The policy also introduced the concept of resource room based education. Mandyata (2002) sees a resource room as a specially staffed and resourced room to which children with disabilities enrolled in a regular school come at planned intervals as the need arises to receive additional and specialized instructions and attention before returning to regular classes on every school day. Resource room based learning however, has not been effective in Zambia (Manda, 2013). One reason could be that, there has been very little collaboration between regular teachers and special education teachers attached to resource rooms on the learning of individual children. Consequently, it has been difficult for teachers in regular classrooms acquire the skills necessary to assist children redeployed in regular classrooms to continue accessing education. Special education teachers have the ability of complimenting what regular teachers give in classes as they are able to bring along with them to the partnership, specialized skills, instructions, information and academic remediation necessary in the learning of children if collaboration was promoted in schools practising integration.

#### **1.2.3.4 Inclusive Based Education**

Zambia has embraced inclusive education as a strategy in the provision of education to children vulnerable children and those with disabilities through its 1996 Education policy, *“Educating Our Future,”* Disability Act of 1996 and now supported by the *Education Act of 2011*. Through these instruments, the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education, (MoESVTEE) has introduced special education in regular classrooms and school practices under the philosophy of inclusive education as a means of promoting equality, equity and partnership in education provision (MoE, 1996; 2011; MoESTEE, 2013). In this format of education, children with disabilities are placed in regular classes and

learn together with their peers without disabilities. The shift towards an inclusive approach to education of children ensures protection of children's rights and helps to increase access. The philosophy itself seems to show that it is no longer a question of compulsory education or children's special needs but the right to participate in education closer to children's place of residence and indeed working towards meeting the overall agenda and goals of providing education children in Zambia (Manda, 2013).

Inclusive education in Zambia is however, not without concerns. Often children with disabilities are placed in regular classrooms and schools without proper assessment services to ascertain actual learning needs of the child and what the teacher should do to support the children. In many cases children with disabilities seem not to receive the kind of support they require for them to effectively participate in classrooms learning (Mandyata, 2002). Most of the teachers who teach in inclusive classes were reported hardly posse basic skills and knowledge in inclusive teaching of children with disabilities in inclusive class settings as well as how to work or promote parents' participation in the learning of children (Chilufya, 2005). This picture on inclusive education practices seem to disadvantages children with disabilities from effective participation in regular classroom learning in that they are not able to benefit from inclusive classroom practices.

However, the need for qualified teachers and full participation of stakeholders such parents and communities in the education of children with and without disabilities in schools, has been adequately acknowledged in the 1996 Education policy as well as in the Education Act of 2011 (MoE, 1996; 2011). The two instruments in the provision of education have all emphasised the need to establish a calibre of well-qualified teachers in special and inclusive

education and promote full participation of various stakeholders in education of children. The instruments have spelt out the need for inclusive type of education and training at all levels in Zambia as a means of providing quality education and training to all children, youth and adults. The implication of this development is that regular classrooms will include children with disabilities and that teachers should strive to meet the learning needs and should have full support of parents, families and the community as key stakeholders (Chilufya, 2005). In order to prepare teachers and parents to work together to achieve quality education for all children, teachers ought to be prepared adequately to develop their full knowledge, teaching skills and interpersonal relationships to work with parents and teach children with and without disabilities in same classrooms and schools.

As already mentioned inclusive education in Zambia, is associated with disability and regular school practices and not necessarily with vulnerability including girl child education. It is one of fundamental approaches that the Zambian government has taken in order to increase access to education, promote equalisation of educational opportunities and a means of ensuring the rights of children (Manda, 2013). As a result of inclusive schooling, a large number of children with disabilities have found themselves in regular classrooms and schools receiving instructions through mainstreaming as opposed to exclusive or separate education. Nationally there were 107, 271 children with disabilities in regular primary schools, 198, 194 in 2010 and in 2009 there were 202, 511 such children (6.3% of pupil population) in regular primary schools (MoE, 2009; 2010; 2013). Table 1 below shows the 2013 distribution of children with disabilities by gender and disability at national level.

Table 1: Children with Disabilities in Regular Primary Schools by Disability and Gender–  
National n= 107, 271

Impairment	Male	Female	% (F)	Total	% Ch.
Hearing Impairment	9,006	7,482	47.4	16,488	16.98
Intellectual disabilities	12,649	9,224	47.8	21,873	18.92
Multiple Impairments	1,506	1, 298	47.5	2, 804	5.95
Physical Impairments	4,601	3,195	44.9	7,796	8.11
Specific-Learning difficulties	25,970	23, 931	48.4	49, 901	38.07
Visual Impairments	5,053	3,356	46.1%	8,409	11.94
Total	58, 785	48,486	47.5%	107, 271	100.0

Source: MoE (2013), Educational Statistical Bulletin, Planning Unit, Lusaka

In 2013, the highest number of children with disabilities in regular primary schools was of those categorized to have specific learning difficulties (49, 901), followed by children with disabilities (21, 873) and those with hearing impairment (16. 488) while the least number of children with disabilities in the regular primary school was of children with multiple impairments (2, 804). Surprisingly, North-western Province, had the highest number of children with disabilities in regular primary classrooms (17, 651) followed by Western Province (16, 652). Lusaka province recorded the least number of children with disabilities in regular primary classrooms (3, 809). In terms of gender there were more male children with disabilities in regular primary classrooms (58, 785) than female children with disabilities (48, 486). The high number of children with disabilities in regular classrooms in North-western and western provinces could be due to factors such as low number of special education classrooms, negative attitudes towards education of the disabled and lack of sensitisation on the plight of children with disabilities (MoE, 2013), other are insufficient personnel in the field of special education, lack of resources (Mandyata, 2002), low participation of stakeholders such as parents, churches and charitable organisations in education provision

(Chilufya, 2005). Interestingly, the 2013 education bulletin reports that north-western province had only 15 out of the 457 special education classrooms at primary and secondary levels of education while Lusaka province recorded the highest number of special classrooms in regular schools (112) (MoE, 2013). This means that more children with disabilities in Lusaka had access to special classroom education than those in other provinces of Zambia.

#### **1.2.3.5 Principles in National Education Policy**

The 1996 National education policy and its implementation, has been guided by the values of liberal democracy. The current education system has been associated with the process of liberalisation and decentralization in education based on democratic principles centred on local governance in education delivery (MoE, 1996; 2001). This development in education provision has had an effect on the administration, financing, decision-making process, parental participation as well as the curriculum implementation . As a result, the delivery of education is currently planned, partially financed, implemented and monitored by the communities through the district education boards as an aspect of local governance. The decentralisation process in education provision in Zambia, has been going on since 1996 and has led to increased parental and community involvement in the learning of children than before (MoE, 2003). Because of this development, more and more decisions in the education of children are being made at a local level involving the communities and schools. There is also increased responsibility and increased sharing of cost for education of children among various stakeholders such as parents, families and communities. For example, local communities are made to participate in school development, maintenance and repairing of school infrastructure as aspects of their input into the learning of children (MoE, 1996; Chilufya, 2005). The Ministry of Education Headquarters however, has remained responsible for policy development and financing of schools at national level as part of the contribution towards the education of children.

The vision and mission of the ministry of education has remained that of providing guidance in the provision of education in Zambia. It has committed itself to ensuring that every Zambian has a right of access to quality education, to education which is relevant and meaningful to individual and societal needs, education that is adaptable to the person's capacity and abilities and relevant to community and national aspirations (MoE, 1996). The goals of education enshrined in the current education policy in Zambia, are generally concerned with the development of positive attitudes towards education, values and behavior among school graduates (Kalabula, 2007; MoE, 2001). On the whole goals of providing education at national level are aimed at producing learners with personally held set of civic, moral and spiritual values; aimed at developing analytical, innovative, creative and constructive young minds regardless of their physical, sensory and mental abilities of an individual. Further, the current education policy seeks to promote increased access to quality education, life-skills, development of positive attitude towards self-employment, entrepreneurship related issues and safeguarding personal health and reproductive health as children grow into young adults (MoE, 1996; 2001).

#### **1.2.3.6 Policy on Partnership in Education**

Education in Zambia has its origins in the works of voluntary organizations of which Christian missionaries have been quite dominant. From the time formal education structure was established in the 1920s to the time of independence in 1964, education was provided through a wide-range of partnerships. These partnerships involved central and local governance, churches and a number of voluntary organisations working together in the provision of education (Snelson, 1974; Mwanakatwe, 1984). Following the attainment of Zambia's independence in 1964, the guiding principle that developed in the provision of education was the establishment of wholly state run or controlled public schools. Through

these schools, free or subsidized educational services were to be provided to all children by the state. Although this socialist policy in provision of education was favoured at the time, it affected the policy of partnership in education that existed before Zambia's independence (Kelly, 1991). The state assumed the responsibility of running schools, managing and financing education though without the support of other stakeholders such as parents and communities. The private sector, churches, voluntary agencies, communities and local government authorities under the policy of education at that time were divorced from participation in the provision of education.

The monopolistic approach in education taken by the Zambian government in the mid 1960s followed by the economic depression and declining economy of the 1970s had several consequences on quantity and quality of education provided (Kelly, 1998; Kalabula, 2007). The move greatly restricted parents' rights to choose and participate in education of their children. It made it difficult for schools to tap valuable human, material and financial resources to support education. Equally, churches, voluntary agencies, parents, families and communities found it difficult to participate in the running and managing of schools in Zambia. As a result there was general failure in quantity and quality of education provided to children including education of children with disabilities from the late 1970s (Mwankatwe, 1984; Kelly, 1991).

The current policy on partnership in education is in response to the decline in the quantity and quality of education. It appears to seek to establish new and proactive partnerships in education provision among stakeholders such as educators, parents, families and communities in the provision of education (MoE, 1996; Kalabula, 2007). The policy seeks to bring together various stakeholders such as educators, private education providers, relevant ministries, churches, non-governmental organization, parents, families and communities in

order to mobilise resources to make education accessible to children despite their physical, sensory and mental capacities (MoE, 2003; MoE, 1996). Katwishi, (1995) alludes to the need for parents and community participation in early education of children with disabilities. She sees it as a meaningful way of liberalization and promoting democratization in education of children. Katwishi (1995), further, notes that partnership in education serves as an opportunity to listen and incorporate the voices of various stakeholders in the education of children and in improving educational services available to all children.

Partnership in education gives protection of parents' right to choose type of education for their children. It protects the basic right to participate in the learning of children. Indeed there are different ways in which parents, families and communities can participate in the education of their children. One of these is in ensuring and sustaining a cost-sharing environment in the light of drastic reduction in public resources available to support education (Manda, 2013). Through partnership direct cost of educating children, are shared or transferred to parents, families and communities as stakeholders of the investment in children's education. Parents-Teachers Associations (PTAs) as linkages in education provision, take the responsibility of raising material and financial resources to support the delivery of education in schools (O'Keefe, 1998). However, it is worth-noting that the objectives of parents, families and school partnership in education, are quite varied. The objectives could be categorized as improvement in education, school improvement and indeed strengthening of community and school linkages in the learning of children.

In the context of partnership in inclusive education, parents, families and community participation provides a platform in making schools accessible, managing schools and

providing school furniture such as desks and chairs to meet the learning needs of children. Through a partnership principle in education, community and schools could work together to increase levels of access to education, participation in children's learning, retention and completion rates among children in the school system (Kanyika, Sakala and Mwale, 2001). The current policy on partnership in education, however, does not seem to recognize the challenges that have associated themselves with community and school partnerships and how they have impacted on the learning of children. These challenges include, poverty, restrictive education legislation, lack of communication and indeed negative attitude of parents, communities, teachers and educational authorities towards partnerships in the education of children.

#### **1.2.3.7 Parents' and Teachers' Partnerships in Inclusive Education**

As a result of the paradigm shift in the education of children with and without disabilities arising from the 1996 inclusive education policy, parents, teachers and other stakeholders have found themselves as partners in an attempt to meet the learning needs of children in schools. Within the framework of inclusive education, parents' and teachers' collaborative relationship has been perceived as a more meaningful method of providing educational interventions to children. Kelly (1998) argued that increased involvement of parents, families and communities in the education of children, had the potential of improving the physical learning environment, school attendance, retention, and performance and graduation rates of children including those with disabilities placed in the regular school system.

Implicit in the 1996 Education Policy is the notion that family and school are partners in the prevention of school failures. Parents and educators, as a result of the change in the policy on the education of children with disabilities, have found themselves increasingly working in partnerships with a view of improving the learning environment and promoting school success. Family and school relationships have been therefore identified as a primary factor

for children's learning, particularly children with disabilities. Family involvement in children's learning has been seen as a way of connecting important social and ecological contexts surrounding children aimed at strengthening their learning and development (Kalabula, 2000). Contributing on the same issue, Katwishi, (1995) has advocated for a positive family and school relationship in the education of children with disabilities. She, in fact, describes family and school relationships as a safety net in fighting negative attitudes and prejudices towards the education of children with disabilities as well as a means of promoting school success of children in the regular schools.

It is, however, worth-noting that, homes, families and schools when made to work together have the capacity of improving the learning outcomes of all children. As a result, parents' and teachers' partnerships were slowly, but steadily receiving primary recognition across the school systems. Katwishi, (1998) acknowledged the importance of parents and teachers' involvement in early childhood interventions in Kalulushi, Zambia. It was found out that the involvement of parents in the early identification of learning needs, was slowly moving from orientation on how to get parents involved in the learning of the children, to how parents and families can support one another in dealing with the conditions and learning problems of the children. Progressively, partnerships were moving from how to get homes and families participate in the learning programmes and activities of children, to how parents can support each other in the management of conditions of children and improving their learning in the schools and classrooms.

Similarly, Pianta and Walsh (1996) have emphasised the importance of establishing a shared meaning across homes and schools for them to experience school success. As a result, partnership has been identified to be necessary in the interruption of the cycle of school

failures among schools practicing inclusive education. Mulholland and Blecker (2008) note that, for children in the school to move from a culture of school failure to a culture of school success, there was need for parents and teachers to recognise school failures and work collectively to find a common solution to the learning problems of children included in schools practising inclusive education.

In a study conducted on the experiences of parents of children with multiple disabilities in Indianapolis in United States of America (U.S.A), Obeng (2010) saw positive connections and interactions between parents and educators of pre-adolescent children with health problems when they fully understood the problems of their children. The study further observed that, parents and teachers' interactions had the potential of enabling them to work towards understanding and sustaining their partnerships in schools practising inclusive education. Obeng (2010) concludes by noting that though partnerships in the education of children appeared not to be accepted among the parents, it was a viable means of minimising the feelings of burnt-out among teachers arising from dealing with children's conditions and learning problems in their schools and classrooms.

In his study, Barry (2006) reported that home and school partnerships were seen as a vehicle for school success for children with and without disabilities in schools. He further observed that as a result of its significance in the learning of children, partnerships were receiving primary recognition from stakeholders across the school systems. Christenson and Sheridan (2001) also noted that parents and family involvement in early education of their children in Nebraska in United States of America, was necessary in improving the quality of education provided to children. The study, however, expressed concerns on how to engage parents in the management of conditions and accessing support services for children included in

mainstream schools. Contributing on the same, Pianta and Walsh (1996) emphasised the importance of establishing a shared meaning of partnership across homes and schools for children to experience school success. As a result, partnership has been identified to be necessary in the interruption of the cycle of school failures among children in schools practicing inclusive education. In another study, Mulholland and Blecker (2008) note that, for children included in regular schools to move from a culture of failures to a culture of success, there was need for parents to recognise school failures as a product of their inability or unwillingness of parents to work with teachers as partners in the promotion of school success in the learning and development of children within the framework of inclusive school practices.

Notwithstanding the observations above, Gaad and Khan (2007) saw family and school relationships in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as being aimed at enhancing educational experiences of children's learning. In their study, parents were viewed as an essential, desirable and helpful element in making children with and without disabilities experience learning in regular classrooms and schools. As educators, in their own right, parents were very helpful in the learning process, just as much as teachers were in ensuring that children received appropriate education through mainstreaming. Positive parents and teachers' relationship, was necessary in reducing suspicion and in opening of new lines of communication and support between educators and parents over the learning of children. Adams and Christenson (1998) observed that, teachers saw increased interactions with parents over the learning of children as an opportunity to learn from each other and to participate in decision-making process in the learning of their own children.

In a report on how parents can be assisted to facilitate academic and social skills in children, Crockett (2000), Pang (2006) and Payne (2006) stressed the importance of establishing a

shared meaning of the school-home partnership in the provision of applicable and practical tips aimed at improving social skills of the children. Visibly the culture of school failure in the attainment of basic social and academic skills among children, has been linked to lack of interactive meetings among parents and educators over the learning of children. Parents' and teachers' inability or unwillingness to interact or communicate with one another contributed to failure in building of a common understanding and approach on how to deal with learning conditions and problems of the children.

Success in children's learning, nonetheless, can be promoted and sustained by allowing resources and skills in the homes, families, communities and schools to be put together and dedicated to the social and academic advancement of children with and without disabilities placed in the mainstream of education (Gerken, VanDyke and Xao, 2006). Parents and teacher's partnerships are therefore best placed for this kind of role in the learning of children. In Gerken, VanDyke and Xao, (2006)'s, study, it was also noted that, parents and teachers needed alternative relationships which were more focused on how to solve learning problems of children. Contributing on the same issue of parental participation in education of children, Subban and Sharma (2006), see parents as an essential link in the improvement of children's learning. The study proposes that schools do the job of reaching out to parents, families and communities to make them participate in children's learning. Sending a report card home about a child's progress and concerns, for example, was seen not to be enough in assisting parents understand learning problems of children and what needed to be done to assist them. It was further, indicated that parents and teachers in schools practising inclusive education, had the desire of helping children as much as possible for them to experience school success rather than failures in mainstream classrooms and schools.

In contributing to the same issue of involving parents in school business, Christenson and Sheridan (2001) indicated that, success of partnerships was evidenced by an active participation of parents and teachers in school chores and caring for all children included in mainstream schools. These increased interactions between parents and educators, had the potential of serving as a basis for improving children's learning. Through regular interactions, parents and educators gave each other opportunities to share experiences, evaluate children's progress and identify gaps in the learning. Partnerships also aimed at providing orientation to parents and teachers on their roles and responsibilities in the learning of children through inclusive schooling. Interactions between parents and teachers however, may or may not necessarily involve the use of a traditional paper and pencil, but the method may call for parents and teachers to work together in providing learning opportunities to all children.

As noted by Gardener (1985) and Gonczi (2000) children demonstrate their learning strengths in many ways including performing their daily chores in homes. The natural tendency of children to support parents in their socio-economic and house chores when recognised and enhanced early enough could translate into children's readiness for school or academic work. Parents and families through their relationships with teachers have the potential of freely negotiating and soliciting for support on children which result in school success. Together parents and teachers can work to provide appropriate school infrastructure, learning resources and support services for children to access the school curriculum. Through a partnership approach, parents and teachers see their constant connections and interactions over the children's learning as having the potential of stimulating children's unique desire and potential to learn as reported by Stainback and Stainback (1996). In support of this view, Kelly (1998) observed that educators and parents through their team

work in schools learn to appreciate and respect each other's feelings, opinion and contributions towards children's school success.

As we therefore, study community and school partnerships in regular primary schools practicing inclusive education in Kasama, Zambia, we ought to understand that, a family is a social institution operating in an interdependent way, but with particular influence on the learning and developmental outcomes of a child. Other institutions within the child's immediate environment include, neighborhood, communities and schools which equally affect the learning and development of a child. All these systems support each other in directing the learning and development process of a child (Bronfenbrenner (1991). Homes, families, neighbour-hood, community, peer groups, day care centres, nursery schools, religious institutions, health care centres, and schools as ecological environments. For example, they interact with each other in order to bring out the desired change on a child. Advocates of inclusion, with its origins within the social justice movement (Lipsky and Gartner, 1987) have seen that homes, families, communities and schools as agents of social change which needed to be clearly understood to contribute to children' school success (Banja, 2013). They have a significant role to play in the development of children including those with disabilities. Because of this belief, parents and educators have found themselves working in partnership with each other in the provision of resources and services to support the learning of children as they transform into responsible young adults.

Though parents' and teachers' partnership seem to stress the need for a more proactive partnership between the home and school as immediate ecological environments surrounding a child, the extent to which their collaborative relationships have influenced the learning outcomes and development of a child may not have been fully documented in schools practising inclusive education. Parents and educators however, have been burdened by the

presence of children in the mainstream schools whose learning needs are diverse and complex. Because of the diverse nature of learning needs existing among children enrolled in mainstream inclusive schools, involvement of parents and teachers in social and academic life of children, have become necessary for them to access the school curriculum and experience school success (Subban and Sharma, 2006). Parents and teachers need to work as partners in the promotion of social and academic success among children with and without disabilities in the school system. This study therefore, sought to evaluate the types of partnership with parents and communities in the learning of children in selected regular primary schools in Kasama, Northern Province, Zambia.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

The Zambian government through the Ministry of Education currently, supports the principle that every child has equal right of access to quality education. This means that every child regardless of personal circumstance or capacity should have equal opportunities to access quality education (MoE, 1996; MoE, 2011). Children with disabilities in Zambia however, are exceptional in that their education requires among many other things, modification of educational facilities, resources, adaptation of teaching approaches and regular support services for them to gain access to quality education. As a result of limitations in educational facilities, instructional resources, teaching approaches and support services only 16, 940 of as many as 160, 000 to 250, 000 children with disabilities recorded in 1996 had access to some form of education (MoE, 1996). The few children with disabilities that were able to gain access to education at that time did so mainly through special schools, special units, special separate rooms as opposed to regular classroom education.

The low participation in education among children with disabilities could be attributed to several factors such as inadequate places in special schools, lack of donor involvement and inaccurate statistical information on children with disabilities requiring educational services (Kelly 1998), inappropriate educational facilities and under-developed system of identifying learning needs of children (Manda, 2013). Other factors are, poor physical learning environments, negative attitudes towards education of the disabled, insufficient qualified personnel (Mandyata, (2002) and lack of proactive parental involvement in school programmes and learning activities (Kalabula, 2001).

In order to address the problems of equal educational opportunities and increased access to quality education among children with disabilities in Zambia, the Ministry of Education through its 1996 Education Policy, *Educating Our Future*, introduced special education practices in regular school classrooms. Because of the current education policy, a large number of children with disabilities have found themselves learning together with their peers without disabilities in the same classrooms and schools. In 2009 for example, there were 202, 511 children with disabilities (6.3%) of the total pupil population in regular primary schools in Zambia learning together with their peers without disabilities as compared to 16, 940 such children recorded in 1996 (MoE, 1996; 2009).

In spite of the efforts made so far through the 1996 education policy to make education accessible to more children with disabilities through inclusive schooling, lack of participation of parents, families and community in the learning of children with and without disabilities in primary schools practicing inclusive education, seems to persist. Little seems to be known on the status of parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children and how their relationships have influenced the learning outcomes of children with and without disabilities

in inclusive school settings. No systematic studies on parents' and teachers' partnerships seem to have been carried out in schools practising inclusive education in Zambia to evaluate such partnerships. It is against this background that the present study, sought to evaluate the nature and quality of parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children with and without disabilities in regular primary schools practising inclusive education in Kasama, Zambia.

#### **1.4 Purpose**

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the community and school partnerships in the learning of children with and without disabilities in regular primary schools practising inclusive education in Kasama District in the Northern Province of Zambia.

#### **1.5 Objectives**

In the study, the objectives were to:

- (i) assess the type of parents' and teachers' partnerships existing in the learning of children in regular schools practising inclusive education;
- (ii) determine factors influencing parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children in inclusive schools;
- (iii) map out communication strategies used by partnerships in building a shared responsibility in the learning of children; and
- (iv) establish the perceptions held by parents and teachers over their collaborative partnerships in the learning of children in inclusive school settings.

#### **1.6 Research Questions**

Based on the above objectives, the research questions used were:

- (i) What type of parents' and teachers' partnerships exists in regular primary schools practising inclusive education?
- (ii) Are there factors that may have influenced the parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children in inclusive schools?
- (iii) Are there differences in communication strategies parents' and teachers' partnerships use in building a shared responsibility in the learning of children in primary schools practising inclusive education?
- (iv) What perceptions do parents and teachers hold over their collaborative partnerships in the learning of children with and without disabilities in inclusive schools?

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

From the available literature, it is believed that parents and educators are more likely to work collaboratively in the promotion of children's learning in primary schools, when each of the participants feel involved, consulted and have their contributions appreciated or acknowledged by others within the partnerships (Seey, 1989). In doing so, parents and their communities would be more willing and motivated to participate in the learning of children. The study therefore, was designed to contribute to the existing literature on the collaborative relationships between parents and teachers in the learning of children with and without disabilities in inclusive schools. It was also hoped that the findings of this study, would highlight progress and gaps existing in the current form and practice of partnerships among parents and teachers in regular primary schools practising inclusive education.

It was also hoped that the information obtained from this study would be of use to parents, teachers, head teachers, education administrators, planners, policy-makers and other stakeholders in the provision of educational and support services to children with and without disabilities in the mainstream schools and classrooms. Further, it was hoped that knowledge

generated through the study would contribute to the establishment of more effective partnerships among parents and teachers in the learning of children. The study would also help to establish respective roles parents and teachers play and ought to play in the learning of children in schools. As a result the awareness on the role of parents and teachers in the learning of children would enable, policy-makers, educational and school administrators to plan and support parents' and teachers' effectively in the schools practising inclusive education.

## **1.8 Delimitation and Limitations**

### **1.8.1 Delimitation**

Delimitations indicate the boundary of the study in the context of content and geographical coverage. It is used to address how the study was narrowed in scope and covers several factors of which the researcher did not have control at all (Kombo and Tromp, 2006; Kasomo, 2007; Kasonde-Ng'andu, 2013). In this study, focus was on the type of parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children in regular primary schools practising inclusive education in Kasama, Zambia. The participating regular primary schools, teachers and parents were chosen because of their experiences in dealing with issues surrounding inclusive school practices in Zambia. Participating schools were those which had been actively involved in inclusive school practices since 1998 when inclusive education was introduced in the districts (O'Keeffe, 1998). Further, the researcher felt that parents and teachers' experiences, views, attitudes towards partnerships in the learning of children in inclusive school settings, would contribute new knowledge to the existing body of knowledge on partnerships in inclusive education in Zambia.

### **1.8.2 Limitations**

For the purpose of being objective and self-critical of the study carried out on the nature of parents' and teachers' partnerships in inclusive education, the researcher paid particular attention to certain factors that challenged the study. These include; the study being too detailed in terms of the number of respondents and questions that were asked as part of data collection. There were 180 respondents drawn from three geographical study areas, namely; urban, peri-urban and rural, with a mixed background and experiences on disability and education. Because of this, respondents exhibited different characteristics and experiences on various themes of the study which made conclusions in some cases rather difficult. As a result, this created difficulties in making accurate statistical and thematic analyses of the data collected. However, use of different instruments in the collection of data assisted in minimizing the problem noted above. The data collected was therefore, reliable and valid to support the findings of the study.

The quality of research instruments used may have positively or negatively contributed to the outcome of this study. Some questions on the scaled responses were used on the strength that, they had been used in other studies such as those done by Kalabula (2000) and Christenson and Sheridan (2001). The concern of the researcher was that such instruments were mainly designed to be used on one type of respondent— teachers and based in an urban settings. Although this may have posed administrative challenges in the management of data, the researcher used a combination of different types of respondents and study locations hence, the results were not compromised.

To some extent, the position of the researcher in the training of personnel in special and inclusive education may have had some influence on the responses given by the respondents. For example, the respondents were quite aware that the report on community and school

partnerships in inclusive education in Kasama District of the Northern Province of Zambia, may be read also by policy-makers, planners and administrators in education and that the contents of the report may to certain extent influence decisions on how parents and teachers relate to each other in the learning of children in schools. Because of this, part of the information contained in this thesis, could be considered suspect and un-reliable in the generalization of the findings of the present study.

### **1.9.1 Theoretical Model**

An Ecological Systems Model was used as a base for the present study on community and school partnerships in the learning of children. Urie Bronfenbrenner's 1979 Ecological Child Development Model observes that the development of a child in an ecological environment appears to be greatly determined by what a child experiences in the immediate and distant ecological settings that interacts with such a child. Ecological settings such as people, homes, neighbourhood, community, play-grounds and schools when working together, have a potential of allowing child to learn for example, appropriate behaviour, how to talk, read and socially associate with other children and adults in an ecological environment. In this study, a partnership model arising from the interaction between child and an ecological environment was used to guide this study on community and school partnerships in regular primary schools practising inclusive education. A partnership model in this study has been considered as a business-like relationship between and among people and objects in the ecological environment surrounding learning, and learning and developing child. The study is centred on the 1979 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model of Child Development. The model, stipulates that,

*“Human development takes place through processes of progressively more complex connections and interactions between an active, evolving bio-psychological human organism and the persons, objects, symbols in its immediate ecological environments.”* (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998: 996).

From the above statement, it appears that the Ecological Model of Child Development attempts to explain the existing relationships between an active child, and the connections and interactions occurring between and among persons, objects and symbols in the child's ecological environments. It provides a framework on which the connections and interactions between and among homes, families, communities and schools directed at supporting the learning and development of a child, could be centred. Bronfenbrenner (1979) Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998)'s work in fact, provides insights on how the model can contribute to the enhancement of the connections and interactions within the immediate and distant ecological environment in order to enrich the child's experience and promote school successes rather than school failures. In his work on bio-ecological model of child development, Bronfenbrenner (1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) observes that the relationships between an active child and persons, objects and symbols in the environment, does exists on a fairly regular connections and interactions. As such, the model looks at the child's immediate and distant ecological environments, as a set of nested structures surrounding a child with particular influence on a learning and development child. According to the ecological systems model, Bronfenbrenner (1979; 1991) looks at an individual as an inseparable part of a small social system comprising of four interrelated ecological systems, namely microsystem, mesosystem, ecosystem and macro systems.

A micro system in ecological systems model describes the relationship of the child with the immediate ecological environment such as home, family, neighbor-hood, peers, community, play-grounds and schools. Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998), note that a micro system as a child's immediate ecological environment focuses on support from the relationship within a home and school to support the learning and development of a child. In the case of an ecosystem, it describes the interrelationship that exists among major ecosystems that surrounds an individual's life in an ecological environment such as home, family and school

(Christenson, 2000). It serves as an interface of contexts for a child across the home and school connections and interactions over the learning and development of a child. Interface contexts could be said to have influences on family and school relationships, parents' and teachers' attitudes or behavior, and amount of training towards working as partners in the learning of children.

A macro system however, provides an overall cultural or sub-cultural pattern that is likely to influence the learning outcomes of a child within an ecological environment. It provides a culture set up through which a child interacts with the environment and indeed functions as an individual. Examples of a macro system that have a relationship with the learning and development of a child include, legislation and policy on education, cultural norms, traditions, attitudes of families and community, socio-economic, political and religious and humanitarian factors which all have effects and impacts on the learning outcomes of a child (Bronfenbrenner, 1991). The ecosystem provides support and structure for agencies and work places outside home and school that results in meaningful relationships towards the learning and development of a child. It represents the interactions and shared responsibilities that exist around learning and developing child such as people, objects and symbols (Christenson and Sheridan, 2001) that are necessary to support a child. It is worth-noting however, that attitudes and actions towards the relationships among parents and educators, often are sensitive and can greatly influence the learning and development of a child. On the whole, the ecological systems model appreciates the connections and interactions that surround learning and the developing child and provide an understanding of the behavior and impacts the relationships tend to have on a child.

Bronfenbrenner & Morris (1998) observes that, learning and developing child finds itself at the centre of multiple and reciprocal influences that are to some extent, useful in understanding the relationship between a child and the ecological environment. The model emphasise on the understanding of an individual as part of an ecosystem for example, a child in a home or school and indeed in the relation of the child to the whole ecosystem. The microsystem as immediate ecological environment a developing child finds him or herself in consists of homes, families, communities, schools and peer-groups all interacting with an individual child.

Central to this model, is the shared responsibility among participants in the child's learning in an ecological environment. The model brings out significant indicators of the relationships or connections and interactions existing around a child in its immediate ecological environment and how it could bring success in the academic life of a child. It observes that, learning and development of a child revolves around family, community and school connections and interactions which serves as a centre of learning and developmental process. A closer examination of the model further shows the need for more collaborative relationships among parents, families, homes and schools as immediate ecological environments with a potential of influencing the social and academic advancement of a child. In the context community and school partnership in education, the ecological systems model provides an understanding of the behaviour which is significant in social and academic life of the learning and developing child.

### **1.9.2 Treatment of Theoretical Model**

In this part of the chapter, we deal with the adapted model used to support our study on parents' and teachers' partnerships in inclusive schools. The adapted theory used in the study, is a modification of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model on Ecological Child Development. The

modification was aimed at making the model more relevant and applicable to the study on the extent to which parents and teachers were in partnership in the learning of children in primary schools practicing inclusive education in Zambia. In his study Chakulimba, (1986) reports of significance of modifying a social model to make it relevant to a particular study. He states that such an action helps to take the model a step further in its contribution toward understanding the social phenomena being studied. This is as a result of the additional thoughts such a model brings to the study. In this study, the modified model used does not only bring out the extent of the relationship between an active child and the ecological environment but appreciates the connections and interaction between and among people, objects, and symbols surrounding the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1991). The modification of the model in a study of this nature helps to explain some of the ideas, values and concerns arising from the relationships between parents and educators in the learning of children with and without disabilities in the schools practising inclusive education.

There are however, problems that arise in the use of models in an empirical study such as this one. One of the problems is the application of a model which was formulated in an environment such as western world but being applied in a study conducted in a developing country like Zambia. The issue of relevance of such a theory to a study for example, on parents' and teacher's partnerships in education, becomes a factor that requires adequate attention from the researcher. Another problem is that of choice of a model out of the so many social related models to guide the study, a social issue such as partnership in inclusive school practices (Chakulimba, 1986). A researcher is faced with the problem of making a decision of which theory is likely to contribute significantly to the study. In this study however, the Ecological Child Development Model was adopted to support the study for a number of reasons. Unlike the model being used in its original form, a modified model provided the ability to interlink and bring out significant influence of on the ecological

systems in which a child learns and develops into young and responsible adults (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998). The modified model applied in the study provided insights surrounding parents' and teachers' partnerships. It was able to bring out what may have been lacking in the model and in doing so made it more relevant and applicable to this kind of study.

In short the main argument in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model of Child Development is the focus on the relationship between an active child and the ecological environment surrounding a child and how it impacts on the learning of the child. A modification made to the model helped in the identification of strengths and gaps in the parents' and teachers' partnerships in schools practicing inclusive education. The central thesis of the adapted model used in the study, has been the idea of a shared responsibility among parents and teachers in the learning and development of children with and without disabilities in regular primary schools practicing inclusive education.

### **1.10 Operational Definitions**

**Disability:** restrictions or limitation in ability to perform a given activity. It may be as a result of an impairment.

**Inclusive Education:** a philosophy in which schools have a responsibility of meeting the learning needs of all children within regular education.

**Inclusive practices:** placement of children with disabilities and those with specific learning difficulties in regular education settings where special needs are met. Children with and without disabilities learn together in regular classrooms or schools. Children with disabilities may be in a regular class all time (full inclusion) or periodically withdrawn for specialist attention in a resource room (partial inclusion).

**Inclusive School:** a "school for all," that is a school that responds to the diverse education

needs of children, a school that accommodates different styles and rates of learning among children within a regular school or classroom setting (Unesco, 1994).

Primary School: an institution of learning that provides education to children up to the seventh grade (grades 1 -7).

Mainstream: ordinary or regular education. It may also mean an ordinary class or school.

Partnership: an arrangement where two or more parties known as partners agree to cooperate to advance their mutual interests such as learning of children.

Parent: a caretaker of the offspring in their own species, for example human beings.

Special Education: education exclusively or intended for children with disabilities and those with specific learning difficulties.

Teacher: an individual who has undergone a formal training in teaching children and is teaching.

### **1.18 Summary**

This chapter has given a brief background on community and school partnerships in the learning of children with and without disabilities in schools practising inclusive education. It started with a focus on the global perspective of inclusive education, history of special education in Zambia, integration in education provision before giving a Zambian perspective of inclusive education practices. This was followed by a discussion of the current policy on partnership in education focusing on the relationships among parents, families and schools in the provision of education. The chapter also shed light on the statement of the problem, purpose, objectives and research questions which guided the present study. Further, the

chapter has provided the significance, delimitations, limitations, theoretical model and discussed how the model was treated to make it more relevant before providing key operational terms used in the study. The next chapter reviewed related studies on parents' and teacher's partnerships in education.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Overview**

Chapter Two reviews available literature related to the study. The literature review starts with a discussion of the Ecological Model of Child Development which formed the basis of the study. The literature review then proceeds to discuss related literature on the nature of partnerships in schools before examining factors that may have influenced partnerships. The chapter then reviews literature on the communication strategies used in the promotion of a shared responsibility in the learning of children. The chapter ends with a discussion on the perceptions and values held by parents and educators over their collaborative partnerships in schools practising inclusive education.

#### **2.2 Related Models on Partnerships in Education**

In his study on the role of families in children's development, Bronfenbrenner (1991) reported that informal education that children accessed through the family circles and house chores, were important prerequisites for children to experience school success. Further, the study noted that, experiences of parents in the up-bringing of children were significant in making children succeed in school. Parents and educators therefore, needed to establish and develop connections and interactions that were aimed at enhancing children's learning in the schools. Hayes and Grunn (1988) nonetheless, perceived family homes, and school partnerships as being integrative or problem-solving relationships. Hence, parents and teachers' partnership have been seen as a relationship that was aimed at assisting children experience success as opposed to school failures. The study further observed that, the central theme in the family and school relationship, was a focus on easing the burden of making

children with diverse learning needs, learn and develop with full support of the ecological environments in which they live and will have to live and function as adults.

In their study, Sheridan and Kratochwill (1996) look at homes and schools as ecological settings with the potential of serving primarily as engines in the formal education of the children. The study sees the need to enhance family and school relationships as a means of sharing experiences and concerns necessary for children to access school success. Sheridan and Kratochwill (1996), note the need to create positive connections and interactions over the learning and development of children within the framework of family and school partnerships. The study further observed that family and school relationships were often characterised by existence of mutual respect, trust and confidence among parents and educators in the schools. Westwood (2001) indicates that interactive connection between parents and teachers were seen to have a potential of making children perform better in their social and academic work. The study concluded that an open kind of parents' and teachers' relationship, tend to help reduce school failures among children. Gaad and Khan (2007) nonetheless, reported that parents and teachers openly shared their experiences, concerns and suggestions on how best to assist children succeed in schools. Arising from the existing theories on partnerships in education, it appears that there is a need to evaluate the type of partnerships parents and teachers enter in, regarding the learning of children with a focus on making a general curriculum more accessible to children including those with disabilities placed in the mainstream classrooms and schools.

Power and Bartholomew (1987) noted that, attitudes projected by the educators towards parents' and teachers' partnerships, to a certain extent influenced the manner in which parents, families and educators related with each other in their attempt to educate children. Several models besides that of Bronfenbrenner (1979) are advanced to support the notion of

parents and educators working in partnerships to support the learning and development of children. Such models have helped to explain patterns of attitudes, assumptions, structures and level of partnerships existing between and among parents and teachers over the learning of children in the school system. Swap (1993) identified the following models in relation to parents' and teachers' relationships in education; partnership; positioning; protective, school to home transmission; curriculum enrichment and contextual–system models, as having significant influence on the quality of parents' and teachers' relationships in the learning of children that was likely to exist in a school environment.

### **2.2.1 Family-Partnership Model**

In his study, Christenson, (2000) reports that, the overall goal of a family-partnership model, is the desire for parents, families, communities and schools to work together to accomplish a common goal over the learning of children. The model proposes an attitude among parents and educators that promotes a collaborative relationship on issues of children's learning for them to experience school success. It has called for the enhancement of learning at home and at school through regular connections and interactions between teachers and parents in order for children to experience school success rather than failures (Quester, 2000). Parents sought to provide structure, guidance, discipline and assistance to the children in their own rights as homes and families in order to prepare them for integrative learning in school. A family partnership model in the education of children further provides an avenue in the promotion of shared values and goals with parents and teachers in the learning of children. The relationship between parents and teachers recognises and ensures the existence of a mutual and respectful means of sharing roles, beliefs, perspective, experiences, expertise and knowledge necessary to support the learning of children in integrative classrooms and schools. However, the level to which parents are working together with teachers in the context of school improvement, curriculum implementation and fostering of relationships among various stakeholders in the

learning of children with and without disabilities in Zambian regular primary schools practising inclusive education has not been fully investigated and documented hence, the present study.

In their contribution on the relevance of parents' and teachers' partnership in education in Baltimore, United States of America, Kalyanpur and Harry (1999) called for educators to freely share with parents and families information on school curriculum, learning programmes, activities and progress children were making. Under this model, parents were also seen to have the responsibility of providing information on children's condition, strengths, and weaknesses. This would enable both educators and parents to understand children's learning needs and work collectively to resolve them. Through the enhancement of children's learning at home, at school and regular sharing of information family-partnership model can be viewed as a vehicle in the promotion of success among children in mainstream schools.

In their contribution on this view, Scott-Jones (1995) and Jenkinson (1997) specified the roles parents ought to play in the partnership with teachers in finding solutions to the learning problems faced by children. These included the provision of a structure for guiding and disciplining the children in homes and schools. Based on the observations made above, it seems that, teachers and parents have a responsibility of helping each other in the development and provision of appropriate curricula, learning resources, programmes and activities that are aimed at creating opportunities for children with and without disabilities to adequately access the general school curriculum in the school system. This may however, not be the situation in the schools practising inclusive education in Zambia. This study therefore,

is an attempt to describe and document the roles parents and teachers are playing in the promotion of collaborative partnerships in the learning of children in inclusive schools.

Contributing on the issue of partnership in education, the National Centre for Education Statistics (1998:75) in the United States of America identified a theory where families, homes, and schools were essential elements in the accomplishment of a common goal on children's learning. The model believed that school success among children with and without disabilities depended much on the educators and parents agreeing to support each other in attempt to overcome the learning and developmental needs of children. The model in fact, expresses the need for a communication system which allows parents and educators to freely interact, exchange experiences and information and concerns about the children's learning. It is however, necessary under a partnership approach, for schools to use strengths and experiences of parents in their upbringing of children in the provision of more learning interventions to identified problems among children in the schools. In this study, this can be perceived to be of particular importance in the reduction of learning barriers among children with diverse learning needs in the school system.

In Zambia, homes, families and communities interact with schools in different capacities. Some of the members of the community such as parents and local leaders have children attending lessons in schools practising inclusive education. Because of their attachment to schools, they see themselves as stakeholders and whatever happens in the schools becomes their concern and responsibility hence, are willing to work together with educators in the schools (Kalabula, 2001). Schools in Zambia took up the cultural, physical and social characteristics of the communities in which they were located as a symbol of partnerships. The school and community relationship for instance, ensures that a relevant curriculum was

put in place in the preparation of children for good citizenry. This included what to teach, what needed to support the curriculum, when to teach and why teach (Katwishi, 1995). Further, schools in Zambia offered expert knowledge to the learners through teaching of subjects and skills. The communities, on the other hand, provided non-expert tasks which included norms, values, ideas, clothes, food, shelter, language and attitudes through interactions within homes, parents and families of children (Musonda, 1995). Partnership between parents and educators has been seen to be necessary in ensuring the success of all children in mainstream classrooms and schools.

### **2.2.2 Protective Model**

Nonetheless, a protective model appears to contradict the partnership model in the provision of education to children. A protective model by its nature, stresses the need to protect the school and its environment from parental interference in its attempt to provide education to children. Powell and Bartholomew (1987) observes that, the protective model was more centred on the assumption that parents, by virtue of allowing children to be enrolled in the schools, delegated to the school the responsibility of educating their children without necessarily involving parents of such children. Parents and their communities were not necessarily required in the learning of children, but were to hold the schools accountable in the learning of children. In this model, it is observed that the nature of the contract with parents over the learning of children is that of schools accepting their responsibility to meet the required support for the children's learning without necessarily involving parents.

In the outlook, a protective model suggests that schools should work independent of families and homes in their attempt to educate children. Schools themselves are capable of making the right decisions, on what children needed and what needs to be done to make children experience school success (Manda, 2013). In the Zambian situation, however, some parents

view children's learning as the responsibility of schools and that, parents need not be fully involved in academic life of the children. Because of this view, calling parents to schools is only when there is a disciplinary case that need the support of parents to resolve it. At least, this is the way things have been whether traditional or not in the Zambian school system. A protective approach to learning of children, though quite established in Zambian institutions of higher learning, has its own implications which may negatively impact on the quality of education and training provided to children. It has for example, limited the resources and expertise available in the training institutions to meet the learning needs of children. Institutions of higher learning are not able to enhance home and community resources to support the education and training of children because parents are kept at a distance instead of getting them involved in programmes (Kalabula, Mandyata and Chinombwe, 2006). This arrangement, however, has its own implications on the quality of education and training provided to children in higher institutions. Limited resources are available to support the learning of children.

### **2.2.3 Curriculum Enrichment Model**

In a study by Walberg (1984) on the relevance of curriculum enrichment model to participation of parents in the education of children, it was observed that, specific actions families taken at home can enhance curricular and educational objectives in the schools. In his study, Walberg (1984:398) refers to family actions on the education of children in home settings as, 'curriculum of the home.' The curriculum of the home included informal parental-child conversations about everyday events, encouragement and interest in the academic and personal development of the child. These informal interactions were seen to positively contribute to the improved learning outcomes among children in the classrooms and schools.

It is from this perspective that school personnel see family involvement in the learning of children as being important in the promotion of school success. This is based on the assumption that interactions between families and school personnel can enhance the attainment of curricular and educational objectives in schools. The model assumes that parents and educators each hold unique expertise related to curriculum and instruction which they can bring to the partnership and help to explore for purpose of enhancing the education of children (Lopez, 1999). The essential element of the model seems to be the degree to which educators can draw on parents' knowledge and experiences in transferring learning experiences in home context to that of the school environment. The potential weakness of this model in the Zambian context however, arises from teachers' perception of school curriculum implementation process (Kalabula, 2007). Teachers view parents as being ignorant of the learning needs of their own children and what needs to be done to assist them access quality education. As a result, parents and teachers seem to show unwillingness to work together to support the learning of children. This may have continued to be the situation in regular primary schools practising inclusive education in Zambia.

#### **2.3.4 Positioning Model**

Discussing the relevance of a positioning model to education provision in elementary schools in the East coast of New Mexico in the United States of America, McCloskey (2010) observed that literature that was available to guide participation of parents in special education practice, often referred to parents as being vital members, critical in the designing and implementation of the learning programmes and activities of children. The study acknowledged the fact that, in some situations, disconnections occurred between the information to guide parents and platform available for sharing of information and experiences. This often affected the way information was made available to partners with the

collaborative relationship in the learning of children. Harrie' and Van Langenhove (1999) however, used the positioning model for purpose of exploring how parents of children with disabilities, are positioned and position themselves in their connections and interactions with educators, doctors and therapists dealing with issues of disability and special education.

In keeping with literature provided to guide interactive meetings with teachers, parents in most cases took active position or a reflexive positioning as participants in the learning of children. The study revealed that the position of parents in relation to the education of children was acceptable and celebrative by teachers and providers of services as it often brought new dimensions to the provision of education. The model further, explains how schools sometimes use their interactive positioning to make certain positions regarding the conditions and learning problems of the children available or in some cases out of reach to parents. The study concluded by stating that the level of support parents received through application of the reflective and interactive positioning as interacted with educators empowered them to support the learning of their children in schools.

### **2.3 Perceptions and Values on Partnerships**

In a study conducted on the role of parents in the success of inclusive schooling in Brunei, Darussalam, Koay, Lim, Sim and Elkins (2006) noted that, parents were teachers in their own rights. Parents had a unique role to play in the learning of children within the framework of inclusive education. This view was based on the premise that parents were the first teachers of their own children. As parents, they had sufficient knowledge and experiences on how best to assist children improve in their social and academic learning and development. In this study, partnership encompassed a belief that learning occurred in many contexts including homes, neighbourhood and community and that it was not limited to direct classroom

instructions. The study concludes by stating that, homes and families provided a formidable learning environment with a potential of translating experiences into school success rather than school failures. In his contribution concerning the diversity in roles of parents in children's learning, Richard (1987) indicated that families, homes and neighbours served as immediate ecological contexts in which children learn to value their own school successes and failures. It was through these ecological settings that children acquired learning skills through their daily house chores and support of parents and families in the promotion of team work or togetherness in readiness for their school work and experiences.

Similarly, Coleman (1987) reported on the impact of home and school relationships on children's success by acknowledging the role of parents, siblings and families in arousing children's natural curiosity to explore the environments and to learn. It is through such interactions with parents, that children develop a sense of working together and acquire some level of competence for them to function and succeed in the school system. The school and home relationship has been therefore perceived as a platform for parents and teachers to explore and share knowledge, skills and experiences on the learning and development of children. It has been seen as an avenue for resolving children's learning problems in schools (Rizzo and Vispoel, 1992). Parents' and teachers' connections and interactions consequently, helped children to receive the required support for them to benefit from school practices from time to time.

Mehran and White (1988) revealed that previous experience with children with disabilities, was a factor likely to shape the nature of family and school relationships. The study showed that teachers as well as parents who had earlier contacts and had worked with children with disabilities tended to perceive the idea of parents and teachers working together in a more positive manner than parents and teachers without previous experiences in working with

children and persons with disabilities. The study further recorded that the previous experience of parents and teachers in dealing with children and adults with disabilities helped to develop a better working relationship with parents and educators with similar experiences than those without previous experiences in working with such children and adults. In Zambian schools, inclusive practices are fairly new. Parents and teachers may have limited knowledge, exposure and experiences to bring sufficient knowledge and experiences to support their partnerships in the learning of children with and without disabilities in inclusive school settings.

Mandell and Murray (2005) studying collaborative initiatives among parents and educators in comprehensive schools in England reported that, only 23 per cent of the 1,896 teacher respondents valued family involvement in the learning of children. However, 48 per cent of the respondents said that, it was a waste of time for teachers to seek partnership with parents because very few parents were knowledgeable of what children's learning problems were and what needed to be done to assist such children. Teachers speculated that though young children spent 71 per cent of their time outside the school mainly with parents, families and in the neighbourhood, parents had less interactions and support for children in their school work. Further, respondents noted a mismatch on the level of awareness on the roles of parents in the learning of children. It was observed that, while teachers were aware of what parents can do to support the children's learning, parents appeared to be less knowledgeable of what was expected of them in the parents' and teachers' relationships. Such a gap in the level of awareness of what each partner in the relationship was capable of bringing had the potential of negatively affecting the success of children in the schools.

Muthukrishana (2003) identified low level of awareness on what parents and teachers could do together to support children's learning as yet another factor affecting their participation in

school business. He reported that teachers' programmes and activities that required working with parents and families in children's learnings were more theoretical than practical work in nature. Fewer opportunities however, were being created for parents and teachers to interact, exchange experiences and raise the levels of awareness on the plight of children in regular schools and classrooms. The study concluded by suggesting the idea of in-house orientation and training as well as regular meetings between teachers and parents for purpose of raising the level of awareness, appreciation and gain respect from each other in the home and school partnerships. This view was supported by the Office of the Deputy Presidents of South Africa (1997) which reported that the high level of functional illiteracy among the disabled children and adults, was a direct result of the lack of educational and training opportunities for children and adults with disabilities, more so among those in rural areas.

The content of the Office of the Deputy President of South Africa (1997) report was explained on the basis of low level of awareness among parents of the provisions available for children with disabilities. The result of inadequate exchange of information between the educators and parents on the education of children, was seen to have contributed to the low skill levels and a correspondingly limitation in access to education, training and employment opportunities among children and adults with disabilities. The gap on information available on the education and training of children with disabilities in the Republic of South Africa can be minimised through continued dialogue among parents, families, communities and schools on the education training provisions available for such children. Partnership is therefore seen as an avenue through which parents and educators can bring the desired change in the education and training of persons who are differently abled in our society.

In his study on the perceptions of secondary school teachers on their partnership with parents in the learning of visually impaired pupils in regular secondary schools in Zambia, Kalabula

(1991), observes that teachers had many obstacles to overcome in their attempt to build a collaborative relationship with parents of children with visual impairments integrated in secondary schools. He reported that secondary school teachers lacked orientation and training on how to work with parents and children with visual impairments in the schools. Regular secondary school teachers believed that, training and increased parental participation in the learning of children were important factors in ensuring success in the learning of visually impaired children in integrated classrooms and schools. The study observed that, parents could play a role in the securing of learner-support and improvement of the physical learning environment for children to effectively access the general curriculum in secondary schools. The study nonetheless, focused on the views of teachers in secondary schools. The views of parents of children with visual impairments integrated in regular primary schools practising inclusive education may have different views on partnerships from those of parents of children in regular secondary schools. The present study aimed at establishing the extent of the partnerships among parents and teachers in regular primary schools practising in inclusive education

Mulholland and Blecker's study (2008) on parents and special educators, interaction on learning of children with disabilities in New Jersey, found out that, pre-service teachers who interviewed parents as a means of increasing opportunities for them to interact with parents found that, an interview designed to help them to gain a fuller understanding the roles of parents in the partnerships. The study also showed that, parents were less engaged in the learning of the children by teachers in schools. Because of this parents found themselves less supportive of the learning of children in homes and schools. Contributing on the same, Musonda (1995) observed that parents in Zambia, in most cases considered themselves less competent to get involved in solving social and academic problems of children. Often such parents associated their inability to participate in the learning programmes and activities of

children to fears and lack of orientation on how best to work in partnership with teachers of their children. Musonda's (1995)'s work nonetheless, was based on schools which were not involved in inclusive school practices. It is possible that their inability to participate in learning of their children can not necessarily be due to incompetence of parents proposed by the study but other factors ranging from mistrust, personalisation of issues to unfavourable school policies and practices to support parents and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children.

#### **2.4 Type of Partnerships**

Taniuri (1986) explains the type of parents' and teachers' partnerships on the basis of quality of internal environment and interactions within the relationships itself. By type of partnership, the study referred to the quality of relationship existing among partners in the partnership. Nature of their connections and interactions are believed to influence their attitudes towards the learning of children. It also describes the values which members attach to the contribution of each other towards social and academic success of children. Brickel (1999) observes that there was a reciprocal relationship between climate in the partnership and degree of involvement by the members in the partnerships. The study indicated that, partnerships that were positive or had open climate, enjoyed greater levels of parental awareness of what was going on in the school and showed increased participation as compared to those which use more closed relationships with parents. Partnerships which were more open were described as being responsive to the needs of the children. They also tended to promote a sense of fairness, openness and supportiveness among their partners which served as a sign of unity towards a common goal of making the school curriculum accessible to children with and without disabilities in the schools.

Reporting on the teachers' views on inclusive education practices in Zambia, Mandyata (2011) observed that, acceptance of children with disabilities in regular primary schools was more theoretical than practical, in that, only one third of the teachers believed that schools had the support of parents to meet the learning needs of children with disabilities enrolled in inclusive classrooms and schools. Two thirds of the teacher-respondents were found not to be in favour of the presence of children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. Teachers believed that inclusive education schools did not have the support of parents, communities nor resources to meet the learning needs of children. Teachers were, instead in favour of a segregative education for children with disabilities which had the potential of winning the support of parents and other stakeholders in the community. Further, the study cited unpreparedness of schools for partnerships; low levels of awareness on the plight of children in the learning of children, as contributing factors to negative perceptions held by parents and teachers on inclusive school practices.

Coates (1989) contributed on the same subject by observing that teachers believed that, children were likely to benefit more in a segregative learning environment than in an inclusive learning environment. A segregated learning environment had the potential of increasing parental involvement in the learning of children. It also had the potential of soliciting the desired resources and support services to enrich access to school curriculum among children. Kauffman (1993) added to this view by citing the restrictions in the learner-support available for pupils in the regular schools. In addition, absence of expertise, and lack of support from parents were among factors that led to teachers as well as some of the parents of children to support an exclusive or separate education for children with disabilities as opposed to mainstreaming.

Berryman and Neal (1980) on the other hand, investigated attitudes of teachers and parents towards mainstreaming of children with disabilities. The study developed a scale aimed at eliciting teachers' and parents' preference on the two types of educational service delivery models. One was the 'pull-out' model, which refers to exclusive special education model and the other was the 'in-class' model, referring to inclusive school arrangement. The scale was administered on a sample of 382 teachers and parents in special and inclusive education school settings. The results showed that special and regular teachers favoured a pull-out or exclusive special education model while most of the parents supported an in-class model or inclusive education for children with disabilities (Jenkison, 1997; Lopez, 1999). Teachers cited lack of acceptance of inclusive education practices and unwillingness of parents to participate in the learning programmes and activities as one of the many factors contributing teachers' unwillingness to host children with diverse learning needs in their mainstream classroom and schools. Parents however, favoured inclusive school practices, because of desire for increased access to education and the capacity of the social model to promote a shared responsibility among parents and teachers over the learning of children.

The findings of Berryman and Neal (1980) however, agreed with those of Coates (1989) and Kauffman (1993) who indicated that though parents accepted the presence of children with disabilities in regular education, teachers in New Jersey, did not agree with the inclusion of such children. Teachers preferred an exclusion model of educating for such children or an arrangement where children with disabilities were left in the hands of specialised personnel and had full access to resources. Mainstream teachers believed that they were ill-prepared to handle issues of children with disabilities together with normal children in the same classrooms and schools. Full support of parents and relevant professionals such as physiotherapists, speech specialists, psychologists and social workers, was seen as being

significant in the provision of education among children with and without disabilities to make them experience school success.

Semmel, Abernathy, Butera and Lesar (1991) in a similar study, examined the perceptions of the teachers and pre-service teachers on the integration of learners with speech disorders into regular education in Chicago. Perceptions of the 2,500 teachers and pre-service teachers were obtained based on specific responses to a questionnaire on perceptions held on the integration of children with disabilities in the regular schools. The study revealed that the majority of the respondents held favourable perceptions of integration except where children showed severe disablement and disruptive behaviour in their interactions with other children. The study equally showed that older teachers were more negative on issues of inclusion of children in regular schools. On the other hand, younger teachers and pre-service teachers were in favour of integration and more willing to work with parents of the children. Nonetheless, Yuen, Westwood and Wong, (2004) have cited limited adaptations to meet students' needs, pupils' dependence on peer assistance as well as low level of awareness on the roles of parents in the learning of children, as a hindrance to positive integrative education. The study associated the unwillingness of elderly teachers to support inclusive practices trust in competence of teachers and o the gaps in the schools' inability to orient and training teachers on the need for strong family-school connections and interactions in the learning of children.

The quantitative techniques used in Semmel, Abernathy, Butera and Lesar (1991) study, however, may not have been adequate to bring out in-depth information on teachers' views on their relationships with parents. The respondents, were only allowed to rate every objective in the study without subjecting them to open-ended questions to justify their views on various issues raised in the study. Use of quantitative technique alone in the study showed

the weakness of not bringing out in depth information on various themes of the study (Hill, Le Grange and New-mark, 2005). In order to generate in depth information to support the study use of a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques was going to be more ideal for the study. It would have significantly helped to establish the underlying factors to support the findings on what might have influenced teachers' views on parents' and teachers' partnerships in inclusive education practices.

In a study carried out by Evans (2002) on the relationships between homes and schools in Florida, on how they interacted over children's learning, 66 per cent of 1, 565 parents who made contact with teachers of their children, found the interactions to be useful in solving learning problems of children. Regular contacts and interactions gave parents an opportunity to communicate with teachers on how to deal with certain conditions and learning problems of children. Such contacts provided a platform for sharing personal experiences in solving learning problems of children. The study further showed that regular interactions between teachers and parents were a potential factor in building mutual trust, confidence and respect among participants in partnerships necessary in the promotion of school success among children.

Ozum (1995) alluded to the importance of parents being primary teachers in the learning of children and how as parents they can contribute positively to the reduction of school failures. In this study, investigation on how children's voices, parents and families shared relationships with teachers and school administration contributed towards finding solutions to learning problems of children, were conducted. The study revealed that the involvement of parents in the identification of children's learning problems and collective implementation of learning programmes tend to influence the behaviour and conduct of children. The interactions between parents and teachers, over school work of their children provided

contexts for sharing experiences and strengthening of their collaborative relationships over children's learning.

## **2.5 Factors influencing Partnerships**

In consistence with Christenson's (2000) study on the roles of parents in the children's learning in Baltimore, Evans (2002) studied the involvement of parents in classroom learning of children with disabilities in selected elementary schools in Florida. His study reported that 1,028 parent-respondents of the 1,563 favourably supported the idea of them participating in dealing with individual learning problems of children. In support of this view, parents believed that the relationship between them and teachers helped to create a platform for exchanging experiences, knowledge and skills on how to provide individualised attention and support to their children. The study further identified various factors that appeared to have affected the relationships between parents and educators in the learning of children. These ranged from challenges in goal setting, ignorance on roles and mistrust to inappropriate school policies. As a result partnerships were unable to create friendly-atmosphere needed to support the learning of children.

Leyser and Kirk (2011) reported that communication between parents and teachers over the learning of children with Angelman Syndrome schools in Illinois and Wisconsin, revealed that not only a strong support of philosophical and legal principles of inclusion education were necessary but also the knowledge of roles of parents and teachers in the partnerships. A number of respondents supported a segregated education rather than an inclusive form of education. In addition, the study indicated that, parents were satisfied with the children's schooling through mainstreaming though showed concern on lack of support services for children.

Parents however, offered insights about their children to guide rehabilitation and interventional activities. Leyser and Kirk, (2011) examined perspectives of inclusive education and involvement of parents in the learning of children with Angelman Syndrome in an urbanised area of California. Though the findings were quite informative, the results may not necessarily be the same with different disability groups in non-urbanised or industrialised areas. The study itself was limited in that only sixty-eight parents of children with Angelman Syndrome participated in the study. The number of participants in the study was rather low and researchers restricted themselves to open-ended questions which may have significantly influenced the learning out-comes because of limitations in the type of research instrument used in the study.

Through the work of Parents and Teachers Associations (PTAs) Christenson and Sheridan (2001) in Nebraska equated parental roles to elements of school successes or failures among children. The study saw learning as a hierarchic process in which children had to go through and needed a shared responsibility among parents, teachers and other stakeholders to enable children experience school success. The study concluded by noting that individual interest, time, policies, resources and strengths of parents affected the success of the relationships with teachers in the learning of children. Active participation of parents in the learning process was viewed as a stimulant of children's school successes. The study did not provide the level to which individual interests, resources and policies influenced the way parents and educators perceived and supported their collaborative relationships in schools involved in inclusive education.

Tuck (2005) in a study on teachers' effectiveness in handling children with diverse learning needs in the mainstream classrooms in Jordan, observed that regular communication between parents and teachers somehow, helped to improve the social and academic performance of

children. Further, the study noted several contributing factors to school successes among children. These ranged from increased parental involvement in social and academic affairs of children, existence of mutual trust, confidence to respect each other's contributions to substance of a more proactive collaborative relationship in the learning of children. Berry (2006) added to this sentiment by stating that parents were likely to support, the use of a differentiated curriculum and work along-side teachers when they were made more aware of the needs of children and what needed to be done for them to access the general school curriculum. It is quite true that awareness among parents and teachers of the learning problems of school children can attract a desire for them to get involved in making the school curriculum more relevant to needs of the children. Nonetheless, Tuck (2005) and Berry's (2006) work on parents and the curriculum did not seem to show the level to which parents and families were able to participate in the designing and implementation of school curriculum in urban schools which may be quite different in non-urbanised regular primary schools practising inclusive education.

Katwishi (1995) in a study on early childhood interventions among children with disabilities in Zambia, proposed the need for parents and teachers to work together in the early identification of special learning needs in children and collectively providing appropriate interventions. In her opinion, early identification of learning needs in children formed a basis for the formulation of more realistic Individualised Family Programmes (IFPs) as well as Individualised Educational Plans (IEPs) directed at assisting learners with learning problems. Parental participation was deemed necessary in the identification of learning needs and provision of interventions to children in homes and schools.

Katwishi (1995) call for the involvement of parents in the early identification, assessment and interventions was consistent with the view of Guralnick (1989) who identified the blending

of knowledge and experiences about children's learning involving parents and the community to be of significance in reducing school failures. The participation of parents in early identification programmes and activities helped children to improve in their social and academic work. Parents and teachers collectively brought to their partnership a shared vast experiences which worked better for children with and without disabilities placed in the mainstream schools.

In a study conducted by Kasonde-Ng'andu and Morbeg (2001) on Inclusive Education practices in Northern-Western and Western Provinces of Zambia, it was observed that, there was need for parents and teachers to work together to improve the learning environment and sharing of experiences on children's conditions and learning problems. The study reported that parents and teachers found it rather difficult to share and plan for diverse children's learning needs because of the differences in understanding the roles in the partnerships. It was evident from the study, that, identified learning needs were not receiving the desired attention from parents and teachers. A minimal orientation and training of parents and teachers on partnership in inclusive education, was deemed to be necessary in the promotion and sustenance of parents' and teachers' partnerships in the school system.

Recognising the importance of family and school partnerships in children's learning, Bradley (1997) proposed that institutions of higher education needed to address knowledge barriers on partnership among parents and teachers through regular interactive meetings and training programmes. The study concluded by suggesting that issues of parents and family involvement in the learning of children needed to be incorporated in teacher education curriculum to prepare teachers for partnership responsibilities in the schools. Training of teachers in working with parents and professionals was seen likely to broaden the scope of connections and interactions over the learning of children included in the mainstream

schools. The findings however, did not state the kind of knowledge and skills parents and teachers needed to acquire in order for them to support the development and substance of a more proactive relationship over the learning of children in the context of social and academic inclusion.

## **2.6 Communication Strategies in Partnerships**

On shared responsibility, literature by Letts (2002) stated that for a child to perform well in school, parents were a fundamental part of the children's learning and development. Because of such, parents were to serve as strongest advocates for their children's learning in and outside the schools. Parents need to deeply get involved in the school affairs of children. She further reported that parents through active family and school relationships were better placed to criticise and make suggestions on the curriculum, educational resources and instructional approaches teachers use in promoting learning among children. The study noted that parents' participation for example, in children's homework and assignments, helped to improve the learning outcomes of children. Through an open communication system, parents and teachers were more likely to speak with one voice on the learning problems of children when allowed to work as a team through a partnership approach. In Zambia for instance, Parents' and Teachers' Associations (PTAs) meetings, were seen as a platform for parents and teachers to share experiences, expertise and expressing concerns over the learning of children. Schools often invited parents to discuss various issues surrounding the social and academic life of children.

For schools practising inclusive education to move from a culture of failure, to a culture of school success among children, Smith (1997) linked academic failure to the inability or unwillingness among families, communities and schools to communicate share experiences and responsibilities regularly on the learning and development of children. Olson and

Chalmer (1997) writing on the attitude of teachers in schools, argued that failure to experience social and academic success among children with disabilities in inclusive education school setting, was more of an interactive and or relational problems between educators and parents and not a product of the children's conditions nor inability to learn. The study, therefore, recommended a more resilient approach to parent-teachers' relationships on children's learning. Olson and Chalmer (1997) argued that sharing experiences and uniting home and educational resources to support the learning, had the potential of increasing access to education and improving the quality of learning provided to children with diverse learning needs in the same classrooms and schools.

In his evaluation report on inclusive education practices in Kasama and Mbala districts of the Northern Province of Zambia, O'keefe (1998) noted significant improvements in the enrolment, retention and quality of education provided to children with disabilities receiving their education in inclusive schools. The study attributed the success of inclusive school practices to the increased level of awareness on the plight of children with disabilities and the desire of most parents to get involved in the affairs of the schools. Nonetheless, the extent to which parents and teachers were working together in the promotion of inclusive school practise, were not reflected in the report hence, the need to generate the information and document the extent to which parents and teachers were supporting each other over the learning of children.

Gaad and Khan (2007) reporting on the challenges faced by primary school teachers in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) revealed that teachers in the private sector favoured special education service delivery model as opposed to inclusive schools practices. The study attributed these findings to lack of skills needed to teach learners with diverse learning needs in regular classrooms. The report cited limited involvement of parents in the

learning of children as yet, another contributing factor. In addition, teachers gave heavy teaching loads in mainstream classrooms as another factor that had made it difficult for them to meet the needs of learners with disabilities in schools. The study concluded by calling for additional training, support from school administrators, increased access to support services and resources through initiatives from partnerships to enable children to access the general curriculum.

Hess, Molina and Kozleski (2006) supported this view by seeing parents as principal advocates and tutors of their own children. The gatherings of parents and teachers to discussed learning issues, partnerships had the potential of serving as avenues or vehicles for improving the learning outcomes of children. Through this avenue, parents and teachers were likely to freely interact, appreciate each other and understand the nature of children's conditions and learning problems to provide meaningful support to learners in mainstream classrooms and schools.

Marston and Leslie (1983) studying the perception of teachers on the mainstreaming of children with disabilities, noted that it was through homes and families that children received their first rewards and guidance or rejection. Consequently, it was these actions and reactions that translated into school successes or failures as children progressed in their social and academic life. Ammon (1999) postulated that the strength of inclusive education practices lay not in the separation of home, family or community from schools but in connections and interactions that brought these ecological settings together and the influence the learning outcomes of children in the schools. The study revealed that it was through family and school relationships that bonds of friendships were formed between parents and educators which result in school success among children. This in turn united the families and schools

together into a force with a common purpose of reducing school failures among children in schools practising inclusive education.

On the critical issues of communication on the rights, roles and responsibilities within the partnerships, parents and educators called for a move beyond simply listing barriers to communication but discussing and clarifying how teachers and parents could improve their communication and consequently their collaborative relationships in the learning of children. Gutkin (2000) stated that educators and parents tended to assign a low priority to communication on the rights and roles of parents and teachers in the partnerships. Respondents believed in the existence of rights, specific roles, mutual respect as well as orientation and training of participants on how best to improve communication or interaction over the learning and development of children. Gutkin (2000)'s findings on roles of parents in children's learning however, were inconsistent with Gerber's (2000) report which saw effective communication as a basic instrument in the creation of sustainable parents' and teachers' partnerships. These studies however, did not show the extent to which parents and educators were engaged in constructive communication that could help to improve their relationships between parents and teachers to support the learning of children.

Sofolahan (1995) in a study on attitudes of teachers towards mainstreaming of children with disabilities in schools in Awolowo in Nigeria stressed the need for parents and teachers regularly interact in order to share experiences on children's learning home and school visitations. The study revealed that the primary purpose of a parent-teacher relationship was to assess a child's social and academic progress and to establish existing learning trends and needs. These expectations were, however, without consideration of how parents and teachers perceived the current practice in the area of communication concerning the learning of

children. Cooper (1996) noted nevertheless that, good interactions between teachers and parents significantly helped to improve the delivery of the school curriculum as well as assisted in rising of the social and academic performance of children with and without disabilities.

In his contribution to the debate on the communication with parents in inclusive education, Kalabula (2000) observed that parents in Zambia were often ignored in the process of making decisions on how best to support the learning and development of children. He noted that most of the school decisions were based on experiences necessarily without incorporating the views of parents and the community in which children lived and developed into young adults. Improved communication between parents and teachers, however, was seen to have the potential of helping in pooling together home and school resources and expertise which were important factors in the promotion of school successes in the children's learning. This view was also echoed by Coleman (1987) who indicated that, regular interactions between homes and schools which were centred on the promotion of joint ownership of children's learning needs and success, served as a basis for inclusive education practices. Mulholland and Becker (2008) added by stating that, parents and teachers tended to go into partnerships without a clear vision on how communication process needed to be when dealing with children's learning. This in turn affected the ability of the partnership to collectively solve learning and developmental problems of children.

Powell (1993) and Innes (1994) observed that the promotion of partnerships as a means of enhancing the learning of deaf children was receiving primary recognition across grades in the study schools. These studies reported the family involvement of parents in early childhood education. The involvement was seen to have shifted from that of orientation on

how to get parents and teachers work together in the learning of children, to how best to support one another as parents and teachers in the management of conditions and solving learning problems of children. In his contribution to the existing knowledge on family and school interactions in China, Magrab (2003) revealed an interesting shift in the learning of children with disabilities from a segregative approach to education, brought parents and educators closer to each other on academic issues of the children. Parents' and teachers' relationships moved from how to get parents involved in what the school could do to help children, to how to make them participate in the learning activities such as homework. Hence, collectively parents and teachers were more determined in breaking or interrupting the cycle of school failures among children with and without disabilities. It is worth-noting that, in Zambia, parents often went into partnerships with teachers not to directly support the delivery of curriculum but to support schools in rehabilitation and construction works as part of the school's effort to improve infrastructure in the schools.

Epstein and Sheldon (2002), writing on the need to improve students' school attendance through the family and school involvement, recognised, among other factors, parents as important in supporting the social and academic success of children. In their study, 84 per cent of parents agreed with the theory that children performed better when parents and teachers were regularly communicating, interacting and guiding each other in meeting the learning needs of the children. As such, parents, despite teachers' expertise in the education of children, when offered an opportunity through an open communication contributed positively towards the attainment of the desired educational goals for their children. The study further noted that a collaborative partnership approach in solving learning problems in most situations helped to place both teachers and parents in a much better position to understand learning problems, providing the learner-support and consultations over the learning needs and progression of children in classrooms and schools.

In his survey on school consumer satisfaction, Johnstone (2010) revealed that parents often disagreed on how the curriculum support services ought to be provided to children with learning problems. The study established that, parents did not often agree on how best to support each other and the school in the promotion of learning among children. Teachers, however, believed that an open two-way communication approach in the partnership was an important element in the creation of an effective home-school information exchange system which was supportive of the children.

In another study, Ames (1993) observed that teachers, who easily interacted with parents, had better learning outcomes among children than those who did not. Ames (1993) hypothesised that teachers' sharing of information and experiences with parents of the children, had a significant influence on how parents responded to the call for participation in the learning of children with and without disabilities in classrooms and schools. It was concluded that parents were more willing to support children and teachers in their efforts to improve the learning conditions, so long as parents became more aware of their roles and responsibilities in the learning of children.

In light of the above, Welch and Sheridan (1995) recommended for parents and teachers' partnership approach in dealing with issues of education with children with disabilities in San Antonio elementary schools. This was safely linked to parents, specific communication strategies which helped both parents and teachers to understand learning concerns of children and what needed to be done to appreciate their learning problems in mainstream classrooms. The common communication strategies used in the partnerships included regular parents and teachers' meetings proposed by Ira Gordon in the 1970s. He observed that, parents and teachers openly met to exchange information, experiences and concerns over the learning of

children. Consequently this worked in favour of the children in mainstream classrooms because it helped to improve learning conditions and learning outcomes of the children. The other strategy used in communication among parents and teachers' partnerships, was to allow parents to visit classrooms and schools to interact with both teachers and their children, aimed at understanding and appreciating the roles of partnerships in the learning of children. In some cases in Zambia, Kasonde-Ng'andu and Moberg (1997) reported that parents openly shared information and experiences through home visitations and serving as paid employees of school besides participation in the removal of learning barriers in schools for children to learn. This helped to increase chances of access to the school curriculum by children.

Moberg (1997) carried out an investigation on the attitudes of special education teachers towards inclusion education system in Estonia, Finland and United States. It was observed that not only the use of Parents and Teachers Associations (PTAs) meetings, helped to build a shared responsibility with parents in the learning of children. However in some cases, the increased use of call-parents, phone calls, school open days and use of e-mails contributed to sharing of information among parents and teachers over the learning of children. Miles (2007) admitted that sometimes, the sharing of information between educators and parents happened only when there was serious learning or social problems affecting children. He observed that, parents were hardly available to discuss learning needs of children including those deemed not to be threatening to the general learning and welfare of the children. Teachers were not welcoming to the parents' participation in schools attempt to solve learning problems of children.

Teachers however, acknowledged the need for regular interactions between parents and teachers' through avenues such as meetings and parents' clubs. Such gatherings were perceived to provide more opportunities for understanding of each other's contributions and

failures towards the learning of children. In her study on pupils' attitude towards integration in Bristol in Britain Wendy (1986) saw parents as important partners efforts to change pupils' attitudes towards each other in the schools. The study looked at parents as simply receivers of school-based judgment of children's learning, but as major shareholders in changing pupils' attitudes towards education. Hayness; Corner; Hamilton and Lee (1989) studying parental involvement in integrated schools, found out that, the use of articles in newspapers, magazines; brochures and suggestion boxes to discuss issues to do with learning helped to enhance the sharing and exchanging of information and experiences. The study focused on the involvement of parents in the learning of children in schools which were located in urban schools. The findings of this study, may not necessarily reflect the same as those of Hayness; Corner, Hamilton and Lees (1989) on the use of newspapers, magazines and suggestion boxes as approaches through which parents and teachers can freely exchange information, experiences and concerns about the learning of children.

One aspect of Singal's (2006) study on how general educators, parents and special educators collaborated to support children's learning in New Delhi , was the desire for parents to regularly interact with teachers over the learning needs of children in order to uplift children's performance. The study observed that Parents' and Teachers' Associations (PTAs), were significant in solving various learning problems of children. Other studies such as of Smith, *et al* (1997) and Kalabula (2000) had contrary views on the involvement of parents in learning interventions and rehabilitation programmes and activities for children. Kalabula (2000) reported that parents often had negative views on their involvement in school activities of the children. Parents, questioned teachers' call for the participation of parents and doubted teachers' abilities to make children learn without the involvement of parents. The studies, indicated that a separate learning environment, with full support of specialist teachers and relevant professionals, was more ideal as opposed to inclusive learning

environment where parents of children were seen to be ignorant of their roles and responsibilities in the learning of children.

In the study carried out by Elliot (2008) on the effect of teachers' attitudes towards partnerships in children's learning, it was observed that, interaction between home and school was not simply a preference, but an important ingredient in the overall improvement of communication among various stakeholders in the learning of children. It was revealed that the relationship between home and school had the potential of enhancing the performance of the children. The study observed that children tended to perform better in their school work, when parents and teachers got involved and supported one another in the learning of children.

In his study of the modes of communication between teachers and parents in the promotion of children's learning, Ammon (1999), concluded that, bringing regularly together para-professionals, teachers, and parents in dealing with the learning problems, helped to improve and strengthen support services available for the children. Further, partnerships helped in the creation of confidence and a feeling of being recognized and appreciated in among parents. As a result, parents became more positive in supporting the learning of children in the schools. Parents were viewed to be more willing to cooperate and ready to develop a desire to work along with teachers when parents felt well knowledgeable of what was expected of them in the partnerships. Properly oriented parents can greatly help in the provision of learning interventions and supervision of learning programmes and activities. Through partnerships, Bladley (1997), in the learning of children envisioned parents' increased opening up to sharing experiences, in the learning of children and concerns over children's learning when schools became more open to parental participation. Parents' and teachers' collaborative relationships can be seen as a potential element in improving the understanding among parents and teachers in relation to the learning of children in inclusive schools.

A study by Murphy (1992) on modes of communication, teachers use to share information with parents, showed that partnerships were more built on oral communication instead of other methods of sharing information and experiences. The study however, was silent on how parents and educators through their partnerships could assist to improve their communication and consequently support the learning of children. Spurgeon (2007), was of the view that teachers and parents should regularly share information and in the process understand each other's role in the learning of children. The study concludes by observing that parents and teachers needs to use more personalised strategies to communicate and attract parental participation in the learning of children.

In their study on family and school relationships, Voster and Hunter (1989), revealed that willingness to listen to each other among parents and teachers revolved around mutual trust and respect for each other and openness in the way experiences were being shared in an attempt to find common solutions to the learning problems of children. Wendy (1986), adds by observing that effective communication was dependent on several factors ranging from being sincere, honest to being trusted in the way parents and educators interacted with each other over the learning of children. However, Wendy (1986)'s, did not reveal areas in social and academic life of children which needed parents and teachers to work together for the purpose of easing the learning problems of children and making the school curriculum accessible to all children.

It is however, worth noting that studies investigating inclusive education in Zambia, have, among other things provided literature on realities of inclusive education practices. Kasonde-Ng'andu and Moberg (2001) and Kalabula (2000), for example, gave information on status of inclusive education practices in schools, Zambia. Contributing on the same, Mandyata (2011)

reported on the perceptions of teachers on the inclusive education practices in primary schools in Kasama, Zambia. The study reported ill-preparedness of personnel, inadequate resources to support inclusive practices, low levels of awareness on the plight of children and limited involvement of parents, as some of the factors that may have influenced teachers' perceptions on inclusive school practices. The present study however, sort to explore the extent to which homes, families, communities and schools were working in partnerships in the promotion of school success among children with and without disabilities in the same classrooms and schools.

## **2.7 Summary**

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to review the related literature on community and school partnership in inclusive school practices. The review focused on the perceptions and values held by parents and teachers on partnerships in the learning of children. It also reviewed information available on the types of partnerships as well as communication strategies used in the promotion of a shared responsibility in the learning of children with and without disabilities in regular primary schools practising inclusive education in Kasama, Zambia. Very little attention had been paid to parents' and teachers' partnerships in schools practising inclusive education in most of the studies done in Zambia. This is the gap that the present studies sort to address. The next chapter discussed the methodology that was used to collect the required data for the study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Overview**

This Chapter discusses the research methodology the researcher used to investigate the extent of partnerships between parents and teachers in the learning of children with and without disabilities in schools practising inclusive education. The chapter presents type of research design used, target population, sample, sampling techniques and data collection instruments employed in the study. Pre-testing of instruments, characteristics of respondents, data collection procedure as well as data analysis process, are thereafter discussed. The chapter ends with a presentation of the ethical considerations.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

In this study, a descriptive survey design was used. This type of design refers to the structure of investigation carried out. It is a scheme, an outline or a plan used in collection of data in order to answer the research questions (Lay, 1996; Kombo and Tromp, 2006). By using a descriptive design, the researcher, was able to collect data and explain phenomena more deeply and exhaustively to support the findings. Orodho (2003) sees a descriptive research design as a conceptual structure within which research is conducted or planned to be carried out. It is perceived as a set of logical steps through which a researcher answers the research questions. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), look at a descriptive design as one of the focused approaches for guiding a study of this nature. It has the ability of determining type of participants, how data need to be collected, analysed and interpreted to support the findings. It is a type of research design which is reflective and accommodative to a human mind. Because of these attributes, the design can be used in the collection of information about people's attitudes, opinions, feelings, and in addressing various social and educational related problems (Kalabula, 2001). The design shows how the research has been arranged and helps

to provide information on what happened to the respondents as well as methods that were used in the collection of data.

In this study, a combination of qualitative and quantitative research techniques was used to collect data. This was aimed at collecting detailed information about parents' and teachers' relationships over the learning of children with and without disabilities in the same classrooms and schools. Use of a combination of these research techniques, provided the researcher with opportunities for normative theorization on the research problem based on the findings. It gave the researcher, an opportunity to search in more detail for a fundamental theory that adequately explained the nature of partnerships existing between parents and teachers in the learning of children in inclusive school settings. A research design employed in this study, involved use of a questionnaire, interview guide, in-depth interview and analysis of documents. Through use of these research instruments, the researcher was able to collect relevant information from a variety of respondents drawn from urban, peri-urban and rural parts of the study district.

Patton (1990) noted that, aspects of human environment are constructed by an individual through participation in the environment and its social reality. This is based on the meaning; individuals give to their interactions with other people and objects within their ecological environment. This view is shared by Mwiria and Wamahiu (1995), and Johnson (2006), who noted that, qualitative approach to data collection allows the researcher to study things in detail within their natural settings. Because of this, the researcher used this research design to study phenomena in relation to the meaning people attach to things or experiences around them. The researcher however, used more of qualitative than quantitative methods in the generation of data. Through use of more qualitative techniques in the study, the researcher was able to obtain detailed information about patterns and trends in the sample. This helped

to explain the nature of partnerships that existed among parents and teachers in relation to learning of children in regular schools practising inclusive education.

### **3.3 Reasons for Use of Survey Research Design**

Through the alignment of the study towards more qualitative rather than quantitative methods, the study took more of a phenomenological approach. Patton (1990) defines phenomenology, as a research strategy which centers an investigation on a phenomena happening in a real life and as influenced by human reasoning or mind. Patton (1990) observes that, human beings have minds, thoughts, feelings, meanings and indeed intentions and awareness of their being which can influence their thoughts about things happening around them. Arising from this, we can confidently, observe that peoples' actions can be studied in the context of social environment in which they live and function, carry with them meanings which attach themselves to their actions, experiences and expressions. People define their situations and give meanings to their own actions as an expression of what is on their minds as a group and individuals. Because of this, people do not simply react to external influence but are made to act from their own human consciousness arising from what is going on in their minds at one particular time.

A phenomenological approach was used in this study, with an understanding that, humans make sense of the world around them by explaining it according to the way they see, feel and experience things around them. The method was therefore, employed in this study in order to make an assessment of how parents and teachers collectively work together to transform the learning situations of children for the better in the mainstream of education. In this study, the researcher, attempted to explore and document the nature of partnerships existing between parents and teachers over the learning of children in same classrooms and schools. Because of the rich information likely to be generated through use of phenomenological approach in a study of this kind, the researcher believed that a clear understanding of the current form and

practices in parents' and teachers' partnerships in schools practising inclusive education would be made.

Patton (1990) argues that through use of connections and interactions, which are characteristic of a phenomenological approach, the researcher, would understand and appreciate how people see things from other people's point of view. The scholar concludes by stating that, people see human behaviour in the context of what others say and do and in the process, are able to define the world around them. People are believed to give meaning to things on the basis of what is in their minds, their actions to things and social products that arise from their connections and interactions with people and objects in their social environment. The researcher, therefore, felt that, a phenomenological approach to this kind of study, was more appropriate in that it had the ability of generating relevant data to support the findings.

In this study, the interest of the researcher was to understand the meaning, perceptions, attitudes, feelings and ideas of participants pertaining to their partnerships with parents and teachers over the learning of children with and without disabilities in the same classrooms and schools. Based on the interactions with parents and teachers using more of a phenomenological approach, it was possible for the researcher, to put together, perceptions, opinions, attitudes of participants and establish the type of parents and teachers' collaborative relationships in the learning of children in inclusive classroom and school settings.

### **3.4 Population**

The target population for this study was parents of children with disabilities, parents of children without disabilities, teachers and head-teachers in regular primary schools practising inclusive education. The rationale for selecting these parents, teachers and head-teachers in the study district, was that they have been the first in the province as Zambia as a whole, to feel the impact of an arrangement where children with and without disabilities learn in the

same classrooms since the introduction of special education practices in regular schools. Participating parents and teachers have been involved in inclusive schooling since 1998 in Kasama, Zambia (Mandyata, 2002). The researcher believed that participating parents and teachers had sufficient experiences on partnerships in inclusive education to provide knowledge and experiences to meaningfully contribute to the new knowledge on partnerships in the learning of children in inclusive school settings. The census of population and housing of 2011 reported that there were 109, 039 parents of children with and without disabilities, resident in Kasama District of Northern Province. Out of this number, 55, 610 were females while 53, 429 were male parents (CSO, 2011). The Education Bulletin of 2013 also reported that there were 5, 563 teachers in primary schools in Northern province of which 3, 302 were male teachers while 2, 2261 were females. It further showed that there were 1,193 primary school teachers in the 169 regular primary schools practising inclusive education in Kasama, Zambia. Out of this number, 608 teachers were females while, 585 were males with relevant qualifications and sufficient experiences in inclusive school practices to contribute to the present study.

### **3.5 Sample**

A sample can be said to be a smaller group or subset of the accessible target population. It has the characteristics of a larger group or population (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). It is carefully, selected in order to be representative of the whole or entire population. Kasonde-Ng'andu (2013), sees a sample, as a subset of the population taken to be representative of the whole study population. Sampling itself is a process of drawing a sample from a population. It is done in order to reduce the cost and time of doing a research. A sample also helps to reduce on number of participants in the research by making it manageable as well as controllable on the part of the researcher (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).

In this study, the sample comprised one hundred and eighty (180) respondents of which eighty-two (82) were teachers; twenty-eight (28) were head-teachers and seventy (70) were parents of children with and without disabilities in regular primary schools practising inclusive education. Table 2 below shows the distribution of respondents by status, gender and location.

Table 2: Respondents by Status, Gender and Location (n=180)

Location	Status of Respondents								Total
	Head Teachers		Teachers		Parents of Children with Disabilities		Parents of Children without Disabilities		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Urban schools	5	8	16	23	4	6	6	15	83
Peri Urban schools	4	4	11	8	3	4	5	12	51
Rural schools	4	3	9	14	2	3	3	8	46
Total	13	15	36	45	9	13	14	35	180

In relation to status and gender of the respondents, there were seventy two (72) males out of which twenty three (23), were male parents while, forty-nine (49) were male teachers. There were 108 female respondents who participated in the study. Out of this number, forty-eight (48) were female parents while the remaining sixty (60) were female teachers. In case of seventy (70) parents who took part in the study, forty nine (49) were parents of children without disabilities while, twenty two (22) were parents of children with disabilities. These respondents were drawn from three geographical locations as follows, eight three (83) were from urban schools, fifty one (51) from peri-urban schools and forty six (46) came from rural schools. the majority of the parent–teacher respondents were drawn from regular primary schools in the district.

Although a stratified proportionate sampling technique was used to ensure an equal representation between parents of children with and without disabilities in schools practising inclusive education, there was a huge difference in the number of parents of children with disabilities (22) and those without disabilities (49) participating in the present study. One explanation could be that there was lack of awareness about learning needs of some of the children placed in regular classrooms especially among children with hidden disabilities like hard of hearing and specific learning difficulties. Some parents for example, were not aware of the persistent failure of their children to do well in some of the subjects such as in mathematics or languages hence, classifying themselves as parents of children without a disability when in actual sense their children were experiencing learning difficulties in selected subjects offered in regular classrooms.

The respondents in the present study were drawn from three geographical locations in the district. These were as follows, eight three (83) were from urban schools, fifty one (51) from peri- urban and forty-six (46) came from rural schools. In the present study, majority of the respondents came from urban schools. A small proportion the respondents, however, came from rural schools. Selection of respondents from different geographical locations, was aimed at providing an opportunity to the researcher, to deal with data which was more representative and characteristic of different locations in the study district. The researcher visited primary schools involved in inclusive education practices and individuals that were perceived to have sufficient knowledge and experiences in the learning of children in same classrooms and schools.

In relation to the ages of respondents in the sample, majority of the respondents thirty nine (39), were aged between 35 and 39 years. The distribution of the respondents in relation to status and age of respondents was as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Respondents by Status and Age Range (n=180)

Age Range	Status of Respondents			Total
	Head Teachers	Teachers	Parents	
24 years & below	0	2	3	5
25-29 years	0	14	13	27
30-34 years	1	21	14	36
35-39 years	3	23	13	39
40-44 years	5	15	15	35
45-49 years	10	4	5	19
50 years & above	9	3	9	19
Total	28	82	70	180

According to the table above, out of this number, twenty (23) were teachers, thirteen (13) were parents while the remaining three, were head teachers. A minority of the respondents who participated in the study, five, were aged 24 years and below. The average age of teachers who took part in the study, was between 35 and 39 years, while, that of parents was between 30 and 34 years of age. In case of head teachers, the average age was 45 and 49 years. The oldest respondents were among head teachers whose ages were 45 years and above. Majority of parents who participated in the study were aged between 35–39 years. Table 2 below, shows the distribution of respondents by status and age range of respondents. On the question of the status and qualifications of teachers who participated in the present study in schools practising inclusive education, their distributions were as shown in table 4 below.

Table 4: Status and Qualifications of Teacher-Respondents (n=82)

Status	Qualifications of Teacher-Respondents				
	Primary Teachers' Certificate	Teachers' Diploma	University Degree	Higher University Degree	Total
Regular Teachers	21	16	02	0	39
Special Teachers	03	07	04	01	15
Head Teachers	14	09	04	01	28
Total	38	32	10	02	82

According to the above table, there were eight-two (82) teachers in inclusive regular primary schools who participated in the study. Out of the total number (82) of teacher-respondents, thirty-nine (39) were regular primary teachers, seventeen (17) were special teachers while the remaining twenty-eight (28) were head teachers of regular primary schools practising inclusive education. There were more regular teachers who participated in the study as compared to special teachers and head teachers in this study. One reason being there more children with disabilities in classes taught by regular teachers as compared to special teachers who were teaching in regular classes.

In relation to qualifications of teacher-participants, thirty eight (38) teachers had Primary Teacher's Certificates, thirty two (32) had Diploma in Education, ten (10) had first University degree in Special Education while the remaining two (2) of the participants who were also head teachers had higher university degree (Master's degree in Special Education). For the purpose of the present study, the teacher-respondents who took part in the study were adequately qualified, knowledgeable and skilled in teaching with a better understanding and experience on inclusive school practices to contribute towards the building up of new knowledge on parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children in schools practising inclusive education.

In order to establish the length of experience in teaching children with and without disabilities in same classrooms and schools, teacher-respondents were asked on how long they had been teaching in inclusive classrooms and schools. The responses were as indicated in table 5 below.

Table 5: Length of Service of Teacher-respondents ( n=82)

Teaching Experience	Range in Years	No. of Teacher-Respondent
	One year & below	01
	2-3 years	23
	4-6 years	24
	7-9 years	27
	10 years & above	07
	Total	82

Table 5 above, shows that out of the eight–two (82) teacher-respondents, the majority of them (27) had served in inclusive classrooms for a period of seven (7) to nine (9) years while the least number of teacher-participants had worked for one (1) year and below in inclusive schools. It was evident from the statistical information generated in this study that most of teachers who contributed to the study had sufficient knowledge, skills and experience on working with parents in inclusive learning environments to contribute towards building up of new knowledge on parents’ and teachers’ partnerships in the learning of children in inclusive schools.

### 3.6 Sampling Procedure

Stratified random sampling technique was used to place schools in geographical locations for purpose of participating in the study. Stratification ensures that different groups of population are represented in the sample. In this study the technique involved grouping of schools into three geographical locations; urban, peri-urban and rural areas. The schools from each of these groups were then, randomly selected in order to arrive at schools to participate in the

study. Use of stratification in this study was important in that, different groups or subsets of the population served as a represented sample (Johnson, 2006; Creswell, 2009). In each group, the population was divided into strata such as teachers, parents of children with disabilities, parents of children without disabilities and head teachers.

The classification of participating schools was based on whether or not the school was located in an urban, peri-urban or rural area of the study district and was involved in inclusive school practices. The distance from town centre to where each participating school was located in the district, was used in this study as a criteria for grouping schools in the three study geographical locations. In this study, regular primary schools practising inclusive education which were within a radius of 1-10 kilometres from the town centre of the study district, were considered to be urban; those within a radius of 11-20 kilometres were classified as peri-urban while, those from 21 kilometres and beyond, were grouped as being rural schools. Purposive sampling procedures were used in each stratum to select parents and head teachers to participate in the study. Purposive sampling is a type of sampling which enables, a researcher to select a sample based on a certain purpose (Kasomo, 2007). This sampling technique helps to increase usefulness of the findings.

The selection of a sample under these procedures is based on the judgment of a researcher regarding the characteristics of a representative sample. The logic in the use of a purposive sampling procedure in a study of this kind lies in the selection of information that allows in-depth study (Hessler, 1992; Borg and Gall, 1993). It is indeed, a procedure from which a researcher learns a great deal about issues of importance to support the study. In this study, purposive sampling procedure was used to select the 28 head-teachers and 70 parents of children with and without disabilities who participated in the study. These were selected as

sources of in-depth information because of their increased connections and interactions with teachers as well as experiences in the learning of children in inclusive school settings.

A simple random sampling technique was used to select primary school teachers who participated in the study. A simple random sampling is defined as a process of selecting from the population, a sample that provides every possible respondent, an equal chance of being selected to be part of a sample. The procedure was used in this study because it gave each element or subject in the population, an equal chance to participate as part of a sample (Mwiria and Wamahiu, 1995). A simple sampling procedure as used in this study involved assigning a number to every teacher of the accessible population at each participating school. These numbers were then placed in a container, shaken and a number at a time picked at random. The subjects that correlated with the numbers picked were included in the sample. They served as sources of the primary data which supported the findings of the study.

### **3.7 Research Instruments**

In this study, three instruments were used in the collection of data. These were questionnaires, semi-structured interview guide and in-depth interview guide. Questionnaire, interview and in-depth interview guides were used to collect primary data. The researcher chose to use these instruments in the data collection because of several advantages each of them was capable of bringing to this kind of study. Such ranged from explanatory powers, representativeness, appropriateness to ability to ensure reliability and validity in the data generated to support this kind of study (Cohen and Marion, 1998).

In relation to explanatory powers of the instruments, the researcher, referred to instruments' ability to generate data capable of providing adequate explanations to questions raised in the study. On the part of representativeness, the researcher meant generalisability of the

information collected using such instruments (Bliss and Orgborn, 1983). This meant that, the study can be replicated in another setting with similar conditions using the same instruments and can provide corresponding results. In addition, the researcher, found the instruments to be appropriate for this kind of study. The instruments used were capable of producing the much needed and relevant results to answer questions raised on parents' and teachers' partnerships in primary schools practising inclusive education. The researcher believed that instruments used, were capable of ensuring reliability in the data collected to support the findings. In the context of validity of the method employed in this study, the instruments were seen to be able to obtain data that was capable of answering questions raised in the study. Further, choice of instruments in this research was based on the understanding that, if the study was repeated in different locations at the same time and with similar respondents at a different time, the instruments could provide the same results (Patton, 1990). These criteria therefore, helped the researcher in choosing a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods which were appropriate in the collection of data to address the research problem. Below is a detailed description of the instruments the researcher used in the collection of data on which the findings of the study were based.

### **3.7.1 Questionnaire**

It is a research instrument used in the gathering of data over a large sample in more accurate manner (Kasonde-Ng'andu, 2013). In this study, a questionnaire was used to collect data from teachers in regular primary schools practising inclusive education (see Appendix 1). Through use of a questionnaire, the researcher was able to assess the perception, opinions, attitudes and feelings of teachers over their collaborative relationships with parents in the learning of children with and without disabilities in same classrooms and schools. Because of its ability to be presented to the respondents in the same format, way and content, the researcher found a questionnaire to be more ideal in the collection of data to support the

study. Use of a questionnaire provided an advantage of reducing the researcher's influence on the responses that were to be provided by participants on various items.

Many of the questions in the questionnaire took a Likert response format in design. Under this format, respondents were required to indicate for example, whether as respondents, they strongly agree; agree; disagree or strongly disagree with the statement given in the question. Use of a Likert scale approach in the measurement of perceptions; opinions, attitudes and feelings towards parents' and teachers' partnerships, was found to be suitable in this study. In addition, a questionnaire was seen to have the capacity of indicating the degree or extent of the agreement or disagreement in the response to questions raised in connection with the partnerships in the learning of children.

Further, use of Likert format was easily understood by respondents, who may have had minimal understanding of perimeters surrounding a survey research. Kombo and Tromp (2006), note that a questionnaire is important when one wants to get a general impression about the people's opinions, perception or feelings about a particular research question. Because of this advantage over other research instruments, a questionnaire was seen to be appropriate in the collection of data to support the findings. In addition, Lay (1996), states that, a questionnaire, just like interviews, is suitable when researching on unobservable issues. He cites as examples, opinions, values, interests and experiences as best assessed through questions since they can be easily quantified for the purpose of descriptive reporting. In this study, use of a questionnaire was found therefore, to be more ideal in the generation of the required data to support the findings on the extent of the partnership between parents' and teachers' in inclusive classrooms and schools.

### **3.7.2 Interview Guide**

In this study, the researcher also used interview guide in the collection of data from parents in schools practising inclusive education (see Appendix 2). The interview guide comprised open-ended questions. The interviews involved the interviewer using oral questions during interviews and interviewee, giving oral responses to the questions. The interviews involved dealing with one interviewee at a time. The interviewees were made to speak in their own words which were recorded on an audio tape and later transcribed into written notes for the purpose of analysis. In some cases the researcher took brief notes directly from the main points raised in responses to a question during interviews.

Patton (1990) sees interviews as one of the qualitative research methods that enables a researcher, to find out what is in another person's mind. It is an ideal method in that, we can easily capture one's, feelings, thoughts and interests with it than other forms of research instruments. In this study, use of interview guide helped the researcher, to understand what was in respondents' minds on the collaborative relationships between parents and teachers in schools involved in inclusive practices (Creswell, 2009). In addition, an interview guide was chosen because it was appropriate in the collection of data associated with feelings, thoughts and intentions surrounding the relationship between parents and teachers over children's learning.

Though use of interview guide in the study was quite time consuming, it was effective in the collection of data to support this study, in that it enabled the researcher to probe the responses for detailed information on particular item covered in the interview guide (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).

In addition, an interview guide helped the researcher to encourage respondents to expand on their responses or give reasons to justify their views, opinions, feelings or concerns over parents' and teachers' partnerships in inclusive school settings. It was also possible through use of an interview guide for the researcher to cross check information provided during the interviews as well as that, collected using other instruments (Kasonde–Ng'andu, 2013). The interview guide used, was therefore, ideal in the collection of information on the extent of the relationship between parents and teachers over the learning of children. Use of interview guide, to a large extent helped the researcher to control response situations, interview schedules as well as interview environments in order to collect the required data from respondents.

The interview sessions involved making two contacts with interviewee. In the first contact, the focus was on explaining the purpose of the interview and arranging the day and time when the actual interview was to take place. During the second contact, the researcher reminded the interviewee on the purpose of the interview. This part of the interaction helped in the creation of confidence in parent-respondents and in ensuring confidentiality before proceeding with the actual interview. In the course of the interview, the researcher also allowed the interviewee to complete his or her thoughts on an item before proceeding to the next item in the interview guide. This helped to secure clear thoughts and responses from the respondents as the interview went on.

### **3.7.3 In-depth Interview Guide**

For the purpose of generating detailed information and explanations to adequately answer questions raised in the study, the researcher chose to use in-depth interviews in the collection of data from head-teachers in schools practising inclusive education (see Appendix, 3). As principal officers in the administration of schools, head-teachers were seen to hold valuable

information on parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children in the mainstream of education. In this study, a total of 28 head-teachers running regular primary schools involved in inclusive education, were purposively selected and subjected to in-depth interviews on their collaborative relationships between parents and teachers of children included in the mainstream schools. Creswell, (2009), observes that, the idea of in-depth interviews with respondents was an important method of generating valuable information to support this kind of study. Detailed interviews with school head-teachers provided an opportunity to a researcher, to cross-check information obtained from other respondents through use of other instruments. This arrangement in a way, contributed towards ensuring reliability and validity in the information generated in attempt to answer the questions that were raised in the study.

In a situation where respondents were unfamiliar with the use of English language as a media of communication, questions were translated into the most familiar local language, in this case Icibemba to enable them follow and understand the questions before responding to them. Parents' responses that were collected through the use of the local language were translated into English in readiness for data analysis and interpretations.

### **3.8 Reliability and Validity**

Patton (1990) defines reliability as a measure of the degree to which a data collection instrument is able to provide consistent results or data after repeated trials with the same or similar respondents and in a controlled environment. The author also sees it as a measure of whether or not an instrument is doing what it is supposed to measure in the process of collecting the data needed in addressing a particular research problem. To ensure reliability in this study, the instruments used were piloted in three schools with the aim of strengthening them before the actual collection of data. In case of Validity, it is a measure of the degree to

which various items in the instrument cover the materials needed to be collected from fieldwork (Cohen and Marion, 1998).

Kasomo (2007) explains validity, as the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences made from the data generated through use of research instruments. In other words, validity in an instrument is an indication of the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of data can actually represent the trueness of the situation on the ground, thereby making it possible to respond to a research problem. The research instruments used in this study were, however, designed in such a way that they could effectively compare with other research instruments in terms of validity and reliability of the information collected on parents and teachers' partnerships in inclusive education. Further, the results of a pilot study carried out in readiness for this study, helped to ensure reliability and validity. The weaknesses that were identified in the pre-data collection instruments were attended to before proceeding to do the actual data collection.

### **3.9 Pre-testing of Research Instruments**

This was carried out in Mpika District in the Northern part of Zambia. It involved teachers, head teachers and parents selected from regular primary schools that were involved in inclusive school practices since 1998 under the Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) programme. The regular primary schools from which respondents were drawn for the purpose of pre-testing of research instruments, were based on their geographical locations within the district. The pre-testing of research instruments took place in June, 2008. During this period, schools were in session hence, it was easy for the researcher to find teachers to participate in the study. However, parents were mostly interviewed in the afternoons when they were less engaged in their house chores and socio-economic activities.

The testing of instruments before actual research was directed at establishing the internal consistency in the questions (Cohen and Marion, 1998). In addition, pre-testing of instruments was aimed at finding out whether questions in the instruments were able to assess various specific aspects on the extent to which parents and teachers were in partnerships in the learning of children with and without disabilities in schools practising inclusive education. The pre-testing of instruments helped the researcher to clear out some of the confusion that arose in the initial instruments in relation to use of concepts such as “*mission*,” “*vision*,” “*Policy*,” “*practice*,” and misunderstanding of content of some of the questions contained in questionnaire or interview guides. The pilot study indeed, helped to clean both the questionnaire and interview guides before the actual study was carried out.

### **3.10 Data Collection Procedure**

Data were collected in two phases with an interval of about six months in between each of them. The first phase took place between October and November, 2008 while the second phase was between June and July, 2009. Follow-ups on unclear responses but considered significant to the study were made between October and November, 2009. The same respondents, where possible and if practical who participated in the first phase, were made to participate in the second phase, except where for logistical reasons it was not possible for the researcher to trace those respondents who participated in the earlier data collection exercise. Use of this approach helped in ensuring reliability and validity of the data that was collected to support the study.

Questionnaires and interviews involving teachers were administered during school time because this was the only opportune time to get hold of this type of respondents. Head teachers in some of the participating schools were involved in the administration of simple random sampling as well as completion of the questionnaires among selected respondents.

On the part of the head teachers a detailed one-to-one interview approach was used to solicit for responses.

### **3.11 Data Analysis**

#### **3.11.1 Primary Data**

The data collected from questionnaires were analysed quantitatively. The quantitative data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to generate frequencies and percentages which were used in describing distributions of lone and summated variables. Cross tabulations and chi-square analysis were used in presenting relationships between variables. The data from the interviews were analysed by using across-case approach. This approach involved grouping of the emerging themes from the responses generated on each question during interviews (Patton, 1990). This was possible because interview guides were prepared based on the objectives of the study.

Questions employed in the interview formed the central themes on which the analysis was based. The responses on each question were grouped according to the emerging themes. The process was repeated until all responses were grouped according to the themes or sub-themes that emerged from the study (see Appendices 4, 5 and 6). The across-case approach was also used to analyse open ended questions covered in the questionnaire (Creswell, 2009). Each item in the questionnaire provided a theme under which responses to the item were grouped and consolidated. Lloyd and Blanc (1996), suggest that in analysing qualitative data, the initial task is to find concepts that help “*make sense of what is going on,*” (Patton, 1990:43). According to Patton (1990:44),

*The strategy of inductive designs is to allow the important analysis dimensions to emerge from patterns in the cases*

*under study without presupposing in advance what the important dimensions will be.*

This study, employed the inductive analysis method in the generation of data from interview discussions. The inductive method was used on this form of data in order to identify common inferences, statements and themes emerging from the collected data. The salient opinions provided by the respondents on various items on each question asked during interviews, were identified, interpreted and summarized in order to establish facts. The interpretation of views, feelings and opinions arising from the collected data, was based on the objectives of the study.

### **3.11.2 Secondary Data**

During the field visit to primary schools practising inclusive education, the researcher requested for and studied school documents related to inclusive education practices as well as parents and teachers' partnerships in children's learning. These documents included registers, Parents' and Teachers' Association (PTAs) minutes of teachings which helped to collect part of the required data such as information on enrollment, attendance, and school projects related to inclusive school practices. In some cases, secondary data was used to cross check information that was generated through use of primary data collection instruments. Apart from the information obtained from school records the researcher also used information from internet sources, peer reviewed hard and electronic journal articles as well as books on inclusive education with a focus on partnerships in education to generate secondary data to support the current study.

### **3.12 Ethical Considerations**

In this research, clearance was obtained from the University of Zambia, Ethics Committee. Bearing in mind the expectations of the Ethics committee, the rights of the respondents and respect for privacy were recognised. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured by not

allowing respondents to write their names on the questionnaires unless where the respondents willfully consented to using such information in order to illustrate a point during the discussion. This helped to minimize fears of victimisation and promoted honesty among respondents in the way participants responded to the questions. Hence, respondents felt more secure with this kind of approach in the collection of data. The respondents were also informed in advance that the questionnaires and interviews were intended to collect information for a specific academic purpose and not for other purposes which were likely to infringe on the rights of individuals or groups of people participating in the study. This measure helped to ensure confidentiality during the data collection and reporting of the findings of the study.

### **3.13 Summary**

In this chapter, an attempt was made to provide a description of the methodology that was used to collect the required data. It has provided highlights on the research design, population, sample and procedure used to generate the information required to support the study. A justification and description of the research instruments, data collection procedure and how analysis of data was done, has also been given in order to help the reader understand how the findings of the study were arrived at. The chapter has ended by providing ethical considerations which were made in relation to this study. The next chapter presents the findings

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.0 Overview

The previous chapter highlighted the methods used to collect data for this study. This chapter presents the findings. The data was collected through use of questionnaires, semi-structured interview and in-depth interview guides. Analysed quantitative and qualitative data are presented.

The chapter is guided by the following four (4) research questions.

1. What type of parents' and teachers' partnerships, exist in regular primary schools practising inclusive education?
2. Are there factors that might have influenced the parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children in inclusive classrooms and schools?
3. Are there differences in communication strategies parents' and teachers' partnerships use in building a shared responsibility in the learning of children in regular primary schools practising inclusive education?
4. What perceptions do parents and teachers hold over their collaborative partnerships in the learning of children with and without disabilities in inclusive schools?

To present the findings, the researcher has used cross tabulations, frequencies and percentages. The results have been presented in form of tables and figures in some cases as a way of describing the findings. On some of the themes, the researcher has provided a verbatim to show the actual responses made by the respondents. Pearson's Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) test at a defined degree of freedom with a critical or table value (limits of confidence of intervals) of 0.05 has been used on selected items. This helped to give the level of significance of the findings on specific themes (See

appendix 7). The Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) test was intended to determine and compare the responses of different respondents on a particular item at a defined level of significance in order to get a more detailed view of the findings. The acceptance level used in this study was set at a margin of 5 per cent (.05%) error.

#### 4.1.0 Research Question 1

What type of parents' and teachers' partnerships exists in regular primary schools practising inclusive education?

One of the objectives of this study was to assess the types of parents' and teachers' partnerships existing in schools practising inclusive education in the study districts.

One of the questions asked in order to establish the types of partnerships existing in schools practising inclusive education, was whether or not parents and teachers saw their partnerships as being essential in the success of children with and without disabilities in their social and academic performance. The responses were as shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Whether Parents and Teachers Perceived Partnerships as Essential in Children's Learning (n=178)

Status	Responses				Total
	Always	Sometimes but not always	In some situations only	Never at all	
Teachers	22	30	21	7	80
Parents	12	35	10	13	70
Head teachers	2	11	7	8	28
Total	36	76	38	28	178

The results showed that seventy-six (76) of the respondents were of the view that parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children in inclusive school settings were sometimes, but not, always important in making children with and

without disabilities succeed in their social and academic work. In support of this view, one female parent of a child without a disability observed that:

*Every child has the right to learn regardless of anything, so parents and community support is vital to make it possible for children to learn.*

On the other hand, twenty-eight (28) of the respondents reported that parents and teachers never saw their partnerships in the learning of children as being important for them to experience school success. This was evidenced in the observation made by one female regular classroom teacher, who said that:

*Teachers are experts in the learning of children hence; do not always require the support of parents or families to make children learn.*

On the whole, the results showed that, parents and teachers believed that partnerships were essential in the learning of children with and without disabilities in regular classrooms and schools practicing inclusive education.

These findings were subjected to a Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) test in order to establish the level of significance. The Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) results were generated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16. The test results revealed that the obtained Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$  obs) value of 15.6 for teachers, was greater than the Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$  crit.) value of 9.5 at the degree of freedom of four and significance level of 0.05. This meant that most teachers did not see the involvement of parents in the learning of children as being essential for the improvement of social and academic performance of children in schools practising inclusive education.

On the other hand, the observed Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$  obs) of 8.2 for parents and 3.0 for head teachers were less than the Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$  crit.) values of 12.6 and 9.5 for parents and head teachers at the degree of freedom of six and four respectively with a significance level of 0.05. This implied that although teachers did not see the

partnerships with parents as essential, parents and head teachers saw their relationships as important for all children to experience school success in the same classrooms and schools.

As a follow up question, respondents were asked why teachers did not always see the current form and practice of parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children as essential in the promotion of school success among children in schools practising inclusive education. The responses were as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Reasons for Teachers not Perceiving Partnerships as Essential in Success of Children (n=104)

Reasons	Nature of Respondents			Total
	Teachers	Parents	Head teachers	
Ignorance among parents on roles	9	6	9	24
Lack of awareness on learning needs	29	15	8	52
Believing teachers were more than competent	10	5	5	20
Interference from Free Education Policy (FEP)	3	4	1	8
Total	51	30	23	104

The table

above shows that the majority, 52 of respondents said that there was lack of awareness on the conditions and learning needs of children with and without disabilities placed in mainstream classrooms and schools. A small proportion of respondents eight felt that there were interferences arising from the Free Education Policy (FEP) which made parents feel that, it was government's responsibility to provide for all children in the school system and not necessarily parents and the community. In support of the notion that there was less awareness on the learning

needs of children in schools practicing inclusive education, one male regular class teacher noted the following:

*Ignorance among parents on their roles in the partnerships contributed to negative perceptions of their relationship with teachers.*

Contributing on the same issue of parents and teachers not seeing partnerships in the learning of children as being important, a female special education teacher observed that:

*Refusing to secure school uniforms and school fees for the children even when parents were financially able was a sign of parents valuing less, the learning of their children especially those with disabilities in schools.*

Reacting to the same question on whether or not partnerships among parents and teachers in the learning of children were essential in the learning of children in schools practicing inclusive education, one female parent of a child with a disability reacted by saying that:

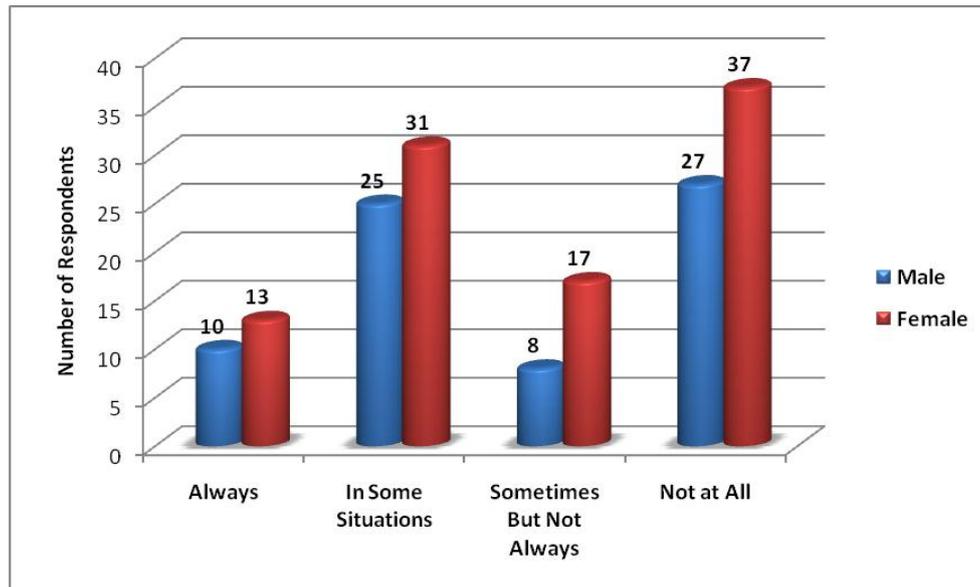
*A teacher is paid for handling my child perceived to have handicaps. Why should the same teacher want me to get involved in what is his or her work to make my child learn?*

Contributing on the same issue of not seeing partnership in the learning of children as being necessary, one female parent of a child without disability supported the earlier parent's statement by saying that:

*We believe teachers are knowledgeable enough about children's strengths and problems in classrooms and can deal with them without necessarily engaging parents.*

In order to further assess the nature of partnerships existing in the schools, respondents were asked where or not the goals and objectives of the parents' and teachers' relationships in the learning of children in regular primary schools practising inclusive education were being met. The responses were as shown in the figure below.

Figure 1: Whether Goals and Objectives of Partnerships were Being Met in Inclusive Schools (n=168)



The figure above shows that twenty-seven (27) male and thirty-seven (37) female respondents reported that goals and objectives of ensuring that every child within the framework of inclusive school practices, experienced school success through provision of a least restrictive learning environment, well resourced and staffed learning classrooms supported by parents' and teachers' partnerships, were not being met in most of the regular primary schools practising inclusive education.

On the other hand, a minority, ten male and thirteen (13) female respondents, acknowledged that goals and objectives of their relationships were being met in inclusive classrooms and schools. The findings further, revealed that there were more female respondents, thirty-seven (37), who felt that goals of their partnerships were not being met as compared to twenty-seven (27) male respondents who felt that the goals of their partnerships were not being met. Nonetheless, the results generally showed that majority of parents and teachers involved in the partnerships in the learning of children with and without disabilities were of the view that goals and

objectives of their relationships were not being met in schools practising inclusive education.

In order to establish the level of significance, the findings were subjected to a Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) test. The results were that the obtained Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$  obs) showed values of 4.9 for teachers, 14.1 for parents and 3.2 for head teachers which were less than the Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$  crit.) values of 12.6 for teachers; 15.5 for parents and 9.5 for head teachers at the degrees of freedom of six; eight and four respectively at a significance level of 0.05. This was interpreted to mean that, parents, teachers as well as head teachers in schools practicing inclusive education were of the view that goals and objectives of their partnerships such as provision of a least restrictive learning environment, well resources classrooms and high level of awareness of the learning needs of children in inclusive classrooms and schools, were not being met at all. The parents –teachers respondents noted the continued presence of disability-unfriendly infrastructure, insufficient and inappropriate learning resources as well as absence of qualified personnel to support inclusive education practices in schools.

In an attempt to further establish the nature of partnerships prevailing between parents and teachers in regular primary schools practising inclusive education, respondents were asked on whether or not a welcoming and accommodative atmosphere to ideas and suggestions made by participants in the partnership in the learning of children existed in schools practising inclusive education. The responses were as indicated in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Whether a Welcoming and Accommodative Atmosphere Existed to Support Partnerships (n=135)

Responses	Status of Respondents			Total
	Teachers	Parents	Head Teachers	
Strongly Agree	12	5	06	23
Agree	25	8	4	37
Disagree	20	20	9	49
Strongly Disagree	23	1	2	26
Total	80	34	21	135

According to the results in Table 8, most of the respondents, forty-nine (49), expressed the view that schools were not welcoming or accommodative to parents' ideas and suggestions except in some situations such as removing of physical barriers in the learning environment. Teachers were seen not to be willing to acknowledge or incorporate ideas and suggestions of parents on the learning of children in their classroom practices. Parents of children with and without disabilities were found to participate less in the social and academic life of their children. Few parent-teacher respondents, twenty-three (23) however, supported the view that schools were welcoming and accommodative in that they appreciated and incorporated concerns, ideas and suggestions from parents in their classroom and school practices. In sum, the results showed generally, that schools were not welcoming or sensitive to concerns, ideas and suggestions made by parents and the community on how to improve the learning of children with and without disabilities in schools practising inclusive education.

This view was also supported by a Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) test which showed that the obtained Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) values of 5.9 for teachers and 16.8 for head teachers were less than the Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$  crit.) values of 12.6 and 23.6 respectively at the degrees

of freedom of six and fourteen with a significance level of 0.05. This meant that while head teachers and teachers believed that partnerships were welcoming and accommodative for parents to participate through contributing ideas and making suggestions in the learning of children, the obtained Chi- Square ( $\chi^2$  obs.) value of 14.7 for parents was greater than the Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$  crit.) value of 12.6. This implies that, schools practising inclusive education were neither welcoming nor accommodative to ideas and suggestions from parents and communities for them to effectively participate in the learning of children.

For purpose of generating more information on the nature of the partnerships existing in schools practising inclusive education, respondents were asked on whether or not in their opinion, a non blaming and non fault-finding atmosphere prevailed in the parents' and teachers' partnerships for them to effectively participate in the affairs of the schools. Table 9 below shows their responses.

Table 9: Whether a Non- blaming and Non-fault-Finding Atmosphere Existed in Partnerships (n=181)

Responses	Location of Respondents			Total
	Urban Area	Peri-Urban Area	Rural Area	
Always	2	13	3	18
Most times	3	4	7	13
Sometimes	22	12	12	46
Few situations	22	16	13	51
Never at all	18	19	15	52
Total	67	63	50	180

The results showed that the majority of respondents, fifty-two (52), believed that a non-blaming and no fault finding atmosphere did not exist in the partnerships in various geographical locations of the study. A minority of respondents (14) however, were of the view that a non-blaming, no fault-finding and rather problem-

solving atmosphere did prevail most of the times. In short, the findings showed that, parents and teachers believed that a blaming and rather fault-finding atmosphere existed in the parents' and teachers' partnerships which affected attempts to improve the social and academic welfare of children with and without disabilities in schools practising inclusive education.

The results were subjected to a Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) test. The test indicated that the obtained ( $\chi^2$  obs.) values of 4.8 for teacher-respondents and 15.4 for head-teachers, were less than the Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$  crit.) values of 15.5 at the degree of freedom of eight at a significance level of 0.05. This was interpreted to mean that head teachers and their teachers believed that the prevailing atmosphere in the partnerships in the learning of children in schools practising inclusive education, was non-blaming and not fault-findings. It was instead, supportive of parental participation in the learning of all children. On the other hand, the obtained Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$  obs.) value of 15.9 for parents was greater than the Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$  crit.) value of 15.5 at the degree of freedom of eight with a significance level of 0.05. This meant that, parents were of the view that schools were more focused on blaming and finding faults in parents and the communities, thereby making it difficult for them to effectively participate in the learning of their own children.

In order to further assess the nature of partnerships between parents and teachers, respondents were asked whether or not schools considered and implemented ideas and suggestions made by parents and communities when making decisions in the learning of children in their respective schools. The responses that were given were as shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Whether Schools Attempted to Implement Ideas and Suggestions from Parents and Communities

Responses	Status of Respondents			Total
	Teachers	Parents	Head -teachers	
Very seriously	32	6	8	46
Fairly seriously	40	27	11	78
Never at all	8	4	7	19
Total	80	37	26	143

The findings showed that the majority, 78 of the respondents, felt that schools were fairly serious when it came to accommodating ideas, concerns and suggestions from parents, families and communities when making decision in the learning of children.

In support of this view, one male special teacher-respondent stated that:

*Parents are often called to discuss the behaviour of naughty children and share ideas on how best to deal with such unruly behaviours exhibited by their children, but few of them turn up.*

However, 46 of the respondents reported that schools were very serious in the way they responded to concerns, ideas and suggestions of parents, families and the community in the learning for children with and without disabilities in inclusive schools. One female parent of a child without a disability acknowledged the unit among parents and teachers in the school by reporting that:

*We often decide together with teachers on issues such as building new classrooms which are friendly to all children hence, a sign of collective responsibility in dealing with problems of children.*

On the other hand, 19 of the respondents reported that the existing atmosphere in community and school partnerships was rather hostile and unaccommodative for parents, families and communities to make any significant contribution to the learning of children. Respondents cited increasing school failures among children with and

without disabilities as examples of failure of partnerships. In support of this observations, one female regular class teacher noted as follows:

*Though parents are often invited to help resolve learning problems of their own children, many hardly turn up thinking that teachers will not be willing to accept whatever they were going to suggest on how to assist their children.*

Contributing on the same issue of schools' responses to parents' to contributions to children's learning in inclusive schools, one female special teacher observed that:

*Lack of active participation from parents was mainly because schools have failed to orient parents on their roles and responsibilities in partnerships over the learning of children.*

On the whole, the findings showed that schools were not serious in their attempt to respond to ideas, concerns and suggestions from parents and communities regarding the learning of children with and without disabilities in the schools practising inclusive education.

As a way of assessing the nature of partnership existing in the schools, respondents were asked on whether or not parents and teachers recognized and appreciated the importance of their relationships in the learning of children. Their reactions to the question were as shown in table 11 below.

Table 11: Whether Parents and Teachers Recognised and Appreciated Importance of Partnerships (n=97)

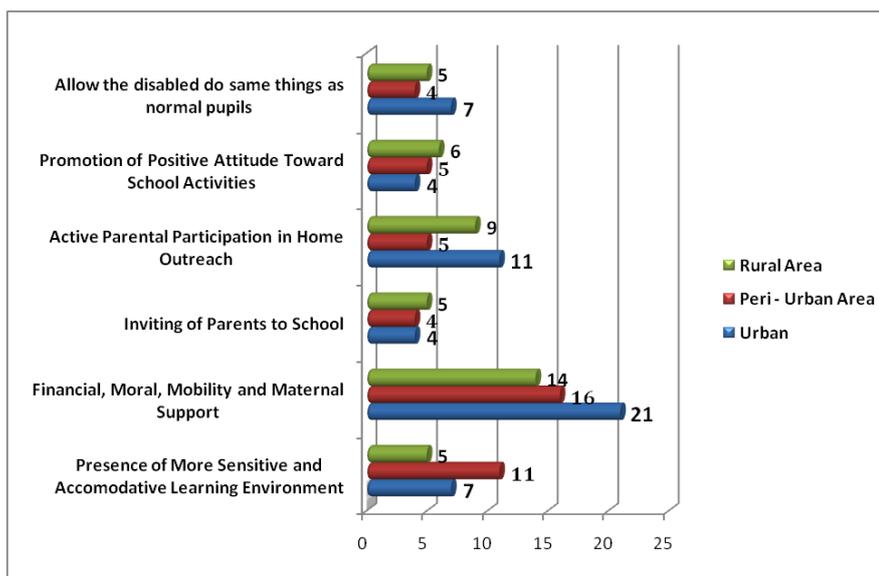
Responses	Location of Respondents			Total
	Urban	Peri- urban	Rural	
Agree	20	16	12	48
Disagree	4	13	18	35
Not sure	2	5	7	14
Total	26	35	37	97

The results revealed that 48 of the respondents in urban, peri-urban and rural schools, supported the view that parents and teachers recognised and appreciated the importance of each other in the learning of children in inclusive education classroom and school settings. On the other hand, 35 of the respondents disagreed with the observation that parents and teachers recognised and appreciated the roles of each other in the learning of children in schools practising inclusive education. In short, the findings showed that generally parents and teachers regardless of their geographical locations in the study district, recognised and appreciated the importance of their collaborative partnerships in the promotion of success among children in schools practising inclusive education.

The findings were however, subjected to a Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) test to determine level of significance. The obtained Chi-Squared ( $\chi^2$  obs.) values of 4.7 for teachers; 5.9 for parents and 7.2 for head teachers, were less than the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$  crit.) value of 9.5 for teachers, 9.5 parents and 15.5 for head teachers at the degrees of freedom of four and eight with a significance level of 0.05. This was interpreted to mean that the majority of head teachers, teachers and parents of children with and without disabilities in schools practising inclusive education in different geographical areas, did recognise and appreciate the importance of their partnership in the learning of children.

In order to establish the nature of the partnerships existing in the schools, respondents were further asked to give examples of what they felt were indicators of the existence of active partnerships among parents and teachers over the learning of children in their inclusive schools. The responses were as indicated in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Evidence of Presence of Partnerships in the Learning of Children (n=144)



The results showed that twenty-one (21) of the respondents in the urban, sixteen (16) in the peri-urban and fourteen (14) in the rural schools, believed that parents were participating in the learning of children in that they regularly provided financial, moral and material support to children and schools. Supporting the view that participated in the business of inclusive school through provision of mainly financial, moral and materials towards learning of children, one male head teacher of a school practicing inclusive education observed that:

*My school from time to time calls for Parents' and Teachers' Association (PTA) meetings through which parents and the community in our catchment area participate in the running of my school.*

On the other hand, four respondents in urban, five in the peril-urban and six in the rural areas of the district, said that the most significant indicators was that partnerships helped to promote positive attitude towards children's learning in the same classrooms and schools. In short, the findings showed that the most significant indicators of the existence of an active partnership between parents and teachers in children's learning was the regular provision of financial, moral, mobility and material support to children in need and the school as a whole.

On the question of indicators of areas on which the parents' and teachers' partnerships focused in the provision of education to children with and without disabilities in inclusive schools, the responses were as shown in Table 12 below.

Table 12: Areas of Collaboration in Children's Learning (n=143)

Status	Areas of Collaboration					Total
	Creation of barrier free learning environment	Increasing awareness on learning needs	Securing learning materials	Increasing parental Participation in learning	Secure support services for needy children	
Teachers	31	7	15	4	2	59
Parents	21	16	13	8	6	64
Head-teachers	15	6	2	1	1	25
Total	67	29	30	13	9	148

According to Table 12 above, sixty-seven (67) of the parent-teacher respondents observed that their parents and teachers' partnerships were more focused on the creation of a barrier-free or an enabling learning environment to enable children access the school curriculum in the same classrooms and schools. Few respondents nine (9) however, indicated that parents' and teachers' partnerships were more focused on soliciting for supportive services from relevant professionals such as medical doctors, physiotherapists and social welfare officers to support the learning of children in inclusive schools. On the whole, the findings were that partnerships were more focused on the creation of disability learner-friendly physical learning environment as opposed to supporting other aspects of children's learning.

In an attempt to establish whether or not parents and teachers, through partnerships, were helping in the provision of learning resources to needy children and the school as a whole as part of the nature of their relationships, the responses were as shown in table 13 below.

Table 13: Whether Learning Resources were being Provided Through Partnerships (n=148)

Responses	Gender of Respondents		Total
	Male	Female	
Sometimes	37	40	77
Always	15	27	42
Not at all	13	16	29
Total	65	83	148

Out of the 148 participants who responded to the question, seventy-seven (77) of the respondents reported that sometimes parents through partnership with teachers assisted schools in supplying learning resources to support the learning of children. Twenty-nine (29) of the respondents however, dispelled the notion that parents were involved in regular supply of learning resources to children through partnerships. In short, the findings were that parents and teachers were sometimes involved in the supply of learning resources to individual children as well as the school, as a whole.

These findings were subjected to the Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) test. The Chi-Square test showed that the obtained Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$  obs.) value of 1.2 for teachers and 9.1 for head teachers, were less than the Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$  crit.) value of 9.5 for teachers and 12.6 for head teachers at the degrees of freedom for four and six with a significance level of 0.05. This was interpreted to mean that head teachers and teachers were of

the view that learning resources were mostly secured through other sources such as government and not so much through partnerships with parents of the children.

In order to establish the nature of the partnerships that existed between parents and teachers, respondents were asked to indicate the type of learning resources provided to the schools through their support to children with and without disabilities. The responses were as shown in the Table 14 below.

Table 14: Examples of Learning Resources Supplied through Partnerships (n=110)

Resources	Status of Respondents			Total
	Teachers	Parents	Head teachers	
Learning Materials: exercise books, pens, pencil, duster, chalk, text books	22	23	15	60
Learning equipment: overhead projectors, Radio, TV sets, Video tapes	12	16	9	37
Specialized materials: writing frames, brailled papers, hearing aids, signed language books, Perkin's brailers	7	4	2	13
Total	41	40	26	110

The results showed that sixty (60) of the respondents said that parents and teachers through their partnerships sometimes helped to secure learning resources to support children's learning in the schools practicing inclusive education. These included the provision of uniforms, exercise books, textbooks, pens, pencils, chalk, textbooks to support children's learning. In contributing on the same on learning resources generally supplied by the parents through the parents' and teachers' partnerships, one female parent of a child with a disability acknowledged by noting that:

*Some children receive support from Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) in form of uniforms, books and school fees following appeals made by parents for support to children with identified needs in the schools.*

On the issue of specialised equipment for children with disabilities included in mainstream schools, thirteen (13) of the respondents acknowledged that there were times when partnerships assisted individual children in soliciting for specialised equipment and materials to support their learning. In support of this view, respondents gave examples of equipment and materials solicited from well-wishes for individual children which included braille papers, brailion papers, writing frames, Perkins' brailers to support the learning visually impaired learners, signed books, hearing aids, signed numbers and signed alphabet charts for use by those with hearing impairments and wheel chairs, crutches, calipers, pencil-holders for those with physical and health impairments to enable them adequately access the school curriculum.

As a follow up question, respondents were also asked to indicate the types of support services, partnerships were able to secure for children with disabilities included in mainstream schools. Their responses were as shown in Table 15 below.

Table 15: Examples of Support Services Secured through Partnerships (n=135)

Support services	Status of Respondents			Total
	Teachers	Parents	Head teachers	
Provision of mobility appliances	16	10	5	31
Medical treatment and rehabilitation	7	9	5	21
Social welfare support	16	16	6	3
Supplement food for pupils	5	8	3	16
Parent to Parent Support Programmes (PPSP)	3	12	4	29
Total	57	55	23	135

As can be seen from the table above, thirty-eight (38) of the respondents cited social welfare support services for needy children as the most significant services

partnerships were able to secure in support of needy children in schools practising inclusive education. contributing on the issue of support services available in participating inclusive schools, one male parent of a child without a disability noted that through partnership:

*We help children whose parents are not able to buy books, uniforms, provide sufficient food and pay school fees by providing or appealing to those who have to help children in the school.*

The findings further revealed that twenty-nine (29) of the respondents were of the view that parents' and teachers' partnerships were more or less centred on the promotion of parents-to-parent connections and interactions over the conditions and learning problems of children as opposed to other aspects of day to day schooling. This was evidenced by the comment one female parent of child without a disability made during an interview where she observed that:

*Meetings are organised on a one-one basis involving parents with children with and without disabilities at which experiences and concerns about the learning of children are freely shared.*

Another female parent of a child without disability contributed on the same issue by saying that:

*We parents sometimes provide voluntary teaching to children with identified social and academic problems without necessarily waiting for teachers to tell us to do so.*

On the whole, the findings showed that partnerships were more involved in soliciting for social services including securing of school fees and uniforms for children with and without disabilities in the schools as opposed to other support services that were needed by the children.

#### **4.2.0 Research Question 2**

Are there factors that might have influenced the parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children in inclusive schools?

One of the objectives of this study was to establish factors that might have influenced the parents' and teachers' partnerships over the learning of children in inclusive classrooms and schools.

One of the questions respondents were asked in order to identify factors that might have contributed to the current form and practice in the partnerships was, whether or not schools had visions and missions which were relevant and supportive to parents' and teachers' partnerships in learning of children in inclusive classrooms and school settings. The responses were as shown in Table 16.

Table 16: Whether Schools had Visions and Missions Supportive of Partnerships in Children's Learning (n=166)

Responses	Location of the school			Total
	Urban	Peri-Urban	Rural	
Agree	47	25	20	92
Disagree	18	12	8	38
Not sure	18	8	8	36
Total	83	45	38	166

From the results in table 15, the majority of the respondents, ninety-two (92), drawn from different geographical areas in the district reported that, schools offering inclusive education schooling had school visions and missions that were relevant and supportive of their partnerships in children's learning while thirty-eight (38) of the respondents refuted the claim that school missions were relevant to works of partnerships in the schools. In support of the relevance of the school missions to parents' and teachers' partnerships, one male head teacher of a school involved in inclusive schooling cited his school mission:

*Enter to Learn and Depart to Serve.*

Contributing to the view that school mission statements were quite relevant to the role and responsibilities of parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children in schools practising inclusive education, one female special teacher quoted her school mission statement which read as follows:

*Providing Quality Education to All Children.*

Thirty-six (36) of the 166 respondents who responded to the question however, expressed ignorance on the existence and relevance of school missions to parents' and teachers' partnerships in inclusive schools hence, could not commit themselves to as whether or not such visions and missions of their schools, were relevant to the activities of the parents' and teachers' partnerships in their schools. The general findings were that most of the schools practising inclusive education schooling had school visions and missions which were relevant and capable of supporting of the existence of active parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children.

For purpose of establishing the level of significance of the findings reported above, a Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test was used. The test indicated that the obtained ( $\chi^2$  obs.) values of 4.7 for teachers; 6.8 for parents and 7.2 for head teachers, were less than the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$  crit.) values of 9.5 for teachers; 12.6 for parents and 15.5 for head teachers at the degree of freedom of four and eight and significance level of 0.05. This meant that most of the head teachers, teachers and parents in the urban, peri-urban and rural areas of the district were of the view that inclusive schools had school visions and missions which were relevant and supportive of partnerships in the learning of children.

In order to establish whether or not schools had practices which were relevant and supportive of the partnerships between parents and teachers in the learning of children

in inclusive education school settings, respondents gave responses as shown in table 17 below.

Table 17: Whether or not School Policies and Practices were Supportive of Parents' and Teachers' Partnerships (n=173)

Status	Responses of Respondents			Total
	Agree	Disagree	Not sure	
Teachers	27	54	1	82
Parents	33	14	16	63
Head-teachers	5	10	13	28
Total	65	78	30	173

The majority of the respondents, seventy-eight (78) said that the school policies and practices were not relevant or supportive of partnerships in the learning of children in schools practicing inclusive education whereas sixty-five (65) agreed that the school policies such as promotion of increased access to education by all children, improvement of learning environment, development of positive attitudes towards education and supporting active participation of parents and communities in the learning of children were relevant and supportive to roles and responsibilities of partnerships in the learning of children. In support of the school openness to parental participation in the learning of children, one female head-teacher of a school involved in inclusive school practices observed that:

*Although it was our school policy to have parents and communities to participate in school development, maintenance and repair of school infrastructure programmes, most parents continue to show unwillingness to work with schools to resolve learning problems.*

However, a small proportion of respondents, thirty (30) expressed ignorance on the existence of school policies and practices which were relevant and supportive of their partnerships in the learning of children. Parents did not see themselves as key

stakeholders in working towards improved learning environment in the schools as remarked by one male parent of a child with disability who said that:

*It is not my role as a parent to initiate projects but the school itself which should make its intentions known to us.*

To sum up, the findings showed that the current school policies and practices in schools practicing inclusive education were neither relevant nor supportive of the development and sustenance of more proactive parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children.

On application of a Chi –Square ( $\chi^2$ ) test, the findings, showed that the obtained Chi – square ( $\chi^2$  obs.) of 10.2 for teachers, was greater than the Chi–Square ( $\chi^2$  crit.) value of 9.5 at the degree of freedom of four with a significance level of 0.05. This meant that, teachers were of the view that, schools did not have policies or practices which were neither relevant nor supportive of current parents' and teachers' partnerships. However, the observed Chi–Square ( $\chi^2$  obs.) values of 8.8 for parents and 8.2 for head teachers were less than the Chi–Square ( $\chi^2$  crit.) values of 9.5 for parents and 18.3 for head teachers at the degrees of freedom of four and ten and significance level of 0.05. This was interpreted to mean that parents and head teachers were of the view that the existing school policies and practices were relevant and adequate to support partnerships in the learning of children in same classrooms and schools.

As a follow up to the question on the existence of relevant school policies and practices to support partnership movements in inclusive schools, respondents were asked to give reasons why they felt that, schools practicing inclusive education had policies and practices which were supportive of partnership initiatives in the learning of children. The responses were as shown in Table 18 below.

Table 18: Reasons for having School Policies and Practices, Supportive of Partnerships (n=76)

Reasons	Location of respondents			Total
	Urban	Peri-urban	Rural	
Easy to share experiences on children's Learning	6	2	2	10
Promotes mutual trust, respect and appreciation	5	3	4	12
Helps create barrier free learner-environment	10	8	9	27
Increased level of awareness on children's learning	2	4	3	9
Increases access to quality education	4	8	6	18
Total	27	25	24	76

As

shown in Table 18 above, twenty-seven (27) of the respondents felt that the main benefit of having school policies and practices which were relevant and supportive of the existence of parents' and teachers' partnerships was that, such policies and practices offered opportunities for parents to support children and work together with schools to create a barrier free learning environment as observed by one female parent of a child without disability who said that,

*Parents are involved in school work so that they help to improve the learning environment of children in the schools.*

Supporting the notion expressed by the parent above, one male regular class teacher observed that:

*Schools should allow parents to participate in school activities as first parents of children and indeed enable them to see how teachers struggle to make children learn in classrooms.*

Few respondents (nine) however, noted that the existence of relevant and supportive school policies and practices to partnerships in the learning of children, helped to raise

the level of awareness on the plight of children with learning needs among parents, families, communities and teachers. One female parent of a child with a disability appreciated the increased involvement of parents in the learning of children by saying that:

*Parents were increasingly getting involved in school projects and academic life of individual children.*

As a way of establishing yet other factors that may have influenced parents and teachers' partnerships in schools, respondents were asked to indicate whether or not parents and teachers routinely met to review the social and academic progress of children placed in inclusive classrooms and schools. Table 19 below shows their responses.

Table 19: Whether Parents and Teachers Routinely Met to Review Children's Progress (n=145)

Status	Response of Respondents			Total
	Agree	Disagree	Not sure	
Teachers	28	37	16	81
Parents	16	12	11	39
Head-teachers	8	12	5	25
Total	52	61	32	145

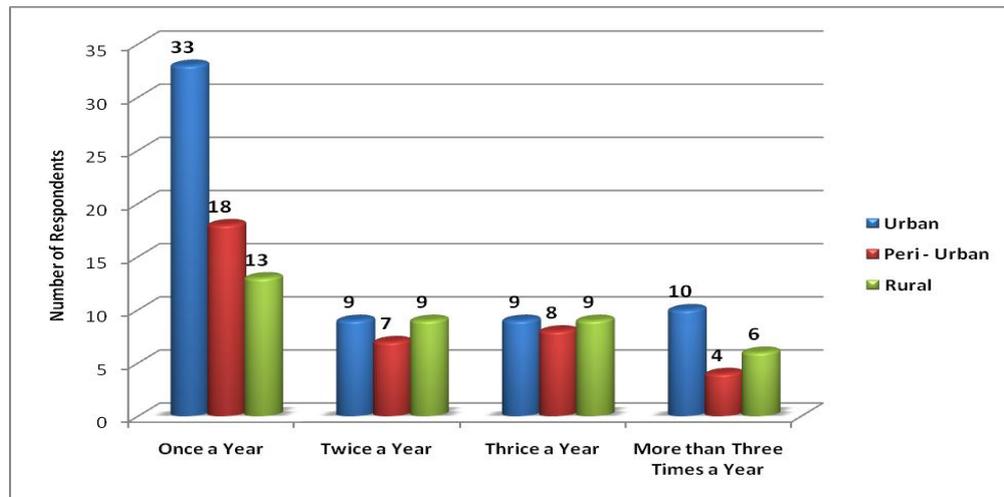
In the response to whether or not parents and teachers routinely met to review the social and academic progress of children in inclusive education classrooms and schools, fifty-two (52) of the respondents said that they regularly met while, sixty-one (61) of them however, did not agree with the notion that parents and teachers regularly met to review progress of the children. Nonetheless, thirty-two (32) of the respondents could not commit themselves as to whether parents and teachers in schools practicing inclusive education were routinely meeting to discuss and review the problems and progress of children. The general impression arising from the

findings was that parents and teachers were not routinely meeting to review the social and academic progress of children with and without disabilities in inclusive classrooms and schools.

In order to establish the significance level of the findings on whether or not parents and teachers were routinely meeting to review the social and academic progress of children in inclusive schools, a Chi-Squared ( $\chi^2$ ) test was applied. The results of the test showed that the obtained Chi-Squared ( $\chi^2$  obs.) values of 8.8 for teachers, 4.1 for parents and 9.1 for head teachers were less than the Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$  crit.) values of 9.5 for teachers and parents and 15.6 for head teachers at the degrees of freedom of four and eight with a significance level of 0.05. This meant that, respondents believed that parents, teachers and head teachers were not routinely meeting to review the social and academic progress of children in schools in involved in inclusive education practices

As a follow up to the question on parents and teachers having interactive meetings over the learning of children, respondents were asked on how often interactive meetings were held aimed at discussing and reviewing the social and academic progress of children. The respondents drawn from different locations in the study district gave response as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Frequency of Review Meetings held among Parents and Teachers on Children’s Learning (n=135)



From the results above, the majority, thirty-three (33) respondents from urban, eighteen (18) from peri-urban and thirteen (13) from rural schools reported that parents and teachers at the most met only once a year to share experiences and review the social and academic progress of children included in inclusive classrooms and schools. Ten (10) of them from urban, four (4) from peri-urban and six (6) from the rural schools however, reported that, they met more than three times a year to do so. On the whole, the results indicated that generally, parents and teachers in most schools met only once a year to share experiences and concerns in children’s learning for children in schools practising inclusive education.

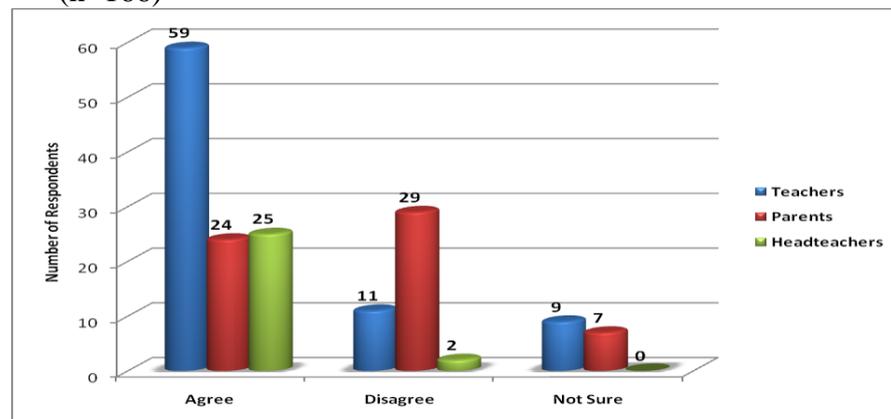
### 4.3 Research Question 3

Are there differences in communication strategies parents’ and teachers’ partnerships use in building a shared responsibility in the learning of children?

It should be recalled that another objective of this study was to find out communication strategies partnerships were using to promote sharing of responsibility over the learning of children with and without disabilities in the same classrooms and schools.

One of the questions, respondents were asked was on whether or not, there were differences in communication strategies used by parents' and teachers' partnerships in sharing experiences, progress and concerns in the learning of children in inclusive classrooms and schools. The responses given by respondents were as shown in Figure 6 below.

Figure 4: Whether there were Differences in Communication Strategies Used to Share Experiences, Progress and Concerns in Children's Learning (n=166)



Out of 166 respondents, fifty-nine (59) teachers, twenty-five (25) head-teachers and twenty-four (24) parents noted that there were significant differences in the communication strategies partnerships used to share experiences, concerns and progress in the learning of children. Twenty-nine (29) parents, eleven (11) teachers and two head-teachers however, disagreed with the notion. The overall findings were that, there were significant differences in the communication strategies parents and teachers used to share experiences, progress and concerns over the learning of children in inclusive school settings.

The use of a Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) test, helped to establish the level of significant in the responses given by respondents in the study. The obtained Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$  obs.) values of 9.4 for teachers and 1.0 for head teachers, were less than the Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$  crit.) values of 9.5 for teachers and 6.0 for head teachers at the degrees of freedom of

four and two respectively at a significance level of 0.05. This showed that head teachers and teachers believed that there were no significant differences in the strategies partnerships were using to share experiences, progress and concerns in the learning of children. The obtained Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$  obs.) value for parents of 9.6 however, was greater than the Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$  crit.) value of 9.5 at the degree of freedom of four with significant level of 0.05. The results indicated that parents believed there were significant differences in the strategies partnerships were using to share experiences, progress and concerns in the learning of children with teachers in various schools.

As a follow up question, respondents were asked to give examples of communication strategies partnerships were using to share experiences, progress and concerns over the learning of children included in mainstream classrooms and schools. The responses were as shown in Table 20 below.

Table 20: Examples of Communication Strategies Used by Partnerships to Share Experiences and Concerns (n=16)

Strategies	Respondents			Total
	Teachers	Parents	Head Teacher	
P.T.A meetings	39	15	8	62
Notes and reports to parents	18	25	04	47
School-home visitations	6	8	01	15
Use of family Pacs	10	8	7	26
School Open days	11	6	7	24
Total	82	60	28	172

In relation to the strategies through which partnerships shared information, experiences and concerns, sixty-two (62) of the respondents reported that though there

were differences on approach from one school to another, most schools dependent on the use of Parents and Teachers Associations' (PTAs) meetings to share information over the learning of children in schools practising inclusive education. In line with these findings, one female parent of a child without a disability made the following remark,

*Once in a while, we parents are called for PTA meetings where issues are discussed on children's performance and learning problems.*

Contributing on the issue of strategies used by parents' and teachers' partnerships in sharing of knowledge, skills and experiences in the learning of children in inclusive school settings, one male regular teacher noted as follows,

*Many are the times when parents of children are invited to discuss issues affecting the learning of children in the school, but only a few do turn up for such discussions with teachers.*

Few of respondents, fifteen (15) however said that partnerships were using more of school-home visitations to sharing information, experiences, progress and concerns of children with parents in schools. One female parent with a child with a disability in the school narrated that:

*I was once called to discuss my child's performance with his class teacher. I was impressed with the manner the teacher handled the discussion and accommodated my personal views about my child's performance and how the child could be helped to improve on his classwork.*

The general impressions arising from the findings, were that most partnerships in schools were using Parents' and Teachers' Associations' (PTAs) meetings to share experiences, concerns and progress of children with and without disabilities in inclusive schools than other communication strategies available for schools to use.

As a follow up question, respondents were asked on whether or not communication strategies being used provided opportunities for parents and teachers to effectively

interact and exchange information, experience and concerns over the learning of children with and without disabilities in inclusive education school settings. The responses were as shown in Table 21 below.

Table 21: Whether Partnerships Provided Opportunities for Parents and Teachers to Interact on Children’s Learning (n=161)

Status	Responses of Respondents			Total
	Always	Sometimes	Not at all	
Teachers	29	28	18	75
Parents	25	20	14	59
Head teachers	4	12	11	27
Total	58	60	43	161

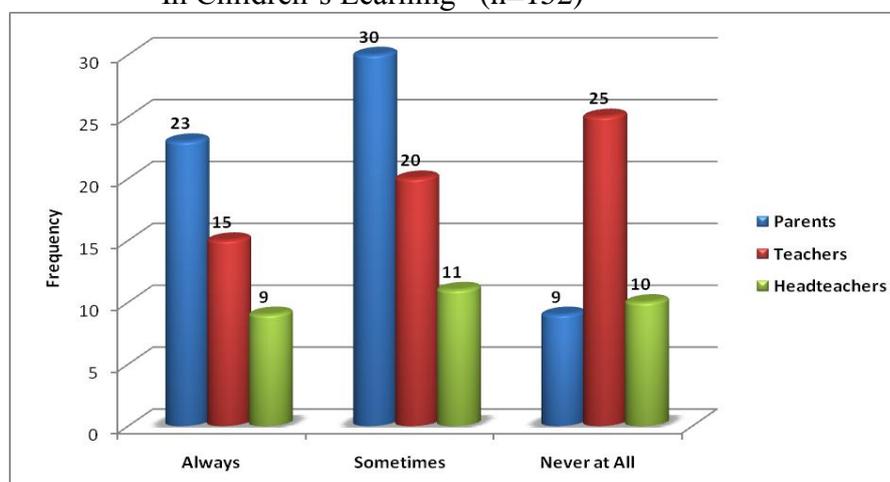
The results showed that sixty (60) of the respondents felt that partnerships always created sufficient opportunities through the existing modes of communication for parents, families and communities to interact with teachers over the learning of children in mainstream schools while fifty-eight (58) of them said that sometimes such opportunities were provided for them to interact with the teachers. Few respondents, forty-three (43) however, were of the view that opportunities were never provided for parents to actively contribute to the learning of children. To sum up, the findings showed that schools through existing modes of communication with parents such as Parents and Teachers’ Associations (P.T.As), provided sufficient opportunities to parents, families, and communities to participate and share experiences with teachers on the conditions and learning problems of children with and without disabilities placed in inclusive schools.

In order to establish the level of significance of the findings on whether or not partnerships provided sufficient opportunities for parents and teachers to interact, share experiences and concerns in the learning of children, a Chi-Square test was used. The obtained Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$  obs.) values of 6.4 for teachers and 15.6 for head

teachers, were less than the Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$  crit.) values of 9.5 for teachers and 18.3 for head teachers at the degree of freedom of four and ten respectively with a significance level of 0.05. This meant that teachers and their head teachers believed that partnerships provided sufficient opportunities for parents, families and communities to interact with teachers and contribute to the building of a shared responsibility over the learning of children. The obtained Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) value of 14.1 for parents however, was greater than the Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$  crit.) value of 12.6 at the degree of freedom of six with significance level of 0.05. This was interpreted to mean that, although head-teachers and teachers were of the view that sufficient opportunities were being offered for parents to participate in the learning of children, parents felt that schools were not providing sufficient opportunities through communication strategies being used for them to participate in the building of a shared responsibility in the learning of children.

As a way of establishing whether or not parents and teachers were actively involved in the making of decisions over the learning of children with and without disabilities in mainstream classrooms and schools, respondents gave their responses as shown in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Whether Parents and Teachers were Involved in Decision-Making In Children's Learning (n=152)



The findings showed that thirty (30) parents, twenty (20) teachers and eleven (11) head-teachers who took part in the study, indicated that parents were sometimes involved in the making of decisions over the learning of children in schools practising inclusive education. In support of the observation that parents were at times though not always involved in decision-making in the learning of children in schools practising inclusive education, one female parent of a child with disability remarked that,

*Although teachers generally think parents were too ignorant to understand learning problems of their children, one class teacher at the school my child goes to, does allow us as parents to get involved in making important decisions concerning our children's learning.*

However, twenty-three (23) parents, fifteen (15) teachers and nine (9) head teachers indicated that parents were always consulted and involved in the making of decisions over the learning of children. In support of this observation, one female regular class teacher said that:

*Informed parents tend to always push for participation in decisions on what needs to be done about their own children.*

A small proportion of respondents, twenty-five (25) teachers, ten (10) head-teachers and nine (9) parents nonetheless, reported that parents were never involved in the making of decisions on children's learning or were they advised on what they needed to do in order to help children in their learning in classes. One female parent of a child with a disability however, bitterly complained about school's failure to get parents actively involved when making important decisions about children's conditions and learning by saying that:

*I do not know the role I should play in resolving the identified learning problems of my own child. No one wants to tell me what is wrong with the child, what my role is, but teachers go ahead in*

*making decisions over my child's condition without consulting me as a parent.*

On the whole, the findings showed that parents were sometimes involved in the making of important decisions surrounding the conditions and children's learning in classrooms and schools practicing inclusive education.

The findings on the involvement of parents in decision making in the learning of children were subjected to a Chi –Square ( $\chi^2$ ) test to establish the level of significance. The obtained Chi–Square ( $\chi^2$  obs.) value of 5.0 for teachers; 7.7 for parents and that of 10.1 for head teachers were less than the Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$  crit.) value of 9.5 for teachers and 18.3 for parents and head teachers respectively. This was an indication that, respondents were of the view that, parents were sometimes involved in the making of decisions on issues surrounding the learning of children with and without disabilities in schools.

Concerning the evidence of parents' and teachers' participation in decision-making process in the learning of children in schools practising inclusive education, responses were as shown in Table 22 below.

Table 22: Evidence of Indicators of Parents' and Teachers' Participation in Decision-Making in Children's Learning (n=157)

Status	Responses					Total
	Availability of Instructional Resources	Presence of Learner friendly Infrastructure	Increased awareness on learning needs	Active multi-disciplinary assessment teams	Increased parental involvement in decision making	
Teachers	18	37	6	8	10	69
Parents	7	20	15	9	11	62
Head teachers	1	13	8	1	3	26
Total	26	70	29	18	24	157

As shown in Table 22 above, seventy (70) of the respondents said that the most significant indicator or evidence of the parental participation in schools over the learning of children was the presence of learner-friendly infrastructure and furniture to support the learning of children in some of the schools practising inclusive education as observed by one of female parent of a child without a disability in the school:

*As parents we freely speak to the school management and sometimes to teachers of our children on learning problems and what teachers feel we should do to help our children learn.*

Contributing on the issue of indicators of parental participation in decision making, one female regular class teacher made a complement by saying that,

*Parents and the community around our school respond well to the security concerns in our school by employing security guards on behalf of the school.*

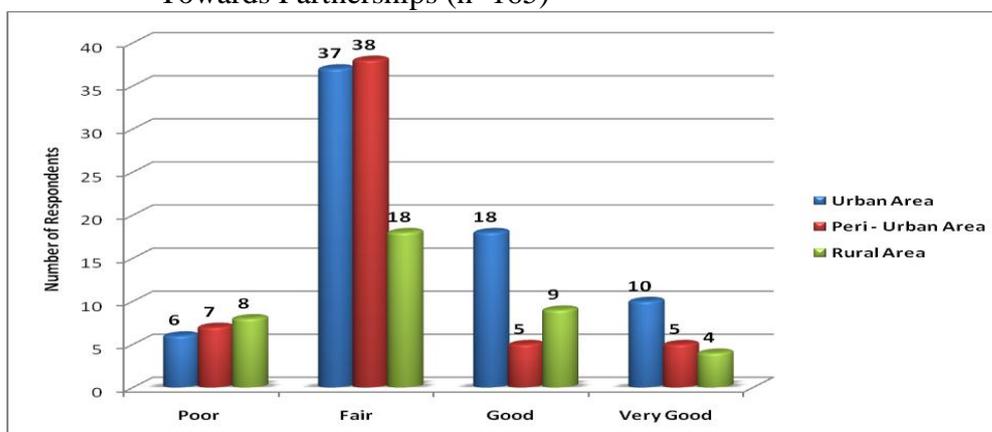
Twenty-nine (29) of the respondents however, cited the rise in the levels of awareness on the plight of children in the school especially of those with disabilities as a clear indication of parents commitment and willingness to participate in attempts to solve learning of children as indicated by one female regular class teacher who said that,

*School bought tape recorders for pupils with visual impairments to enable them access classroom curriculum.*

The results also revealed that only a few, eighteen (18) of the respondents felt that the involvement of multi-disciplinary assessment teams in the learning of children, was in most cases, a collective decision of parents and teachers in schools practising inclusive education.

A follow up question was on whether or not parents and teachers trusted each other in the way they shared information and interacted with each other over the learning of children in inclusive school settings. The responses were as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Whether Parents and Teachers Trusted Each Other's Contributions Towards Partnerships (n=165)



The findings shown in the above figure reveals that, ninety-three (93) parent-teacher respondents felt that parents and teachers in schools practicing inclusive education fairly trusted each other on the issue of academic support to children in classrooms and schools. Nineteen (19) respondents however, observed that parents and teachers had a very good trust of each other's contributions towards the learning of children in the schools while twenty-one (21) of the participants believed that there were too much mistrust among parents and teachers which negatively affected the learning of children in the schools practicing inclusive education. On the whole, the general findings were that parents and teachers fairly trusted each other in the way they interacted with each other in the partnerships over the learning of children with and without disabilities in classrooms and schools involved in inclusive education.

Respondents were also asked to identify factors that might have led to the existing mistrust among parents and teachers in the way they communicated and interacted with each other over the learning of children. Their responses were as shown in Table 23.

Table 23: Reasons for Mistrust among Parents and Teachers in Partnerships  
(n=170)

Reasons	Response from Respondents			
	Head Teachers	Parents	Teachers	Total
Doubts about competence of each other on assigned roles and responsibilities	10	16	32	58
Lack of Self-belief to jointly solve children's learning problems	6	20	24	50
Resistance to increased interactions among teachers and parents	7	8	10	25
Personalization of social and academic issues of children	5	18	14	37
Total	28	62	80	170

As can be seen from the Table 23 above, fifty-eight (58) of the respondents attributed the existing mistrust in partnerships between parents and teachers to the increasing doubts and suspicions about each other's competence to play assigned roles in the partnerships. In support of this view that there were increasing doubts and suspicions on contributes made by parents of children among teachers in schools practicing inclusive schools, one male parent of a child without a disability in the school, made the following observation:

*Teachers often ignore us as parents thinking we know nothing about our own children. They are unwilling to let us participate in the school's efforts to solve learning problems of children.*

However, fifty (50) of the respondents linked the existing mistrust to the way parents and teachers interacted, shared information and experiences over the learning of children as well as lack of self-belief among parents that they can jointly work together with teachers assist children learn within the same classrooms and schools as noted by one of the participating regular class teacher who said that:

*Parents feel less knowledgeable of what goes on in the classrooms to make any significant impact on teacher's attempts to make children learn.*

On the other hand, twenty-five (25) of the respondents said that the increasing mistrust in the sharing of information and communication among parents and teachers over the learning of children was to a larger extent, due to the increasing resistance to hold interactive meetings among parents and teachers in relation to learning problems of children. One male special teacher participant lamented by observing that:

*Parents have a tendency of just dumping children in the school without even thinking about how teachers struggle to assist children overcome their learning problems in the classrooms.*

In short, the general findings were that, there was mistrust at times among parents and teachers in partnerships mainly as a result of the increasing doubts and suspicions over their contributions, understanding and performance of their roles in the learning of children. In some cases teachers felt that parents had limited knowledge on children's learning problems and what needed to be done while parents also felt that teachers appeared not to understand the learning problems of their children.

#### **4.4.0 Research Question 4**

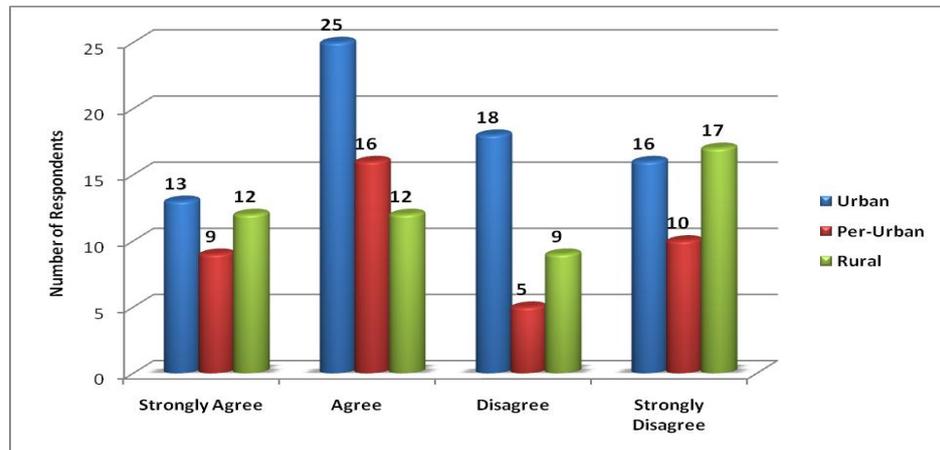
What perceptions do parents and teachers hold over their collaborative partnerships in the learning of children with and without disabilities in inclusive schools?

It should be remembered that one of the objectives of the study was to establish the perceptions and values held by parents and teachers on their partnerships in the learning of children in regular primary schools practising inclusive education

To this effect, one of the questions, respondents were asked was to establish whether or not parents and teachers in schools practising inclusive education, were in favour of

their partnership in children’s learning in its current form and practice. The responses were as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Whether Parents and Teachers Were in Favour of a Partnership Approach in Children’s Learning (n= 162)



The majority of respondents, twenty-five (25), in urban, sixteen (16), in peri-urban and 12 in rural schools were in favour of parents’ and teachers’ partnership in its current form and practice in the learning of children with and without disabilities in the same classrooms and schools. Seventeen (17) respondents from rural schools, sixteen (16) from peri-urban schools and ten (10) from urban schools, however, were not in support of the current form and practices in the partnerships. On the whole, the general findings were that, the majority of the respondents in urban and peri-urban schools were satisfied with current form and practices in partnerships while, those in rural schools were not supportive of them.

On application of the Chi- Square ( $\chi^2$ ) test, it was revealed that the obtained ( $\chi^2$  obs) value of 16.9 for respondents in rural schools, was greater than the ( $\chi^2$  crit.) value of 15.5 at the degree of freedom of eight with a level of significance of 0.05. This was interpreted to mean that generally, respondents in rural schools were of the view that parents and teachers were not in favour of the current form and practices in partnerships in the learning of children in inclusive schools. On the other hand, the

Chi Square ( $\chi^2$  obs) value of 4.7 for respondents in peri-urban and 10.8 for those in urban, were less than the Chi– Square ( $\chi^2$  crit.) values of 6.0 and 21.0 at the degree of freedom of two and four respectively with a significance level of 0.05. This meant that, respondents in the peri-urban and the urban areas were convinced that a partnership approach to dealing with the learning problems of children with and without disabilities in schools practising inclusive education was a better approach while, those in rural schools did not believed in a partnership approach to solving learning problems of such children in schools practising inclusive education.

On whether or not there were significant differences in the perceptions and values held by parents and teachers on their collaborative partnerships across various age groups over the learning of children with and without disabilities in the same classrooms and schools, the responses were as shown in Table 24.

Table 24: Whether there were Differences in Perceptions and Values Held by Parents and Teachers in Partnerships (n=177)

Age	Responses of Respondents				Total
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	
<b>24 years &amp; Above</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>25 - 29 years</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>30 - 34 years</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>35 - 39 years</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>40 - 44 years</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>45 - 49 years</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>50 years &amp; Above</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>177</b>

The majority, eighty-eight (88), of the respondents across age groups said that, there were significant differences in the perceptions and values held by parents and teachers on the current form and practice in the partnerships in the learning of children with and without disabilities in the same classroom and schools. Few, fourteen (14), respondents however, noted that there were no significant differences in the current form and practices of partnerships existing in schools practising inclusive education. Parents and teachers were not happy with the current form and practice of partnerships in inclusive education. The findings, generally, revealed that the majority of the younger parents and teachers, aged between 30 and 39 years were more supportive of a partnership approach in dealing with the learning problems of children, than those aged 40 years and above. On the whole, the findings were that, there were significant differences in perceptions and values held by parents and teachers over their partnerships over the learning of children with and without disabilities in inclusive schools.

The findings were supported by a Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) test, the obtained value of 5.1 for teachers; 4.0 for parents and 5.5 for head teachers, were less than the Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$  crit.) value of 15.5 for teachers; 12.6 for parents and 21.0 for head teachers at the degrees of freedom of eight and six respectively at a significance level of 0.05. This meant that, parents, teachers and head teachers regardless of their age groups were generally of the view that there were significant differences in the way they perceived and valued a partnership approach to solving learning problems of their children in schools practising inclusive education.

As a follow up question, respondents were asked why the majority of the parents and teachers across various age groups were satisfied with the current form and practice of partnerships in the learning of children with and without disabilities in schools practising inclusive education. The responses were as shown in Table 25 below.

Table 25: Reasons Parents and Teachers Supported a Partnership Approach to Children's Learning (n= 134)

Reasons	Status of Respondents			Total
	Teachers	Parents	Head-teachers	
Partnerships provided learning resources and mobility appliances to children	19	12	5	36
Promoted sharing of knowledge, skills and experiences on children's learning	17	12	10	39
Parents able to give baseline information on children's conditions	9	7	3	19
Created opportunities for parents and teachers to understand, respect and appreciate each other	9	9	5	23
Parents and teachers Work together to remove architectural barriers in schools	9	5	3	17
Total	63	45	26	134

The majority, thirty nine (39) of the respondents believed that the current form and practice in partnerships, provided opportunities for parents and teachers to share their acquired knowledge, skills and experiences on how best to assist children with various conditions and learning problems, learn effectively in same classrooms and schools. In support of the role played by parents in the learning of children in schools, one male parent of a child without a disability felt that,

*Every child has the right to learn regardless of his or her conditions so long as parents and teachers believe in working as a team in dealing with learning problems.*

Another parent of a child without a disability contributed to the discussion on why partnerships needed to be supported in schools practicing inclusive education by noting that:

*We as parents are the first teachers of our own children and our knowledge and experience about our children's conditions can be helpful to teachers in assisting our children learn effectively.*

One female regular class teacher supported the views expressed by the parent above by observing that:

*Because learning of an infant starts from home, parents must have gathered sufficient experiences to help teachers make children with learning problems benefit from their presence in classrooms if worked together with us teachers.*

Only, seventeen (17) of the respondents believed that parents' and teachers' partnership in its current form and practice, created more opportunities for removing architectural barriers to enable all children access the school curriculum in inclusive schools.

Respondents were also asked to give reasons why few parents and teachers were not supportive of a partnership approach to the learning of children in regular primary schools practising inclusive education. The responses were as shown in Table 26 below.

Table 26: Reasons why some Parents and Teachers were not Supportive of Partnerships (n =34)

Reasons	Respondents			Total
	Teachers	Parents	Head teachers	
Too much suspicion and mistrust among teachers and parents	3	7	1	11
Tendency to personalise issues on children's learning	4	3	1	08
Ignorance on roles in the partnerships,	2	1	0	3
Parents valuing less education of their children	1	5	2	7
Interference from Free Education Policy (FEP)	1	4	0	5
Total	11	20	4	34

Table 26 above, shows that eleven (11) of the respondents were of the view that parents and teachers were not in support of the partnerships in its current form and practice because of too much suspicion and mistrust among parents and teachers over their contributions to children's learning as one female regular class teacher observed:

*Parents are too busy with house chores, farm tasks and other businesses for them to make any significant contributions towards improving the learning environment of children.*

Contributing to the debate on why some parents were not supportive of a partnership approach to the learning of children with and without disabilities in same classrooms and schools, one male parent of a child without a disability noted that:

*Some parents regard children especially those with disabilities as being valueless and a waste of the limited time and family resources which must be spent instead on children whose economic retains are much higher, hence are not willing to support partnership.*

Few five (5) respondents however, associated failure of parents and teachers to support a partnership approach in the learning of children to ignorance on parents' roles and benefits accrued to partnerships in the learning of children as observed by a female regular class teacher- participant who reported that,

*Some parents bring confusion in the school because of their ignorance which makes it difficult for teachers to work freely.*

#### **4.5.0 Summary**

This chapter has presented the findings of the study on the nature of the partnerships in the learning of children in schools practising inclusive education. Despite some of the concerns expressed by parents and teachers over their current form and practice of partnership, partnership, was generally found to be cordial and accommodative with recognition and appreciation of each other's contributions towards children's learning. The study found that there were several factors that appeared to have influenced the

current form and practice of partnership over the learning of children. These included the continued presence of disability- unfriendly school infrastructure; unclear school policies and practices; inadequate learning resources; irregular interactive meetings; and lack of openness to new ideas and suggestions on how best to develop and strengthen partnerships in schools.

It was also evident from the findings that, communication within the partnerships depended much on Parents' and Teachers' Associations' (PTAs) meetings as opposed to other available and more focused modes of communication. Lastly, but not the least, it was found that parents and teachers in regular primary schools, generally held positive perceptions and values of their partnership in the learning of children with and without disabilities in primary schools practising inclusive education. The chapter has presented the findings. The next chapter discusses the findings.

## **CHAPTER FIVE DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **5.1 Overview**

In this chapter, the findings of the study on the evaluation of community and school partnerships in regular primary schools practicing inclusive education in Kasama District in the Northern Province of Zambia are discussed. The discussion is guided by the following objectives of the study: to assess the type of parents' and teachers' partnerships in schools practising inclusive education; to determine factors influencing parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children; to map out communication strategies used by partnerships in building a shared responsibility in the learning of children and to establish perceptions and values held by parents and teachers over their collaborative partnerships in the learning of children in inclusive school settings.

### **5.2 Objective 1**

To assess the type of parents' and teachers' partnerships existing in schools practising inclusive education

Teachers, parents and head teachers were the main targets of the research findings in this study. Therefore, guided by the objective, the researcher investigated whether or not partnerships were essential in the schools practising inclusive education. There were one hundred and seventy eight (178) respondents who provided information about whether or not partnerships were necessary in the learning of children within the frame work of inclusive school practices. It was found that though majority of teachers did not think it was essential for their work, parents and head teachers believed that partnerships were significant in fighting school failures and in promotion of success among children with and without disabilities in the schools. Parents and head teachers however, see partnerships as necessary in the improvement of school infrastructure and securing learning and mobility resources to support

access to the general school curriculum by children. Parents however, do not see themselves as being competent to effectively participate in issues related to implementation of curriculum as well as in the management of homework policies in schools practising inclusive education.

On the other hand, teachers saw themselves as being more qualified, experienced and competent enough to handle curriculum issues concerning children's learning problems whether with or without the full participation of parents and the community. Teachers perceive parents as being ignorant of the learning problems of children and what could be done to arrest school failures among children. Parents are usually, unwilling to participate in curriculum instructions involving their own children, because of feeling incompetent in what goes on in the classrooms. Schools must therefore, serve as agents of change by taking time to orient and train parents on their roles in the learning of children for them to contribute positively to the success of all children in the schools.

Arising from these findings, it is important to appreciate the need to centre parents' and teachers' relationships on theoretical approaches such as the 1979 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Child Development model, which acknowledges the positive values family-school relationships as ecological environments can bring to home-school success of children with and without disabilities. Family-school relationships must therefore, be seen and built on shared responsibility and accountability among parents and teachers as partners in fostering the learning and development of children within an ecological environment. In the present study, findings were however, inconsistent with those of Coates (1989) and Kauffman (1993) who observed that parents and teachers were keen to participate in school

curriculum issues concerning their children if only schools were open enough to accommodate their views, opinions, concern and suggestions.

It was also reported in Kauffman (1993) study that parents were less willing to participate in school construction and rehabilitation works, but more willing to participate in the classroom curriculum of the children. It is clear from the findings of the present study that, the differences in the results of the present study and those of the studies cited above were partially due to variations in the location of the study and exposure of the respondents to education and disability. While results from Coates (1989) and Kauffman's studies (1993) concentrated on partnerships between parents and teachers in elementary education with a bias to schools in urban settings, the findings in this study included views of parents and teachers drawn from not only the urban settings but, peri-urban and rural school settings, whose views appears to be significantly different from those of respondents in urban school environments.

During the face to face interviews the matter of whether or not goals of the parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children were discussed. These ranged from increasing access to quality education, improving school environments, development of analytical, innovative, creative and constructive minds of children to promotion of positive attitudes towards education of children as well as enabling children acquire knowledge on reproductive health as provided for in the current education policy (MoE, 1996; 2001). It was evident from the discussion that although limited learning resources from various stakeholders were being made available to support access to quality education as well as attempts to improve learning environment of the school, it was clear goals and objectives of parents and teachers

working together in the promotion of learning among children with and without disabilities in the same classrooms and schools were not being met.

There were several factors advanced to explain why goals and objectives of the partnerships were not being met in inclusive schools. These ranged from, ill-preparedness of both parents and teachers for partnership activities, increasing resistance by parents to participate in learning of children, to lack of access to specialised advice and services from relevant professionals such as speech specialists, physiotherapists, psychologists, social welfare workers and medical personnel on how best to deal with the conditions and learning problems of children included in mainstream schools. The findings also revealed that there were inadequate instructional resources for children with and without disabilities to use to access the school curriculum as well as the ignorance on the part of parents and teachers on their roles in the partnerships. These elements were seen as clear indicators of failure to meet the goals and objectives of the partnerships in schools practising inclusive education.

It was further established that Parents, regardless of their educational level, income status, ethnic background, parents want their children to be successful in classrooms and school work. Across study ages, parents want information about how inclusive schools function, their children learn and parents' roles in supporting children's learning for them to see their relevance to partnership activities being provided in inclusive schools. We can conclusively state that, parents' beliefs on their roles and manner in which such roles are perceived by parents themselves, can have a bearing on how parents see and value their collaborative relationships with teachers of their children in schools. Parents often hold positive or negative views of their partnerships

because of the orientation they receive from schools on partnerships in children's learning. Where orientation is carefully structured and planned, parents are likely to ably participate in partnership activities. Schools therefore, play a significant role in the promotion of parents and teachers' partnerships more so, where schools have taken time to orient parents on specific roles they ought to play in the partnership in the learning of children.

In relation to other studies, these findings were in agreement with those of Ammon (1999); Roach and Elliot (2005) who explained the failure of partnerships to meet their set goals and objectives on the basis of lack of understanding of parents' roles and responsibilities in children's learning. Roach and Elliot further, reported that lack of confidence or self-belief among parents and teachers to jointly solve the learning problems of children tended to contribute to the inability of partnerships to see themselves as being relevant to the learning of children in inclusive schools. To sum up, it was clear from this study, that due to increased resistance among parents and communities to participate in the affairs of the schools practising inclusive education, goals and objectives of their collaborative relationships in the learning of children, are not being met in regular primary schools involved in inclusive practices.

The findings of the present study on whether or not inclusive schools were welcoming, responsive and accommodative to the views, opinions, interests, ideas, suggestions and concerns of parents and communities on their partnerships in the learning of children, showed that schools were rather hostile, unresponsive and unaccommodating for them to effectively participate in children's learning. Further, weaknesses in the current partnerships among parents and teachers in the learning of children were also evidenced by lack of disability-friendly school infrastructure;

irregular interactive meetings on children's learning; failure to secure learning resources and inability to attract relevant professionals to support partnerships in the provision of specialised services to children included in regular school settings. Based on the results of the present study, partnership theory appears to support parents' connections and regular interactions with teachers in the learning of children. It for example, acknowledges and appreciates community and school involvement in the learning of children. Schools in the study district have been however, seen to be neither responsive nor accommodative to the views, ideas, concerns and suggestions of parents, families or communities on how parents could work together with teachers to promote school successes among children with and without disabilities in the same classrooms and schools.

These findings were not however, in line with those of Smith (1997) and Olson and Chalmer, (1997) who reported school openness and increased desire to take full ownership of children's learning by parents. Parents believed that as primary educators of their own children, they needed to be given more opportunities to participate and contribute to the learning of children. Further, the studies cited limited parental participation in the implementation of school curriculum, homework policy and general improvements of learning environments as examples of schools' inability to take advantage of the partnership to enrich the learning of children. Olson and Chalmer (1997), concluded by stating that failure to experience school success among children was not as a result of the hostility of the schools to foster partnerships, but were due to ignorance among parents on their roles and responsibilities in the learning of children. Arising from these findings, it is clear that, inclusive primary schools, regardless of their locations, were neither welcoming, responsive nor accommodative

to the views, ideas, suggestions and concerns on how to provide education and improve the learning of children with and without disabilities in the same classrooms and schools.

The main response through data collected using a questionnaire on the issue of existence of a non-blaming, no fault-finding and rather problem-solving atmosphere in the partnership involving parents and teachers was that the majority of parents and teachers disagreed on the existence of such a working environment in regular primary schools practising inclusive education. Parents in particular, observed that teachers in schools were bent on blaming and finding faults in them as parents of children with and without disabilities. This made it rather difficult for schools to build a more proactive relationship with parents that could work in favour of children's learning. Parents believed that teachers were bent on blaming and finding faults in them as parents as opposed to building a partnership that was more supportive of their current form and relationship. Schools hardly engaged parents in learning programmes, activities and actions that could promote a more proactive relationship in the learning of children in schools practicing inclusive education but showed willingness to participate in physical school improvement.

From the results of the study, it is important to note that, when parents feel involved, wanted and appreciated in their roles and responsibilities in the partnerships, they are more willing to participate meaningfully in the learning and development of their own children. Parents easily develop a sense or a belief that, as partners with teachers in the education of children they could work to promote school success among such children. Schools involved in inclusive education practices must therefore, be

welcoming and accommodative to parents and communities for children to benefit from parents and teachers' connections and interactions in the learning of children.

In relation to studies such as those conducted by Josson (1995), Adams, Christenson (2000), and Kasonde-Ng'andu and Moberg (2001), it was reported that parents often found it difficult to share and plan for diverse learning needs for their children, because of not knowing for sure what the teachers thought and believed could be done to help the children benefit from their presence in an inclusive school setting. This study in particular, observed that the existence of a blaming and fault-finding atmosphere in the partnership, was characterised by several behaviours such as failure to accept parents as educators of children in their own right; unwillingness to openly share information of children learning and failure to effectively put home and school resources together to support the learning of children in inclusive school settings. The study further, identified failure by partnerships to focus on children and parents' aspirations, concerns and needs as limiting factors to efforts of the partnerships to meet the set goals and objectives over the learning of children. In short, it is evident from the findings of this study that, schools practising inclusive schools needed to create opportunities through partnerships for parents and local communities to effectively participate in the creation of a learning environment which is supportive to the learning of all children.

It was clear from the findings that, parents and teachers' partnerships were not serious in their attempts to accommodate ideas, concerns and suggestions of parents and communities in the learning of children with and without disabilities. This was evident, through the learning activities and actions in which parents and teachers were involved in in schools practising inclusive education. There were however, few

parents and teachers who felt that schools were not keen at accommodating ideas and suggestions of parents and families in the making of decisions and taking actions in the learning of children. One explanation was the continued lack of knowledge and skills on how best to interact with teachers and other parents in order to bring out the desired change in the learning of children. Often this led to a possible rejection of ideas and suggestions of parents on how to improve the learning of their children placed in the mainstream schools.

From the results discussed above, it is clear that, inclusion of ideas and suggestions of parents arising from a meaningful engagement of parents and working jointly across homes and schools can yield a lot of benefits for children with and without disabilities in the same classrooms and schools. In the presence of an effective home-school partnerships as well as inclusion of some of the proactive ideas and suggestions from parents, children are likely to demonstrate improved school performance, develop positive attitudes, and strengthen their relational and interactive skills. Teachers too, become more efficient in their conduct of classroom and school business when parents become partners in the learning of children. Schools are therefore, more likely to implement successfully learning programmes and activities and pupils performing better when parents are considered as primary educators whose feelings, ideas and suggestions could contribute meaningfully to the success of a collaborative relationship in the learning of children.

Similar studies conducted on the same, such as those by Davies (1988) and Epstein (1992) reported that, parents, homes and families want to be and can be involved in the learning experiences of their own children, so long schools took time to orient parents on their roles in the partnerships with teachers. The studies recommended

more teachers' interactions with parents for them to feel accepted and appreciated in their contributions to the learning of children. In short, unless parents, homes and families feel always connected and appreciated through incorporating their progressive ideas and suggestions in the learning of children, parents are likely to continue questioning the validity of their relationships with teachers the learning of children through in inclusive school practices.

Using face to face interviews on the issue of recognising and appreciating parents and teachers' contributions to children's learning through partnerships, it was reported that recognition and appreciation of parents' feelings, opinions, concerns and suggestions was quite fair in urban and peri-urban schools but not in rural schools practicing inclusive education. Parents in rural schools felt neither recognised nor appreciated in their contributions to the partnerships in children's learning as compared to those in urban schools. One explanation can be attributed to the variations in the degree of exposure to information available to parents in urban, peri-urban and rural schools on disability, educational provisions and achievements among persons with disabilities. It appears from the present study that, parents and teachers in urban and peri-urban schools were more exposed to issues of disability and education than those in rural schools. There were various modes of communication available through which to access information on disability and education in urban and peri-urban schools than there was in rural schools. The study cited, use of radios, televisions, daily newspapers, education magazines, news-letters and interactions with role models of persons with disabilities who may have succeeded economically, socially and academically in life as some of the tools that helped to expose issues of disability and education to the general public in urban schools. These avenues of gaining access to information on disability and education are hardly available to

parents in the rural communities making it difficult for them to enrich their understanding and appreciation of issues surrounding disability and education to support parents' and teachers' partnership in the learning of children.

Parents in rural schools, on the other hand, mostly depended on the informal interactions with teachers which limited their access to information on the disability and education to support partnerships on inclusive school practices. This affected their participation in the learning programmes and activities of children in inclusive classrooms and schools. Parents in rural schools for example, felt neither recognised nor acknowledged in the partnerships. They were therefore, not keen on supporting the parents and teachers' partnership over children's learning. These findings were nonetheless, in line with those of Murphy (1992); Katwishi (1995), and Smith (1997), who reported of educational background of parents, presence of role models, socio-economic status of families, family structure and access to information on disability and education, being significant in making parents become supportive of relationships between communities and schools in the learning of children. From these findings, it is clear that schools needed to assist parents to feel acknowledged, recognised and appreciated on their contributions to partnerships for them to remain supportive of the relationships and contribute towards creation of a learner-friendly learning environment for all children.

On the issue of evidence of participation by parents in the affairs of the schools, it was clear from the findings that, parents and teachers were involved in the construction and rehabilitation of infrastructure aimed at creating a learner-friendly learning environment for children to a certain extent. This was evidenced by the financial, moral, material support and the presence of learner-friendly infrastructure and

furniture in some of the schools practising inclusive education. Parents were also involved in the implementation of the school homework policy as well as home outreach learning programmes and activities. Based on these findings, the increasing involvement of parents and families in the learning of children, can be linked to the Ecological Child Development model which sees and appreciates the expertise available in the immediate ecological environment of the child such as homes, families, neighbourhood and schools to support the learning and development of children (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield and Karnik, (2009). The model believes in parents and educators as elements in the ecological environment of a child, holding unique expertise related to home-school curriculum and instruction needed in the promotion of school success rather than failures as the child learns and develops. Potential problem of this model in relation to the present study, arises from when educators within the ecological environment of a child, see themselves as expertise in issues of curriculum and instructions and are not willing to involve homes, parents and families in issues surrounding the learning and development of the child. Parents therefore, fail to see the need for them to continue interacting and participating in enhancement of the home-school curriculum to support the learning and development of children in the same classroom and schools.

On the whole, the findings are in line with those of Davies' (1991) and Lindle' (1989) who saw parental participation in children's learning as a proxy for other types of partnering, including the nurturance of social network, facilitation of cohesion on one off events and creation of opportunities for the establishment of a resource base to support the learning of children. we can conclude from the findings, that when parents and teachers agree and work together to support the learning and development of

children, parents as well as teachers often develop a better understanding of the learning problems in the learning of children. This can result in parents and educators seeing the need for them to work together to improve the learning environment for children with and without disabilities.

Through use of face to face interview and questionnaire to generate information on whether or not parents and teachers participated in the supply of instructional and learning resources to learners with and without disabilities in schools practising inclusive education, the findings revealed that sometimes parents and teachers as partners worked together to secure and supply instructional resources to support the learning children. These included textbooks, pencils, pens, exercise books, chalk and dusters to support the teaching and learning of children. It was further, noted that parents were actively involved in securing social support services which included school fees, uniforms, food supplements and provision of shelter to children in-order to support children's learning. The desire among parents and educators to work together in solving learning problems can be explained on the basis of the curriculum enrichment model which sees the need for them to participate in issues of curriculum and instruction. Through this model, we acknowledge and appreciate in this study, the role of homes, families, neighbourhood and communities in making the curriculum accessible to children as a result of parental participation in the learning of children.

In the studies conducted by Davern (1999) and Freeman, Alkins and Kasari (1999), parents expressed satisfaction on their participation in children's learning more so, on the social and academic benefits accrued to the improvement of the learning environment, and integration of programmes and activities offered to the children in schools. Children for example, were supplied with resources and services to support

the learning through the involvement of parents, families, communities and schools. Ferguson (2002), however, observed that, parents of children with severe disabilities often did not favour the constant involvement of teachers in issues of their children including soliciting for professional support services. One explanation is that, parents often fear to be exposed to other parents as well as educators on their struggles to find solutions to conditions and learning problems of their own children. As a result, this contributes to limited interactions among parents and teachers on issues surrounding conditions and learning problems of children in the schools.

### **5.3 Objective 2**

To determine factors influencing parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children in inclusive schools

After assessing the nature of the parents' and teachers' partnerships in schools practising inclusive education, the researcher was concerned with factors that may have influenced the partnership in the learning of children. One hundred and sixty-six (166) respondents provide information on factors that may have influenced the partnerships. On whether or not schools had visions and missions which were supportive of parents' and teachers' partnerships in the schools, the findings in the present study, revealed that the existing school visions and missions were relevant, responsive and supportive to a partnership approach in dealing with learning problems of children. The visions and missions were relevant to the aspirations of the partnerships and were seen to be helpful in providing guidance on how best to engage parents, families and their resources in making the general school curriculum more accessible to children with and without disabilities in schools.

The findings of this study conform to the works of Pianta, Walsh (1996) and Miles (2007), which observed that, the existence or non-existence of relevant and responsive

school visions and missions can promote or inhibit participation of parents, families and communities in children's learning. School visions and missions, which are positive about partnerships, have the potential of constructively influencing the organisation and management of learning environments, programmes and activities of children. Positive visions and missions of schools were seen in the present study, as having the potential of changing the perceptions and values held by parents on their collaborative partnerships with teachers in the schools. This is necessary in dealing with the conditions and learning problems of children. In short, from the findings of the study, we can concluded that the existing school visions and missions were relevant and adequate to support and make partnerships among parents and teachers in the learning of children in the regular primary schools that have chosen to practice inclusive schooling.

A minority of respondents however, did not agree with the existence of responsive vision and missions, relevant and supportive to the current relationships between parents and teachers in the learning of children. Several reasons were advanced in support of this view. These ranged from failure by schools to adequately and regularly supply learning resources and equipment; continued absence of disability friendly school infrastructure to negative attitudes towards the learning of all children in inclusive school settings schools. Children with disabilities in the included in regular schools, for example, lacked specialised resources and equipment and services to support learning. This was an indication of the existence of school vision and missions which did not accommodate the role of partnerships in the learning of children. The study particularly, cited lack of materials and equipment such as writing frames, braille papers and wheel chairs to support learners with visual and physical disabilities in the schools. Further, this study revealed that children with

hearing impairment, lacked hearing aids, signed language-based learning resources such as manual alphabet, number charts, and signed language books to support the learning of such children. To sum up, school visions and missions which were proactive and have the potential of contributing significantly to the school success of children with and without disabilities placed in the same classrooms and schools.

During the face to face interviews, most respondents observed that, education policy on community and school partnerships and the adapted inclusive school practices, were not comprehensive, relevant or supportive of the development and sustenance of effective parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children with and without disabilities in the same classrooms and schools. This view was evidenced by the non-existence of barrier-free physical learning environments; lack of opportunities for sharing ideas and experiences on the conditions and learning problems of children and the limited access to learning facilities and support services among children with disabilities. Indeed, lack of participation of parents in the learning of children, could be attributed to schools' failure to develop and sustain policies and practices which are more supportive of collaborative partnerships in the learning of children. In most cases, schools do not see poor family-school relationships as a problem arising from the existence of policies and practices which are not relevant to needs of partnerships. As a result, schools are not able to develop sustenance of parents and teachers' relationships that are supportive to the learning of children.

These findings were in agreement with those of Zellman and Waterman (1998) and Kalabula, Mandyata and Chinombwe (2006) which reported the existence of institutional-level policies which were supportive of parents' and communities' participation in the education and training of children and young adults with

disabilities. Though parents and head teachers in the present study reported the existence of policies and practices which were seen to support their collaborative relationships with schools, teachers on the other hand, had contrary views on the same. Teachers, saw too many weaknesses in the existing school policies and practices in relation to partnerships in children's learning. Teachers believe that school policies and practices were not accommodative to parents for them to actively contribute to the learning of children. In short, we can conclude that schools need to assist partnerships to function by providing school-level policies and practices which are more relevant, responsive, supportive and central to the roles of parents and teachers in partnership in the learning of children in inclusive classrooms and schools.

On interactive meetings between homes, families, communities and schools, the majority of respondents observed that parents and teachers did not routinely meet to review the social and academic progress of children. It was further observed that, where such meetings took place, parents and teachers practically met only once a year to discuss general issues affecting the learning of children in classrooms and schools. Often these meetings took the form of annual Parents and Teachers' Associations (PTAs) meetings, which were rather general in the manner they attempted to deal with issues of children's learning in inclusive school settings. Christenson (2000) explained this situation on the basis of differences in parents' and teachers' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities in the partnerships. In short, unless schools develop a willingness to learn from each other about parents and family relationships and how they can jointly solve learning problems of children, parents are likely to continue to under-score the importance of their collaborative partnerships in the learning and development of children in schools practising inclusive education.

Differences in the way teachers and parents viewed their interactive meetings, were however, explained on the basis of the value attached to the education of their own children; level of awareness on parental roles and the openness of school personnel to ideas and suggestions on collaborative relationships from parents and other stakeholders in the learning of children. Because of these differences, parents in urban areas were more willing and keen to interact with teachers through regular interactive meetings over children's learning, than those in rural schools. The observed desire to work with teachers among parents in urban schools can be attributed to increased exposure to information on disability and education through a variety of interactive media in urban schools as opposed to those in rural schools. Parents in urban schools for example, are able to make use of phone calls; send notices home hold informal meetings and use emails to share information and experiences children's learning, unlike those in rural school settings who hardly have access to these facilities. This may have resulted in the observed differences among parents in their readiness to work together with teachers to solve learning problems of children.

These findings were in line with the findings of Kelly (1998), Kanyika (2000) and Sigal (2006), who observed that, the increasing school failures among children, were mainly due to failure by schools to orient parents and communities on their roles in children's learning. These studies called for increased participation of parents in the learning of children for them to experience school success. To sum up, it is important for schools to orient and train parents together with teachers involved in the learning of children as partners on their respective roles in order for parents to freely interact with teachers and support the learning programmes and activities of planned for children in the schools.

#### **5.4 Objective 3**

To map out communication strategies used by partnerships in building a shared responsibility in the learning of children

Having discussed the findings on factors that may have influenced the parents' and teachers' partnerships in regular primary schools practising inclusive education, this section discusses the communication strategies partnerships were using to build a shared responsibility in the learning of children with and without disabilities in the schools. There were one hundred and sixty-six (166) respondents who provided the information on communication strategies being used to build a shared responsibility in the learning of children within the framework of inclusive education in classrooms and schools.

Out of the 166 participants who answered the question on the involvement of parents in decision-making as an aspect of communication between parents and teachers, the majority of respondents (108), observed that parents were involved though not always, in deciding on what needed to be done to improve the learning conditions of children in schools. This was evidenced by the provision of learner-friendly school infrastructure in some of the schools; increased levels of awareness on the plight of children and a regular supply of instructional and learning resources in some of the schools practicing inclusive education.

Increasingly, parents within the partnerships were able to willingly serve, as fund-raisers; advocates and supporters of attempts to resolve learning problems of children. Parents' desire to participate in attempts to raise learning resources and serve as advocates of partnerships in children's learning, was consistent with Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998)'s work on application of ecological systems theory on learning and development of children. Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) saw the relevance of

persons, objects, homes and families as children's environments, to be significant in learning and development of the children. Participation of parents in the learning of children for example, is supported by the ecological systems theory which sees families and schools and their relationships as interface of systems, necessary in learning and socialization of children. These systems help to prepare children for their adult roles as family members and potential scholars in readiness for their positions in the wider communities.

These findings are in agreement with those of Voster-Hunter (1989) and Christenson (2000), who observed that, the participation of parents through active connections and interactions in the social and academic life of a child, had the potential of promoting school success rather than failures. The two studies concluded by calling for a collective responsibility in the learning of children through setting common learning targets, curriculum designing and mobilization of resources to direct on how to solve learning problems of children. Henderson and Berla (1994), noted that the goal for parents, families and school partnership, was to promote school success among children. The present study notes that the improvement in school attendance, learning infrastructure, pupils' achievements and a reduction in disciplinary cases among children, as some of the indicators of the existence of proactive collective relationship between parents and teachers in schools practicing inclusive education.

Other studies on pupils' achievements such as those of Kelly (1998) and Kelly and Kanyika (2001), showed positive attitudes towards school work; high school retention and completion rates among learners with disabilities and without disabilities placed in mainstream classrooms and schools. These contributed to connections and interactions among parents and educators which led to improvements in the learning

and development of children. It was clear from the findings that, though parents and families were not always involved in decision-making process, parents had learnt to value their participation through decisions made over the learning of children, because it was through such partnerships that, their voices on children's learning could be heard in schools. To sum up, schools needed to strive to invite parents, homes, families and communities through a collective decision-making process to participate and serve to bridge the gaps or barriers in the learning of children for them to succeed in inclusive school settings.

On whether or not there were differences in communication strategies used by partnerships in promotion of a shared responsibility in the learning of children with and without disabilities, eighty-eight (88) of the one hundred and seventy-seven (177) respondents observed that, there were significant differences in strategies partnerships were using from school to school to share information, experiences and concerns over the learning of children. It was noted that, while some partnerships in schools much depended on the use of Parents' and Teachers' Associations (PTAs) meetings as a means of sharing information, experiences and concerns, others valued more the use of sending notices to parents of the children, calling individual parents and organising school open days as a means of exchanging information between parents and teachers over the learning of children with different learning needs in the schools.

However, out of the one hundred and sixty-six (166) parents and teachers who responded to the same question, forty two (42) of them observed that their interactions over the learning of children were rather restricted in nature because at times teachers were only willing to talk with parents when there were serious problems concerning the conduct or behavior of a child which threatened the safety and learning of other

children in classrooms and schools. The present study indeed, acknowledged the importance of an open communication system. Parents saw an open communication system as an important factor in the creation of a working partnership with teachers which promoted the learning of children. Ames (1993) reported that, children whose teachers communicated to children's parents at high levels, using a variety of communication modes tended to perform better than those children whose teachers were restricted or limited in communicating with children's parents. Ames (1993) concluded by stating that frequent and effective communication strategies were necessary in building a shared responsibility between parents and teachers in children's learning. It was evident from the findings of this study that schools needed to use a variety of communication approaches, especially those which allowed open and free exchange of information on progress, needs and interests of children in order to develop and sustain a more collective relationship with parents and communities in schools that were involved in inclusive education practices.

On whether or not sufficient opportunities were provided through the existing communication strategies for parents and teachers to interact, share information and experiences in the learning of children, findings of the present study showed that, strategies which were being used were adequate and relevant to the building of a collective responsibility among parents and teachers in the learning of children. Variation in modes of communication employed in parents and teachers' partnerships such as use of school family pacs; school and home visitations and parent to parent interactions, were seen to help in the building of self-esteem, self-confidence and mutual trust among parents and teachers thereby resulting in improved learning environments and academic performance of the children.

It was also evident from the study that, the more parents and teachers interacted through appropriate communication strategies, the more opportunities or chances were created for parents and teachers to learn from each other and work to solve learning and developmental problems of children. In schools where parents and teachers freely interacted and supported each other, children tended to perform much better in their social and academic work than where parents and teachers were not willing to freely work together to solve learning problems of the children. One explanation is that, parents and teachers generally desired similar things over the learning of children in classrooms and schools. Often parents and teachers want the best for the children in terms of social and academic provisions made available to them. Participation of parents in the education of their own children therefore, becomes necessary in schools involved in inclusive education.

Similarly, the results from this study showed that teachers and head teachers reported the significance of using strategies such as Parents and Teachers' Associations (PTAs) meetings as a means to provide opportunities for more parents to share their experiences and learn from each other in the learning of children in the shortest possible time. Some parents however, disagreed with the notion that the current strategies of partnerships which being used in the promotion of a shared responsibility in the learning of children, were effective to bring out the desired change in the way parents and teachers perceived their collaborative relationships in the learning of the children.

These findings were consistent with the results of Obeng (2008) whose work on experiences of parents of children with severe multiple health problems in which it was reported that, children with severe multiple health problems benefited more from

their presence in classrooms and schools when parents and teachers willingly and freely shared and exchanged information concerning the learning of children. It was further noted that parents' ability to communicate their views and concerns with teachers of their children, was an essential therapeutic function for both individual parents and the children in the schools. The study concluded that, use of more stimulating strategies in the learning of children had the potential of assisting schools in building a shared responsibility, necessary in improving the learning of children in the school system.

With regard to trusting each other's contributions towards finding solutions to learning problems of children with and without disabilities, the findings of the study, showed that parents and teachers fairly trusted each other's contributions towards solving learning problems of children in classrooms and schools. It was found that, parents and teachers generally had positive views on individual and group contributions towards solving learning problems of children with and without disabilities in schools. These views were however, inconsistent with those of Abosi (2000) and McClosky (2010) who observed that, parents regardless of their socio-economic status, trusted teachers more than themselves as parents over attempts to make children experience school success. Parents for example, freely entrusted to class teachers, sensitive information about their children's conditions and learning problems, but fellow parents. One explanation, is attributed to social stigma surrounding disabilities in communities which prevented parents from freely sharing personal experiences with other parents outside the parents' and teachers' partnerships. Parents therefore, are more open to sharing information about children with relevant professionals such as teachers, physiotherapists, social workers and many others than fellow parents in schools practising inclusive education.

To sum up, it is important for schools involved in inclusive education practices to create a context for conversations which allows parents and teachers to feel free, relaxed and comfortable in their attempt to participate in schools' efforts to make children learn in inclusive classrooms and schools. It was also clear from the findings of this study that, lack of self-belief among parents to jointly solve learning problems of children and the increasing doubts and suspicions among themselves, limited their chances to learn from one another in order to find solutions to the learning problems of children.

#### **5.5 Objective 4**

To establish the perceptions and values held by parents and teachers over their partnerships in the learning of children in inclusive school settings

After discussing the communication strategies parents' and teachers' partnerships were using to build a shared responsibility in the learning of children, the researcher investigated the perceptions and values held by parents and teachers over their collaborative relationships in the learning of children. There were one hundred and sixty two (162) teachers, parents and head teachers who provided information on perceptions and values held by parents and teachers on their partnerships in the learning of children in inclusive school settings. Out of the one hundred and sixty two (162) respondents, eighty seven (87) of them felt that there were significant differences in perceptions and values held by parents and teachers on their partnerships in the learning of children with and without disabilities in the same classrooms and schools. It was evident from the findings that majority of parents and teachers were happy with the current form and practices in partnerships, while seventy five (75) of the respondents were not comfortable with the current form and

practice in relation to parents and teachers' partnerships in schools practising inclusive education. Parents and teachers, who were in favour of the current form and practices of partnerships, gave several reasons in support of their views over relationships. These views included the advantages accrued to partnerships ranging from; creation of opportunities for schools to mobilise learning resources, increased capacity in soliciting for mobility appliances to attempts to make the curriculum more accessible and contributing to the creation of a least restrictive learning environment. Arising from these findings, it is evident that parents and teachers see a community and school partnership approach as being significant in increasing access to education, promotion of equalization of educational opportunities and the provision of quality education to children in schools practising inclusive education.

Through a partnership approach, parents and teachers are able to understand and appreciate the conditions of their children as well as efforts teachers make to provide education to their children. This study found out that, while teachers regardless of geographical locations in the district were not comfortable with the involvement of parents and community in school work, parents and head teachers understood and appreciated their participation in the learning programmes and activities of children. In addition, parents saw a partnership approach as an opportunity for homes and schools to mobilise and put together resources necessary to support the learning of children. In the studies conducted by Gad and Khan (2007) and Elliot (2008), it was reported that, partnerships between parents and teachers in the learning of children, provided a platform for the unification and coordination of basic and specialized resources to enhance the learning of children in inclusive classrooms and schools. In the present study, it has been observed that, though parents and head teachers understood and appreciated the role of a collective relationship approach in solving

learning problems of children, teachers, regardless of their locations in the study district were not in support of the partnership with parents in schools.

Teachers' negative perceptions of their relationships with parents observed in the present study can be attributed to a belief that teachers are competent enough to deal with learning problems. Parents think that teachers are competent to solve learning problems of children hence, not necessary to involve parents of children in communities where schools are located. Parents feel that the training teachers receive in readiness for teaching roles were adequate to deal with learning problems of all children. Because of this, teachers, believe that parents have very little to contribute to partnerships in the learning of children. Teachers see parents of children with and without disabilities in schools practicing inclusive education, as being less competent and knowledgeable of the learning needs of the children, and what is needed to be done to make their children experience school success.

Teachers' negative perceptions of a collaborative relationship with parents of children they teach however can be explained on the basis of school protective model advanced by Powell and Bartholomew (1987). The model argues that schools by nature of their design as institutions of learning should be allowed to enjoy a protection from interference of parents and communities. By virtue of accepting to have children enrolled in schools, parents surrender part of their authority over what children should learn and how learning should take place to teachers as secondary parents of children which must be respected by parents and the community. The study concluded by stating that schools be independent of parental interferences by not supporting a partnership approach to learning of children. In line with Powell and Bartholomew (1987)'s work, a call for partnership approach in the learning of children is perceived as a breach of the contractual agreement existing between

parents, families and communities on one hand, and schools on the other hand in schools practising inclusive education.

The findings of the present study were however, consistent with those of Sharma and Desai (2002), who noted that collective relationships between teachers and parents of children, often gave them a chance to learn from one another on various issues on the learning of children and how best to deal with learning problems of children. It is clear from the findings that, parents and teachers in schools practising inclusive education do acknowledge the importance of partnerships in the provision of school success among children with and without disabilities though may have not agreed on the form and practices surrounding the current relationships in the learning of children.

This study further revealed that, younger parents and teachers, aged between 30 and 39 years, were more willing to work through a partnership approach in dealing with learning problems of children with and without disabilities, than those aged 40 years and above. One reason is the closeness of the two groups of participants to the children whose interests need to be met through a partnership approach. Younger parents were seen to be much closer to children than elderly parents or caregivers. Elderly parents were grandparents, uncles or aunts of children with full trust of teachers in meeting learning needs of children with or without the support of parents.

As biological parents of children, younger parents were full of excitement, desire and ambitions to see children succeed in their social and academic life. They were therefore, more willing to enter into a collaborative relationship with teachers with a view of improving the learning conditions of children in inclusive classrooms and

schools. Parents or caregivers aged 40 years and above, were however less willing to get involved in school work surrounding children. One explanation is the feeling of having sufficient knowledge among elderly parents about what children need arising from their experiences on children and what teachers can do to make them experience academic success. In short elderly parents and teachers in schools practicing inclusive education are not as keen as younger parents and teachers to regularly interact and exchange information, experiences and concerns in order to solve learning problems of children. On the other hand, elderly parents see teachers as experts in area of formal education. Because of this they perceive collaborative partnership as an interference with expert work of teachers in schools.

Based on the findings of the study it can be concluded that, the results, were not consistent with those of Mulholland and Becker (2008), who stated that parents, regardless of their age groups, were primary engines in the learning of children. The two scholars note that, parents are always willing to participate in the school curriculum of their own children regardless of their socio-economic status or extent of children's disablement but lack guidance from educators on how best to contribute to the learning of children. Kalyanpur and Harry (1999) linked school failures among children with disabilities to lack of confidence, trust and openness among parents and teachers. Parents and educators were not willing to support each other to make children experience school success. On the whole, it is evident from this study, that the desire or willingness to participate in the learning of children through a partnership approach mostly went with the age of the participants. The younger the parents and teachers are, more open and willing they are to supporting each other in the learning of children and the school so that all children experience school success

rather than failures in regular primary classrooms and schools practicing inclusive education.

## **5.6 Summary**

This chapter has discussed the findings of the study on the nature of the community and school partnerships existing in schools practising inclusive education in Kasama, northern Zambia. From the findings, it is clear that, parents' and teachers' partnerships were cordial, accommodative and responsive to the learning needs of children. Parents and teachers willingly participated in learning programmes and activities of children in inclusive schools. The chapter has however, provided several factors that may have influenced the current form and practices of parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children. These ranged, from low level of awareness on roles of parents and teachers; unsupportive school policies and practices; irregular interactive meetings; lack of openness to each other among parents and teachers to insufficient knowledge on how best to develop and sustain parents' and teachers' partnerships in schools.

It was also evident from the study that, parents' and teachers' partnerships depended much on Parents and Teachers' Association (PTA) meetings as a strategy for communication among parents and teachers. Some schools however, also employed other strategies in sharing of information such as, sending notices to parents, calling parents, hosting school open days and home visitation. In addition, it was clear from the discussion that, the majority of parents and teachers had positive perceptions and values of their collaborative relationships in the learning of children, despite several concerns raised on the current status of partnerships in relations to regular primary learning in schools practising inclusive education.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 Overview**

The chapter broadly makes a review, conclusion and recommendations of the study. It is divided into sections. In the first section, it provides a review of parts of the study. This is followed by a summary of the main findings. The chapter ends with the conclusion and recommendations of the present study.

#### **6.2 Summary of the Study**

Arising from the previous chapters, the purpose of this study was to evaluate the type of community and school partnerships existing in the learning of children with and without disabilities in regular primary schools practising inclusive education in Kasama district in Northern Province of Zambia.

The study was guided by the 1979 Urie Bronfenbrenner's Model of Child Development. The model was modified in order to make it more relevant to the study of parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children in inclusive school settings. Through use of this model, the researcher was able to explore the relationships existing among parents and teachers in the learning of children. It also helped the researcher in understanding the processes the partnerships were following in the promotion of parental participation in the learning programmes and activities offered to children in same classrooms and schools.

The present study was guided by the following objectives (i) to assess the type of parents' and teachers' partnerships in schools practising inclusive education; (ii) to determine factors influencing parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children (iii) to map out communication strategies used by partnerships in building a

shared responsibility in the learning of children and, (iv) to establish the perceptions and values held by parents and teachers over their collaborative partnerships in the learning of children.

One hundred and eighty (180) respondents participated in the study, consisting of eighty two (82) teachers, seventy (70) parents and twenty eight (28) head teachers. Teacher-respondents were selected using simple random sampling technique while, parents and head teachers were chosen using purposive sampling technique. For the purpose of generating the primary data to support the study, respondents were drawn from three geographical locations in the study district, namely; urban, peri-urban and rural schools. Primary data were generated through use of research instruments; questionnaires, semi-structured and in depth interview guides while, secondary data was generated using documentary analysis approach.

In order to ensure reliability and validity of the data collected to support the study, the research instruments were piloted in Mpika district with the aim of strengthening them before actual data collection was done in Kasama. As a result of the pilot study, the weaknesses that were identified in the pre-data collection instruments which included misunderstanding of concepts such impairment, disability, vision; mission, policy, practice, goals and objectives were attended to before proceeding with the actual data collection.

The quantitative data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) through which frequencies, percentages, standard deviations and Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) values were generated to provide descriptive statistics. Qualitative data were analysed using inductive analysis method. This involved coding and grouping of the emerging themes and subthemes in the present study.

## **Findings**

The following findings emerged from the study:

- (i) Though teachers in urban, peri-urban and rural regular primary schools practising inclusive education did not see partnerships as being essential in the learning of children, parents and head teachers believed that partnerships were important in the promotion of school successes among children with and without disabilities placed in inclusive school settings.
- (ii) Though parents and teachers appreciated partnerships in the learning of children, the goals and objectives of their collaborative relationship, were not being met in most of the schools practising inclusive education.
- (iii) Results of the present study showed that the working relationship among parents and teachers was neither responsive nor accommodative to parents' participation in the learning of children with and without disabilities in inclusive classrooms and schools. Teachers did not see parents as being knowledgeable, skilled or experienced on learning conditions and problems of children to make a meaningful contribution to the learning of children in the same classrooms and schools
- (iv) The results also showed that schools practising inclusive education were not committed towards the promotion of parental participation in the learning programmes and activities of children with and without disabilities in regular primary schools.
- (v) Parents and teachers regardless of their geographical locations did not recognize or appreciate the current form and practices in the parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children.

- (vi) Parents were more concerned with the creation of a barrier-free physical learning environment than participation in the delivery of day to day classroom curriculum.
- (vii) Parents' and teachers' partnerships where possible and practical, helped to supply basic learning resources and solicited for support services to assist children access the school curriculum
- (viii) Schools had clear visions and missions to support the works of parents' and teachers' partnerships in the learning of children in inclusive education practices.
- (ix) School policies were seen to be at variance with the goals and objectives of the partnerships, thereby making it difficult for parents to effectively participate in the learning of children.
- (x) Parents and teachers rarely met to plan implement and review learning programmes and activities of children in inclusive schools.
- (xi) There were significant differences in the way information on children's learning was shared among parents and teachers in schools practising inclusive education.
- (xii) Parents and communities were sometimes, though not always, involved in the making of decisions concerning the learning of children with and without disabilities in inclusive schools.
- (xiii) Parents and teachers regardless of their geographical locations were in support of a partnership approach in finding solutions to the learning problems of children in schools practising inclusive schools.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

It was clear from the findings of the study that despite some of the concerns expressed by parents and teachers regarding the current form and practice in the partnerships, it was generally observed that relationships were cordial and to a certain extent, accommodative with recognition and appreciation of each other's contributions towards inclusive school practices. The study also revealed that Parents' and Teachers' Association meetings were the main mode of communication among parents and teachers as opposed to other modes like school open days, home-school visitations, call- parents and use of emails in sharing information on children's learning. The study further showed that parents and teachers generally had positive perceptions and values of their collaborative relationships in the learning of children with and without disabilities in schools practicing inclusive education.

It was however, evident from the findings of the present study that learning needs of children with and without disabilities in inclusive school arrangement are always difficult to adequately meet without full participation of stakeholders such as parents, families and communities. Although parents, families and schools in schools practicing inclusive education were generally happy with the form and practices in the parents' and teachers' partnerships, there were a number of concerns regarding the learning of children. These included existence of unclear legislation and policies on partnerships; ill-preparedness, negative attitudes, mistrust among parents and teachers; low levels of awareness on the plight of children and indeed ignorance on roles of parents and teachers as participants in the partnership in inclusive schooling. Based on these findings, we can conclude that parental and community participation and collaboration of parents with teachers in the learning of children, is a process that parents and teachers must nourish daily. Parental involvement and effective partnerships which is founded on trust and positive communication, remains a

significant factor in the promotion of equalisation of educational opportunities and provision of quality education to all children in schools practising inclusive education in Kasama, Zambia.

#### **6.4 Recommendations**

In view of the findings and conclusion above, the following recommendations are made:

1. Parents and teachers should work together to address seriously the barriers that have impeded the development and sustenance of an active community and school partnership in the learning of children with and without disabilities in regular primary schools practising inclusive education.
2. Schools should develop and enforce policies and practices that recognise, respect, accommodate and support parents' and teachers' participation in the learning of all children in classrooms and schools.
3. Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Childhood Education (MoESVTEE) should provide parents and teachers with relevant information, knowledge and skills on partnerships in the learning of children in inclusive school settings through regular school based seminars, workshops and where possible training in partnership in inclusive education.
4. Parents and teachers should work in partnership in the learning of children to improve the existing educational facilities such as school infrastructure, furniture and regular supply of learning resources to enable children with and without disabilities access the school curriculum in the same classrooms and schools.
5. Schools practising inclusive education should take a leading role in the promotion of changed perceptions and values over partnerships by holding regular formal and

informal interactive meetings; encouraging home-school visitations and holding open days to share information, experiences and concerns over the learning of children.

6. Training institutions such as colleges of education and the universities preparing regular teachers should recognise the need for teachers to be informed, knowledgeable and skilled on working in partnerships with parents and communities in the promotion of school success among children by incorporating community and school partnerships in teacher education curriculum.

### **6.5 Future Research**

Research studies on collaborative partnerships between parents and teachers in the learning of children with and without disabilities, with a focus on specific disability groups, geographical locations and classroom practices, would be a worthwhile contribution to the existing literature on parents' and teachers' partnerships in relation to inclusive school practices in Zambia.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Questionnaire for Teachers

#### Instructions

Do not write your name on this paper.

Treat this work as a contribution towards building up knowledge on inclusive practices in the district.

Put a tick on your choice or circle your response or fill in the appropriate responses in the space provided.

All responses must be written in the space provided.

1. Where is the school located in the district?
  - (a) Urban area:
  - (b) Peri-urban area:
  - (c) Rural area:
2. What is your gender?
  - (a) Male
  - (b) Female
3. How old are you (in years)?
  - (a) < 24 years
  - (b) 25 – 29 years
  - (c) 30 – 34 years
  - (d) 35 – 39 years
  - (e) 40 – 44 years
  - (f) 45 – 49 years
  - (g) > 50 years
4. What is your highest professional qualification?
  - (a) Primary Teacher's Certificate
  - (b) Secondary Teacher's Diploma
  - (c) University Degree
  - (d) Higher University Degree
  - (e) Others(s) specify
5. How long have you been teaching?
  - (a) Less than one year
  - (b) 1 – 3 years

- (c) 4 - 6 years
  - (d) 7 – 9 years
  - (e) 10 or more years
6. What is your current classroom area of teaching practice?
- (a) Regular
  - (b) Special
  - (c) Mixed class of abled and disabled children
7. Are you trained in special / mixed class teaching practices?
- (a) Yes
  - (b) No
8. If your response in question 7 is yes, how long have you been teaching in a mixed class of abled and disabled children?
- (a) Below 1 year
  - (b) 1 -3 years
  - (c) 4 -6 years
  - (d) 7 – 9 years
  - (e) 10 or more years
9. Which of the following disability group forms the majority of children with disabilities enrolled in your school?
- (a) Behaviour disorders.....
  - (b) Hearing impaired.....
  - (c) Hard of learning.....
  - (d) Specific Learning Difficulties.....
  - (e) Mild mentally retarded .....
  - (f) Moderately mentally retarded .....
  - (g) Partially sighted .....
  - (h) Totally blind .....
  - (i) Physically impaired .....
  - (j) Gifted children .....
  - (k) Other, specify.....
10. Parents and teachers support partnership in its current form and practice in the provision learning and related support services
- (a) Strongly disagree .....
  - (b) Disagree.....

- (c) Not sure.....
  - (d) Agree .....
  - (e) Strongly agree.....
11. If your response in question 10 is, strongly agree / agree, what reason would you give for their working together? .....
12. If your response in question 10 is, strongly disagree / disagree what reason would you give for the response? .....
13. Is parental involvement in the learning of pupils in the school seen to be essential in the provision of education to children with and without disabilities?
- (a) Sometimes.....
  - (b) Always.....
  - (c) No at all .....
14. . If your response in question 13 is, sometimes / always, give a reason why parents should be involved in the learning of their children...
15. If your response in question 13 is, not at all, give a reason why parents are not involved in the learning of their children in school: .....
16. In your opinion, are goals and objectives of educating children with and without through the same schools, being met in your school?
- (a) Not at all .....
  - (b) In some situations.....
  - (c) Sometimes, but not always.....
  - (d) Always.....
17. From your experience in the school, is the atmosphere or climate in the partnership over the learning of children with and without disabilities in the same classrooms and schools,
- (a) Strongly Agree .....
  - (b) Agree.....
  - (c) Disagree.....
  - (d) Strongly disagree.....
18. If your response in 17 is, in some situations, sometimes, but not always or always, in which area does the parents mainly partner with the teachers in the promotion of children's learning in the school? .....

19. If your response in question 25 is, not at all, what reason would you give for the parents and teachers' negative perception of their involvement in children's learning? .....
20. Does a non – blaming, no fault finding, problem-solving kind of relationship exist between the parents and teachers in the learning of disabled and normal children?
- (a) Not at all .....
  - (b) In some cases .....
  - (c) Sometimes but not always .....
  - (d) In most cases .....
  - (e) Always .....
22. From your experiences, does the school attempt to understand and accommodate the needs, ideas and opinions of the local community on the promotion of learning activities involving normal and disabled children in the school?
- (a) Very seriously.....
  - (b) Fairly seriously.....
  - (c) Not at all: .....
23. In which way does your school mainly invite parents to share experiences and concerns on the learning of both disabled and normal children in the school?
- (a) Through PTA meetings.....
  - (b) Through school open days .....
  - (c) Through home visit learning programmes.....
  - (d) Through community development meetings.....
  - (e) Other (s) specify:.....
24. Basing on your experiences in your school, do parents and teachers recognize and appreciate the importance of each other the learning of children?
- (a) Agree .....
  - (b) Disagree .....
  - (c) Not sure.....
25. If your response in question 28 is agree, in which way do parents and teachers appear to show that they recognize and appreciate the importance of each other working together in the learning of children? .....
26. If your response in question 28 is disagree, in which way do parents and teachers seem to fail to recognize and appreciate the importance of each other contributions? ..

27. Does the school have a vision, mission and values that were supportive of partnerships in the education of children? If so can you cite your school mission you think is relevant to partnership?
- (a) Agree.....
- (b) Disagree .....
- (c ) Not sure: .....
28. Does the school have policies and practices that are relevant and supportive to the learning of children with different needs?
- (a) Agree.....
- (b) Disagree.....
- (c ) Not sure: .....
- 29.If you agree can you cite some of your school policies? If you do not agree give reasons for the school's failure to have policies and practices supportive of partnerships.....
- 30.Are learning resources supplied by the partnerships to the school?
- (a) Some times .....
- (b) Always:.....
- (c ) Not at all: .....
- 31.If your response to question 34 is, all the time /sometimes give an example of learning resource provided by partnership to support the learning of children.
- .....
- 32.Are support services secured for the children in your school by the partnerships?
- Agree.....
- Disagree.....
- I am not sure.....
- 33.If you agree, give example of services secured through partnerships for children
- .....
- 34.Do parents and teachers routinely meet to review the learning of both normal and disabled children in the school?
- (a) Agree.....
- (b) Disagree .....
- (c) Not at all: .....

35. If your response to question 36 is yes, how often do teachers and parents meet to review the learning of their children in the school?
- (a) Once a year.....
  - (b) Twice a year.....
  - (c) Thrice a year.....
  - (d) More than three (3) times a year:.....

36. From your observations, does the school implement the decisions made collectively with parents on the learning of both normal and disabled children in the school?
- (a) All the time:.....
  - (b) Sometimes:.....
  - (b) Never at all .....

36. Rate the following indicators of value attached to the community and school linkage on the learning of children with and without disabilities. (Rate items by ticking (✓) in the appropriate box: 1 = Poor; 2 = Unsatisfactory; 3 = Satisfactory; 4 = Good; 5 = Very good; 6 = Excellent).

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6
Availability and relevance of instructional resources to support children's learning						
Presence of learner friendly infrastructure and furniture for children						
Existence of an effective collaboration between On the learning of children in the school.						
High level of awareness on learning needs of children in the school.						
Existence of a multi-disciplinary team to support the learning of children's learning						
More parental involvement in decision making process on the learning of pupils in school						

37. Are there varieties in communication strategies used in sharing experiences, information and concerns over the children's learning?
- (a) Agree .....
  - (b) Disagree.....
  - (c) I am not sure.....

39. Give examples of communication strategies used to share experiences and concerns over the learning of children in the partnerships

.....

38. Do the current communication strategies provide opportunities for parents and teachers to learn from each other on learning of a children exist in the school?
- (a) All the time: .....

(b) Some times:.....

(c ) Not at all: .....

39. In your view, do the parents and teachers trust each other, have common motives, share set objectives and communicate regularly on the learning of children? Why do you think so?

(a) poor .....

(b) Fair .....

(c ) Good.....

(d) Very good.....

40. If your response to the question above, is, “poor or fair” what factors have contributed to this situation?.....

**Thank you for your cooperation**

## **Appendix II: Interview Guide for Parents**

1. Where is the school located in the district?
2. What is your gender?
3. How old are you?
4. Is your child learning in this school without or with a disability?
5. How was your child selected for enrollment into this school?
6. Where you as a parent, involved in the identification and placement your child?
7. If Yes, what role did you play in the identification and placement of your child?
8. If No, why were you not involved in the identification and placement process in the school?
9. Should the community and school work together in partnership in the learning of children with and without disabilities in same classrooms and schools?
10. If your response in question 8 is, Strongly Disagree / Disagree, what reason would you give for your response
11. If your response in question 8 is, Strongly Agree / Agree, what reason would you give for your response?
12. Do you think it is necessary for the school to involve parents in the learning of children?
13. If your response in question 12 is, Sometimes / Always, give a reason why parents are be involved in the learning of their children?
14. If your response in question 12, is Not at all, give a reason why parents are not involved in the learning of the children?
15. From your experience in the school, do parents and teachers perceive parental involvement in partnerships as being essential in the learning of children in same classrooms and schools?
16. In your opinion as a parent, are the goals and objectives of educating children with and without disabilities in the same classrooms and schools being met by the partnerships?
16. If your response in question 17 is, Yes what reason would you give for your response to question 16?
17. If your response in question 17 is No, what reason would you give for your response?

18. From your experience through working with the school, does a non-blaming, no fault finding, problem-solving atmosphere in the partnership in the learning of children in same school exist?
19. If your response to question 18 is, in Sometimes, but not always in which area of the partnerships does the community and school mainly work together to promote the learning of children?
20. Does the partnership attempt to understand and accommodate ideas, suggestions and concerns of parents over the learning of children in same classrooms and schools?
21. In which ways does the partnership in your school invite parents to participate in the solving of learning problems of children?
22. Rate the following indicators of value attached to the community and school linkage on the learning of children with and without disabilities. (Rate items by ticking (✓) in the appropriate box: 1 = Poor; 2 = Unsatisfactory; 3 = Satisfactory; 4 = Good; 5 = Very good; 6 = Excellent).

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6
Availability and relevance of instructional resources to support children's learning						
Presence of learner friendly infrastructure and furniture for children						
Existence of an effective collaboration between on the learning of children in the school.						
High level of awareness on learning needs of children in the school.						
Existence of a multi-disciplinary team to support the learning of children's learning						
More parental involvement in decision making process on the learning of pupils in school						

41. Does the school have a vision, mission and values which are relevant and supportive to partnership activities? If so can you cite your school mission you think is relevant to partnership?
23. If your response in question 23 is, always or Some times, what would you say is an example of existence of such?
24. Does the school have policies and practices which accommodate the views, suggestions and concerns of the parents and teachers? If you agree can you cite some of your school policies?
25. Does your partnership with parents provide learning resources for the children? Give examples.
26. Basing on your experience in the school, do parents and teachers recognize and appreciate the importance of each other within the community and school relationship?

27. In your opinion, does a more welcoming, respectful, responsive and accommodative atmosphere exist in the school for parents and teachers to work together?
28. Give an example of a support service provided to the school through partnership?
29. Are there variations in communication strategies used by partnerships to share experiences over the learning of children?
30. Do the existing communication strategies provide opportunities for parents and teachers to participate in the works of the partnerships?
31. Give examples of communication strategies employed by the partnerships to ensure a shared responsibility in the learning of children.
32. In your views, what factors have led to the mistrust and disrespectiveness among partners in the partnerships in schools practising inclusive education?

**Thank you for your cooperation**

### **Appendix III: Interview Schedule for Head Teachers**

1. Where is your school located? Is it rural, peri-urban or urban?
2. What is your gender?
3. How old are you?
4. What is your highest qualification?
  - (a) In regular teaching
  - (b) In inclusive /special education
5. How long have you been teaching/ administering school (in years)?
  - (a) In regular teaching
  - (b) ( b) In inclusive / Special Education
  - (c) Administration in a mixed school (disabled and normal children)
6. Can you provide number of pupils in your school by gender?
7. How many of these are disabled by gender?
8. From your experience, which disability group forms the majority of children with disabilities enrolled together in your school?
9. Why does the school seem to have more of this disability group than other disability groups?
10. Should the community and school work together in partnership in the learning of children with and without disabilities in same classrooms and schools?
11. If your response in question 8 is, Strongly Disagree / Disagree, what reason would you give for your response
12. If your response in question 8 is, Strongly Agree / Agree, what reason would you give for your response?
13. Do you think it is necessary for the school to involve parents in the learning of children?
14. If your response in question 12 is, Sometimes / Always, give a reason why parents are be involved in the learning of their children?
15. If your response in question 12, is Not at all, give a reason why parents are not involved in the learning of the children?

16. From your experience in the school, do parents and teachers perceive parental involvement in partnerships as being essential in the learning of children in same classrooms and schools?
17. In your opinion as a parent, are the goals and objectives of educating children with and without disabilities in the same classrooms and schools being met by the partnerships?
16. If your response in question 17 is, Yes what reason would you give for your response to question 16?
18. If your response in question 17 is No, what reason would you give for your response?
19. From your experience through working with the school, does a non–blaming, no fault finding, problem-solving atmosphere in the partnership in the learning of children in same school exist?
20. If your response to question 18 is, in Sometimes, but not always in which area of the partnerships does the community and school mainly work together to promote the learning of children?
21. Does the partnership attempt to understand and accommodate ideas, suggestions and concerns of parents over the learning of children in same classrooms and schools?
22. In which ways does the partnership in your school invite parents to participate in the solving of learning problems of children?
23. Rate the following indicators of value attached to the community and school linkage on the learning of children with and without disabilities. (*Rate items by ticking (✓) in the appropriate box: 1 = Poor; 2 = Unsatisfactory; 3 = Satisfactory; 4 = Good; 5 = Very good; 6 = Excellent*).

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6
Availability and relevance of instructional resources to support children's learning						
Presence of learner friendly infrastructure and furniture for children						
Existence of an effective collaboration between on the learning of children in the school.						
High level of awareness on learning needs of children in the school.						
Existence of a multi-disciplinary team to support the learning of children's learning						
More parental involvement in decision making process on the learning of pupils in school						

- 23 Does the school have a vision, mission and values which are relevant and supportive to partnership activities? If so can you cite your school mission you think is relevant to partnership?
24. If your response in question 23 is, always or Some times, what would you say is an example of existence of such?
25. Does the school have policies and practices which accommodate the views, suggestions and concerns of the parents and teachers? If you agree can you cite some of your school policies?
26. Does your partnership with parents provide learning resources for the children? Give examples.
27. Basing on your experience in the school, do parents and teachers recognize and appreciate the importance of each other within the community and school relationship?
28. In your opinion, does a more welcoming, respectful, responsive and accommodative atmosphere exists in the school for parents and teachers to work together?
29. Give an example of a support service provided to the school through partnership?
30. Are there variations in communication strategies used by partnerships to share experiences over the learning of children?
31. Do the existing communication strategies provide opportunities for parents and teachers to participate in the works of the partnerships?
32. Give examples of communication strategies employed by the partnerships to ensure a shared responsibility in the learning of children.
33. In your views, what factors have led to the mistrust and disrespectiveness among partners in the partnerships in schools practising inclusive education?

**Thank you for your cooperation**

## Appendix IV: Summary of Teachers' Qualitative responses

1. *Why communities and schools agree to work together on the learning needs of abled and disabled children in mainstream schools*
  - a. Purpose of sharing knowledge, skills, and experiences on children's learning needs and solutions in mainstream school.
  - b. Through collaboration providing educational aids and appliances
  - c. Give baseline information on children's learning needs and potentials to guide teaching and learning process
  - d. Strengthen community mobilisation and early detection of children with learning and developmental needs
  - e. Create opportunities of understanding and appreciating each other's contributions towards children's learning.
  - f. Removal of academic and architectural barriers in the school system
  - g. No response items

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2. *Why communities and schools do not agree to work together on the learning of abled and disabled children in mainstream schools.*
  - a. Mistrust between parents and educators on the learning of children in the schools.
  - b. Personalisation of issues by parents and educators on the learning of children in the schools
  - c. Limited knowledge on the role of parents on the learning of children in the Schools.
  - d. Its government's responsibility through free education policy to provide for all children.
  - e. Parents value less, don't support nor care the learning of their children in schools
  - f. No response items
3. *Why parents are involved in the learning of differently abled and abled children in the school.*
  - a) Help to familiarized themselves with how differently abled and abled children learn in mainstream schools.
  - b) Share knowledge and experiences as 1<sup>st</sup> teachers on the learning and development of children in the schools.
  - c) Collectively monitor the progress of their children in the schools.
    - (d) Help to reinforce/improve social and academic performance of children by supervising homework, resources.
    - (e) Minimise architectural barriers in the schools
    - (f) No response item

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4. *Why parents are not involved in the learning of both disabled and abled children in the school.* Parents think its government responsibility to provide for all children in the schools.
  - a. Parents are ignorant of their own children's learning and development.
  - b. Educators feel they are more than competent to handle differently abled and abled children in mainstream schools.
  - c. No response item

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5. *Areas of collaboration perceived by teachers in the learning of differently abled and disabled children in mainstream schools.*

- a) Regular review of learning programmes and activities for all children in the school.
- b) Creation of a conducive learning environment for all children in the school i.e.: mobilising up – fronts; rehabilitation works.
- c) Localisation of school curriculum to meet the learning needs of all children in the school.eg guidance, organizing games, parents teaching crafts and home economics topics
- d) Collective monitoring and evaluation of all children’s learning i.e.: home-work policy; family pacs; inviting of parents to visit school.
- e) Providing vocational skills training to all children i.e.: crafts; weaving; cookery; needle work; carpentry
- f) Collective control of discipline and behavior of children in school.
- g) Provision of learning resources to all children regardless of their disabilities
- h) No response items

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6. *Reasons for teachers not perceiving collaboration in the learning of the children as being essential in the school,*

- a) educators perceive parents as being ignorant on the learning of their children.
- b) lack of sensitization on the learning of differently and abled children in mainstream schooling.
- c) parents feel that teachers are competent enough to deal with all children’ learning problems in the schools.
- d) no response items

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7. *Indicators of the existence of positive attitude and focus on strength rather than weaknesses in children’s learning*

- a) presence of a more sensitive and accommodative learning environment and experiences in the school.
- b) regular financial, moral, mobility and material support by the partnership to children in schools.
- c) regular invitation of parents to school ie: PTA meetings; open days; family pac; school and community fetes.
- d) active parental participation in home work policy; remedial work and other academic activities.
- (e) Promotion of positive attitudes towards learners among teachers and parents
- (f) Differently abled children allowed to do same thing as normal pupils in the school e.g.: sitting for same examinations.
- (g) no response items

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8. *Reasons for negative attitudes and unfocussed feelings about the learning of differently abled children.*

- a) influence of traditional myths on handicaps on the learning of differently abled and children in the schools.
- b) Mistrust among parents and teachers on the learning of children with diverse learning needs in mainstream schools.

- c) unfavourable atmosphere existing in the school on the learning of children.
- d) parents un knowledgeable on their roles on the learning of all children through mainstreaming.
- e) no response items

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9. *Indicators of attempts to understand and accommodate needs; ideas and opinion of the parents and community on the learning of all children.*

- a) frequent open days; family pacs; fetes held in the school i.e.: family pacs; reviewing children's performance.
- b) regular PTA meetings on children's learning.
- c) working together on school improvement initiatives and assessment of children.
- d) adequate and relevant learning resources for all children in the school i.e.: general and specialised resources and equipment.
- e) 6.Sharing children's learning problems.
- f) no response items.

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10. *Indicators of schools failing to understand and accommodate community's needs; ideas; and opinion on the learning of children in school.*

- a) lack of interest and desire to support the learning of children in the school.
- b) limited sensitisation opportunities on the learning of children in the school
- c) limited access to school by differently abled children in the community.
- d) irregular PTA meetings conducted in the school.
- e) irregular open days; family pacs held in the school.
- f) teachers' apprehension about having SEN children in mainstream classes schools
- g) rigidity in the school curriculum and architectural set up of the school.
- h) No response

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11. *Ways in which the community and school recognize the importance of each other on the learning of differently abled children in the school.*

- a) removal of academic and architectural barriers in the school for children to access learning.
- b) regular attendance of PTA/developmental meetings held in school.
- c) participation in school open days during which educators and parents exchange views and encourage children.
- d) participation in curriculum localisation initiatives in schools i.e.: vocational skills;
- e) free provision of baseline information on the learning of children in schools.
  - (g) common goals and objectives on children's learning and development
  - (h) Participation in family pacs over learning of children
  - (i) no response items.

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12. *Ways in which community and schools fail to recognize the significant of working together to resolve children learning problems.*

- a) irregular PTA meetings held on the learning of children in the schools
- b) failure to regularly attend open days and family pac gatherings.
- c) mistrusts among parents and educators on the learning of children.
- d) failure to participate in the implementation of projects and home work policy.

- a. 6. Too conflicting of ideas and opinions on how to solve children's learning problems
  - e) no response items.
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13. *Support services provided to differently abled children in the school.*

- a) Supply mobility appliances to needy children i.e.: wheel chairs; crutches; calipers; while canes;
  - b) medical and Physiotherapy services i.e.: child rehabilitation physiotherapy therapy and chemical therapy.
  - c) Social welfare services i.e.: bursaries to needy children – buying uniform; payment of school fees; learning materials.
  - d) participation in pre-vocational skill training ie: weaving; crafts; homework
  - e) assessment services i.e.: multi –disciplinary identification of learning needs among children in schools.
  - f) 7. Provision of support staff and learning resources to needy children
  - g) no response item
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14. *Learning resources supplied to the school for learning of all children.*

- a) General learning materials eg: text books; exercise books; manila papers; chalk, uniforms.
  - b) General learning equipment eg: radios; tapes; phones; photocopiers; type writers.
  - c) Specialized equipment eg: writing frames; perkins brailers; hearing aids; computers with speech mode; braille translators.
  - d) Specialized materials eg: braille papers; brailon papers;
  - e) No response item.
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15. *Examples of ways in which the partnerships listen and responds to concerns and suggestions on the learning of differently abled children.*

- a) regular PTA meetings held in school
  - b) Suggestion boxes displayed in strategic places in school.
  - c) parents visiting the school regularly
  - d) children allowed to learn without uniforms in more cases
  - e) open days conducted regularly
  - f) family pac sessions held regularly
  - g) Reports on children sent to parents
  - h) Increasing school development project
  - i) no response item
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## **Appendix V: Parents' Interview Responses – Summary**

1. *Why communities and schools do not agree to work together on the learning of differently abled children in mainstream schools.*

- a) because of mistrust between parents and educators on the learning of differently abled children in mainstream schools.
- b) too much personalisation of issues on the learning of children in mainstream schools.
- c) limited knowledge and experience on the role of parents in the learning of differently abled children among teachers.
- d) parents feel it's government's responsibility through free education policy to provide for children.
- e) parents value less the learning of their differently abled children.
- f) no response item

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2. *Why communities and schools agree to work together in the learning of differently abled and abled children in mainstream schools.*

- a) purpose of sharing experiences on children's learning.
- b) provision of educational aids and appliances for all children.
- c) give baseline information on children's conditions, learning potentials and concerns.
- d) strengthen community mobilisation and early detection of learning needs in children.
- e) creating opportunities of understanding and appreciating each other's contributions towards children's learning.
- f) removal of architectural barriers in mainstream schools.
- g) no response item.
- h) promoting the Right to Education for all children in the community.

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3. *Why communities are involved in the learning of differently children in mainstream schools.*

- a) help to familiarize themselves with children's learning through mainstream schools.
- b) remove mistrust among stakeholders on the learning of children through mainstream schooling
- c) purpose of sharing knowledge and experiences on how to make children with different learning needs learn together in mainstream schools.
- d) removal of architectural barriers in mainstream schools.
- e) help create confidence and self- esteem for differently abled children as they learn together with abled children in mainstream schools.
- f) strengthen community mobilization and early detection of learning problems in children
- g) no response item

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4. *Why parents are not involved in the learning of differently abled and abled children in mainstream schools.*

- a) believe that teachers are competent enough to deal with children's learning problems.
  - b) parents think its government's responsibility to provide support to children schools.
  - c) too much mistrust among stakeholders in the learning of differently abled and abled children through mainstream schools.
  - d) no response item
-

5. *Areas of collaboration perceived by parents in the learning of differently abled and abled children in mainstream schools.*
- a) planning with teachers children's learning programmes and activities.
  - b) removing architectural barriers in the schools to make it accessible to children.
  - c) securing educational aids and appliances for all children.
  - d) increasing the level of awareness among stakeholders in the learning needs of children.
  - e) participate in the localization of the school curriculum to meet learning needs of the children ie: teaching of practical subjects – crafts, weaving, cookery, need-work, carpentry.

- 
6. *Reasons for parents not collaborative with teachers in the learning of children.*
- a) ignorance among parents on their roles on the learning of children through.
  - b) lack of awareness on the learning needs of differently abled and abled children in mainstream schools.
  - c) parents believe that teachers are competent enough to deal with children's learning problems.
  - d) parents feel its government's responsibility to provide for children through the free education policy.

- 
7. *Indicators of the existence of a non-blaming, no-fault finding and rather problem stance on the operation of school-community partnership*
- a) high level of discipline among children in mainstream school
  - b) oriented and trained teachers and parents on the provision of education to children through mainstreaming
  - c) collective monitoring and evaluation of pupils' work
  - d) frequent PTA meetings to discuss children's learning
  - e) existence of a conducive learning environment in the mainstream school
  - f) no response item

- 
8. *Indicators of the existence of positive and focused attitudes on strength rather than weaknesses in children's learning*
- a) presence of a more sensitive and accommodative learning environment
  - b) baseline information on children's learning freely shared among stakeholders
  - c) regular invitation of parents to the school i.e.: PTA meetings, open days, family pacs and school fetes.
  - d) active parental participation in home work policy, remedial work activities
  - e) elements of togetherness i.e.: working with the community in most of the school businesses.
  - f) no response item

- 
9. *Support services provided to differently abled and abled children in the Schools*
- a) provide social welfare services ie: bursaries; uniforms; school fees to vulnerable children,
  - b) improve water and sanitary conditions for children enrolled
  - c) provide medical and physiotherapy rehabilitation services i.e.: child rehabilitation, physiotherapy and chemical therapy
  - d) supply mobility appliances to needy children
  - e) no response item
-

10. *Learning resources supplied to the school for the learning of children through the partnership*

- a) learning materials e.g.: textbooks, exercise books, pencil; pens, rules
  - b) learning equipment supplied include hearing aids; writing frames; computers; ordinary type writers; Braille translators and other provisions supplied through the partnerships
  - c) specialized and sports materials and equipment such as Braille paper; brailion papers ; balls with bells; nets etc
  - d) no response item
- 
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11. *Examples of ways in which the linkage listens and responds to concerns and suggestions on the learning of differently abled and abled children in the schools.*

- a) regular PTA meetings held in the school
  - b) suggestion boxes displayed in strategic places in mainstream schools
  - c) parents visiting the school regularly
  - d) collectively monitor and evaluating children's learning in mainstream schools
  - e) open days conducted regularly in mainstream schools
  - f) family pacs sessions held regularly in the mainstream schools
  - g) no response item
- 
-

## **Appendix VI: Head teachers' Responses – Summary**

1. *Location of the school*
  - Urban
  - Peri- urban
  - Rural
2. *Gender of respondents*
  - Male
  - Female
3. *Age of respondents:*
  - <24years and below
  - 25 – 29 years
  - 30 – 34 years
  - 35 – 39 years
  - 40 – 44 years
  - 45 – 49 years
  - <50 years
4. *Professional Qualifications*
  - Primary Teachers' Certificate
  - Secondary Teachers' diploma
  - University degree
  - Higher University Degree
  - Others; Specify
5. *Whether trained:*
  - Regular Education
  - Inclusive/Special Education
  - Both (Special/Regular)
6. *Length of service in years*
  - Less than 1 year
  - 1 -3 years
  - 4 -6 years
  - 7 – 9 years
  - 10 or more years
7. *Types of disability groups included in the study schools*
  - Emotional and Behavioural problems
  - Hearing impairments
  - Hard of hearing
  - Learning disabilities
  - Mild mentally retarded
  - Moderately mentally retarded
  - Partially Sighted (Low Vision)
  - Totally blind
  - Physically Impaired
  - Gifted Children
  - Others – specify
8. *Whether schools and communities should work together in the promotion learning programmes and support to abled and disabled children*

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Strongly disagree  
Disagree  
Not sure

9. *Reasons why communities and schools agree to work together on the learning needs of Abled and disabled children in mainstream schools*
- purpose of sharing knowledge, skills, experiences on children's learning needs and solutions.
  - through collaboration providing educational aids and appliances
  - give baseline information on children's learning needs and potentials to guide teaching and learning process
  - strengthen community mobilisation and early detection of children with learning and developmental needs
  - create opportunities for acceptance, understanding and appreciating of able and disabled children and parents' and teachers' contributions to learning.
  - removal of academic and architectural barriers in the school system
  - no response items
- 
- 

10. *Reasons why communities and schools do not agree to work together on the learning of abled and disabled children in mainstream schools*
- mistrust between parents and educators on the learning of children.
  - personalization of issues by parents and educators on the learning of children
  - limited knowledge on the role of parents on the learning of children
  - its government's responsibility through free education policy to provide for children.
  - parents value less, don't support nor care the learning of their children
  - no response items

- 
- 
11. Whether parents see their involvement in children's learning as being significant
- Agree  
Disagree  
I am not sure

12. *Reasons why parents feel be involved in the learning of differently children in feel sense of belonging*
- help to familiarised themselves with how differently abled and abled children learn in the mainstream schools and develop a sense of belonging
  - share knowledge and experiences as 1<sup>st</sup> teachers on the learning and development of children
  - collectively monitor the progress of their children
  - Help to reinforce/improve social and academic performance of children by supervising homework, learning resources.
    - Minimise architectural barriers in the schools Participate in decision-making process on children's learning
  - no response item

- 
- 
13. *Reasons why parents feel be not involved in the learning of both disabled and abled children*

- a) parents think its government responsibility to provide for all children including disabled in the schools hence are pushed to do things in schools
  - b) parents are ignorant of their own children's learning and development.
  - c) educators feel they are more than competent to handle differently abled and abled children in mainstream schools.
  - d) no response item
14. *Whether goals /objectives of inclusion are being met in the schools*  
 Agree  
 Disagree  
 I am not sure
15. *Indicators of the existence of positive attitude and focus on strength rather than weaknesses in children's learning in the school.*
- a) presence of a more sensitive and accommodative learning environment and experiences in the school.
  - b) regular financial, moral, mobility and material support by the partnership to the learning of all children in schools.
  - c) regular inviting of parents to school i.e.: PTA meetings; open days; family pac; school and community fetes.
  - d) active parental participation in recruitment, home work policy; remedial work and other academic activities.
  - e) Promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled learners among teachers and parents
  - f) Disabled children to be allowed to do same thing as normal pupils in the school e.g.: sitting for same examinations for purpose of acceptance in communities.
  - g) Regular reporting on pupils' progress in school e.g. in homework, tests etc
  - h) no response items
16. *Indicators of existence of negative attitude and lack of focus on strengths of children*
- a) low enrolment of SEN children in mainstream schools
  - b) lack of support in learning aids/assistive services e.g. stress management etc
  - c) failure to attend PTA meetings
  - d) Negative attitude towards children's learning
  - e) Poor physical infrastructures in the schools
  - f) Ignorant of educational and social services available on the learning of the disabled
17. *Description of the relationship between community and school on the learning of differently abled children.*
- a) irremoval of academic and architectural barriers for children to access the school curriculum
  - b) irregular attendance of PTA/developmental meetings held
  - c) participation open days during which educators and parents exchange views and encourage children.
  - d) Refusing to participate in curriculum localisation initiatives i.e.: vocational skills;
  - e) free provision of baseline information, cordial relationships in the learning of children
  - f) o) Have common goals and objectives on children's learning and development
  - g) high level of participation in family pacs over learning of children

18. *Areas of collaboration perceived by head-teachers in the learning of differently abled children in mainstream schools*
- a) regular review of learning programmes and activities for children
  - b) creation of a conducive learning environment for children i.e.: mobilising up – fronts; rehabilitation works.
  - c) localisation of school curriculum to meet the learning needs of children in the school.eg guidance, organizing games, parents teaching crafts and home economics topics
  - d) collective monitoring and evaluation of all children’s learning i.e.: home work policy; family pacs; inviting of parents to visit school.
  - e) providing vocational skills training to all children i.e.: music; crafts; weaving; knitting; cookery; needle work; carpentry
  - f) provide security (e.g.: employ watchmen),collectively control discipline and behavior of children in school.
  - g) 8.sourcing learning resources, uniforms, books, parents, mobility appliances to all children regardless of their disabilities
  - h) no response items
  - i) No evidence of parental/teacher collective decision and mutual relationships in schools
19. Rating of the areas of focus on partnerships using the following levels of significance:  
*1= Less significant*  
*2=Significant*  
*3=Very significant*  
*4=Excellent*
- a) Creation of a least restrictive learning environment,
  - b) Community awareness and sensitization on disabled and normal children’s learning through same schools,
  - c) Securing of learning equipment and material for children enrolled in the schools,
  - d) Provision of multi-disciplinary support services to children
  - e) Promotion of home based learning for children needing additional learning and support services
20. *Whether the school understands and accommodates needs, ideas and opinions of parents and community on the learning of children*  
 Agree  
 Disagree  
 I am not sure
21. *Indicators of attempts to understand and accommodate needs; ideas and opinion of the community on the learning of children*
- a) frequent open days; family pacs; fetes held in the school i.e.: family pacs; reviewing children’s performance
  - b) regular PTA meetings sourcing funds to support children’s learning
  - c) Agree to working together on securing rooms, school improvement initiatives assessment and teaching of children
  - d) adequate and relevant learning resources for children i.e.: general and specialised resources and equipment.

- e) Exemption of children with disabilities from paying school fees and other forms of school requirements
- f) Allowing and monitoring children with disabilities to learn with others in mainstream schools
- g) no response items

22. *Indicators of school's failing to understand and accommodate community's needs; ideas; and opinion on children's' learning*

- a) lack of interest and desire to support the learning of children
- b) limited sensitisation opportunities on the learning of children
- c) limited access to school by differently abled children in the community.
- d) .irregular PTA meetings conducted
- e) .irregular open days; family pacs held
- f) .Parents and teachers' apprehension about having SEN children

23. *Ways in which parents and teachers share their experiences, visions and expectations on the learning of both abled and disabled children in a regular school setting*

- a) regular PTA meetings to discuss issues on the learning of children
- b) collectively design and implement IEPs for children with learning

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c) sourcing learning materials for both learners with special needs and those without special needs

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- d) irregular attendance of PTA meetings discussing children's learning problems
- e) witnessing and reviewing learning programmes

24. *Whether parents and teachers recognize and appreciate the importance of each other in the school and community partnerships*

- Agree
- Disagree
- I am not sure

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27. *Indicators of attempts to recognize and appreciate the importance of each other in the school and community partnerships.*

- a) frequent open days; family pacs; fetes held in the school i.e.: family pacs; reviewing children's performance
- b) good turn at public gatherings such as regular PTA and open day meetings on children's learning
- c) accommodating suggestions on school improvement initiatives and assessment of children
- d) adequate and relevant learning resources e.g. books, pens
- e) School visits to sharing children's learning problems, finding solution and implementing them.
- f) Identifying children with disabilities and reporting them to schools for placement and support

28. *Indicators of failures to recognise and appreciate the importance of each other in the school and community partnerships*

- a) Refusing to work together on learning problems and concerns of children e.g.: not participating in homework; assessment etc.
- b) Irregular attendance of school meetings on the learning of children

- c) Insufficient learning resources for both abled and disabled learners in the school
- d) Too many infrastructural barriers for learners in the school

29. *Whether a more welcoming, responsive and accommodative atmosphere exists in the school and community partnership.*

- Agree
- Disagree
- I am not sure

30. *Indicators of existence of welcoming responsive and accommodative atmosphere for partnerships to operative effectively.*

- a) parents values sharing experiences on the learning of their children
- b) parents contribute to curriculum adaptation and implementation in the school
- c) parents freely participate in the improvement of learning environment in the school
- d) parents from time to time visiting the school to see how pupils learn

31. *Whether the school had a mission/statement promoting importance and functioning of the partnerships in the school,*

- Agree
- Disagree
- I am not sure

32. *Reasons for having a mission / statement on the learning of abled and disabled children*

- a) provide guidance, acceptance and accommodate learners with diverse needs
- b) Raising level of awareness and sensitization on the learning need of children
- c) ensure provision of access and quality of education to both abled and disabled children

- 
- 
- e) promoting understanding and appreciation of each others (teachers and parents) contributions on the learning of children in the school
  - f) its a matter of promoting rights of the disabled children.
- 
- 

33. *Whether school had policies and practices aimed at supporting working together on the learning of abled and disabled children*

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- I am not sure

34. *Reasons for having policies and supporting working together on learning of abled and disabled children*

- a) increased participation of both teachers and parents in the learning disabled and abled children
- b) raising level of awareness and sensitisation on the children's learning
- c) providing guidance on quality of learning required of children
- d) reduce educational injustices
- e) equalization of educational opportunities for all children in the school
- f) consolidation of work relationships with the partnership in the school

35. *Whether parents and teachers routinely meet to review the operations of the school and community partnerships in schools.*

Yes

No

I am not sure

36. *If yes, how often do they meet to review operations of the partnerships on the learning of blind and disabled children?*

Once a year

Twice a year

Thrice a year

More than 3 times a year

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37. *Whether the school and community partnerships provide support services and learning resources aid learning in the school.*

Agree

Disagree

I am not sure

38. *Support services provided to differently abled and abled children in the school.*

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- a) Supply mobility appliances to children in need i.e.: wheel chairs; crutches; calipers; while canes;
  - b) medical and Physiotherapy services i.e.: child rehabilitation physiotherapy therapy and chemical therapy.
  - c) Social welfare services i.e.: bursaries to needy children – buying uniform; payment of school fees; learning materials.
  - d) participation in vocational skill training i.e.: weaving; crafts; homework
  - e) assessment services i.e.: multi-disciplinary identification of learning needs among children in schools.
  - f) 7. Provision of support staff and learning resources
  - g) 8. presence of user friendly infrastructure in the school e.g. installation of ramps, rails, wide doors
  - h) etc to facilitate mobility
  - i) no response item
- 
- 

39. *Learning resources and environment supplied to children for their learning.*

- a) General learning materials e.g.: text books; exercise books; manila papers; chalk, uniforms.
- b) Learning materials and equipment for ADL e.g. soaps; tooth paste; toys; polish; cobra etc
- c) Specialised equipment e.g.: writing frames; perkins brailers; hearing aids; computers with speech mode; braille translators.
- d) Specialised materials e.g.: braille papers; brailon papers;
- e) no response item.
- f) free learning environment for both abled and disabled children

40. *Whether the school implements decisions made collectively with parents within the partnerships in the schools*

Agree

Disagree  
I am not sure

41. Rating the following aspects as *signs of value attached to the community and school linkage* on the learning of both disabled and normal children in this school.

Poor  
Unsatisfactory  
Satisfactory  
Good  
Very good  
Excellent.

42. *Communication Strategies schools use in sharing experiences and concerns with communities on the learning of abled and disabled children in the schools*

a) Through PTA meetings

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b) schools hosting open days and family Pacts where learning problems of children are shared,

c) Allowing parents to freely visit school and classrooms to discuss children learning concerns with teachers

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d) working together with the school to reduce infrastructural barriers by conducting orientation and sensitization meetings with parents on the learning of children including those living with disabilities.

f) teachers making home visits to discuss academic and social problems of children in the school including those living with disabilities.

g) using of suggestion boxes for parents and the community to share their concerns on learning of children

h) using phones to communicate to parents/ teachers for the purpose of sharing progress and concerns on children's learning

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43. *Whether partnerships vary communication strategies with parents on the learning of children in the schools.*

Agree  
Disagree  
I am no sure

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44. *Whether a mechanism for listening to and responding to concerns and suggestions on learning abled and disabled children.*

Agree  
Disagree  
I am not sure

45. *Examples of ways in which the linkage listens and responds to concerns and suggestions on the learning of differently abled and abled children*

a) regular PTA meetings held in school within development projects

b) suggestion boxes displayed in strategic places in school.

c) parents visiting the school regularly

d) children allowed to learn without uniforms in most cases

e) open days conducted regularly in schools

f) family pac sessions held regularly in schools

g) Supporting initiatives in the securing of mobility aids and specialized equipment for children with disabilities included in the regular schools.

46. *Extent to which the school and community trust/mistrust each other within the promotion of the partnership in the school*  
(a) Poor (b) Fair (c) Good (d ) very good

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## Appendix VII: Chi - Square (Pearson's): Descriptive Results for Quantitative Data

- (i) Children with and without disabilities enrolled in the schools should continue receiving education together in regular classroom /schools,

	$\chi^2$ obs	df	Asymp. Sig. (2 –side)	$\chi^2$ crit.	Meaning
Teachers	6.85	6	.334	12.59	Ho not rejected
Parents	10.803	6	.095	12.59	Ho not rejected
Head teachers	6.103	2	.047	5.99	Ho Rejected
Overall results: Teachers;			Ho not rejected	Parents:	Ho not rejected
Head teachers;			Ho Rejected		

- (ii) Parents were actively involved in the identification and placement of children with disabilities in regular schools

	$\chi^2$ obs	df	Asymp. Sig. (2 –side)	$\chi^2$ crit.	Meaning
Teachers	9.880	4	.912	9.49	Ho Rejected
Parents	2.865	4	.581	9.49	Ho not Rejected
Head teachers	3.180	2	.341	5.99	Ho not Rejected

Overall Results: Teachers; Ho Rejected; Parents; Ho not Rejected; Head teachers; Ho not Rejected

- (iii) Parents and teachers in different geographical areas of the district work together in promoting appropriate learning to children with and without disabilities in regular schools

	$\chi^2$ obs	df	Asymp. Sig. (2 –side)	$\chi^2$ crit.	Meaning
Teachers	16.869	8	.032	15.51	Ho Rejected
Parents	4.723	2	.094	5.99	Ho not Rejected
Head teachers	5.541	12	.937	21.03	Ho Rejected

Overall Results: Teachers; Ho Rejected Parents; Ho not Rejected Head teachers; Ho Rejected

5. Parents and teachers were in favour of collaborative relationships on the learning of children with and without disabilities in regular schools

	$\chi^2$ obs	df	Asymp. Sig. (2 –side)	$\chi^2$ crit.	Meaning
Teachers	5.055	8	.752	15.51	Ho not Rejected,
Parents	3.954	6	.683	12.59	Ho not Rejected,
Head teachers	5.541	12	.937	21.03	Ho not Rejected
Overall Results: Teachers; Ho not Rejected			Parents: Ho not Rejected	Head teachers;	Ho not Rejected

- (v) Parents and teachers see community involvement in educational activities as being essential for social and academic success of children with and without disabilities in the schools

	$\chi^2$ obs	df	Asymp. Sig. (2 –side)	$\chi^2$ crit.	Meaning
Teachers	15.609	4	.004	9.49	Ho Rejected
Parents	8.219	6	.223	12.59	Ho not Rejected
Head teachers	2.960	4	.223	9.49	Ho Not Rejected

Overall Results: Teachers; Ho Rejected Parents: Ho not Rejected Head teachers; Ho not Rejected

6. Goals and objectives of the parents and teachers collaborative relationships on the children's learning for children with and without disabilities were being partially met in schools practicing inclusive education

	$\chi^2$ obs	df	Asymp. Sig. (2 –side)	$\chi^2$ crit	Meaning
Teachers	4.897	6	.557		12.59 Ho not Rejected,
Parents	14.052	8	.080	15.51	Ho not Rejected
Head teachers	3.160	4	.531	9.49	Ho not Rejected
Overall Results:	Teachers; Ho not Rejected		Parents: Ho not Rejected		Head teachers; Ho not Rejected

- vii) Whether or not a more welcoming responsive and accommodative atmosphere existed in parents and teachers in resolving children's learning problems existed in the working together in inclusive schools

	$\chi^2$ obs	df	Asymp. Sig. (2 –side)	$\chi^2$ crit	Meaning
Teachers	14.676	6	.023	12.59	Ho not Rejected,
Parents	5.855	6	.442	12.59	Ho not Rejected
Head teachers	16.837	14	.265	23.68	Ho not Rejected
Overall Results:	Teachers; Ho rejected		Parents: Ho not rejected		Head teachers; Ho not Rejected

- viii) A non-blaming, no fault-finding and rather problem-solving atmosphere to facilitate in schools to deal with learning problems of children with and without disabilities in schools

	$\chi^2$ obs	df	Asymp. Sig. (2 –side)	$\chi^2$ crit	Meaning
Teachers	4.752	8	.783	15.51	Ho not rejected
Parents	15.869	8	.750	15.51	Ho rejected
Head teachers	15.368	8	.52	15.51	Ho not Rejected
Overall Results:	Teachers; Ho not Rejected		Parents: Ho Rejected		Head teachers; Ho not rejected

- ix) Schools' attempts to understand and accommodate ideas and opinions of parents and the community children's learning for children with and without disabilities in schools

	$\chi^2$ obs	df	Asymp. Sig. (2 –side)	$\chi^2$ crit	Meaning
Teachers	5.385	2	.068	5.99	Ho not Rejected
Parents	6.750	4	.345	9.49	Ho not Rejected
Head teachers	4.927	4	.295	9.49	Ho not Rejected
Overall Results:	Teachers; Ho not Rejected		Parents: Ho not Rejected		Head teachers; Ho not Rejected

- x) Parents and teachers recognise and appreciate the importance of each other in their attempt to resolve learning problems of children

	$\chi^2$ obs	df	Asymp. Sig. (2 –side)	$\chi^2$ crit	Meaning
Teachers	4.650	4	.325	9.49	Ho not Rejected
Parents	5.914	4	.206	9.49	Ho not Rejected
Head teachers	7.178	8	.518	15.51	Ho not rejected
Overall Results:	Teachers; Ho not Rejected		Parents: Ho not Rejected		Head teachers; Ho not Rejected

(xi) Schools had mission statements which were relevant to the operations and functioning of the school and community partnerships on the children's learning for children with and without disabilities in classrooms and schools

	$\chi^2$ obs	df	Asymp. Sig. (2 –side)	$\chi^2$ crit	Meaning
Teachers	4.695	4	.320	9.49	Ho not Rejected,
Parents	6.750	6	.345	12.59	Ho not Rejected,
Head teachers	7.175	8	.518	15.51	Ho not Rejected
Overall Results:	Teachers; Ho not Rejected			Parents: Ho not Rejected	Head teachers; Ho not Rejected

(xii) Schools had policies and practices which were supportive of the school and community partnerships on the children's learning for children with and without disabilities in schools

	$\chi^2$ obs	df	Asymp. Sig. (2 –side)	$\chi^2$ crit	Meaning
Teachers	10.15	4	.038	9.49	Ho Rejected
Parents	8.838	4	.065	9.49	Ho not Rejected
Head teachers	8.15	10	.550	18.31	Ho not Rejected
Overall Results:	Teachers; Ho Rejected			Parents: Ho not Rejected	Head teachers; Ho not Rejected

(xiii) Learning Resources were provided by the school and community partnerships to support children with and those without disabilities in regular classrooms

	$\chi^2$ obs	df	Asymp. Sig. (2 –side)	$\chi^2$ crit	Meaning
Teachers	1.208	4	.877	9.49	Ho not Rejected
Parents	13.731	6	.033	12.0	Ho Rejected
Head teachers	9.064	6	.170	12.59	Ho not Rejected
Overall Results:	Teachers; Ho Rejected			Parents: Ho not Rejected	Head teachers; Ho not Rejected

(xiv) Parents and teachers routinely meet to review the social and academic process of learners with and without disabilities in the study schools

	$\chi^2$ obs	df	Asymp. Sig. (2 –side)	$\chi^2$ crit	Meaning
Teachers	8.835	4	.934	9.49	Ho not Rejected
Parents	4.129	4	.389	9.49	Ho not Rejected
Head teachers	9.058	8	.337	5.51	Ho not Rejected
Overall Results:	Teachers; Ho not Rejected			parents: Ho not Rejected	Head teachers; Ho not Rejected

(xv) Frequency of meetings between parents and teachers aimed at reviewing children's social and academic progress, was adequate to provide s desired change in schools

	$\chi^2$ obs	df	Asymp. Sig. (2 –side)	$\chi^2$ crit	Meaning
Teachers	9.835	4	.934	9.49	Ho Rejected
Parents	16.114	12	.186	21.03	Ho not Rejected
Head teachers	9.58	8	.807	15.51	Ho not Rejected
Overall Results:	Teachers; Ho Rejected			parents: Ho not Rejected	Head teachers; Ho not Rejected

**(xvi)** Parents were actively involved in the decision-making process on the learning of children with and without disabilities in schools practicing inclusive education

	$\chi^2$ obs	df	Asymp. Sig. (2 –side)	$\chi^2$ crit	Meaning
Teachers	5.001	4	.287	9.49	Ho not Rejected
Parents	7.736	10	.655	18.31	Ho not Rejected
Head teachers	10.137	10	.429	18.31	Ho not Rejected

Overall Results: Teachers; Ho not Rejected Parents: Ho not Rejected Head teachers; Ho not Rejected

**(xvii)** There were variations in strategies used to share experiences and concerns on the learning of children in schools practicing inclusive education

	$\chi^2$ obs	df	Asymp. Sig. (2 –side)	$\chi^2$ crit	Meaning
Teachers	9.355	4	.053	9.49	Ho not Rejected,
Parents	9.551	4	.059	9.49	Ho Rejected
Head teachers	1.044	2	.593	5.99	Ho not Rejected

Overall Results: Teachers: Ho not rejected Parents: Ho rejected Head teachers; Ho not rejected

**(xviii)** The school and community partnerships provided sufficient opportunities for parents and teachers to build a shared responsibility towards in resolving social and academic problems of children in inclusive schools

	$\chi^2$ obs	df	Asymp. Sig. (2 –side)	$\chi^2$ crit	Meaning
Teachers	6.413	4	.170	9.49	Ho not Rejected
Parents	14.052	6	.080	12.59	Ho Rejected
Head teachers	15.608	10	.111	18.31	Ho not Rejected

Overall Results: Teachers: Ho not Rejected Parents: Ho Rejected Head teachers; Ho not Rejected

**(xix)** Parents and teachers trusted each other in their contributions towards solving social and academic problems of children with and without disabilities in schools

	$\chi^2$ obs	df	Asymp. Sig. (2 –side)	$\chi^2$ crit	Meaning
Teachers	9.502	8	.302	15.51	Ho not Rejected
Parents	6.912	4	.141	9.49	Ho not Rejected
Head teachers	9.846	4	.426	9.49	Ho not Rejected

Overall Results: Teachers; Ho not Rejected Parents: Ho not Rejected Head teachers; Ho not Rejected

**(xx)** Table 38: Parents and teachers had high expectations of the school and community partnership in its attempt to make inclusive education practices succeed in school

	$\chi^2$ obs	df	Asymp. Sig. (2 –side)	$\chi^2$ crit	Meaning
Teachers	11.890	4	.973	9.49	Ho Rejected
Parents	14.611	8	.553	15.51	Ho not Rejected
Head teachers	9.561	4	.964	9.49	Ho Rejected

Overall Results: Teachers; Ho Rejected Parents: Ho not Rejected Head teachers; Ho Rejected

**Appendix: VIII. Enrolment of Pupils in Schools Practising Inclusive Education  
By Gender**

Primary School	Males	Females	Totals
Musa	540	343	874
Nkole Urban	895	894	1,789
Musenga	193	324	517
Chanda- Mukulu	315	359	674
Mutoba	608	352	960
Nkole Mfumu	689	591	1,280
Mubanga Chipoya	704	792	1,496
Kateshi	451	305	756
Kasama Primary	1,402	1,321	2,723
Milenge	189	119	308
Lukashya	473	406	879
Chitambi	894	895	1,789
Kasenda	639	591	1,230
Munkonge	509	452	961
Malama	894	889	1,784
Lwabwe	416	227	643
Misamfu	938	743	1,681
Chiba	1,100	792	1,892
Soft Katongo	647	675	1,322
Lua Luo	818	644	1,462
Mwelwa	504	430	934
Kapongolo	1,017	835	1,852
Henry Kapata	463	297	760
Chifwani	735	810	1,545
Chafwa	751	575	1,306
Milungu	533	335	870
Chilubula	477	269	746
Misambo	235	169	404
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18,235</b>	<b>15,209</b>	<b>33,444</b>

Source: MoESVTEE (2013). Educational Statistical Bulletin, Planning Unit, Lusaka,

**Appendix IX: Enrolment of Pupils with Disabilities in Primary Schools Practicing Inclusive Education by Gender**

Primary School	Boys	Girls	Totals
Musa	40	22	62
Nkole Urban	28	47	75
Musenga	27	24	51
Chanda-Mukulu	38	49	87
Mutoba	73	61	134
Nkole Mfumu	69	98	167
Mubanga Chipoya	87	91	178
Kateshi	14	12	30
Kasama Prim	96	83	179
Milenge	33	15	48
Lukashya	58	65	123
Chitambi	26	29	55
Kasenda	118	73	191
Munkonge	36	23	59
Malama	39	31	70
Lwabwe	31	45	76
Misamfu	22	20	42
Chiba	14	18	32
Soft Katongo	101	67	168
Lua Luo	55	49	120
Mwelwa	85	65	150
Kapongolo	81	63	144
Henry Kapata	39	26	65
Chifwani	27	16	43
Chafwa	66	32	98
Milungu	38	24	62
Chilubula	18	21	39
Misambo	15	06	21
Totals	1, 464	1, 175	2, 639

Source: MoESVTEE (2013). Educational Statistical Bulletin, Planning Unit, Lusaka,