

**PROVISION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TO CHILDREN WITH
SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN SELECTED INCLUSIVE PRIMARY SCHOOLS
OF KABWE DISTRICT, ZAMBIA**

BY

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**A dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Special Education**

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Lusaka

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DECLARATION

I declare that the work presented in this dissertation entitled "Provision of Early Childhood Education to Children with Special Educational Needs in Selected Inclusive primary Schools of Kabwe District, Zambia" is to the best of my knowledge and my own work and that it is original. The dissertation contains no material that has been accepted for an award degree or diploma by the University of Zambia or any other institution. All the works that are not mine have been acknowledged.

Signed: T Mulunda

Date: 7/12/17


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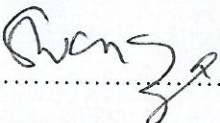
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ABSTRACT

Early Child Education (ECE) is important because it provides early experiences in the development of the child's social, physical, cognitive, creative, moral and emotional capabilities and tends to have a long and lasting impact on the child in the later years. To this effect, this study sought to investigate the provision of early ECE to children with special educational needs (CSEN) in six selected primary schools in Kabwe District. The objectives of the study were to: investigate the availability of ECE for children with special educational needs, establish the benefits of ECE to children with special educational needs, ascertain the challenges faced in the provision of ECE to children with special educational needs and to establish the measures that have been put in place to overcome challenges faced by inclusive ECE centres in selected primary schools in Kabwe District.

Qualitative approach and a descriptive research design were employed in the study. A sample of 25 participants was drawn from six selected schools. The sample comprised of 1 Standard Officer of Special Education (ESO-SP.ED), 6 head teachers, 12 ECE teachers and 6 parents and was purposively drawn from the six selected primary schools in Kabwe District. Un-structured questionnaires, face-face interviews and observation checklist were used to collect data from the participants and the data was analysed thematically based on the themes that emerged in the study.

The findings of the study revealed that inclusive ECE programmes were being implemented in the six visited primary schools which had opened ECE centres. The numbers of learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN) were very minimal, ranging from mild to moderate challenges. Further, the study revealed the following benefits of inclusive ECE; CSEN were exposed to an early learning which smoothened the transition to grade one, early experiences improved academic outcomes, inclusion brought different families with CSEN together and amplifies children's' social, physical and cognitive abilities. Challenges identified were; Lack of friendly infrastructure, over enrolment, lack of trained specialised teachers, and inadequate awareness on inclusive education, unsuitable play grounds, inadequate materials and erratic funding.

Measures that have been put in place to overcome the challenges faced by inclusive ECE were; fundraising ventures, sensitization of the community on inclusive ECE, teachers attending workshops on inclusive education, holding continuous professional development meetings and involving parents in school activities and training teachers in special education. The study recommended that the government should increase budgetary allocations towards ECE, more sensitization on inclusive education, more parental involvement in school activities and train all teachers in special education for inclusion to be a success.

DEDICATION

This report is dedicated to my family (Mulunda family) for all the support rendered to me during the time of my studies at the University of Zambia.

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ACRONYMS

| | |
|------------------|---|
| CPD | Continuous Professional Development |
| CRC | Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| CSEN | Children with Educational Special Needs |
| DEBS | District Education Board Secretary |
| ECE | Early Childhood Education |
| ESO-SP.ED | Education Standards Officer for Special Education |
| GRZ | Government of the Republic of Zambia |
| MESVTEE | Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education |
| MOE | Ministry of Education |
| PWD | People with Disabilities |
| SEN | Special Educational Needs |
| SNDP | Sixth National Development Plan |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNZA | University of Zambia |
| WHO | World Health Organization |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background to the study, the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, and questions, significance of the study, delimitation, limitation and theoretical framework as well as definitions of operational terms.

1.1 Background to the Study

Early Childhood Education (ECE) has in recent years become a critical area of focus owing to the global recognition of the importance of early years. Early years in life are globally accepted as the most important period during which all children including those with special educational needs experience numerous developments such as; cognitive, perceptual, language, socio-emotional and motor development which are very useful for their achievement and social functioning. There is convincing evidence suggesting that skills acquired early in life facilitate the acquisition of more sophisticated skills for later application in school (Duncan and Murnane, 2016). At school entry, children who have passed through ECE will have a set of skills determined by interaction between their own endowment (genetic), and the quality of interactions of the experiences in the home and child-care settings that support school readiness (Deguzman, Doniza, Sabio, and Teressa, 2010).

Generally, ECE is aimed at promoting holistic development in all children from birth to the age of 8. According to MoE (1996), ECE is an organised form of educational provision for children between the ages of three and six. Olowe, Katelu and Majebi (2014) defines ECE as any group program that is designed to promote children's intellectual, socio-emotional, language, physical and learning from birth to the age of 8. McDowell (2013) describes ECE as a branch of education theory which relates to the teaching of young children (formally and informally) up to the age of about eight. This is the period from pre-natal development to eight years of age and a very crucial phase of growth and development because experiences during early childhood can influence outcomes across the entire course of an individual's life. Sooter (2013) agreed with Mahuta (2007) by stating that the aim of ECE include fostering proper development of children, identifying and addressing their problems, harnessing their potentials, building their characters, enhancing their learning and equipping them for life so that their actions are channelled towards

positive personal, communal and global development. For all children, early childhood provides an important window or opportunity to prepare the foundation for life-long learning and participation, while preventing potential delays in development and disability. It is a vital time to ensure access to intervention which can help them reach their full potential (WHO, 2012). It is very important to note that all ECE program and activities are tailored towards giving early positive experiences to all children.

The importance of early education is widely acclaimed in various international documents and developmental goals such as UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Millennium Development Goals, (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) goals among others. The Zambian government is among the member states that ratified goals contained in these documents.

Therefore, the rights of children with disabilities to develop their potential have equally become a worldwide concern reflected in a number of worlds' conventions. This is because of the right to Education for All, which includes children with special educational needs. This struggle for achieving education for all was for the first time recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948). Through this declaration and other various international conventions, all states with few exceptions are signatories and thus committed to resolutions that in different ways secure rights protect the peoples of the state, their resources and their voices, regardless of traits such as race, religion, gender, health or age. Education as a right for all is stated in Article 26 of the 1948 Human Rights Declaration as follows

Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory..... Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace (UN, 1948: 26).

The stated article is one of the oldest international conventions for achieving basic education for all children, including those with disabilities. The following are some of the world's declarations which clearly state the goals to provide education for all children. The rights to education for

persons with disabilities were also stated in the rules set by the UN General Assembly in 1993. These rules are also called the Standard Rules of Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (UN, 1993). The focus of including persons with disabilities is clearly emphasized. A very good example is rule number 6 which states the following concerning inclusive education;

States should recognize the principle of equal primary, secondary and tertiary educational opportunities for children, youths and adults with disabilities, in the integrated settings. They should ensure that the education of persons with disabilities is an integral part of the education system (UN, 1993).

The convention of the Rights of persons with disabilities held on 30th March, 2007 is another declaration which explicitly discusses inclusiveness in education. This is evident in article 24 which states that;

State Parties should recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing the right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunities, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels of education (UN, 2007:24).

Due to the important issues enshrined in these articles, the United Nation's mandate brought inclusion into a wide moral framework as it touched the lives of every individual in the world. It was from this idea that five years after it was written, in June 1994, representatives of 92 governments and 25 International Organizations formed the World Conference on Special Needs Education, held in Salamanca, Spain. They issued a dynamic new statement, named the Salamanca Statement, on the education of all the children with disabilities, calling for inclusion to be the norm (UNESCO, 1994). The statement argued that regular schools with inclusive orientation were the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating conducive communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all. Moreover, it argued, inclusive schools provide an effective education to the majority of the children and improve the efficiency, and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.

UNESCO, (2005) defines inclusive education as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and

modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and conviction that is the responsibility of the state to educate all children (UNESCO, 2005). Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs and those with special needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them with a child-centered pedagogy capable of meeting those needs. The concept of inclusion is based on the fact that all children and young people, despite different cultural, social and learning back ground, should have equivalent learning opportunities in all kinds of schools (UNESCO, 2008). Inclusive education is not a marginal issue, but is central to the achievement of high-quality ECE for learners and the development of more inclusive societies. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 10% of the worlds' population constitutes persons with disabilities and that approximately 85% of the persons with disability live in the developing countries.

Therefore, inclusion in ECE begins with recognizing that all children and their families have the right to access high quality ECE despite any form of disability. Inclusive practices are intended to identify and remove barriers to full acceptance, participation and learning for all children, including those with disabilities by recognizing that many challenges associated with disability are embedded in socio-culture and practices. This entails that inclusion practices aim at altering policy, organization, structure and pedagogy so that children with special needs can take their rightful place as full and valued members of their education communities (Higgins, Mac Arthur and Morton, 2008). An inclusive school must put flexibility and variety at its core. This should be seen in the structure of the school, the content of the curriculum, the attitudes and beliefs of staff, parents and pupils themselves and the goal should be to offer every individual a relevant education and optimal opportunities for development (UNESCO, 2005).

Although advocacy for inclusion has been made at various conferences, persons with disabilities, especially children and the young continue to be the most disadvantaged groups in all societies (Hegarty and Alur, 2002). As a result of limitations that they manifest they are subjected to social discrimination, impoverished educational experiences and above all, every limited work opportunities. It is now widely accepted that children with disabilities should be educated alongside their age peers and be treated as full members of their community. In tandem with this, Zambia has made strides in the provision of ECE to all children. The first impression was in 1957 when an act of parliament was enacted to this effect. The Education Act of 1966 passed a

sweeping statement that all children will be provided with quality primary education. In 1977 the Education Reform Document emphasized education as an instrument of personal and national development. The 1990s saw resounding reforms in the Ministry of Education. The reforms were designed to improve the delivery of the education system that had substantially been declining since the 1970s. The second major education reform was the document called Focus on Learning of 1992. It emanated from the World Declaration on Education for All. It stressed that every person; child, young and adult shall be able to benefit from the educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning need (UNESCO, 1990). The policy emphasised the mobilization of resources for the development of school educational for all, including CSEN.

After the Salamanca conference (1994), Zambia adopted the inclusive education approach. For this reason, the National policy on Education, “Educating Our Future” (1996), a policy document on Zambia’s Education stipulates a few statements on the education of learners with disabilities and acknowledges the importance of inclusive ECE. ECE is a government policy priority and has been identified as a key strategy for improving learning outcomes amongst Zambian learners. It states that the aim of ECE is to get children better prepared for school before entry into grade one (ECE Standard Guidelines, 2013). In 2013, the Ministry of Education came up with ECE National Policy draft which states that the policy seeks to provide for an all-inclusive approach to the development of young children to promote their physical well-being, cognitive and linguistic skills, and social emotional development. The ECE policy provides a national policy direction on the ECE provision in the country. Currently, using the concept ‘Annexing,’ the government of the Republic of Zambia has introduced ECE centres in the mainstream government primary schools. A number of primary schools have begun implementing inclusive ECE. Between 2013 and 2014, MoGE opened 1,526 ECE centres in some of the existing government primary schools as annexed centres. It is important to note that inclusive ECE has a long lasting impression on children.

Matafwali and Munsaka (2011) observed the ECE can greatly enhance human capital information, raising productivity and income levels and reducing public expenditure by lowering welfare, educational and health costs. Their study also noted that the Zambian government appreciates the benefits that come along with public investment in ECE as it is the developmental period in one’s life during which significant transformations take place in which a child is equipped with basic skills that serve as a foundation for later learning. Mtonga et al

(2012) also noted that inclusive education is cost effective in that learners with disabilities go to a school of their choice near their residence. Since inclusive education is indeed inclusive in nature, it reduces several social barriers between learners with disabilities and those without. Furthermore, it is evident that in inclusive settings, learners with disabilities are likely to perform better because of the interactions with their peers. It is also at this period that early identification of special needs and intervention should be done (ECE Standard Guidelines, 2013). Therefore, there is need to provide and make available quality ECE to all children including those with special educational needs (SEN). It is against this idea of the government's position to introduce Inclusive Early Childhood Education (ECE) in the mainstream of the education system which is enshrined in the 1996 National policy document on Education, 'Educating Our Future that, prompted the researcher to investigate the provision of ECE to children with special educational needs in the six selected primary schools in Kabwe District.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Zambia, ECE has over the years not been taken as an integral part of the education system and has, therefore, been treated as an independent sector away from the Ministry of General Education mainstream system. ECE has been viewed as a privilege only available to children from high income families. Although the Ministry of Education policy document (1996) clearly stipulates that ECE shall be available to all children, it is only very recent that the Ministry of General Education took a direct role in the provision of ECE. This development has seen the establishment of ECE centres in existing primary schools as a way of enhancing access to ECE for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, previous studies done by Songiso, (2016) have revealed a number of challenges faced in the provision of quality ECE in public schools of Senenga District. Despite the concerted effort on ECE by Government through the Ministry of General Education to make sure that every individual accesses ECE regardless of his or her background, little is known on the provision of ECE services to children with special educational needs in government primary schools, hence the study.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the provision of early childhood education to children with special educational needs in selected inclusive primary schools of Kabwe District.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study will be guided by the following research objectives;

- i. To investigate the availability of early childhood education to CSEN in selected primary schools of Kabwe District.
- ii. To establish the benefits of inclusive ECE to children with special educational needs in selected primary schools of Kabwe District.
- iii. To ascertain challenges faced by inclusive ECE centres in selected primary schools of Kabwe District.
- iv. To establish measures that can be used to overcome challenges faced by inclusive ECE centres in selected primary schools in Kabwe District.

1.5 Research Questions

The study will be guided by the following research questions;

- i. To what extent is ECE available to children with special educational needs in selected primary schools of Kabwe District?
- ii. What benefits do CSEN get from inclusive ECE in selected primary schools of Kabwe District?
- iii. What are the challenges faced by inclusive ECE centres in selected primary schools of Kabwe District?
- iv. What measures can be put in place to overcome the challenges faced by inclusive ECE in primary schools of Kabwe District?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Sampson (2012) postulates that the significance of the study in a thesis shows the importance of seeking a solution to the statement of the problem identified previously. Therefore, through this study, it is hoped that the study may on one hand add to the body of knowledge on the relevance of inclusive ECE education, while on the other hand, it would give stakeholders information on

how to improve inclusive education in ECE centres. Additionally, the results might act as a point of reference for further academic research in the area of early childhood education to CSEN in Zambia.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

According to Masabila and Nailaila (2013), delimitation of the study involves reducing a study in terms of geographical location, age, sex, population traits, population size, or other consideration. Therefore, the study was only restricted to 6 selected primary schools with ECE centres in Kabwe District.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

Best and Kahn (2009) postulated that limitation of the study are those conditions which are beyond the control of the researcher and may also place restrictions on the conclusions of particular study. Therefore, the limitation was that the sample size of the study was too small (6 primary schools) hence, its findings may not be generalized to other public primary schools in Kabwe District and Zambia at large.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

The study used Friedrich Wilhelm Froebel's (1837) theory. Froebel was a Germany educationist, who laid the foundation for modern education systems based on the recognition that children have unique needs and capabilities. The theory further states that ECE pays off well in those children who go through it as they find more success in later schooling. Froebel believed that every child possessed, at birth, his or her full education potential, and that what was needed was an appropriate educational environment which would encourage the child to grow and develop in an optimal manner (Staff, 1998). According to Watson (1997), Froebel's vision was to stimulate an appreciation and love for children and to provide a new but small world, a world that became known as the kindergarten. This is a small world where children interact through play with other children of their own age group and experience the first gentle taste of independence.

The theory is important because it recognizes children as individuals with rights and responsibilities according to their ages and abilities, and this theory has profoundly affected educational policy and practice internationally. This theory has equally promoted the availability

of ECE to all children. According to Froebel, children equally deserve the same rights and respect as adults and should be treated as individuals passing through a unique phase of life. Froebel like others educationists understood that the emotional quality of a child's life is important and that it is heavily affected by the quality of parental love and early childhood experiences, which can also be called home and pre-school environments.

Froebel discovered that brain development was most dramatic between birth and the age of 3. Hence, he recognized the importance of early education experiences which contributed so much to the development of the child's cognitive skills. Similarly, neuroscience has also provided unequivocal evidence suggesting that the first three years are characterized by massive brain development and that early experiences are crucial in shaping the architecture of the brain (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). According to Corbett (1998), Froebel significant contribution to ECE was his theory of play as a means of engaging children in self-activity for the purpose of externalizing their inner natures. To Froebel, play activities provided the means for a child's intellectual, social, emotional and physical development. Froebel's kindergarten system consisted of games and songs, construction, and gifts and occupations. The play materials were what he called gifts, while activities were called occupations.

This theory is important to this study because of its recognition of children's unique needs and capabilities. Froebel's philosophy of education is in line with the Salamanca Statement which says that: We believe and proclaim that: *"Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs"* (UNESCO, 2008). Unique needs and capabilities embrace all children, those with SEN inclusive. Froebel also respected children as individuals with rights and responsibilities according to their ages and abilities and this philosophy is still used in many educational policies and practices internationally. Children's rights have been recognized in several documents and international treaties which have been ratified, documented and accepted by many countries over the rights of children.

1.10 Definitions of Terms

The following were the identified operational terms used in the study so as to make it more meaningful.

Children with Special Needs: Children who for various reasons cannot take full advantage of the curriculum as it is normally provided.

Inclusive Education: Inclusive education is a practice of including CSEN in the regular educational program.

Pre-school: Organized education for children below the age of seven.

ECE Annexing: Attachment of early childhood education centres to Government primary schools.

Early Childhood Special Education: Is educational program for CSEN from birth to 7 years of age or pre-school age.

Early Intervention: Refers to planned and organized efforts to enhance the developmental delay or further delay due to intellectual, physical, sensory or other disabilities.

Quality Education: refers to education that is relevant, appropriate, participatory, flexible and inclusive that offers protection.

Inclusion: refers to a commitment to evaluate each child regardless of any form of disability or *any factor that disadvantages the learner.*

Mainstreaming: refers to replacing students with ‘special needs’ in regular classes without changing the curriculum.

Policy: refer to a statement of commitment of official guidelines given by the government to undertake specific program directed at achieving some goals.

1.11 Summary

The above chapter gave the background of the study. The chapter also presented a well-defined statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives and questions, significance of the study, theoretical framework and definitions of operational terms used in the study. The next chapter attempts to review various literature deemed relevant to the study so as to put it within the context of similar previous works.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The chapter presents a review of relevant literature on inclusive ECE. The literature surveyed is presented under the following headings; Availability of inclusive ECE, benefits of inclusive ECE, challenges of inclusive ECE and measures to challenges faced by inclusive ECE centres. It ends with the summary showing the knowledge gap in the reviewed literature.

2.1 Availability of Inclusive Early Childhood Education

2.1.1 Status of Inclusive ECE Worldwide

Inclusion is a priority on the education agenda internationally. The new anti-discriminatory climate has provided the basis for much change in the policy and statute, nationally and internationally. The importance of early childhood development for CSEN was endorsed in the World Declaration of Education for All (1990) and the convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Specifically, the convention on the Rights of Child states that, “ Children have the right to life and the best possible chance to develop fully” (Article 6), and that “ Disabled children must be helped to be as independent as possible and be able to take full and active part in everyday life” (Article 23). Furthermore, the World Conference on Special Needs Education (1994) highlights early education as a priority area. The Salamanca Framework for Action, Article 53 proclaims that;

The success of the inclusive school depends considerably on early identification, assessment and stimulation of every child with special educational needs. Early childhood care and education programmes for children aged up to 6 years ought to be developed an/or reoriented to promote physical, intellectual and social development and school readiness. These programmes have a major economic value for the individual, the family and the society in preventing the aggravation of disabling conditions. Programmes at this level should recognize the principle of inclusion and be developed in a comprehensive way by combining pre-school activities and early childhood health care.’’

The Statement re-affirms the rights to education of every individual, as enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Education for All to ensure that right for all, regardless of individual differences. The Statement also mentions of 1993 UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities which states that the education of disabled children should be an integral part of the education system. Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities, and learning needs and those with special needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them with a child-centered pedagogy capable of meeting those needs. The severity of their disability should range from mild to moderate. This concept of inclusive based on the principle that all children and young people, despite different cultural, social and learning background, should have equivalent learning opportunities in all schools (UNESCO, 2008). This includes ECE. UNESCO,(2008) emphasizes that all education systems, schools and teachers should focus on generating inclusive settings that uphold the values of respect and understanding of cultural, social, and individual diversity. Inclusive education is an approach that looks into how to transform education systems and other learning environments in order to respond to the diversity of learners. The removal of barriers to participation in learning for all learners is at the core of inclusive education system (UNESCO, 2005).

Parents are also an important component to promoting early inclusion. According to Sandall, Hammeter, Smith and Mclean (2005) families' World over can provide critical information from their unique perspective: current guidelines and practices recommend that families be involved in early childhood programmes as receivers and providers of information. Families are recognized as the constant in a child's life, with interactions taking place in a variety of contexts (Vangalder, 1997). These experiences lend families an opportunity to provide various types of information to the teachers that can help in designing and implementation of the valid assessments. For example, parents can share information about their child's temperament, health and physical needs which may help professionals understand a child's reaction to different assessment situations. A child who has poor fine-motor skills may struggle with pen and paper assessments but do well on assessment using oral questioning. In some cases parents can be asked questions to learn more on the child. In addition, parents also promote the availability of early inclusion as they enrol their children in the mainstream of the education system.

UNESCO (2006) reports that in Denmark the identification process of children with disabilities begins at birth. In this country, there is a law which states that all children with disabilities are

entitled to education and social assistance. Education and support for children with disabilities and their parents is offered until the child reaches school age. Thereafter, the multi-disciplinary team of specialists is employed by the government. In case the problem is beyond the team, a referral is made to other experts. Early screening involves children between ages 3 and 5 in basic health and developmental areas including hearing, vision, coordination, speech, cognition development and social and emotional skills. The screening's purpose is to identify developmental and/or other factors that may interfere with the child's learning, growth and development (Zrinka, 2008). Screening helps identify children who may have possible health and developmental problems that may need some extra support before they start school. However, there are a number of problems that may go undetected until later grades. UNESCO (2006) states that Denmark describes its policy as follows; "starting from giving disabled children a life as close to normal as possible", the country works with assumption that everyone regardless of the disability is a citizen of equal dignity, with a right to the same quality of life as others. This implies that they should have the right to housing, education, medical care, employment and opportunities for development.

Dunn (1988), states that countries in the West notably the United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK) have provided leadership in defining and shaping inclusion giving it substantial and definitive features distinct from what used to be integration or mainstreaming. Apart from the US and UK, inclusion is supported by legislative and practiced in Europe. The following countries in Europe (France, Germany, Hungary, Portugal, and Sweden) are also very good examples of European countries that are providing inclusive public educational services for children between three years and school age (UNESCO, 2006). Statistics about access rate to kindergarten's and pre-school in the different countries are hardly comparable. Just an overview; In Sweden and Portugal nearly all CSEN learn in the mainstream preschools/kindergartens (UNESCO, 2006). In Hungary, France and Germany special institutions and (different forms) of inclusive education differ between national regions. For example: in Germany nearly 80% of all CSEN in pre-school age learn in inclusive kindergartens. In these European countries, guidelines, framework or curricula on national or on regional level are implemented. These guidelines address all children learning in the mainstream or pre-schools (UNESCO, 2006)

2.1.2 Status of Inclusive ECE in Africa

The readiness for acceptance of inclusive education especially at pre-school level varies across countries and Continents of the World even when the countries concerned attended the conventions at the same time. In the case of Africa, although the educational policies in a number of countries do recognize early childhood inclusion as a desirable and important form of education for all learners with different disabilities, this practice is not being well implemented in a good number of countries due to a number of challenges. In some countries, inclusive education still remains as ‘pilot projects’ to serve children with different challenges within the mainstream of education (UNESCO, 2007). Thus, this form of inclusion practiced in some African countries is continuously resulting in isolation and frustration for children with disabilities and their parents as the necessary support for meaningful inclusion are lacking (Abosi, 1996). The same belief remains a challenge for implementation of inclusive education even when a good number of African countries have ratified the Education for All declaration. Siewe (2012) states that most children especially those with SEN still remain one of the groups being widely excluded from quality education.

Since 1995 when the Education and Training Policy was issued in Tanzania, the education sector has undergone several reforms. These reforms have always been geared towards achieving Education for All (EFA) (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1995). The government of Tanzania is implementing the policy to ensure that all children including those with disabilities are not denied their right to education. This policy is centred on the constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania 1997; under 11 (3) which states as follows:

“The government shall endeavour to ensure that there are equal opportunities to all persons to enable them to acquire educational and vocational training at all levels of schools and other institutions of learning.”

With regards to Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) the Republic of Tanzania, has included Early Childhood Development (ECD) in the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP) and has committed itself to the development and education of an Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy in order to address the needs of all young children (BEST 2008). This policy included all children inclusive those with SEN at all levels of education. According to BEST (2008), this cross-sectoral policy outline organizational

responsibilities to ensure an effective and efficient plan for IECD service delivery. Meanwhile, the government through the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training implements its policy directive that requires each primary school to have a pre-school admitting 5 to 6 year olds and pre-primary teachers. The government initiatives have resulted in increased enrolment of children with Special Needs from 5,365 (3,198 boys and 2,167 girls) in 2005 and 8,583 (4,450 boys and 4,125 girls) in 2007. This is an increase of 59,9%. Rehabilitation of school infrastructure has been done in a number of schools to create friendly environment for children with special learning needs (UNESCO, 2005).

Ministry of Education and Vocational Training of Zanzibar (2008) reported that the formal education system of Zanzibar is structured according to successive levels with pre-school education for 5 to 6 years old children. This aims at promoting the children's overall development and prepares them for later education. The government in Zanzibar introduced inclusive education to cater for the diverse learning needs of all children in the country. The Ministry of Education in collaboration with other partners started the implementation of inclusive education in 46 schools and later the number grew to 76. Realizing the importance of early education, the ministry put ECE as part of the basic education (MoE, 2008). In order to ensure that all children aged 4-5 are enrolled in pre-school, the ministry raised awareness to the community in establishing classes for pre-primary education to new schools and even old schools that had enough room and space.

The emphasis on the provision of ECE in Zambia strengthened after the resolve of the Jomtien Conference on Education in 1990 and the Dakar Framework of 2000 in Senegal which emphasized on the need to provide education for All by the year 2015 (UNESCO Report, 2003/2004) while the UNESCO 'Salamanca Statement (1994) called all governments to give the highest priority in Inclusive Education, (UNESCO, 1994). The Salamanca Declaration and Framework for Action (1994) on Persons with Special Educational Needs, emphasizes the right of every child to learn in the mainstream institution nearest to their home irrespective of disability. Its main focus is on inclusive education. Since this is an important milestone in the history of education, the ECE fraternity is not an exception in many, if not all African countries. Zambia is among the African countries that acknowledged the ECE inclusion in the main education system. The Zambian government has shown increased commitment towards integrating the ECE sector into the mainstream as a foundation for learning and as an

intervention for improved learner performance (MESVTEE, 2013). This is due to the belief that ECE is an educational level in its own right, whose purpose is not only that of preparing young learners for school, but for holistic development of an individual. According to the MESVTEE (2013), one of the contextual principles is on Non-Discrimination. This guiding principle states that services for ECE shall be provided to all children without discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, race, religious or political affiliation, and mental, physical, sensory, social, economic and emotional status. MoE (2011-June 2017) among its policy aspirations of ECE in Zambia states that, it will ensure that, as much as possible, children aged 3-6 years are allowed equitable access to ECE services. This is to help children enter primary school education with quality ECE experience.

The United Nations Convention on the rights of people with disabilities recognizes and promotes inclusive education as a Right (article 24, 2006). For Zambia among other countries, the UN convention mentioned above is yet to be signed and ratified. However, according to the Zambian National Policy on Education, “the Educating Our Future”, the Zambian government through the Ministry of Education assures to provide quality education for CSEN. The policy states that:

To the greatest extent possible, the Ministry will ‘include’ pupils with special educational needs in to the mainstream institutions and will provide them with necessary facilities.

The government through the same policy, (Educating Our Future, 1996) further commits itself to provide adequate trained personnel, equipment, infrastructure and appropriate technology to enhance the inclusion of CSEN into the mainstream schools. The other important legal framework on the rights and education of persons with disabilities is the Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) Act No.6 of 2012 part 5 divisions 1 which upholds the right to Inclusive Education based on equal opportunities for PWDs. It also upholds the provision of reasonable accommodation to meet the learning needs of PWDs. It further provides for protection from any form of discrimination on the basis of disability. The Persons with Disability Act number 33 of 1996 also states that failure to admit or enrol any child into a school on account of their disability is a discrimination offence. The same document further states that learning institutions should provide appropriate equipment and devices for such children.

Currently, the National Education Policy of 1996 (Educating Our Future) is the guiding policy in the provision of all forms of education in Zambia. The policy also recognizes the importance of ECE in building early experiences in all children (Educating Our Future, 1996). In addition to other ECE policies, the government of Zambia have also come up with is a draft ECE National Policy whose aims are to promote the growth and development of all Zambian children to achieve their full potential regardless of their status (Draft Early Childhood Education National Policy, 2013).The ECE National Policy provides a national policy direction on the ECE provision in the country. The policy goal (2017- 2030) is to uphold the right to education for survival, healthy growth, education and holistic development of children under the age of 7 years including those with SEN.

According to MoGE Staff Audit Report (2016), between 2013 and 2014, the Ministry managed to open 1,526 ECE centres in some already existing government primary schools as annexed centres. As in March, 2016 during the Staff Audit exercise, 1,849 ECE annexed centres were recorded. Currently, there are 1,252 ECE qualified teachers of which 965 are females while 297 are males recruited and placed across the 10 provinces in the country. MoGE has demonstrated its commitment in providing the qualified work force in the provision of ECE in the country. The report also stated that there is a population of 139,060 learners in these ECE centres with a breakdown of 62,975 boys and 76,235 girls; however, there is no report of CSEN in the report, although these children are there in the ECE centres. Currently, ECE has become increasingly common and Zambia has continued to record marginal increase in children attending ECE from 15.3 in 2004% to 27% in 2016 although attendance among children from rural communities and disadvantaged backgrounds remains relatively low (MoGE, 2016). However, much is needed to be done to enhance access to ECE, by all children to meet the target of 30% of new Grade 1 entrants with ECE experience (Republic of Zambia- SNDP- 2017-2021) For Early Childhood Education (ECE), another notable achievement which was made was the shifting of the mandate of providing ECE from the Ministry of Local Government and Housing to the Ministry of Education (Republic of Zambia-Seventh National Development Plan- 2017-2021). In order to improve quality ECE provision in the nation, MoGE through the Directorate of Standards and Curriculum has developed a three year diploma ECE teacher training syllabus that is now used by all colleges (government and private) in the country (Staff Audit Exercise Report, 2016).

In Zambia, inclusive education is helping to improve access to education for CSEN. For example Zambia's special education which started way back in 1905 had only 0.01% children with special educational needs accessing education in 1990 (CSO, 1990), 2% in 1995; (EFA, 1995) and 4.1% (89, 253) pupils with special needs in regular primary and high schools in 2005 (Kalabula, Mandyata and Chinombwe. 2006) representing a significant increase in the number of children with SEN in the regular school system. The increase is attributed to increase in the number of units for SEN, positive attitude towards inclusive practices in regular schools in response to detects of the current education policy. Effective learning for all children is provided in inclusive schools on identified strengths and weaknesses of individual children. Further, inclusive schools seem to be more cost effective than special schools. Special schools educate a very small number of children with special needs at a very high cost thus emphasizing the need for inclusive schooling as means of achieving the education for all.

2.2 Benefits of Inclusive Early Childhood Education

Today there is a growing body of knowledge on the benefits of investment in early childhood development. This is built on scientific research that has established the importance of promoting healthy development during the early years. Also contributing to increased investment in the early years are new demands related to changing economic, social, demographic, political, and educational conditions and new ways of thinking about children and society, particularly from a rights perspective. The short and long term benefits of ECE programmes for all the children are enormous and cannot be over emphasized. Young (2000) also stated that benefits have been noted across the board by educators, socialists, behavioral scientists, economists, neuroscientists, biologists and even politicians. Young and Enrique (2009) observed that by providing basic health care, adequate nutrition, nurturing and stimulation in a caring environment, it helps to ensure children's progress in primary schools, continuation through secondary schools, and successful entry into the work force. However, it was not known whether or not the same benefits revealed in Young and Enriques' study would apply in Zambia hence a justification enough to undertake this study,

Inclusion has become one of the recommended practices for early childhood special education (Mclean and Odom, 1993). Bricker and Pretti-Frontczak (2004) have argued that including children with disabilities in the regular classroom setting assists them in acquiring and generalizing critical developmental skills which are necessary for them to achieve independent

functioning across environment. The major national association for professionals working with young children with disabilities, the division for early childhood of the council for exceptional children, shares an agreement with the National Association for the Education of Young Children that identifies inclusion as a developmentally appropriate practice (The National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1996). Promotion of inclusion by these professional organizations has contributed to increasing social acceptance of difference and diversity and promotion of understanding that everyone is a part of society. Therefore, there was need to undertake such a study in order to gain an understanding to ascertain if regular classroom settings assists children with disabilities in acquiring and generalizing critical developmental skills which are necessary for them to achieve independent functioning across environment in inclusive ECE centres in Kabwe District.

Mwaura, Sylva and Malmberg (2008) conducted a study in four countries in East Africa where they wanted to investigate the effects of pre-school experience on the cognitive development of children in East Africa. The study established that children from impoverished backgrounds who attended ECE attained better developmental outcomes. Similar findings were reported by Aboud (2006), after conducting a similar research in Bangladeshi. Rao & Pearson (2007) reported similar findings. In Zambia, in the Zambian Early Childhood Project, Simmons-Zuilkowski et al (2012) conducted a similar study where they found out that participation in ECE does not only improve performance in academic outcomes, but it also encourages a timely transition into first grade. The stated studies looked at the ordinary pre-school experiences while the current the study sought to look at CSEN in pre-schools.

There is also evidence pointing to the relationship between ECE and academic achievement as well as social outcomes. The Prestigious High Score Perry Preschool Study was an experimental study conducted among low income families in the United States of America. This study also identified short and long term benefits from ECE (Schweinhart et al., 2005). The study findings showed that children, who participated in the ECE programme, out-performed their peers who did not, in a number of intellectual challenges like language tests; from pre-school years to the age of seven. The study also revealed that those who had participated in the programme were in better employment and were significantly less involved in bad acts like criminal activities. Whereas the study was done in America and was conducted on the low income families, the

current study looked at provision of ECE to children with special educational in Kabwe District of Zambia, which also included the benefits.

Every child needs effective early development to be successful, but the disadvantaged children are least likely to get it, Professor Heckman has proven that investing in the early childhood development of disadvantaged children will produce greater returns to individuals and society in better education, health, economic and social outcomes. Heckman (2000) builds the premises that when you invest in ECE programmes, more people acquire more skills which lead to more skilled people. He noted that the returns to human capital investments are greatest for the young ones for two reasons; which is, young persons have a longer horizon over which to recoup the fruits of their investments and skill begets skill. It is no doubt that investing in children makes economic sense for any country that aspires to transform its citizens. Heckman (2006), further stated that, we cannot afford to postpone investing in the children until they become adults, nor can we wait until they reach school age a time when it may be too late to intervene. Learning is a dynamic process and is most effective when it begins at a young age and continues through adult age. Children with disabilities who receive good care and developmental opportunities during early childhood are more likely to become healthy and productive adults. This can potentially reduce the future costs of education, medical care and other social spending (WHO, 2012). Globalization is occurring in almost every industry and ECE is not an exception. Many countries have realized that investment in human capital starting at an early age will support the expansion of their competitiveness and their economic growth. The World Bank (2000) also states that the economic returns to invest in a child are high, but there is an even more compelling reason for underscoring the importance of the early years. Giving children a better chance in education, is not only vital for attacking the worst effects of poverty, but also may be an effective way of breaking the relentless, vicious cycle of poverty transmitted across generations. Munsaka & Matafwali (2013) also noted that, any country that aspires to transform its social and economic landscape should invest in children because children are the future generation. Even in developed nations where infants' survival remains the highest priority, governments still recognize the importance of the early years of development by allocating adequate resources in developmental sectors targeting children.

Experiences throughout one's life shape the functioning of the mind. Especially those that occur in the early years may set the stage for continued transactions with the world, which then

reinforce mental functions (Siegal, 1999). Siegal (2000) also stated that according to neuroscience, brain development in the first three years is very extensive and as such, experiences in early life are especially crucial in organizing the brain's basic structures and in creating the neural foundation for all subsequent development and behavior. The first three years lasts forever in that most of adult mental ability is formed during these early years. Gopnick, Meltzoff, and Kuhl (1999) also conducted a study which revealed that pre-school years are a critical period in the formation of neurological connections that can last for a life time. This research shows that early in life the brain undergoes a process of selective "synaptic pruning" where weak connections are eliminated and others are strengthened. In other words, the influence of early environment on brain development is long lasting. This is why the World Bank (2003) on meeting the needs of CSEN argues that there is considerable evidence showing that infants exposed to good nutrition, toy playmates had measurably better brain function at twelve years of age than those raised in a less stimulating environment (World Bank, 2003). In fact the same report observed that environment affects not only the number of brain cells and the number of connections among them but as well as the way these connections are "wired". This is why it is important that every child's early years are stimulated with different activities which help in brain development. This information is vital to the study as it gives a direction on how early years of life are cardinal to the development of the brain; however the current study looked at CSEN inclusive pre-schools in Kabwe district.

Evidence from neuroscience state that the human brain is an organ designed to adapt and reshape in response to experience. Children at the age of two have twice as many neuron connections as adults. From this age until the age of 16, the brain systematically eliminates those neurons that are least efficient. This is a critical process in shaping the future ability of the brain (Mundkur, 2005). Many other important mechanisms are at work during these critical years. Stimulus during this time has lifelong effects on the brain development, behavior, learning and memory. Certain types of learning are more likely to occur or are more valuable early in life. A very good example would be language. Language exposure during critical early years of childhood development is often required for adequate language acquisition. Briscoe (2000) states that exposure during this time is so important that it seems to have a stronger effect on later command of language than general intelligence or the quality of instruction.

According to Munsaka & Matafwali (2013), the overarching goal of early identification and intervention for children is to incur expenditure on a particular intervention today. It not only improves individual outcomes, but also lowers the costs and impacts associated with the disability for the individual and the wider community over the long term. Intervention yields better results when done in the early years of an individual which are the pre-school days.

In neuroscience research, there is evidence suggesting that early intervention can improve function of the brain damaged through the process of neural plasticity (Klein & Jone, 2008). This calls for the need for early identification and intervention so that necessary interventions are carried out to restore the brain functions. Neuroplasticity refers to structural and functional changes in the brain that are brought about by training and experience. The brain is the organ that is designed to change in response to experience (Mundkur, 2005). The first three years of a child's life are a critical period. It is therefore important to consider the plasticity of children's brains and that their experiences and environment will determine what cells stay and which cells are pruned (Gordon & Browne, 1993). The first years are characterized by rapid development particularly of the brain and this provides the essential building blocks for the future growth, development and progress. If children with disabilities are to survive, flourish, learn to be empowered and participate, attention to ECD is essential (WHO, 2012). Mclean and Cripe (1997) also observed the effects of early intervention on language and concluded that early intervention for a broad spectrum of communication disorders affecting young children can be very effective in eliminating those disorders or at least mitigating their impact on a child's later speech and language development.

Scientists have had a long-standing fascination with the complexities of the process of human development particularly in children. According to Shankoff & Phillips (2000), all children are born wired for feelings and ready to learn. From the time of conception to the first day of kindergarten, development proceeds at a pace exceeding that of any subsequent stage of life, hence the importance of reach foundation of early experiences. Studies to understand this important process have revealed the myriad and remarkable accomplishments of the early childhood period, as well as the serious problems that confront some young children. The dual further revealed that what happens during the first months and years of life matters a lot, because this period of development provides an indelible blue print for adult well-being, but because it sets either a sturdy or fragile stage for what follows. Shankoff & Phillips (2000) observed that

from birth to the age of 5, children rapidly develop foundational capabilities on which subsequent development builds. In addition to their remarkable linguistics and cognitive gains, they also exhibit dramatic progress in their emotional, social regulatory and moral capacities. All these stated critical dimensions of early development are intertwined, and require focused attention. From the above statements, it can be deduced that early experiences affects the development of the brain and this is why all children inclusive of those with SEN need to pass through well stimulated early education. However, the above studies dealt so much on the children in general whereas the current is looking at CSEN in ECE centres of Kabwe District.

Bricker (1995) has argued that inclusive classrooms are not only beneficial for children with disabilities, but they also help children without disabilities to learn to accept human diversity. Interacting with peers is an important component of the socialization of all young children and eventually becomes a major influence in their lives (Guralnick, 1986). It is therefore imperative to investigate the provision of inclusive ECE to children with special educational needs and weigh how the interactions are done as they learn together with their peers.

Due to numerous benefits, today the emphasis is that children with disabilities be served in “inclusion” settings- regular classrooms whose resources have been modified or augmented to allow CSEN to participate successfully in them (UNESCO, 2009). Research around the globe conducted by UNICEF (2012) shows that in such settings, children with special needs make somewhat greater academic and social gains than their peers in self-contained special education classroom. Inclusion increases experiences and skills and benefits them all. It helps children with special needs learn with their peers and grow together. MoE (2007) also states that children that are exposed to an effective ECE are better equipped for the demands of the school system, including proven records of improved academic achievement. Thus an ECE programme enhances children’s readiness for school. The above findings are vital to this study as they give a direction on how CSEN make greater achievement on academic, readiness for school and social aspects of life. However, what is not known is whether or not the CSEN in Zambia would make greater gains in both academic and social spheres when combined to learn with children without disabilities.

The Education International (2009) carried out a research on the benefits of inclusive ECE and found out that: Early childhood is the most critical period for cognitive and social development, the acquisition of languages and early literacy. Children are active learners from birth, and their

first years are vital. Early Childhood Education (ECE) should be recognized as a first step of basic education, as a fully integrated sector within national educational systems. Provision should be universally accessible and free for all children. High quality ECE provides the foundation for life-long learning and stimulates children's social, emotional, cognitive and linguistic development. The above findings are insightful to the current study in that it highlighted on how vital ECE is to all children. However, the current study dwells much on an investigation of the provision of ECE only to CSEN particularly in Kabwe District of Zambia.

Matafwali and Munsaka (2011) conducted a study on an evaluation of community based ECE programmes in Zambia. The study was conducted in four selected districts. The study revealed that the Zambian government just like any other countries has realized the benefit that comes along with public investment in ECE; they stated that, it is the developmental period in one's life during which significant transformations take place in which the child is equipped with basic skills that serve as a foundation for later learning. Hence, the education a child gets from ECE centres increases the retention on primary and high school investments. Their study equally revealed that ECE can greatly enhance human capital information, raising productivity and more levels and reducing public expenditure by lowering welfare, educational and health costs. The above findings are very vital to this study and they truly give a direction on how the Zambian government has realized the benefits that come along with public investment in community based ECE. However, part of this study is focused on the benefits of inclusive ECE to CSEN in selected primary schools in Kabwe District.

Underwood and Frankel (2002) states that in high quality early childhood education programmes all children have opportunities to develop their language, social, physical and cognitive abilities. These domains develop as the young children are learning together, share ideas; play around together and learn from each other as they come from different environments. Early inclusion increases children's opportunities to play and talk together with children of different abilities and creates opportunities for friendship among children. Inclusion also build's self-esteem in CSEN. In inclusive classrooms, children with and without disabilities are expected to learn to read, write and do math. With higher expectations and good instruction CSEN learn academic skills. Inclusive early education is not just about placement in program, but also active participation in social interactions and the development of children's abilities and skills. From the above studies,

one may want to know whether ECE programmes give opportunities to CSEN to develop their language, social, physical and cognitive abilities in inclusive ECE centres in Kabwe district.

The benefits of early inclusive education are obvious. It is the most effective means of fighting negative attitude and developing a proactive inclusive society and surest way of achieving education for all (Underwood and Frankel, 2012). Children with disabilities are less stigmatized and are socially included. Children with or without disabilities learn tolerance, acceptance of different and respect for diversity. As the children play together they develop love for each other and acceptance also develops. Bullying and teasing each other is minimized to a greater extent. The acceptance of each other makes children to learn how to share knowledge and other things as they live together. Friendship is developed as schools are important places to develop social skills. This is one good way of achieving education for all as everyone is embraced. From the study above, one may want to know the benefits CSEN get as they play together with those without disabilities in selected inclusive ECE centres in Kabwe district.

Maria (2008) points out that early inclusive leads to higher achievement for children with disabilities than in segregated settings. Indeed, there are educational benefits for all children inherent in providing inclusive education through major changes in the way schooling is planned, implemented and evaluated. Children with disabilities have access to a wider curriculum than is in special schools. This includes indoor and outdoor activities. CSEN take part in the general education curriculum based on their ages and grades. They are not put into a separate classroom, but rather the curriculum and room are adapted to meet the children's needs.

Early inclusions can produce positive changes in attitudes within schools towards diversity by educating all children together thus leading to greater social cohesion. One area in which CSEN that are included in the mainstream show long-term benefit is in their social-emotional development. Many of the positive social benefits that young children experience in inclusive classrooms continue to be seen when these children are included in higher grades (DeSimone & Parmar, 2006).

McCurdy (2014) did a study that showed how support of peers in an inclusive classroom can lead to positive effects for children with autism. The children were trained on an intervention technique to help their fellow autistic classmates stay on task and focused. The study showed that using peers to intervene instead of classroom teachers helped students with autism reduce off-

task behavior significantly. This shows that the typical student accepted the students with autism both before and after the intervention techniques were introduced. Whereas McCurdy's study focused on how support of peers in an inclusive classroom led to positive effects for children with autism only, the current study looked at the provision of ECE to all children with special educational needs.

Inclusive classrooms are ripe with opportunities to engage children with disabilities in the daily routine and in activities that elicit and challenge academic performance (National Professional Development Centre on Autism Spectrum Disorder, 2010). Typically developing peers, when coached by teachers, can become natural scaffolds of learning and interactions. Evidence to support these types of peers-mediated interventions in the pre-school populations continues to grow. Moreover, the expectations for child growth and development in early childhood classrooms are often much greater than expectations for children in segregated classrooms (Guralnick, 1990). Children may be expected to put on their coats themselves, for example, or to manipulate their fingers to pick up and eat a snack or drink water from a cup. Whatever the expectations may be, they exist for all children. Though they may be accomplished with the right combination of "supplementary aids and services," these higher expectations ultimately lead children with disabilities to achieve more, gain confidence and independence, and develop a strong sense of self, in their pre-school settings and much later in life.

Maria (2008) states that typical children in inclusive settings show an increased ability to help their peers. They learn how to help and when to assist a child with a disability to be independent. Helping is a positive experience for young children. It makes them feel good about themselves and what they can do, thereby, increasing self-esteem. At an early age, young children have not yet formed negative stereotypes towards people with disabilities. The development of attitudes begins during the pre-school years. Early interaction increases the chances that as these children grow up they will feel more positive and less fearful of people with disabilities. This leads to more acceptance of diversity, which leads in less prejudice and a better understanding of others. Respect and understanding grow when children of differing abilities and cultures play and learn together. Social interaction allows children with disabilities to develop their interactive and attention skills. Peer interaction also presents children with disabilities with opportunities to develop and practice communication (Nienhuys, Horsborough & Cross, 1985). The above study

looked at typical children in inclusive settings in general, however, little is known whether children in inclusive ECE settings can show the same increased ability to help their peers.

Parents are also an important component in promoting early inclusion. Research studying parental attitudes toward inclusion has also been positive for parents of children with and without disabilities. Parents of children with disabilities states that their children now participates in activities with typical peers and have friends without disabilities. Families have also reported that having their child in an inclusive setting makes them feel less isolated from their community and home thus encouraging children to interact at a young age will lessen stereotyping in the future, (Dodge and Colker, 1992). All parents would want their children to be accepted by their peers, have friends and lead 'regular' lives. Inclusive settings can make this vision a reality for many children with disabilities. Early inclusion also connects families of CSEN to other families with CSEN. These connections make families share information on how to raise their children with different disabilities. Apart from connecting parents, inclusive ECE sends a message to the community that all children are valued and welcome. The above finding is very vital to this study as it shows the importance of parents in promoting early inclusion. However, little is known whether parents to CSEN in selected inclusive ECE centres in Kabwe district promote early inclusion.

2.3 Challenges of Inclusive Early Childhood Education

Inclusive ECE is about the integration approach of the CSEN in the mainstream. It is under inclusion model that learners with SEN spend most or all of the time with non-disabled learners. While inclusion has its benefits, there are enormous challenges hindering its effective implementation especially in developing countries. The following are some of the challenges faced by inclusive ECE centres;

Teacher child ration has been a subject of much attention among researchers in relation to the factors facing teaching and learning process in inclusive settings. Early childhood development education has not been left out. A study conducted by Dodge and Colker (1992) on high teacher-child ratio revealed that child ratio has continued to grow. On average teacher child ratio for both 3-5 years old children and 6-8 years olds still remain critical. Teachers are not comfortable with the increasing number of children in their classes they handle. Dodge and Colker (1992) further explained that still with this high ratio, ECE teachers were poorly remunerated and looked down

upon in terms of qualifications. Hanushek (1995) compiled a report of the research on large classroom and learning resources in developing countries. The study revealed that in developing countries, one of the biggest problems faced in large classes is the quality and quantity of learning resources available to each learner, such as classroom furniture, textbooks, and other essentials like teaching and learning resources. It appears from the above studies that large crowded classrooms have an impact on the smooth teaching of learners. However, one may want to know whether the challenge of high teacher-ratio has an impact on inclusive ECE programmes in Kabwe District.

On another hand, within the literature on large classes globally, there is evidence that too large classes negatively impact education quality. Class size has many effects on students' engagement, behaviour and student retention. Finn, Pannozzo and Achilles (2003) reviewed studies that examined the link between student engagement and class size. He conceptualized student engagement in two forms which were social and academic engagement. Social engagement refers to how a student interacts socially with other students and teachers, while academic engagement refers to a student's attitude towards schooling and the learning process. Finn et al (2003) concluded that when students are placed in smaller classes, they become more engaged, both academically and socially. With strong social and academic achievement, he urges, academic achievement increases. Class size may also impact teacher motivation and job satisfaction. Wilson (2006) also pointed out that large classes can negatively affect two significant and interrelated aspects of teacher practice which is instructional time and classroom management. A teacher can be experiencing difficulties in classroom management because the numbers are too big to be managed by one person. Finn et al (2003) constructed a conceptual model that considers the impact of class size on teachers' morale and enjoyment of their profession, which in turn impacts learners' engagement. They further concluded that smaller classes positively impact teacher and learner motivation. Teacher motivation is further complicated in many resource- poor countries. With the above studies done large classrooms in general, however, little is known about the impact of this challenge on CSEN in Kabwe District.

Many ECE centres lack adequate teaching and learning resources and facilities suitable for ECE in their learning environment. This is common in developing countries. These include lack of properly ventilated classrooms, furniture suitable for young children, kitchen, safe clean water, play grounds, toilets and play materials. Inclusive education has led to an increased number of

learners in the learning institutions. This leads to a decrement in the available resources in the schools (International Association of the Education of Young Children, 1991). Play is one major activity encouraged in ECE and requires quite a good number of different play materials. Teneja (1990) asserts that, while in infancy, Froebel' theory emphasizes on the development of sensory abilities which requires a number of different play materials which children need to play with. According to the study conducted by Oakes and Saunders (2002), shortages of learning and teaching materials have a negative impact on the learners especially those with educational special needs and disabilities with less knowledge about a subject. This in turn forces most of the parents to remove their children from the inclusive schools and take them to special schools. This affects implementation of ECE curriculum negatively as creation of a sustainable learning environment helps deprived children to improve their academic performance (Offenheiser and Holcombe, 2003).Lack of adequate resources to meet the educational needs of the learners with disabilities in the regular schools cause most of the parents to have doubt as to whether the needs of their children are adequately met in these ECE centres. Thus, most parents prefer to take their children to special schools as compared to inclusive schools. This affects negatively the success of inclusive education. It also affects the performance of the CSEN as they are not stationed at one school to learn. Savolainen, (2000) also pointed out that in Finland infrastructure was unsuitable to children with disabilities but Non-Governmental Organizations came on board to build new schools, made school infrastructure accessible to CSEN at all levels of education, provided bursaries to vulnerable children and worked with professionals in public awareness on inclusion.

In early childhood stage, a child learns through interacting with the immediate environment, hence the environment should have a variety of materials to arouse and sustain the child's curiosity, interest and promote his learning. According to the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, (Curriculum Framework, 2012, p 14-15), an effective ECE programme should exhibit some essential play and learning materials that include; Adequate supply of developmentally appropriate play materials to foster all round development; Sufficient quantity of materials to enable learners work in small groups and should easily be accessible by the child; Materials and equipment which are safe, clean and in good condition; Materials which promote gross and fine motor development and help the child to discover and explore including constructing and reconstructing. It should also promote sensory exploration and social interaction along with creative expressions through art, painting, and so on. Adequate space is required

when setting up classroom teaching/ learning centres for ECE programmes. Three basic settings are needed: a place for the whole class to work together, a place for students to work independently, and a place for the teacher- directed small groups. The above mentioned provisions will enhance quality learning in ECE centres and such well-equipped environment benefits all the learners, those with SEN included.

Catron & Allen (2007) further indicate that a well-arranged environment enhances children's development through learning and manipulating of the play materials as it facilitates classroom management and supports the implementation of curricular goals and objectives. The physical environment allows growth and development through activities in defined play areas. Room arrangement for manipulative activities plays an important role in learner's social and language interactions. UNICEF (2012) also noted that assessment of physical environment should be a priority for equity, safety, efficiency and pedagogical reasons in ECE centres. It gives a recommendation of tools for monitoring the physical environment to ensure that the place is conducive for learning.

Malnutrition and ill-health are factors associated with the socio-economic factor. These factors can significantly damage the cognitive processing ability of children. Children whose processing capacity is impacted by ill-health and malnutrition may require more hours to learn various skills. As such, implementation of ECE may prove critical especially in low income countries (Van de Linde, 2005). Socio-economic differences affecting effective implementation of ECE also cut across regions, with some being labelled 'marginalized'. Regional disparities have significant in facilitating access to ECE where environment levels in rural and marginalized areas are low in comparison to those in the urban areas. Children from the marginalized communities in rural areas suffer lack of access to ECE due to such factors. From the above study, one may want to know whether socio-economic factors also affect the implementation of inclusive ECE in selected primary schools in Kabwe District.

Financial constraints can lead to ineffective implementation of ECE. To run these early education centres adequate funds are needed to procure items needed and to maintain the environment safe for the young children (Kilbride & Kilbride, 1990). Different types of teaching and learning materials are needed to run inclusive ECE centres effectively. Materials such as toys, books, crayons, Manila paper, markers, toiletries; to mention just a few. Alabi & Ijaij (2014) also noted that funding needs to be given maximum consideration because it is very

crucial to achieving success in an educational enterprise. He further stated that in ECE adequate funds need to be made available for the provision of many resources and activities which include stimulating materials for teaching, training and re-training of programmes through workshops, monitoring, feeding, immunization, supervision and inspection, school meals and training manuals among others. Kalabula (2007) states that while the provision of education for CSEN was an integral part of governments overall programmes of extending education for all, this type of education has been starved of funds. Inadequate public funding is responsible for the much of the Ministry of General Education's inability to meet fundamental mandates and obligations to provide the necessary facilities and ensure universal availability of quality of education for all learners.

Meki (2005) carried out a study in Lusaka to ascertain whether grants from Ministry of General Education were sufficient for delivering of quality education. The findings of the study revealed that the Ministry of General Education grants to primary schools were insufficient to meet the cost of providing quality education to the learners. Another study conducted by Ndhlovu (2008) on challenges faced by pupils with disabilities in accessing inclusive schools in Zambia revealed that inadequate funding to schools was to a greater extent a hindrance to special education and provision of quality of education. Lack of suitable infrastructure, inadequate learning resources, inadequate trained teachers in special education, lack of specialized assessment for placement and intervention services, lack of assistive devices and equipment could be attributed to the inadequate funding by the government. Studies conducted as seen above show that education for both learners with and without special educational needs suffer inadequate funding. These challenges make the learning environment hostile to pupils with special educational needs. This situation poses a challenge to inclusive schooling in ECE. The financial challenge to inclusive ECE programmes was another source that motivated the researcher to embark on this study. It was not known whether inclusive ECE programmes in selected primary schools in Kabwe district faced the same challenge.

UNESCO (2009) conducted a study in Kenya where challenges of inclusive education were established. The study revealed that one of the major challenges to inclusive education is funding. Teaching of children with disabilities in the mainstream takes specialists and additional classrooms to support student's needs. To offer special attention to CSEN requires additional money that many schools do not have particularly in the developing countries. Therefore,

inadequate funding can hinder on going professional development that helps to keep specialist and classroom teachers updated on the best practices for teaching special education. This study was conducted in Kenya, however, the researcher would want to know whether this challenge also affects Kabwe District of Zambia.

Dodge and Colker(1992) explains that lack of proper government policy framework on inclusive ECE which continue to hinder every good gain that could be realized through effective development of ECE. There is no adequate support for inclusive education from the concerned stakeholders. In most developing countries, most parents of the disabled learners are cautious about placing their children in an inclusion programme because of fear that their children will be ridiculed by other children, or be unable to develop regular life skills in academic classrooms. This is mainly attributed to poor policy implementation. Many governments in developing countries have not been able to implement inclusive education policy framework. In countries like Kenya, the education policy is an exclusively one-sided policy and fails to meet the needs of the learners with special education needs in inclusive education arrangement (Sudiharto, 2008). One case in point is the issue of assessment tools which most governments fail to supply the needed assessment devices. Thus there is need to build more realist policy provision in order to safe guard the integral development of inclusive ECE. However, what is not known is whether or not lack of government policy framework hinders the effective implementation of inclusive ECE in Zambia.

There is evidence that teachers are a critical factor in ensuring learning in inclusive schools and it is important to have quality and well trained teachers in the early years of school (Aldzi, 2006). The availability of motivated teachers who are capable of supporting children's development and promote their learning as well is very important. Most teachers lack specialized training which should be used to handle CSEN and disabilities. Success of any educational innovation depends on the development of competent and committed staff to provide the services for identification, assessment, referral and educational intervention. Katwishi (1995) in his study found out that there is no single discipline that provides complete training for staff to undertake early intervention programmes for CSEN. There is no single institution producing singly: paramedics, social workers, special education teachers, psychologists, speech specialists and trainers with knowledge and skills such as screening for impairments, educational assessments, parent counselling and guidance and educational interventions for CSEN and the gifted ones but various

training institutions have to contribute to the development of staff for inclusive schooling through collaboration with other institutions. The above study revealed that most teachers lack specialized training which should be used to handle CSEN and disabilities. From the study above, one may want to know whether or not inclusive ECE centres in selected schools in Kabwe lack qualified ECE teachers in special education.

Poor teacher training is another challenge faced in the implementation of inclusive education. Angrist and Lavy (2001) observed that lack of adequate and proper training received by teachers lead to a reduction in their pupil's test scores. Most of the teachers do not have adequate training on handling both the disabled and non-disabled learners in one classroom. Lack of proper teaching skills by the teacher is reflected in the poor performance of the learners. There is continued poor performance of the learners especially CSEN due to poor teaching skills. Moreover, Education International (2010) further reported that low numbers of qualified teaching staff is a challenge in most developing countries and that it has negatively affected the provision of ECE services. In developing countries in particular, the issue of under-qualified teachers present a major challenge, particularly in Gambia, Nigeria, Tongo, Nepal and Zambia respectively where between 60 and 90 percent of preschool teachers were unqualified (Education International, 2010). The above mentioned study observed that Zambia had low numbers of qualified preschool teachers and another observation was made by a recent study by (Sikwasha, 2014) in Kabompo District of North Western Province in Zambia where all sampled public ECE schools had no trained pre-school teachers. On the contrary, the previous year 2013, UNICEF, (2013) made an observation that there was an increased commitment to expanding and improving the quality of ECE evidenced by the recruitment of 1,000 pre-school teachers in 2013 teacher deployment programme by the Zambian government. Tuntufye, (2014) confirmed the observation made by UNICEF (2013) by acknowledging that there were more private colleges offering ECE training. The above observations were made in general ECE settings. However, these findings motivated the researcher to investigate whether or not inclusive ECE centres in primary schools in Kabwe District had teachers trained to handle CSEN.

Mitiku, Alemu & Mengsitu (2014) conducted a study which assessed the challenges and opportunities to implement inclusive education in selected primary schools of the North Gondar Zone in Ethiopia. In the study, seventy one participants were sampled using systematic random sampling to give fair and equal chance of selection. With regard to gathering information,

instruments such as questionnaires, structures interviews and observation were used to collect data. The study's findings revealed that although there were some opportunities that supported inclusive education, it could not be taken as a guaranty due to lack of awareness, commitment and collaboration. The study also showed that challenges outweighed the opportunities on the full implementation of inclusive education. The above study's findings act like a spring board to the current study as it has highlighted some opportunities and challenges of inclusive education in Ethiopian primary schools. However, the current study was conducted in Zambia and what was not known was whether or not the same opportunities and challenges were prevailing in Zambian primary schools on the provision of ECE to children with special educational needs.

Another study done by Mandyata (2011) on the development and requirements for inclusive schools in Chongwe District of Zambia noted that, before developing inclusive education, stakeholders in schools, district, provincial and national levels need to examine their own attitudes towards persons with SEN. All the stakeholders must be committed to inclusive education in regular schools before conducting sensitization to increase public awareness on inclusive practices in schools and surrounding communities. The sensitization should be aimed at making the public more informed, sensitive and responsive to the needs of such children in schools. While Mandyata (2011)'s study focused on the development and requirements for inclusive schools in Chongwe District of Zambia which involved stakeholders such as those from schools, district, provincial and national levels as being key participants, the current study just invoked on the stakeholders from schools and district levels to provide views on the provision of ECE to children with special educational needs in Kabwe District of Zambia.

Malnutrition and ill-health are factors associated with the socio-economic factor. Van de Linde (2005) states that these factors can significantly damage the cognitive processing ability of children. Children whose processing capacity is impacted by ill-health and malnutrition may require more hours to learn various skills, as such; implementation of ECE may prove critical especially in low income countries. Similarly, Kelly (1991) reported that children with disabilities especially girls were victims of poverty. Their parents in most cases were poor and had to struggle to feed and clothe them. The report by Kelly (1991) is more restricted on young girls with disabilities whereas the current study sought to investigate pre-school children with disabilities in selected primary schools of Kabwe District. Socio-economic difference affecting effective implementation of ECE also cuts across regions, with some being libelled

‘marginalized’. Regional disparities have significance in facilitating access to ECE where environment levels in rural and marginalized areas are low in comparison to those in the urban areas. Most children from marginalized communities suffer lack of access to ECE. Moberg & Kasonde Ng’andu (2001) reported that 40% of school children with disabilities in Western and North Western provinces of Zambia dropped out of school system because they could not afford transport to school, food, and uniforms. Those in rural schools had to walk an average of 11 kilometres to schools. This situation became almost impossible to children with mobility challenges. The above report was done in Western and North Western provinces; however, the current study was done in Central province and Kabwe District in particular.

2.4 Measures that can be put in Place to Overcome Challenges Faced in Inclusive ECE Centres

Studies have shown that quality education can only be released and sustained if teachers have good and practicing knowledge which are developed through strong effective initial teacher training and on-going professional development (Kennedy, 2001). These trainings can be achieved in the teacher training colleges, universities and in schools while teachers are in employment. Dutcher (2004) also documented that teacher training is the key to the sustainability of any education programme. Bradshaw & Mundia (2006) further observed that training was one major factor that may foster a positive attitude of teachers towards inclusive education. Through training, teachers get to know more about the characteristics of each type of disability and how students with SEN can learn better. Through training, teachers also get to know more about policies associated with inclusive education and appropriate ways to address learning issues. Apart from teacher training, MoE (2016) states that all educational institutions offering special education shall be mandated to conduct Continuous Development Programmes on SEN for administrators, academic as well as auxiliary staff. These meetings in schools help the staff to learn more on special education and find means and ways to overcome the challenges faced in this area. These measures proved to be useful to the current study because inclusive education is part of the general education and is driven by the same teachers. When teachers are trained, they shall be able to overcome most of the challenges faced in the teaching field like being resourceful and innovative in teaching. Training will equally equip teachers on how to handle CSEN. Klaus (2003) noted that producing teaching and learning aids locally can help in addressing the shortage of teaching and learning materials. This is in line with the skills taught in

all the colleges where trainee teachers are told to be resourceful by using local materials which are cheap and can be found everywhere. From the above measures, one may want to know whether they can also apply to overcome challenges faced in inclusive ECE centres.

Heneveld & Craig (1996) recognized parents and community support as one of the key factors in determining school effectiveness in Sub-Saharan Africa. For schools to run effectively the input of parents is vital this may be the reason schools have Parents Teachers' Association which makes it possible for the school and parents come together to discuss and solve school challenges. These findings were later confirmed by another empirical study by the World Bank of Africa (1999) on community participation which established that, parents are usually concerned about their children's education and often willing to provide assistance that can improve the education delivery. The study further noted that the community can help in identifying and addressing factors that contribute to educational challenges, low participation and poor performance (The World Bank, 1999). Kandall, (2007) also noted that parental and community involvement in schools affects quality of education in a number of ways. These include managing students' attendance and homework, providing resources which are (labour and money) for school infrastructure and other services. Studies have further shown that working with parents helps teachers to come to a deeper appreciation of children's needs hence they may easily respond to the needs of the learners. It appears that the above studies did not take into account the roles parents and the community can play to overcome the challenges faced by inclusive ECE centres. Therefore, this study sought to address the above gap.

Wamahiu (2012) also observed in a study in Kenya, on influence of other stakeholders in the implementation of inclusive education that P.T.A's bring parents and teachers together to improve on the quality of education through enhancing accountability. The degree of parents and other players' involvement varies and may include taking decisions, promoting communication, organizing educational events and fund raising. To bring equity in education at the local level, community participation is very vital. Education programmes and activities can only be successful when the community is invited to participate. In this regard, community participation connotes joint ownership, responsibility, decision making and accountability in education development (Kisanji, 1999).

Kasanji (1999) revealed that in Botswana, the Ministry of Education had set up School Intervention Teams (SITs) within schools in order to help teachers to respond to the learning

needs of individual children. SITs are a school-based resource service whose membership consists of the head teacher, senior teachers, a social worker and the child's parents. The SITs were set up in schools to avoid the unnecessary referral of children with relatively mild learning challenges to the Central Resource Centre (CRC) for special education services. Kasanji (1999) further explains that, the SITs has helped the schools in Botswana become more self-sufficient and more skilful in managing children experiencing learning difficulties and those with mild impairments. Since it has been estimated that 80% of disabled children have mild or moderate impairments (Jones & Stubbs, 1999), it is essential that all teachers in all schools feel confident about meeting the needs of these children. It appears the above programme was done in Botswana and in general school settings and not in ECE centres. Therefore, this study sought to address the above gap.

Fundraising is another measure most schools use in order to overcome challenges they are facing. Maruma (2005) did a study on benefits of fundraising in South Africa and observed that fundraising is not only about money, but it is also about the numbers of supporters. Clark & Norton (1999) stated that some companies were unwilling to give money, but would consider helping in kind. Fundraising enhanced the status of the school since funds raised contributed to better the facilities and solve other challenges the school is facing (Biscoff, Du Plessis & Smith, 2004). Maruma (2004) further observed that fundraising enabled public schools to expand and develop their work and improve services in order to meet the challenges of the future.

In addition to the measures, MoE (2006) states that Non-Governmental Organizations and the community should also supplement the efforts of the government in supporting the implementation of inclusive schooling programme. Such support would minimize the problem of inadequate funding by the government to schools and in turn more CSEN may access education. Savolaine (2000) also reported that in Finland, infrastructure was unsuitable to children with special educational needs but nongovernmental organizations came on board to build new schools, made school infrastructure accessible to CSEN at all levels of education, provided business to vulnerable children and worked with professionals in public awareness on inclusive education.

2.5 Summary

The above chapter presented a review of literature perceived to be of importance to the study. Therefore, various case studies conducted in both developed and developing nations were examined in order to offer rich experiences to the current study. Hence, the following chapter outlines the methodology used to carry out this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter focuses on the methodology employed in carrying out the research. It starts with research design, the location, and population of the study, the sample size, sampling technique, sampling procedure, research instruments, data analysis, ethical considerations and ends with the summary.

3.1 Research Design

Kombo & Tromp (2006) describe a research design as a plan on how a study will be carried out or a detailed outline of how a research will take place. In view of this, the study used a qualitative approach or method in which a descriptive research design was utilized with the intention to understand the in-depth information on people's beliefs, attitudes, opinions, habits or any of the variety of education or social issues (Orodho & Kombo, 2002). In this manner, descriptive research design was ideal for the study as it guided the researcher to understand the participants' opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards provision of ECE to children with special educational needs in inclusive primary school of Kabwe District.

3.2 Location

According to Msabila and Nalaila (2013), there are various factors that can influence the researcher's choice of study area among them are the nature and incidence of the problem, research time frame, and data accessibility, client's interest and instructions, resource availability, goals and objectives of the study.

Therefore, the study was conducted in Kabwe District in Central Province of Zambia. Six Government Primary Schools with ECE centres were selected. Out of the 13 government primary schools in the District with ECE centres, the researcher selected only 6 for the purpose of the research and the choosing of this location was because it was one of the Districts in Central Province where ECE centres were recently introduced in public primary schools. Besides it was a cost effective measure as the researcher came from the same area. Purposive sampling was used in selecting the Schools because it enabled the researcher to select schools with ECE centres. The following are the Government Schools offering ECE in the District; (1) Lukanga,

(2) Kabwe Trust (3) Mwashu (4) Sacred Heart (5) Chindwin (6) Angelina Tembo (7) Muwowo (8) Kasanda Malombe (9) Kang'omba (10) Makululu C (11) David Ramushu (12) Justine Kabwe (13) New Mpima Diary.

From the above list of schools offering ECE, the following 6 schools with ECE centres were visited and all the centres had CSEN with mild to moderate disabilities; (1) Muwowo (2) Kasanda Malombe (3) Kang'omba (4) Justin Kabwe (5) Kabwe Trust (6) New Mpima Diary.

3.3 Target Population

Kombo and Tromp (2009) refer to population as “a group of individuals, objectives or items from which samples are taken for measurements.” Equally Fraenkel and Wallen (1993) perceive research population as the group of interest to the researcher, the group to whom the researcher would like to generalize the results of the study. In line with the above, the target population for the study included all the parents to pre-schoolers with SEN, pre-school teachers, and primary school administrators in the District. The Education Standards Officers were also included because of being educational policy makers in the District.

3.4 Sample Size

A sample is a small proportion of the selected population for observation and analysis. By observing the characteristics of a sample which is diverse, representative, accessible and knowledgeable in a study area, findings can be generalized (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). The total sample size for this study was 25 participants drawn from 6 schools. This consisted of six (6) head teachers, twelve (12) ECE class teachers, six (6) parents and one (1) Education Standards Officer for Special Education (ESO-SP.ED) from the District office. The table (1.0) below shows the composition of the study sample.

Table 1: Description of Participants

| Category of participants | Number of participants | Gender distribution |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Education standards officer for special education | 01 | 01 Female |
| Head teachers | 06 from six selected schools | 03 Males 03 Females |
| ECE class teachers | 12 from six selected schools | 02 Males 10 Females |
| Parents | 06 | 02 Males 04 Females |
| Totals | 25 | 25 |

Source: Field work, 2016

3.5 Sampling Technique

The study employed purposive sampling technique to arrive at both the participants and schools. According to Oliver (2006), purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling in which decisions concerning the individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher, based upon a variety of criteria which may include specialist knowledge of the research issue, capacity and willingness to participate in the research. Achola and Bless (1988) stated that purposive sampling method is based on the judgment of the researcher regarding the characteristics of a representative sample. Furthermore, Kombo and Tromp (2006) state that purposive sampling target only the people believed to be reliable for the study.

Therefore, the researcher used her judgment and knowledge in selecting the categories of participants. This is because the researcher was wholly aware of the required characteristics of participants to provide meaningful insights on the topic at hand. In this case, purposive sampling technique was ideal for this study as it was used to select all the participants who included ECE teachers, head teachers of primary schools with ECE centres, parents of CSEN and the ESO-SP.ED from the DEBS' office who were deemed to be potential participants with rich information on the provision of ECE to CSEN.

3.6 Research Instruments

The study used semi-structured interview guides, un-structured questionnaires and an observation check list to collect data from the participants.

3.6.1 Semi- Structured Interview Guides

Semi- interview guides were used to collect data from the ESO SP.ED, parents to CSEN and the head teachers from the primary schools with ECE centres selected. According to Sidhu (2006), an interview is a two way method which permits an exchange of ideas and information. In an interview, the investigator gathers data from the participants in face to face contact.

3.6.2 Un-structured Questionnaires

Unstructured questionnaires were used to collect data from ECE teachers. According to Sidhu (2006), unstructured questionnaires are usually formulated around open questions. Open questions may give more valid data, as respondents can say what is important to them and express it their own words. Open-ended questions, as they are also known, produce a higher cognitive load in the sense that the respondent has to think harder to arrive at an answer. Open-ended questions were used so as to include more information from the participants such as feelings, attitudes, and their understanding of the subject.

3.6.3 Observation Checklist

An observation checklist is a list of things that a researcher or observer is going to look at when observing a class or the environment (Gall et al, 2003). The list may have been prepared by the observer. Observation checklist not only gives an observer a structure and framework for an observation but also serves as a contact of understanding what goes on regarding the issues at hand (Gall et al., 2003). In this case, the Observation Checklist was used by the researcher in order to understand and capture all the teaching and learning activities concerning CSEN in the 6 selected primary schools holistically. Although this study depended much on data collection through interviews and questionnaires, the Observation Checklist also contributed meaningfully for the purpose of providing a broader perspective to the study. The observation checklist functioned as a supplement of data which helped the researcher to get a holistic picture and clearer view of the study. The observational tool was a list of key things which guided the

observations. The list is attached in the appendix 5. The observations gave the researcher an opportunity to experience the situations with her own perceptions, which were fruitful for the study at large.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis refers to examining what has been collected in a survey or experiment and making deductions and inferences. It is a manipulation of the collected data for the purpose of drawing conclusions that reflect on the interest, ideas and theories that initiated the study (Ng'andu, 2014). In view of this, data which was collected from the informants was analysed using thematic analysis. The analysis involved grouping the emerging themes together by going through the content of the in-depth explanations which was given by the key informants and present them in a narrative form according to their patterns.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

In this study, ethical considerations were strictly followed. Firstly, a written permission was sought from relevant authorities from the University of Zambia clearance ethics committee. Further, permission was sought from District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) and from the respective school administrator of the schools involved in the study. Consent was also obtained from the actual participants before collecting data that included ESO SP.ED, Head Teachers, ECE teachers and Parents. The researcher further assured the participants that the data collected was to be used for academic purpose only and that the element of confidentiality was also highly observed by using pseudonyms for the schools which participated in the study so as to hide their identity. The participants were fully informed about the aim of the study and given the leeway to withdraw at any time they felt like as participation in the study was done on voluntary basis.

3.9 Summary

The above chapter of the study has thoroughly presented methodological aspect of the study with regards to research design, location, target population, sample size, sampling technique, and sampling procedure, instrument for data collection, data analysis and ethical consideration. Having presented the methodological aspect of the study, the next chapter presents the findings of this study in line with the research questions.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The previous chapter presented the methodology employed in the study. It consisted and discussed the research design, location, target population, sample size, sampling technique, and sampling procedure, instruments for data collection, data analysis and ethical consideration that were used to collect data. This chapter therefore presents the findings of study in line with the themes which were derived from the research questions. These were: (1) Availability of ECE to CSEN in selected primary schools of Kabwe District (2) Benefits of ECE to CSEN in selected primary schools of Kabwe District (3) Challenges faced by Inclusive ECE centres in selected primary schools of Kabwe District (4) Measures that have been put in place to overcome challenges faced by Inclusive ECE centres in selected primary schools of Kabwe District?

4.1 Availability of ECE to Children with Special Educational Needs

Table 2: *Enrolment Levels of CSEN in ECE Centres.*

| Serial Number | NAME OF SCHOOL | BOYS | GIRLS | DISABILITY | TOTAL |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|--------------|---|--------------|
| 1 | School- A | 0 | 1 | Healthy impairment Intellectual | 1 |
| 2 | School- B | 0 | 1 | Low vision(<i>albinism</i>) | 1 |
| 3 | School- C | 1 | 0 | Physical Hyperactivity | 1 |
| 4 | School- D | 1 | 0 | Physical (hydrocephalus) behavioral challenges | 1 |
| 5 | School- E | 1 | 1 | Intellectual Hearing | 2 |
| 6 | School- F | 2 | 1 | Physical Hyperactivity Vision | 3 |
| | TOTAL | 5 | 4 | | 9 |

Source: Field work (2016)

With regard to the availability of ECE to CSEN in selected primary schools of Kabwe District, the participants shared the same views. All the 25 participants indicated having knowledge on inclusive ECE and those children with mild to moderate disabilities were being enrolled in ECE centres. The types of disabilities found in the ECE centres visited ranged from behavioural, physical, intellectual, healthy, vision and hearing challenges. The following are the enrolment levels in the ECE Centres visited: 4 ECE Centres had a child each with SEN whereas the 5th

Centre had 2 and the 6th one had 3. It was also reported by 3 participants that these CSEN are fond of stopping school even when their parents are talked to. One female teacher had this to say;

I had 3 learners with SEN but two stopped coming to school. Their parents were talked to, up to now these children do not come to school. The other parent recently came to report that the child will just start school again next year.

The following are the responses of the participants on the availability of ECE to CSEN.

ESO-SP.ED Views on Availability of ECE to CSEN

In view of this, the ESO-SP. ED explained by saying the following;

Early Childhood Education Centres have started enrolling CSEN who have mild to moderate challenges, since these are able to learn when mixed with their peers although they still need extra attention from their teachers. A good number of ECE centres have children with special needs ranging from physical, behaviour, hearing, visual and health challenges.

Head Teachers' Views on the Availability of ECE to CSEN

One male head teacher said the following;

Actually, at this school, we have three learners with special educational needs. One boy is physically handicapped, it appears one leg is shorter than the other and this gives him a lot of difficulty in walking and jumping. The other boy is hyperactive as he cannot sit in one place for a long time. The third one is a girl who has severe eye problems although she can see but with difficulties. Her eyes are ever red and she is always rubbing them.

Teacher's Views on the Availability of ECE to CSEN

A male teacher had the following to say on the availability of ECE to CSEN;

I have a very short boy in my class with a hump on his back. The boy was delayed to be enrolled in school because of his height. The boy is very short, hyperactive but

very intelligent. This boy is also quarrelsome in that other classmates do not like to sit near him in the classroom.

Parents' views on the availability of ECE to CSEN

One parent to a child with educational special needs had this to say;

My child who is a girl had suffered from epilepsy since her childhood and this has made her to look as if she is not normal. Her young brother is in now in grade one. She is very slow both at home and at school the way she does her work compared even to the younger brother. But I was encouraged to enrol her at this pre-school when I heard about inclusive ECE during the P.T.A. meeting. She is very happy now as she used to cry whenever she saw her younger brother being taken to school.

4.1.1 How Schools Advertised SEN Enrolments?

Another question asked to the Head Teachers was how schools advertised SEN enrolment. All the Head Teachers responded that P.T.A meetings and church gathering were ways they use to inform parents on pre-school and Grade 1 enrolment which also includes those with SEN. Only 1 out of the 6 head teachers interviewed added the use of the local radio station in disseminating the news on pre-school and grade one enrolment to the parents. The following were the responses of head teachers on how they advertised SEN enrolments in their respective ECE centres.

Head Teacher's Views on how Schools Advertise SEN Enrolments.

One male head teacher had this to say;

Towards the end of the each year, we usually hold a P.T.A Meeting where a number of school issues are discussed with the parents including the enrolment of pre-school and Grade 1 learners. It is at this very meeting where I take advantage of talking to parents on the importance of enrolling CSEN. I do explain the importance of inclusive education to them.

Another a female head teacher who said that she also did special education at ZAMISE said the following;

Apart from using the P.T.A. gathering to enrol preschool learners including those with SEN, as a school, we also make use of our local radio station to announce to the community the enrolments and we also discuss the importance of enrolling CSEN into pre-school. As a head teacher, I have learnt a lot on Inclusive Education and its importance and I usually educate parents and teachers on Special Education.

4.1.2 Availability of Teaching and Learning Materials in ECE Centres

A further question was asked to the teachers and head teachers to find out how equipped the ECE Centres were in terms of teaching and learning materials. Only two ECE teachers from the same school out of the twelve ECE teachers indicated that their Centre had adequate teaching and learning materials for nearly all the children including those with CSEN. This school is said to be under the mines and has school partners abroad. The other eleven ECE teachers had challenges with teaching and learning materials in their ECE Centres.

Teachers' Views on Teaching and Learning Materials in ECE Centres

In view of this, one female class teacher had this to say;

This ECE Centre has very few teaching and learning materials compared to the number of learners in the classroom. In most cases, I just manage to make one or two to use as teaching aids. Pre-school learners need a lot of toys for play activities which they are denied. The few toys available at times just cause fights amongst the learners instead of learning.

Additionally, one male teacher indicated the following;

I have about 48 learners in my class and have no co-teacher. I really fail to improvise learning aids for this huge number of learners. This challenge of inadequate teaching and learning materials really makes my teaching difficult and tiresome.

Teachers' Views on Teaching and Learning from the Well-Stocked ECE Centres.

The following were the views from one of the teachers from the well-stocked ECE Centre with teaching and learning materials;

We are lucky at this Centre in that the school is attached to the mines association which helps the school in so many ways, and also the response from parents on school fees is very good. The school at least manages to get the required materials for teaching the learners. We are also given items like manila papers, markers, and other items to make teaching and learning materials locally.

Head Teachers' Views on Teaching and Learning Materials in ECE Centres

Head teachers being the implementers of educational policies in schools, it was cardinal to hear from them as well regarding the availability of teaching and learning materials. When asked whether or not there were enough teaching and learning materials in their ECE centres, the majority except one said that the teaching and learning materials were not adequate. To support this, one head teacher contributed the following remarks:

It is a bit of a challenge to have CSEN in these ECE centres without adequate teaching and learning materials to support them. In this school, there are so many children enrolled against very few teaching and learning materials. Parents refuse to assist the school especially in monetary form saying that it is free education.

Another head teacher indicated the following over the challenge of teaching and learning materials;

With the inadequate funding in ECE programs by the government, we fail as a school to buy all the needed learning and teaching materials compared to the numbers of learners in the two classes we have. The number shot close to 80, so we had to make two classes for easier teaching. Even when parents are asked to pay something through P.T.A. agreement to cushion the problem, the response is very poor.

One head teacher whose school was well equipped with the teaching and learning materials had this to say;

This school is attached to the mines' school association on the Copper Belt which helps to fund the school including the ECE Centre. The response on school fees from the parents is also very good. This is an agreement reached when there is a P.T.A. on how much each child should pay to alleviate challenges faced by the school. The

school has also partnered with some schools abroad which once in a while help us with playing materials. These are the items the school has under the ECE Centre: crayons, assorted toys, balls, building blocks, assorted charts, games, jigsaw puzzles, number cards, story book, pencils and assorted learning cards. Teachers are also supported with materials to make more teaching and learning aids.

4.1.3 How CSEN are Identified in ECE Centres?

Learner assessment is vital in the education of CSEN. As such teachers need to assess learners to ascertain their needs and nature of disability. There are a number of assessments a teacher can employ in the classroom to determine CSEN such as observations, screening and information from parents. In line with this, the views of teachers were obtained.

Teachers' Views on the Nature of Assessment for CSEN.

Teachers were asked to state the type of assessment employed to assess CSEN as such; their responses are as captured in the figure below

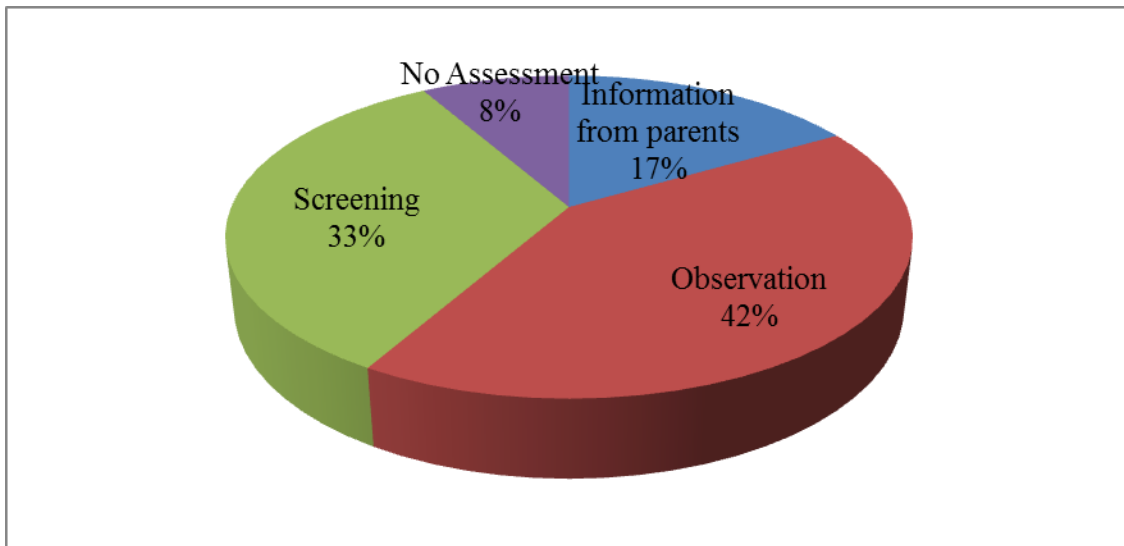


Figure 1: Teacher's Views on the Nature of Assessment for CSEN

The results obtained on the teachers' responses were shown in figure 1 above such that 33% indicated the use of a screening tool namely; Early Grade Assessment Tool, 17% that CSEN were assessed based on the information obtained from parents and medical reports, 8% of the

participants indicated that there was no assessment of the children. The majority, 42% indicated that assessment for children was done by observation. With regard to those who mostly used observation, it was confirmed by one female teacher from one of the schools who said the following;

The school has no screening tools as a result I just use observation methods as I teach to tell SEN in my learners.

With regard to the 33% who used the Early Grade Assessment Tool, one female teacher emphasized that;

I use the Early Grade Assessment Tool to assess my children but the only problem is that, it is too bulky for my class which has about 50 learners. I was lucky to be one of those who were trained on how to use the Early Grade Assessment Tool but as I have already said, it is too bulky for our classes hence other teachers do not use it.

A male teacher from among those who used information from parents in assessing their learners justified such a response by explaining that;

This school has no assessment tools as a result I use parents to get the necessary information about the child. Thereafter, I observe the child.

Further, one female parent shared variable information in support of teachers obtaining information about CSEN from their parents and medical reports, this parent explained that;

My child suffered from severe malaria when she was about two years. This was not noticed at the clinic I took her and was just given some pain killers. I had gone to the farm to do some maize harvesting. After two weeks of not responding to the treatment, I decided to come back to town, so that the child is taken to the hospital. It was at the hospital where I was told that my child had severe malaria and she was admitted. She also started to experience seizures. The hearing problem started after she was given the malaria drugs. She can hear but one has to shout a bit.

As for the teachers that did not assess the learners, it was clearly mentioned during interviews that they have no knowledge on assessment of learners with disabilities in school. One female teacher said the following;

I thought screening of learners is done at the beginning of grade one only; as a result, I did not do it to my learners although I have a child who doesn't look to be normal like other child. This child cannot do what his peers are able to do and lacks concentration. I have summoned the parents to come over to school so that I also learn from them about the child's behaviour.

Some of the participants lamented major challenges faced in assessment of children such as lack of assessment tools and in some cases lack of trained personnel to perform the assessment. As such, observation method is mostly used due to the mentioned challenges as a result only visible and common disabilities were identified.

4.4 Benefits of ECE to Children with Special Educational Needs

The study sought to establish benefits of ECE to CSEN in selected primary schools of Kabwe District.

All the participants indicated that including CSEN at ECE level has benefits. When asked to state the benefits of ECE to CSEN their views were as follows;

The ESO-SP.ED was interviewed in this study as one of the key policy makers especially in the area of special education in the District. In so doing, the information gathered from her was of great value in giving direction to this study that investigated the provision early childhood education to CSEN.

The ESO-SP.ED reported that children with special educational needs get an organized type of education at a tender age which helps them prosper in education and life at large. She further said that they are exposed to school environment at an early age hence, they find few difficulties in grade one and later grades. The other benefit indicated was that early experiences help so much in children brain development

Early Organized Education

The ESO-SP.ED from the District office indicated the following;

CSEN when included in ordinary ECE centres get an organized type of education at a tender age which in turn helps them prosper in education and life at large.

Early organized type of education helps these children to adapt easily in the later grades and they also come to understand the meaning of education at an early stage. ECE experience also lays a strong foundation for success in academic, social circles, as well as in the world of work. It is this very time that their special needs are identified through screening then appropriate intervention is done at an early age.

Early School Exposure

The ESO- SP went on to indicate the following;

The other cardinal benefit CSEN get from inclusive ECE is the exposure to school environment and away from their home at a tender age. They learn to be independent from their parents care and start interacting with different people. School environment exposes them to different places like the library, School tuck shop, play grounds, communal toilets to mention a few. In all these different places, CSEN learn a lot of skills.

Head teachers being the policy implementers in schools, it was vital and suitable to hear from them in order to appreciate the benefits of including CSEN at ECE level. As such, they reported that one of benefit among others of ECE to children with special educational needs was early identification done in the early years of the children's education which helps the teachers to offer them appropriate assistance.

Early Intervention

One head teacher indicated the following;

Early identification yields early intervention which really helps CSEN to prosper in their education because they start getting correct help to their problems at an early stage. It is believed that early intervention can improve the Childs problem. Their teachers are able to plan for their education nicely because the area of concern is well known.

Early Experiences

One head teacher indicated the following on the benefits of ECE to CSEN;

Early experiences are very important in that they help in building the child's brain for future activities. A very good example is the acquisition of language due to early exposure and interactions with their teachers and other peers.

Early Identification of Disabilities

Another head teacher said the following on early identification;

When a problem is tackled early, the results are really overwhelming. This applies to CSEN, if identified early; they can learn and prosper just like those children without SEN. Tender brains are easy to correct as brain development is most extensive in the early years of life.

Early Acquisition of Skills

One head teacher had this to say;

ECE programs help children to acquire skills early which help them be skilled citizen in future. It helps in having a nation with educated citizens who help in the development of the nation.

Teachers being the implementers of educational policies at classroom level were also considered to be key informants in this study as they had daily interactions with children during teaching and learning sessions. Concerning the benefits of ECE to children with special educational needs, teachers said that CSEN have opportunities to develop their language, social, physical and cognitive abilities. They also learn pre-skills in the subjects to be learnt later. They further said that these domains are developed when children are learning together, share ideas, play and learn from each other as they come from different environments.

CSEN learn Pre-skills

In this instance, one female teacher said the following remarks:

Because of ECE, children with special educational needs are able to learn pre-skills in different subjects which act as a foundation before entering grade one. This helps them to breakthrough in reading and writing. This academic achievement helps them find something to do in future and to avoid being criminals.

CSEN Develop in Social, Physical, Cognitive and Language areas.

Another female teacher had this to say on the benefits of inclusive ECE to CSEN;

The goodness of ECE to all the children is that they really develop in different areas such as social, physical, cognitive, and language. ECE also improves children's gross and fine motor abilities due to continuous play activities they do. These areas get developed in the initial stages of education before they cross over to grade one and they encounter fewer difficulties in their later learning.

Stigmatization is reduced

A female teacher indicated the following;

As children play together in an inclusive setting, children with disabilities are less stigmatized and with time, they are socially accepted. The love for each other develops as they interact with one another. Through play, these children increase the ability to learn to help each other which greatly help CSEN to learn.

Curriculum is broad in Inclusive School

In addition, one male teacher said the following;

Children with disabilities when included in ECE, learn a lot of things compared to their friends in special schools or special units. Their curriculum is broad and advanced compared to the one taught in special schools. CSEN in inclusive settings tend to be advanced academic wise compared to their friends.

It was also cardinal to collect views on the benefits of ECE to children with special educational needs from their parents. In line with this, parents reported that ECE benefits CSEN in so many ways which included the following; it brings different families of CSEN together where they can

share ideas, inclusion sends a message to the community that all children are valued and welcome in schools, makes them feel less isolated and imparts CSEN with daily living skills.

Socialization is encouraged

One male parent who had a child with SEN indicated the following;

I really feel happy for my girl to be at this pre-school because the loneliness we used to see in her when the friends go to school is over. We were planning to take her to school when she is much bigger because her behaviour is not very ok. This time, she is also happy and we are seeing a lot of improvement as parents in academic and social areas. I also share with other parents in the community about the importance of ECE to children with disabilities.

Furthermore, one female parent indicated the following;

I was told about the pre-school that accepts CSEN by my friend who has a granddaughter here. The granddaughter is a sickling and a double orphan who lost the mother just after being delivered. Home based care people told her about this pre-school and she also told me because my daughter has epilepsy and this condition makes her look as if she is not very normal. She got burnt with fire at the age of four that made her hand disfigured. I am happy because she has started doing small things like combing her hair, brushing her teeth, lifting items with care when sent. This is a big achievement.

4.5 Challenges Faced by Inclusive ECE Centres.

The study sought to establish challenges faced by ECE centres in the provision of inclusive education in selected primary schools of Kabwe District. Below are the participants' responses;

All the participants in the study which included the ESO-SP.ED, head teachers, teachers and parents indicated the challenges they face in inclusive ECE centres. The ESO-SP.ED who represented the Ministry at the District level indicated that the district faced a lot of challenges, among them being lack of qualified ECE teachers in special education, finances to construct child friendly and universal ECE centres, provision of adequate and appropriate teaching and learning materials, and transport for monitoring the ECE centres regularly.

Lack of Transport at the District to Monitor the ECE Centres

ESO-SP.ED said that;

Lack of transport makes it difficult for us at the district to monitor the ECE centres regularly in the district. As you may be aware that Monitoring is very important as it enables the District office to evaluate teachers' teaching and know where the ECE centres need help. However, in this case, it difficult to embark on monitoring tours regularly due to lack of transport.

With regard to the challenges faced by inclusive ECE centres, the head teachers who participated in the study indicated almost the same views which are inadequate funding towards the ECE programs, low participation by parents in school activities and lack of qualified ECE teachers in special education.

Inadequate Government Funding

One male head teacher had this to say;

The funding we are getting from the government is not enough to cater for all the necessary activities done under the ECE program. This section in school needs a lot of things to keep it running but due to inadequate funding, most of the things are not available. Different materials like toys, picture books, building blocks are required in the section but this school has only a few of these materials. The other problem is that, the same inadequate funding is not given consistently. The same little funding has no proper schedule for receiving it. At times, a term can elapse with no funding making the work of the teachers extremely difficult.

Lack of Special Education ECE Teachers

A female head teacher indicated the following;

There is a problem qualified ECE teachers who have the knowledge of special education. Most ECE trained teachers at this school have upgraded themselves and upon completion, they request to teach in upper classes. This trend has brought a shortage of trained ECE teachers in the school. When asked as to why they quit

teaching at pre-school, they say other teachers looked down up them for teaching in the pre-school section.

Lack of Parental Involvement in School Development

One male head teacher indicated the following;

We are experiencing very low turnout from parents each time we call them upon for a meeting to discuss how we can bring our heads together so that we see how we can develop our school in ways like building, or fundraising. Many are the times when such important school meetings fail to take place due to poor attendance. At times, the meetings take off but with very few parents. For example, a meeting was held with parents to build a modern ECE classroom and parents were asked to contribute front materials like sand, crushed stones, blocks or in monetary form but to date very few parents have responded.

With regard to the ECE teachers, the ones that handle all the learners every day, they raised the following challenges; overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching and learning materials and unfavourable infrastructure.

Over Enrolment

One female teacher pointed out the following;

I have about 45 learners in my class and with mixed back grounds. Out of this number, I have learners who are extremely slow in learning and most of the time; they require my presence or rather one to one type of teaching. This number really affects my teaching and class management. At times, my teaching moral is disturbed due to fatigue, although I really have a passion for the young ones. Many are the times I become very tired and fail to help the slow learners on one to one learning basis.

Unfriendly Infrastructure

Another ECE male class teacher had this to say;

The classroom I am using to teach the pre-school learners is an ordinary classroom meant for older pupils. The desks and the black board are all meant for big learners. The floor in the classroom is worn out with a lot of potholes, posing a danger to the young ones. I also fail to decorate the classroom with teaching aids because the same room is used by another senior class when we knock off. The senior pupils do pull down the learning aids once stuck on the walls.

Inadequate Teaching and Learning Materials

One of the female teachers noted the following;

Due to over enrolment, there is a big challenge where teaching and learning materials are concerned. For example, I have about 50 learners in my class, while there are less than 20 toys for the learners. This applies to other materials like books, building blocks and so on. The playground has equally very few playing equipment for the learners which makes them fight, whenever they are taken outside to play. Because of this, I usually avoid taking them to the play park.

Parents to children with SEN also indicated that they too faced a number of challenges which were long distance to pre-schools, as only few primary schools were offering ECE services in the town, challenge of escorting their children to and from school every day on foot, lack of sufficient knowledge on inclusive education and the problem of providing packed food on every day basis which some parents cannot afford.

Lack of Sufficient Information on Inclusive ECE.

On lack of sufficient information on inclusive ECE, one parent was quoted saying;

The information on inclusive ECE program is not well spread to all the people out there as some are still keeping their children with SEN in their homes. Only us with children in primary section and attend school meetings are aware while those without primary school going children are not aware. I came to learn about this program of including such children last year when I attended P.T.A meeting at this school.

Lack of School Transport

A female parent also indicated that;

Escorting my child who is physically handicapped every day to and from school is quite challenging for me as I am just a widow and no formal employment. I am a marketer who needs to go early to the market to buy merchandise to re-sell. The nature of my business at times makes me not to take my child to school in order for me to go and raise money for feeding at home. The school is quite far from home and I need to take the child in the morning and pick him up after school. The nearby primary school in my area has no ECE centre; hence I had to enrol my child here.

Poverty levels

Further justification was given by one parent on poverty levels and daily provision of packed foods by the following statement;

At times I fail to provide food for my child and this makes her not to attend classes at times. I know my child well in that she cannot stay for hours without food. At times my child demands for expensive foods which I cannot afford like chips and chicken. She tells me that her friends come with nice food every day and not the popcorn I usually give her. Many are the times she refuses to go to school when her demands are not met.

4.6 Measures Put in Place to Overcome Challenges Faced in Inclusive ECE Centres.

With regard to the measures that have been put in place to overcome challenges faced by inclusive ECE centres, the respondents who included the ESO-SP.ED, head teachers, ECE class teachers and the parents indicated the following; There is an on-going district sensitization on inclusive education in general and inclusive ECE. This is mainly done by the officials from the district office with the help of the district radio stations available in the district. Schools also revealed that they are making use of P.T.A. meetings and open days to educate the community on the importance of inclusive ECE and to communicate the challenges schools are facing so that the community can come on board to help. These gatherings are also helping in increasing the enrolment levels of CSEN after educating the parents on the importance of inclusive education.

It was also found out that schools hold Continuing Professional Development meetings (CPDs) where the teachers meet to discuss successes and challenges they face in their various classroom and share on how to solve these challenges. These lesson demonstrations are done according to the grades, coupled with making teaching and learning aids. During the lesson demonstrations, it was reported that much of the attention is also given to the CSEN. Schools have put teachers with special education knowledge to act as consultants on special issues. In schools where there are special units, such teachers are put in charge of special issues. Head teachers revealed that they do sponsor teachers to attend workshops on inclusive and special education and thereafter, come to orient the other teachers. Schools are also fundraising with the help of the parents. For example, parents are asked to contribute different items to the school which are resold and the money goes to the school.

Radio Programmes.

During the interview, the ESO-SP.ED indicated the following on the measures being done by the District concerning the enrolment levels;

As a district, we do have radio programs from time to time to educate the community on the importance of inclusive education which now starts from pre-school. Last time I was on air for the same program was last year (2016) around October before the recruitment of the new entrants in primary schools. Parents were encouraged to take their children with disabilities to the nearest school for enrolment and to be advised accordingly by the specialists' teachers. These air programs have proved to be working as schools have started receiving such children although the numbers are still very minimal. During these programs, parents are educated on the rights to education for every child and that no school should deny a child a school place due to one's disability. Parents are also encouraged to take keen interest in their children's school work like home work which is now a school policy.

Orientation workshops on Inclusive ECE

The ESO-SP.ED went further to explain on the workshops held for ECE teachers in the district;

The district had about two workshops last year where ECE teachers were oriented on inclusive education and some simple screening methods were taught. Teachers

were also asked to refer the learners whose challenges were beyond what they can do. The district has an assessment centre which helps in the issues where school cannot manage before the child is sent to the hospital if need be.

Opening more ECE Centres

In addition, the ESO-SP.ED indicated the following measure on the challenge of overcrowded ECE centres in the district;

The district has managed to open about 13 ECE centres in the already existing government schools and more are yet to be opened. We are working hard to open more ECE centres so that we decongest the few that are already operating in the district. This will also help the learners that are covering long distance to reach to their schools and will serve parents from covering long distances as they escort their children to and from school.

On the part of the school administrators, the following were noted to be the measures that have been put in place to overcome the challenges faced by inclusive ECE centres; parents are being sensitized on the importance of inclusive ECE during the P.T.A meetings and school open days. In these meetings, challenges the schools are facing are discussed and ways in which to solve them are also discussed. Schools hold CPD meetings where they share their classroom successes and challenges, in the same meetings, teachers do demonstration lessons where again their weaknesses and strengths are discussed. Head teachers revealed that they also send teachers to attend workshops so that they can learn new skills. Some schools indicated that they do fundraising ventures with parents so that they raise funds to develop their schools and buy the teaching and learning aids.

Working closely with the Community

During the interview, one of the male head teachers indicated the following;

At this school, we are working closely with the community or rather parents in overcoming the challenges the school is facing including the pre-school section. It was agreed in the P.T.A. meeting that once a term; the school should hold a morning market where parents are asked to contribute different items to the school which the

school later resells and the money realized is used to solve the challenges the school is facing. This activity has really helped the school especially the ECE section which cannot do without a number of things like toiletries.

Sensitization of the Community on Inclusion

A female head teacher also indicated the following measure;

Sensitizing the community, teachers and the pupils on inclusion is an on-going activity at this school. We are trying to kill the problem of discrimination which in turn will yield good enrolment in school. Parents are educated each time we have a meeting with them while school assemblies are used to share this information to teachers and pupils. Our aim is to make sure CSEN accepted by their peers and they should learn together. The school also wants the pupils to disseminate the information to their parents and the community at large. This is what the school is also doing on HIV/AIDS awareness.

Using the 8 Hour Policy to make Teaching and Learning Aids.

Another female head teacher indicated the following on the 8 hour policy in the school;

ECE teachers knock off earlier than the others, so they use the remaining hours before clocking the 8 hour policy time all teachers are supposed to observe in a day to make teaching and learning materials for their learners. They have a lot of time to prepare lesson plans and teaching aids for the next day. This is what is happening at this school and at least they have made quite a good number of the teaching aids. The only challenge we are facing is over enrolment since all our neighbouring primary schools have not yet opened ECE centres.

Parents to CSEN were equally asked what measures they have put in place to overcome challenges faced by the inclusive ECE centres where their children learn from.

Parental School Involvement

One of the male parents had this to say;

When there is work at school, first we are called for a meeting by the P.T.A. executive who explains to us what the problem is and as parents we discuss how we can solve it. That ground there where children play from, we cleared it as parents before those play equipment were put there. We had to put sand there to make the ground safe for the young ones.

Parents Teacher's Association Agreed School Fees and Material Contributions

Another female parent narrated the following;

As a parent with three children at this school, I help the school in one way or another. Firstly when we agree to contribute money as P.T.A, I do pay that money so that the school can develop. At the moment, we have agreed to build a school block for pre-school which I have already crushed the stoned am supposed to contribute.

Morning markets for fundraising

One female parent had this to say;

Every term, the school holds a morning market where we are asked to contribute some items as parents. These items are resold and the school uses the money raised to solve the problem it is facing. For example last year, the school used the money to buy paint for painting the school and cement to mend the cracked floors in the classrooms for the safety of our children.

4.4 Summary

As regard to the availability of ECE to CSEN in schools, the study found that inclusive ECE to CSEN was available at the 6 sampled primary schools although the numbers were still very minimal. The study also found that CSEN were identified in inclusive ECE centres through interviewing parents, screening, and observations.

As regard to benefits of ECE to CSEN, the study established that the following: It improves performance in academic outcomes, encourages a timely transition into first grade, promotes an organized education system, provides early identification and intervention, is a ladder for

language development and weaved different members of families together to share ideas on different disabilities.

The following were the major challenges faced in the provision of ECE to children with special educational needs in ECE centres; lack of funding, lack of transport, lack of trained special education teachers, lack of teaching/learning materials, lack of modern infrastructures, negative attitudes by parents to school development, lack of information and poverty.

The study further found that the following interventional measures have been put in place in order to overcome the challenges faced by inclusive ECE centres in Kabwe District; more sensitizations campaigns to the pupils and the community, fundraising ventures, involving parents in school activities, sponsoring teachers to attend different workshops on inclusive education, holding CPD meetings in schools and using local materials like cartoon boxes, sacks, bottle tops to make teaching and learning aids. Teachers are being encouraged to be resourceful and use local materials which are cheap and easily obtained to make teaching and learning aids.

The previous chapter endeavoured to present the findings of this study in a more coherent manner through qualitative techniques. In the next chapter, some of the foregoing findings of the study will be discussed in relation to the reviewed relevant literature across Global, Africa and Zambian context.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The previous chapter presented the findings of the study. The present chapter discusses the findings of the study. The discussion will be done under the following sub-headings which have been derived from the researches' objectives. The order of the discussion follows the order in which the findings have been presented in the previous chapter. For the sake of clarity, these included; (1) To investigate the availability of ECE to children with special educational needs in selected primary schools of Kabwe District; (2) To establish the benefits of ECE to children with special educational needs in selected primary schools of Kabwe District; (3) To ascertain challenges of faced by inclusive ECE centres in selected primary schools of Kabwe District and (4) To establish measures that have been put in place to overcome challenges faced by ECE centres in selected primary schools in Kabwe district.

5.1 Availability of ECE to CSEN in selected Schools of Kabwe District

As regard to the availability of inclusive ECE to children with special educational needs in selected primary schools in Kabwe district, the study found that this program was present in the schools sampled in the study. It was evident from the data collected from the ECE centres that the centres were enrolling CSEN with mild to moderate disabilities although the numbers were very minimal. This indicated that there are still a good number of children with disabilities in the communities. The disabilities found in the ECE centres ranged from behaviour problems, physical challenges, health impairments, intellectual challenges, vision and hearing problems. These children with disabilities were being attended to by the ECE teachers of which about 50% of them lacked full knowledge of special education. These other teachers were learning about special education in school based meetings and workshops. This helped them to handle CSEN in their classrooms. This finding shows that special education provision at ECE level was available in Kabwe District, although with challenges yet to be discussed below. This finding mirrors that of the National Policy on Education, "Educating Our Future" Ministry of Education (1996) which assures to provide quality education for CSEN. The policy states that: *To the greatest extent possible, the Ministry will 'include' pupils with special educational needs in to the mainstream institutions and will provide them with necessary facilities.* The government through

the same policy further commits itself to provide adequate trained personnel, equipment, infrastructure and appropriate technology to enhance the inclusion of CSEN into mainstream schools. The Disability Act 33 of 1996 states that failure to admit or enrol any child into a school on account of their disability is a discriminatory offence. This finding is also in line with the MESVTEE (2013) which states that the government has shown increased commitment towards integrating the ECE sector into the mainstream as the foundation for learning and as an intervention for improving learner performance. The provision of ECE therefore becomes an integral part of the right to education. The head teachers, teachers and parents shared their awareness of inclusive ECE with the researcher and that some parents had children with special educational needs in the ECE centres. The small numbers of CSEN in ECE centres points out that inclusive ECE has commenced though it needs a lot of sensitization and other necessary equipment to be put in place.

On the methods of assessment, the study findings revealed that there were a number of ways through which CSEN were identified into ECE centres and one of them was through interviewing parents which scored 17%. A number of ECE class teacher found it helpful to interview parents because they had limited knowledge on special education and also schools lacked assessment equipment. Parents were asked to give a brief history of their children with the help of medical reports. One female parent had this to say:

My child suffered from severe malaria when she was about two years. This was not noticed at the clinic I took her and was just given some pain killers. I had gone to the farm to do some maize harvesting. After two weeks of not responding to treatment, I decided to come back to town, so that the child is taken to the hospital. It was at the hospital where I was told that my child had severe malaria and she was admitted. She also started to experiences seizures. The hearing problem started after she was given the malaria drugs. She can hear but one has to shout a bit.

The above finding is in agreement with Sandall et al (2005) who noted that families can provide critical information from their very unique perspective: current guidelines and practices recommend that families be involved in early childhood programs as receivers and providers of information. This is because parents being the first and immediate care takers to the child were considered to be very cardinal and reservoir of correct information about the historical background of the condition the child was going through. Vangalder, (1997) also observed that

families are recognized as the constant in a child's life, with interactions taking place in a variety of contexts. These experiences with the child lend families of CSEN an opportunity to provide various types of information to teachers that can be used to design and implement a valid assessment. The information parents give can also help the teacher in the daily routines of the school. For example family can share information with the teacher about their child's temperament and physical needs which may help professionals understand a child's reaction to different assessments and situations. A child who has poor fine-motor skills may struggle with pen and paper assessments but do well on assessments using oral questioning. This information can equally be obtained from the parent who is in a position to tell the teacher where the child in question performs well.

The study also found that screening which scored about 33% was another way through which children were identified and placed into ECE programs in schools. The Early Grader Assessment Tool was used in the District to identify CSEN. Training workshop on how to use this assessment tool was held and all ECE teachers were invited. Although this training was held, a good number of teachers complained about the bulkiness of the instrument to assess only one child at time. One of the teachers had this to say;

The Early Grade Assessment Tool is good but it has a lot of components in which a child has to be screened. It can take 30 to 40 minutes on one child and as a single teacher, when you can teach. In my case I have about 45 learners which make me fail to use this tool instead I do more of observations.

This is in line with Meisels and Alkins (2006) who noted that ECE teachers need ways of assessing each and all of the various aspects of learning since are all critical. It is particularly important that we pay close attention in ECE to the assessment of the contracts that we know are essential for later achievement and enhancement of life chances. This finding concurs with Zrinka (2008) who further points out that screening purpose is to identify health, developmental and other factors that may interfere with the child's learning, growth and development. Screening helps the teachers to identify children who may have possible health and developmental problems that may need some extra support before they start school. Even when screening is done to the pre-school children, there are a number of problems which may go undetected but noticed in later grades. This implies that before a child is placed either in special educational or regular school, it is imperative to go through the screening process that would

ascertain whether a child has a disability or not. This would guide on whether or not to place this child a special unit in order to receive specialized attention or in an inclusive setting. In inclusive settings, the placed child would feel part of the teaching and learning process and help in equalization opportunities with their able bodied individuals in the mainstream classrooms. To alleviate the challenge of the bulky assessments tool, the Ministry should modify the tool to a standard level and also reduce on over enrolments in ECE centres to enable the teachers manage the small numbers to assess.

The study also established that observation was another way through which children were identified and placed. This method was mostly used and it scored about 42%. This type of assessment scored the highest meaning that, it is the most used, although it is not all the disabilities that can be seen by observation. For example one female teacher indicated the following;

Some disabilities such as physical challenges and behaviour disorders are easily noticed and as a teacher you can find ways to help the child.

Another teacher indicated the following;

Since I didn't do special education at college, I find it easy to use observation method and I also get some information from parents. For example, I have a sickling boy in my class who is very inactive and rarely comes to school. This boy is a double orphan and is kept by the grandmother. I had to sermon the guardian when I saw the behaviour of the boy and his problem of not coming to school regularly. The grandmother reported that the boy was HIV positive and both parents died from the same disease.

This finding resonates with Dunphy (2008) who noted that observation is one of the key methods of assessment. She further stated that observation and adult-child discussion always been and will remain central to assessment of early learning and development. Observation is the principal method at the teacher's disposal when assessing young children. This entails that sometimes people came to know some disabilities through observation because it showed physically and through a child's behaviour. Therefore, the physical appearance and behaviour were the parameters that through observation one could give identify a child and recommend for ECE

placement in schools. However, this type of identification technique was not all that accurate in giving out correct information as it depended on human perception and judgment. Because of some limitations attached to it, therefore, there is need for the government through the Ministry of General Education to be engaging health expertise to help in identifying children who should be recommended for ECE placement after thorough investigations have been conducted. The Ministry should make sure that all ECE teachers are equipped with assessment knowledge so as to reduce on just using observation method which may not give all required information about a child.

5.2 Benefits of ECE to CSEN in selected Primary Schools of Kabwe District

As regard to the benefits of inclusive ECE to children with special educational needs, the study revealed that inclusive ECE centres provide an organized type of education to CSEN at a tender age which helps them prosper in education and life at large. Thus, ECE programs make CSEN ready for school at an early age. This finding is in agreement with MOE (2007) who noted that children that are exposed to an effective ECE are better equipped for the demands of school system, including proven records of improved academic achievement. Thus, ECE programs enhance children's readiness for school and academic achievement. This implies that when CSEN are exposed to school environment at an early age, their academic interests are motivated and they tend to experience few difficulties in grade one and later grades. Therefore, this early exposure to an organized type of education would make CSEN survive the hardships of education system. This entails that they would be able to adapt to any changes in the school environment and become self-reliant as they would gain their independence of doing things on their own.

Shaping of children's brains came out as one of the benefits to children who attend ECE programs including those with SEN. The participants in the study revealed that when young children are exposed to early experiences, this exposure help them in shaping their brains for future abilities. This is in agreement with Mundkur (2005) who noted that the human brain is an organ designed to adapt and reshape in response to experience. He further noted that from the age of two, children have twice as many neuron connections as adults and from this age to 16, the brain systematically eliminates those neurons that are least efficient. This is a critical process in shaping the future ability of the brain. Many other important mechanisms are at work during these critical years. A very good example would be language. Language exposure during critical

early years of childhood development is often required for adequate language acquisition. Briscoe (2000) also confirms that exposure during this time is so important that it seems to have a stronger effect on language than general intelligence or the quality of instruction. Additionally, Siegal (2000) also noted that brain development in the first three years is very intensive and as such, experiences in early life are especially crucial in organizing the brain's basic structures and in creating the neural foundation for all subsequent development and behaviour. This critical period is very important to all children as it prepares the brain of young ones for the future use and achievements.

Three of the head teachers who participated in the study brought up the issue of economic development once young children are taught skills at an early age. They indicated that skills acquired at an early age help the nation to have skilled people who in turn help in its development. These findings are in agreement with Heckman (2000) who noted that when you invest in ECE programs, more people acquire more skills which lead to more skilled people. He further stated that the returns to human capital investments are greatest for the young ones for two reasons; which is that, young persons have a longer horizon which to recoup the fruits of their investments skill begets skill. It is no doubt that investing in children makes economic sense for any country that aspires to transform its citizen and wants to develop. The World Bank (2000) also indicated that the economic returns to invest in a child are high, but there is an even more compelling reason for underscoring the importance of the early years. Giving children a better chance in education is not only vital for attacking the worst effects of poverty, but also may be an effective way of breaking the relentless, vicious cycles of poverty transmitted across generations. Furthermore, Munsaka & Matafwali (2013) noted that, any country that aspires to transform its social and economic landscape should invest in children because children are the future generation. Even in developed countries where infants' survival remains the highest priority, governments still recognize the importance of the early years of development by allocating adequate resources in developmental sectors targeting young children including those with SEN.

The other benefit as indicated in the study was that ECE makes the transition of CSEN to grade one possible without difficulties. This finding is in line with MOE, (2007) which pointed out that ECE programs enhance children's readiness for school. Similarly, Simmons-Zuilkowski et al (2012) in a study done in Zambia found out that participation in ECE does not only improve

performance in academic outcomes, but it also encourages a timely transition into first grade. This was reported on the premise that from the introduction of ECE in primary schools, the grade one enrolment has been overwhelming since children are made to proceed in the same school to grade one including those with CSEN. This has worked excellently especially in the district where the study was conducted and most of the stakeholders were happy with this progress made so far and this calls for continuity by the general populace. This was because CSEN have always been finding it difficult to make a smooth transition to another level of education. However, with the inclusive ECE centres in schools, the transitions have been made easier and simpler thereby making CSEN enjoy their academic journey.

The study found that inclusive ECE centres benefit children with special educational needs as it provides them with early identification. This finding resonates with Katwishi (1995) who pointed out that early identification; assessment referral and appropriate follow-up are basic requirements for effective development of inclusive schooling. This implies that early identification of CSEN helps teachers and medical practitioners to have the best knowledge on how to handle and suggest for correct placement in schools. When the identification is done early and corrective measures are implemented, CSEN are able to learn and succeed in life as their teachers will have the knowledge on how to help them learn. In most cases, this is done through assessment to ascertain the degree of severity. In this vein, teachers and school administrators would have the best levels of knowledge to know whether or not to place them in an inclusive ECE for them to benefit from the teaching and learning activities. Exposing CSEN to early identification helps them to prosper academically because of the help they get from their teachers who after assessment understand their weaknesses. When these weaknesses are taken care of, CSEN have a greater chance of success.

The study also revealed that inclusive ECE provided children with special educational needs have opportunities to develop in different areas such as social, cognitive, physical and language. These domains develop as children from different backgrounds learn together, share ideas and play together. This finding is in line with Underwood and Frankel (2002) who stated that in high quality ECE programs all children have opportunities to develop their language, social, physical and cognitive abilities. For example, one female teacher had this to say; *one girl in my class had problems with speech and the friends used to correct her each time she made a mistake in pronouncing certain words, for example she used to call me "tita" instead of "teacher" this*

child had a big problem with pronunciations but just after a few weeks of interacting with the friends, a great improvement was recorded. This implies that these domains develop when children are learning together, share ideas, play and learn from each other as they come from different environment. As the domains are developing, CSEN are also learning pre-skills in different subjects which act as a foundation before entering grade one. These pre-skills, act as a basis for later learning. Schweinhart et al (2005) further points out that children who participated in the ECE programs, out-performed their peers who did not participate in a number of intellectual challenges like language tests and were also in better employment and were significantly less involved in bad acts like criminal activities.

The study also established that inclusive ECE benefited children with special educational needs in bringing different families together and changing the attitudes of parents towards inclusion. This finding is in agreement with Dodge and Colker, (1992) who noted that parental attitudes towards inclusion had been positive after parents met and shared ideas. This applies to parents of children with and without disabilities. This means that by having different families with CSEN come together their mind set in understanding disabilities changed and promoted acceptance among parents of the victims. This is because they could share ideas and send a message to the community that all children are valued and welcome in schools. Therefore, this positive attitude of parents of CSEN and the community at large became enlightened about disabilities and reduced on the matters of discrimination and segregations against CSEN together with their family members.

5.3 Challenges Faced by Inclusive ECE Centres in selected Primary Schools of Kabwe District.

Despite the government policy on inclusion, the results of the study indicated that there are a number of challenges to be worked on in these schools by the government, the parents and the schools. One of the major challenges that came out in all the schools was lack of enough funding from the Government to support the inclusive ECE programs. This came to light when most head teachers revealed that there was lack and inconsistent funding in schools and this had created shortage of equipment needed to facilitate most of the ECE's activities such as teaching and learning activities. Funding should be given the maximum consideration because it is very crucial to achieving success in any educational enterprise. In view of this, the erratic funding

from the Government has fuelled slow development of school projects and other demands required for inclusive ECE to thrive in schools. One male head teacher explained that:

The funding we are getting from the government is not enough to cater for all the necessary activities done under ECE programs. The other problem is that the same inadequate funding is not given consistently. The same little funding has no proper schedule for receiving it. At times, a term can elapse with no funding making the work of the teachers extremely difficult. Like the previous funding, this school was given k1,700.00. Surely what can we buy from such an amount and for the whole term?

However, this finding is in line with the observation made by Kilbride & Kilbride (1990) who observed that financial constraints can lead to ineffective implementation of ECE. He further noted that to run these early education centres adequate funds are needed to procure items needed and to maintain the environment safe for the young children. In addition, Alabi & Lijaiya (2014) also noted that in ECE, adequate funding needs to be provided for the provision of many resources and activities which include stimulating materials for teaching and learning, training and re-training of ECE teachers, sensitization of programs through regular workshops, monitoring, feeding, immunization, supervision and inspection among others. This indicates that the importance of funding to successful implementation of ECE cannot be overemphasized. Kalabula (2007) also noted that while the provision of education for CSEN was an integral part of the governments overall programs of extending education for all, this type of education has been starved of funds. Inadequate public funding is responsible for the much of the Ministry of Education's inability to meet fundamental mandates and obligations to provide the necessary facilities and ensure universal availability of quality of education for all learners. Ndhlovu (2008) also confirms that inadequate funding to schools was to a greater extent a hindrance to special education and provision of quality education. The challenge however revealed in the study as already alluded to is that Zambian ECE centres are underfunded and could be linked to the low budgetary allocation to the education sector in the nation. This situation of inadequate funding makes the administration of inclusive ECE in general difficulty. A lot and assorted equipment is needed to run inclusive ECE centres so that all the learners are not deprived of their right to education. Therefore, this would deprive learners especially CSEN of their educational rights to accessing long-life skills imbedded in inclusive ECE centres.

Over enrolment or rather over crowded ECE classrooms were also found among the challenges being faced by all the ECE centres. Teachers in all the ECE centres visited brought out the issue of over enrolment. They said they were a lot of pupils in one class who were coming from different communities and had different backgrounds, since the study was done in an urban setting which has a number of shanty compounds. One female teacher from a school near a very big shanty compound had this to say:

I have about 45 children in my class and with mixed backgrounds. This number in some days reduces because some parents don't take ECE programmes so serious. This number really affects my teaching and classroom management. At times, my teaching morale is disturbed due to severe fatigue, although I really have a passion for the young ones. Many are the times I become very tired and fail to help the slow learners on one to one learning basis.

This finding is in line with Wilson (2006) who pointed out that large classes can negatively affect two significant and interrelated aspects of teacher practice which is instructional time and classroom management. A teacher can be experiencing difficulties in classroom management because the numbers are too big to be managed just by one person. The study further revealed that all the ECE centres visited had a teacher per class making it very difficult for the teachers to cater for all the children needs who are in big numbers. Dodge & Colker (1992) added that still with this high child ratio, ECE teachers were poorly remunerated and looked down upon in terms of qualifications. This has made a good number of these teachers to upgrade and start teaching upper grades. The study by Finn et al (2003) also noted that when students are placed in smaller classes, they become more engaged both academically and socially compared to those in bigger classes. This applies that the situation observed in the study where over enrolment was a challenge and as teachers had put it, it was very difficult to teach such classes effectively. CSEN are denied the special attention because the teachers get tired from teaching the large numbers of learners. It is hoped that if class sizes were minimal to acceptable standards, teachers would attend effectively to all the learners especially those with SEN. This challenge calls for urgent action if inclusive ECE has to be meaningful in Zambia.

The results of the study also indicated lack of school transport as another challenge that participants faced from the schools sampled. This came to light when head teachers, teachers and parents reported that there was lack of school transport as they claimed that most of the ECE

learners come from far distant places in the communities. Most schools cannot afford to buy school buses which make learners especially those with CSEN report for classes at different times. This challenge affects the learners negatively in their school performance as they miss most of the first periods of learning. One female parent indicated the following over lack of the school bus;

Escorting my child who is physically handicapped every day to and from school is quite challenging for me as I am just a widow and no formal employment. This makes my child to be late for school most of the times and misses a lot.

This finding is in line with the report by Moberg & Kasonde- Ng'andu (2001) who noted that 40% of school children with disabilities in Western and North- Western provinces of Zambia dropped out of school system because they could not afford transport to school, food and uniforms. This situation becomes almost impossible with young children with mobility challenges to be walking to and from school every day. In view of this, many children at ECE centres report at different times because of coming from distant places while walking on foot and this in turn also affects the teaching morale of teachers. Children that come very late to school miss a lot as their teachers cannot manage to be repeating the lessons. School buses are good in that most children arrive at school almost at the same time and start learning at the same time. School transport also lessens fatigue of walking in children and this makes them concentrate in their lessons.

Lack of specialized teachers to facilitate the teaching and learning in an inclusive ECE was another challenge revealed by the study's findings. Ten out of the twelve ECE teachers seen were diploma holders with special education as just a college component of the courses studied. None of the teachers were fully trained in special early childhood education. It was discovered that some teachers were not qualified to handle CSEN and were facing a lot of challenges in terms of assessment and teaching CSEN. This finding is in agreement with Aldzi (2006) who observed that teachers were a critical factor in ensuring learning and it is important to have qualified and well trained teacher in the early years of school. The study findings revealed that most of the teachers lacked special education knowledge because they were not trained in it as a full course in their respective teacher training colleges hence the poor management. Katwishi (1995) further points out that there is no single discipline that provides complete training for staff to undertake early intervention programmes for CSEN. This means that most trained teachers

lack the knowledge of handling CSEN. To help resolve this problem, all teacher training colleges should train would be teachers in special education and this should be a detailed or full course to enable all teachers to handle CSEN with less difficulties.

Poor training in special education obtained from various colleges was found to be among the challenges the affect the smooth running of inclusive ECE centres, for example one female teacher indicated the following, *‘special education was not seriously taught at the college where I was compared to other courses I did. Many are the times when we had no lecturer to attend to us and we used to study for other courses we considered important.’* This finding is in line with Angrist and Lavy (2001) who noted that lack of adequate and proper training received by teachers lead to a reduction in their pupils’ test scores. Lack of proper special education training is reflected in the failure by teachers to handle both CSEN and the so called normal children in the same classroom. Education International (2010) further reported that low numbers of qualified teaching staff is a challenge in most developing countries and that it has negatively affected the provision of ECE. This challenge affects the performance of CSEN who needs special attention from their respective teachers.

Another challenge which was revealed in the study was that there was inadequate teaching and learning materials such as textbooks, crayons, toys, building blocks to mention just a few. This implies that the inadequacy of these materials in inclusive ECE centres made it hard for CSEN attach meaning to learning. CSEN learn well when they have their own books and even toys for play. Toys are very important in ECE centres as most of the time should be spent under play. Taneja (1990) asserts that, while in infancy, Froebel’s theory emphasises the sensory development in childhood, his emphasis is on play. Play requires a number of different items for children to play with. The teachers pointed out that it was difficult for children especially those with SEN to fully understand what they are taught because there were no books for them to be given in the process of learning for them to look at what the teacher was teaching them. This finding coincides with Oakes and Saunders (2002) whose findings indicated that shortages of teaching and learning materials has a negative impact on the learners especially those with special educational needs with less knowledge about a subject. CSEN learn well with concrete objects all the time. Abstract type of teaching affects their learning as it requires a learner to be thoughtful and apply what the teacher is explaining. Therefore, lack of teaching and learning materials in inclusive ECE centres affects the learning of CSEN who needs these aids all the time

for them to learn properly and be able to remember what they learn on a daily basis. Their improvement academically and socially is therefore hindered. The shortage of these essential materials in the teaching process also hinders the effective teaching from the teachers. Offenheiser and Holcombe (2003) also noted that the shortage of teaching and learning aids affects implementation of ECE curriculum as creation of a sustainable learning environment helps deprived children to improve in academic performance. In early stages of acquiring education, children learn better through interacting with the environment hence the environment should be rich with a lot of different materials to arouse and sustain their learners' curiosity, interest and promote learners' learning.

Furthermore, the findings of the study indicated lack of modern infrastructure and classroom furniture to support inclusive ECE was one of the challenges faced. This was seen and considered to be a challenge because most ECE centres lacked modern infrastructure and conducive furniture. Out of the 6 schools visited, 4 ECE centres had infrastructure and classroom furniture which was not good enough to CSEN. From the findings, most old school buildings lack ramps and few have stairs which are equally not good enough for learners with mobility problems. Three out of the 6 schools visited were using big desks meant for the older learners. This also pose a challenge when it comes to writing for the beginners especially those with SEN. Despite efforts by the Ministry of General Education to introduce inclusive education in Zambia, infrastructure was still a big challenge in almost all the schools as it was not fully modified to accommodate all the learners. Similarly, International Association of the Education of Young Children, (1991) observed and contends that many ECE centres lack adequate teaching and resources and facilities suitable for ECE in their learning environment. This was common in developing countries. Zambia as a developing country is not an exception as this was seen in the study. Although the government has introduced ECE programmes in primary schools, no new buildings to accommodate the young ones have been put in place. This situation made the learning environment somehow hostile to learners with disabilities. Savolainen (2000) also pointed out that in Finland, infrastructure was unsuitable to children with disabilities but Non-Governmental Organizations built new schools, made school infrastructure accessible to CSEN at all levels of education, provided business to vulnerable children and with professional in public awareness on inclusion. In 3 schools visited, the ECE classrooms are also used by other grades when pre-school learners knock off. One teacher had this to say; *am tired of making teaching and learning aids to be stuck on the walls as they are always removed or torn by the*

other pupils who occupy the classroom when the pre-school learners knock off. This is why the walls are not “talking”. This challenge affects both the learners especially those with SEN and the teacher. CSEN enjoy a lot seeing different pictures on the walls and this helps them to develop in language skills as they discuss the pictures. Well decorated walls also prevent dull moments in children. Learning aids stuck on the walls also help learners to identify and relate pictures. Therefore, an ECE classroom should be well decorated with a lot of pictures, numbers and words to arouse learners’ curiosity to learn all the time.

The study’s results further revealed that there was inadequate information on inclusive ECE. Parents indicated that they knew little on inclusive ECE and this led them to be keeping their CSEN at home or take them to schools with special units. One parent had this to say; *my child is very active in that he cannot sit and concentrate on a given task. He is ever moving up and down but when I get angry with him and command him to do something, he does the work. At times, he does the work with less supervision because his condition is not extremely bad. He has by passed pre-school age but when I heard of the inclusive ECE I thought of enrolling him at this ECE centre. I enrolled my son late in ECE because I didn’t know about this programme which allows children with special needs to learn together with their peers.* This challenge is in line with Mitiku et al (2014) who conducted a study and found out that although there were some opportunities that support inclusive education, it could not be taken as a guaranty due to lack of awareness. On commitment and collaboration, Mandayata (2011) also noted that all stakeholders must be committed to inclusive education in regular schools before conducting sensitization to increase public awareness in inclusion practices in schools and surrounding communities. The sensitization should be made to make the public more informed, sensitive and responsive to the needs of CSEN. Lack of adequate information on inclusive ECE can also be related to lack of proper government policy on inclusive ECE. Dodge et al (1992) explains that lack of proper government policy framework on inclusive ECE hinders every good gain that could be realized in through effective development of ECE. There is no much support for inclusive education from the government which can in turn stimulate other stakeholders to come on board to help. There is great need for the government to come on board so as to attract other stakeholders.

Furthermore, the findings of the study indicate that some homes of CSEN are hampered by poverty and unemployment. This was seen and considered to be a challenge because the parents interviewed in the study revealed that they lacked resources to provide food for their children on

daily basis. They further added on to say such financial problems at times makes it difficult for their CSEN to attend lessons. Teachers equally revealed that some parents especially of CSEN had financial problems and were also struggling to pay the little agreed amount by the P.T.A to help run the ECE centres. Similarly, Kelly (1991) reported that children with disabilities especially girls with disabilities were victims of poverty. Their parents in most cases were poor and had to struggle to feed and clothe them. This challenge of poverty has a negative impact on CSEN in that it makes them miss classes when their parents cannot afford to buy food and raise transport money to and from school. Although there is a policy of free education in Zambia, P.T.A's in schools still agree on a small amount to be paid by parents to help in the running of the ECE centres because the allocation given to the schools is inadequate and not on time.

5.4 Interventional Measures Put in Place to Overcome Challenges Faced by Inclusive ECE Centres.

With regard to the measures that have been put in place to overcome challenges faced by inclusive ECE centres in Kabwe District, the participants indicated the following; there is an on going sensitization of inclusive education in the district, using the radio stations available in the District, schools are making use of parents gatherings such as P.T.A. to educate the community on the importance of inclusive education and how parents can help to develop the schools in their communities. Teachers hold CPD meetings where they meet to discuss ways of overcoming classroom challenges and in these meetings; they also make different teaching and learning aids. In these CPD gatherings, successes are also shared for other teachers to learn from them. Teachers also meet in teacher group meetings to demonstrate how to teach different grades and also how to take care of learners with special educational needs in their classrooms. One teacher with special education knowledge has been chosen per school to be spearheading special education issues and to act as a consultant. Schools with special education units have picked one teacher from the special unit to act as special education coordinator in the school. Schools are sponsoring teachers to attend workshops on inclusive learning. In some schools, fundraising ventures are held with the help of the parents, for example morning market, where parents are asked to contribute different items which are later resold. The ESO-SP.ED had this to say on sensitizing the community in the district on inclusive education;

As a district we do have radio programs from time to time to educate the community on the importance of inclusive education which now starts from preschool. Last time

I was on air for the same program was last year around October before the recruitment of the new entrants in primary school. Parents were encouraged to take their children with disabilities to the nearest school for enrolment and to be advised accordingly by the specialist teachers. These air programs have proved to be working as schools have started receiving such children although the numbers are still very minimal. During these programs, parents are educated on the right to education for every child and that no school should deny a child a school place due to one's disability. Parents are also encouraged to take keen interest in their children's work like home work which is now a school policy.

Another interventional measure that was echoed by head teachers interviewed was that they were involving the parents and the community at large in the running of the inclusive ECE programs. Head teachers seen during the study said that schools were part of the community and that the government alone cannot manage to run all the schools. The head teachers revealed that most of the developments in schools are being done with the help of the community although the turnout at times is not encouraging looking at the number of learners' schools has. Nearly all the head teacher mentioned the use of P.T.A. gathering to educate parents on inclusive learning and also how parents can help to develop the schools where their children learn from. School contributions and fundraising ventures were agreed in these meetings. This finding is in line with Heneveld & Craig (1996) who recognized parents and the community support as one of the key factors in determining school effectiveness in Sub-Saharan Africa. The fundraising venture as a measure of using parents and companies is in line with Maruma (2005) who observed that fundraising enabled public schools to expand and develop their work and improve their services in order to meet the challenges of the future. Schools are there because of the parents who bring their children to learn, their presence should be appreciated. For inclusive ECE centres to run effectively the input of the community is vital and this is the reason why all the schools have PTA which brings together the school and the community to look at school challenges. The World Bank in Africa (1999) also confirmed that parents are usually concerned about their children's education and often willing to provide assistance that can improve the education delivery. In addition, MoE (2006) states that nongovernmental organizations and the community should also supplement the efforts of the government in supporting the implementation of inclusive schooling programme. Such support can go a long way in minimizing the problem of

inadequate funding by the government to schools. One Parent had this to say on contributions towards school development;

When there is work at school, first we are called for a meeting by the P.T.A. who explain to us what the problem is and as parents, we discuss how we can solve it in the meeting. Like that ground there where children play from, we cleared it as parents before those playing equipment was put there. We had to put sand there to make the ground safe for the young ones.

Additionally, one female head teacher indicated the following on the importance of parental involvement in schools;

There is no school which can develop without the help of the community. Without parents, there can be no pupils because these children come from the communities and this is why as a school, in all the developments we do, we involve the community as well. A very good example is the plan to put up a classroom block for pre-school learners which was agreed in the previous P.T.A. we had. Parents agreed to contribute some building materials while others will pay money towards the block. This will be a user friendly structure which will accommodate all the learners including those with special needs. During the P.T.A. meeting parents were told about the shortage of classrooms and that it really affected the pre-school learners who also needed good and conducive environment to learn from. Some up front building materials were already brought in by some parents. These are contributions are sand, blocks, stones and cement.

The following were noted to be measures that ECE teachers have put in place to overcome challenges they are facing in inclusive ECE. The teachers are using local materials to make teaching and learning aids. The 8 hour policy in schools is giving teachers time to at least make some teaching aids for their learners. Teacher group meetings are also utilized to make different teaching and learning aids and also to share on teaching demonstrations. It is in these meetings where teachers share their challenges and successes. Teachers also revealed that they do attend workshops in inclusive education and it's there where they gain a lot of knowledge on inclusive education. One teacher said the following on the CPD's held in their school;

The CPD's are helping us a lot in terms of sharing the challenges and successes we face in our various classroom especially on the new inclusive education. Us at pre-school level, we do meet with teachers from the lower primary section and at times we utilize these meetings to make teaching and learning aids using local materials available. Specialist teachers do educate us on special education issues and how to handle these children.

The above finding is consistent with that of MoGE, (2016) which states that all educational institutions offering special education shall be mandated to conduct CPD on SEN for administrators, academic as well as auxiliary staff. These are the times in schools where teachers should learn from one another in terms of successes and challenges. Such meetings build the teachers in different ways and help them to solve the challenges they face in their different classrooms. For example, a demonstration lesson on inclusive education would help teachers lacking such knowledge to handle CSEN in their classrooms. MoGE, (2016) further states that in inclusive institution, there should be a Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO) who shall coordinate SEN activities in the institutions. This is helping a lot in many schools because nearly all the teacher training colleges at the moment have a component of special education. This means that a good number of teachers are being deployed with some knowledge of special education. Some schools just sponsor their teachers to attend inclusive workshops so that they are equipped with inclusive knowledge. Additionally, one head teacher indicated that teachers are encouraged to go for in-service to upgrade in their various courses they have done in their initial training. Despite this view from the head teacher, Kennedy (2001) state that teacher training can be achieved in the training colleges, universities and in actual schools while teachers are already in employment. Dutcher (2004) also documented that teacher training is the key to the sustainability of any education programme, while Bradshaw & Mundia (2006) observed that training was one major factor that may foster a positive attitude of teachers towards inclusive education. Teacher retraining can help a lot in the learning of how to handle CSEN in the mainstream.

Additionally, one of the teacher also emphasized on the use local materials to overcome the challenge of teaching and learning aids. This female teacher had this to say:

I usually use local material to make teaching and learning aids, just to supplement on the few materials from the government.

Klaus (2003) also documented that producing teaching and learning locally can help in the addressing of the shortage of teaching and learning materials. This is in line with what all teacher training colleges encourage their student teachers by being innovative and resourceful when they go in the field to teach. Trainee teachers in all colleges are taught on how to be resourceful in using local materials to make teaching aids. These local materials are readily available and cheap.

5.5 Summary

This chapter presented the discussion of findings of the study in line with the objectives.

As regard to the availability of inclusive ECE to children with special educational needs in schools, the study found that inclusive ECE to children with special educational needs was available at the 6 sampled primary schools. The study also found that CSEN were identified in inclusive ECE centres through interviewing parents, screening, observations and child physical behaviors’.

As regards to the benefits of inclusive ECE children with special educational needs, the study established that the following; CSEN get an organized type of education at a tender age, ECE makes the transition of CSEN to grade one with fewer difficulties, early identification, learn pre-skills before getting into grade one, develop language, social physical and cognitive abilities, learn to socialize, feel less isolated and bring different families with CSEN together to share ideas, just to mention a few.

The following were the major challenges faced in the provision of inclusive ECE to children with special educational needs; lack of funding, lack of transport, lack of trained special education teachers, lack of teaching/learning materials, lack of modern infrastructures, negative attitudes of parents, lack of information and poverty.

The study further found the following interventional measures have been put in place to overcome challenges faced by inclusive ECE centres. More sensitizations campaigns on inclusive education to increase on the enrolment levels of CSEN, encouraging parental involvement in school projects, holding CPD’s in schools, encouraging teachers to be innovative and resourceful and sponsoring teachers to attend workshops on special or inclusive education.

These measures are being done in various schools with ECE centres in order to overcome the challenges being faced.

The next chapter presents the conclusion of the study and puts forward recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The previous chapter discussed the findings of the study. This chapter summarizes the research findings. At this point, it must be confirmed that this study endeavoured to investigate the Provision of ECE to CSEN in 6 primary schools of Kabwe District. However, this investigation was confined only to 6 selected primary schools in Kabwe District. Furthermore, in this chapter, the conclusion is drawn on the basis of the findings of the study and thereafter recommendations are made. Finally the chapter ends by suggesting areas for further research based on the findings of the study.

6.1 Conclusion

It is worth noting that ECE is available to children with special educational needs in ECE centres of Kabwe District although with small numbers of children with mild to moderate disabilities. The 6 sampled pre-school centres had very few learners with challenges such as; vision, hearing, behaviour, intellectual, physical and healthy impairments. These challenges as already alluded to range from mild to moderate, making such learners to be easily included in the mainstream. Looking at the data collected and the observation done in the selected ECE centres, children with special needs were being accepted in the centres and accorded the chance to learn together with children without SEN. The head teachers, teachers and parents indicated that CSEN were learning with their peers in the same classrooms. ECE is a right to all children regardless of their social- economic status, hence the policy of inclusion. This point to the fact that inclusion is based on the principle that all children and young people, despite different cultural, social and learning background, should have equivalent learning opportunities in all kinds of learning institutions (UNESCO, 2008). This is the reason why the government of Zambia has embarked on expanding and improving ECE services, especially for the vulnerable and disadvantaged children. Globally and in the Zambian situation, ECE contributes significantly to achieving the Education for All goals and the Millennium Development Goals. It has also been seen to be a stage of remarkable brain development that lays foundation for later learning. This is in line with the theory of Froebel who discovered that the brain development was most dramatic between birth and the age of 3, hence the importance of early experience which helps a lot in children. The study also found that CSEN were identified in inclusive ECE centres through interviewing

parents, screening and child observations. Early Grade Screening Tool which falls under screening was being used in some schools while a good number of teachers were using observation method due to lack of assessment tools and full knowledge of special education. For example 42% of the teachers indicated using observation method to identify CSEN because of limited knowledge in special education. 33% used screening method but complained of the bulky instrument which required lots of time just on one child. They advocated for revisiting the instrument so that it can be manageable for a teacher to at least screen a good number of children a day. About 17% of teachers relied on obtaining the information of children from their parents. Parents were interviewed and information was obtained. 8% of the teachers did not assess their learners due to lack of knowledge on screening and special education but had CSEN in their classrooms. After interviewing them, they promised to learn from the nearby ECE centres on how to go about with assessment. The study concluded that teachers in ECE section lacked comprehensive knowledge on assessment and they were also no equipment suitable to assess the young ones in the schools. For example, only one of the visited schools had the E chart for eye screening. Three quarters of the ECE teachers interviewed in the study had some knowledge of special education done at college although very minimal. They indicated that special education was just a small component done at college and not very seriously taught like other courses. Teachers indicated that screening was new to them and that they were learning it from workshops for the first time.

As regard to the benefits of ECE to children with special educational needs, the respondents indicated the following benefits; The ESO-SP.ED noted that when CSEN are exposed to ECE at an early age, they face fewer difficulties when they get to grade one as they are already used to the school environment. They have the privilege to have an organized type of learning at a tender age which helps them to prosper in life. The ESO-SP.ED stated that ECE laid a strong foundation for academic success, social circles as well as in the world of work. She went on to say, challenges identified during childhood receive early and appropriate intervention. This helps CSEN be able to learn. All the children under ECE learn to be independent at an early stage as they are kept away from their parents. Further, she indicated that learning is a dynamic process and is most effective when it begins at a tender age and continues through adulthood. CSEN equally learn better when they are enrolled in school while they are young as this enables them to learn a lot from their friends and teachers through interactions.

With regard to the head teachers they revealed that early identification can lead to early intervention and proper placement which helped teachers to find proper teaching methods to teach the affected learners after screening was done. One head teacher stated that early experiences are very important in that they help in building of children's brains for future activities. The head teacher gave an example of language acquisition which is acquired early by a child due to early exposure and interactions with teachers and other peers. Head teachers further noted that early experiences of education helped young ones to succeed academically and reduced on the numbers of school drop outs. This gives schools high passing rates and such children are able to continue with their education till they complete. Teachers being the immediate care takers of CSEN at school level had this to say on the benefits; CSEN develop language, social, physical and cognitive abilities. Children also learn pre-skills before getting into grade one which helped them break through easily. Inclusive ECE also imparted daily living skills in CSEN and brought about acceptance and sharing of ideas among learners. The following benefits were noted from the parents; Inclusive ECE made CSEN feel accepted and less isolated. The inclusion programme sent a message to the community that all children were valued and welcome in school and it also brings families of CSEN together where they can share ideas on management of their children with SEN.

The study also identified the challenges inclusive ECE centres were facing in Kabwe District. The identified challenges included; inadequate funding towards ECE programmes, teachers find challenges to teach the young ones with few or no teaching and learning materials. Teachers noted that their classes were overcrowded and with few or no teaching and learning materials. Even when teachers made these teaching materials locally, the numbers were too large to be accommodated. It was also found that teachers lacked adequate knowledge of special education to undertake activities like assessment. Lack of permanent accommodation in terms of classrooms in some ECE centres was equally revealed. Some classrooms are used by two to three other grades at different times in a day making it difficult for teachers to maintain them. It was also revealed that the infrastructure in the already existing schools was not suitable for the young ones especially those with SEN. Parents equally revealed the following challenges; long distances to ECE centres, lack of transport to ferry their children to and from school like other pre-schools. Parents also complained about the issue of providing packed food for their children every day. They suggested that schools should at least feed the learners.

On the measures, the study revealed that the District office, the school and the parents had devised strategies that helped them cope with the challenges of inclusive ECE in the District. The District office had embarked on having radio programmes from time to time, educating the community on inclusive education. The District office also held workshops to educate school administrators and teachers on inclusive education and also urged more schools to open ECE centres so as to reduce on over enrolments in some ECE centres.

The study also revealed that the schools were educating parents on the importance of ECE to all children through meetings such as P.T.A and open days. Challenges that by the ECE centres faced were brought to light in these meetings and solutions like fundraising ventures were discussed and implemented. ECE teachers were sponsored by schools to attend workshops on inclusive education from time to time to go and learn more skills on inclusive education. The study further revealed that parents and guardians also helped in fund raising ventures in school to help the school raise some money. In case of building, some schools involved parents in contributing up front materials in form of sand, blocks, cement, and other building materials. It was also revealed that some schools engaged parents in painting playground equipment and ferrying sand into the play grounds to make the place safe for the young ones. The government has also a big role to play when it comes to measures to overcome challenges faced by inclusive education programme. UNESCO (1994) suggested that the government should increase resources such as funding, teaching and learning materials in the mainstream when learners with special needs are included. Inadequate funding came out as one of the major challenges as it can help to overcome a number of issues when adequately provided.

The main conclusion of the study is that although inclusive ECE has started, there is a lot the schools, community and the government should put in place to help CSEN, especially in terms of sensitization, training of teachers, infrastructure and funding. There are some aspects of progress like starting the programme, but there are also serious challenges as mentioned above that need to be addressed. Looking at the few numbers of learners with SEN in the ECE centres, this entails that there are still many more children with SEN in the communities.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings above, the following recommendations were made:

- i. There is need for the government through the Ministry of General Education to increase budgetary allocations towards inclusive ECE centres.
- ii. Early identification and intervention should be mandatory all schools to ECE beginners and the screening instruments should be user friendly.
- iii. The government through the Ministry of General Education should construct user friendly infrastructure to cater for all children in ECE centres and modify existing physical facilities to make sure they are barrier-free therefore easily accessible to all learners.
- iv. There is need for serious and continued sensitization on the importance of the inclusive education by the Government and the schools.
- v. Inclusive ECE class- sizes and child- teacher ratios should be considered when enrolling children for quality education provision to all learners.
- vi. The government should create play facilities in all ECE centres as they stimulate learning in young ones.
- vii. There is need to establish strong collaboration between the school and parents. This will go a long way in changing the negative attitude towards implementation of inclusive education.

6.3 Areas for Further Research

Arising from the research findings of this study, some other aspects of this study area may not have been studied and these areas may need to be studied. The areas of the study which may be studied include:

- i. Management practices in inclusive ECE.
- ii. Child find programme and home based care for children eligible for ECE services.
- iii. Improving access to CSEN in early childhood centres.
- iv. Learner-Teacher contact in inclusive ECE centres and its effect on provision of quality education.
- v. Special Education services in inclusive ECE.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Guide for DEBS & ESO-SP.ED

INTRODUCTION

Your District has been selected to help in finding out the provision of Early Childhood Education to CSEN in selected primary schools of Kabwe District.

1. Does the District have ECE centres? If the answer is YES....
2. How many ECE are there in your District?
3. In these centres, are there CSEN? If the answer is YES...
4. How are they identified as CSEN?
5. Do you have qualified pre-school teachers with the knowledge of special education in your District?
6. What are the benefits of including CSEN at ECE level?
7. What challenges do you face as a District in these inclusive ECE centres?
8. What measures have you put in place to overcome challenges faced by inclusive ECE centres in the District?

Thank you for your responses!!

Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interviews Guide for the Head Teachers

INTRODUCTION

Your school has been selected to help in finding out the Provision of Early Childhood Education to CSEN in selected primary schools of Kabwe District.

1. Are you aware of early childhood education?
2. Do you have an ECE centre at this school?
3. Do you have learners with disabilities learning in this ECE centre?
4. What criteria does the school employ when enrolling learners with disabilities?
5. Does the school have qualified pre-school teachers with special education knowledge?
6. How equipped is the ECE centre at this school?
7. What are the benefits of including CSEN in ECE programmes?
8. What challenges do you face by including CSEN in ECE programmes?
9. What measures have you put in place to overcome the challenges you face in the inclusive ECE centre?

Thank you for time responses!!

Appendix C: Questionnaire for Teachers

I am a post graduate student in the School of Education pursuing a Master of Education in Special Education degree at the University of Zambia and I am now carrying out a research as required by the institution on the topic; *Provision of Early Childhood Education to Children with special educational needs in inclusive primary schools of Kabwe District.*

You have been selected to be one of the respondents in this research. Please you are asked to provide objective information by way of responding to your best ability to the followings questions. Also be assured that the information you provide shall be treat as confidential and for academic purposes.

SECTION A. General Information

1. Education background of Participants

Please mark all your educational qualifications

Primary Certificate []

Primary Diploma []

Special education Certificate/Diploma []

Early childhood Certificate/Diploma []

Degree []

Any other please specify

2. How long have you been in the teaching service?

0 – 5 years [] 6 – 10 years [] 11 – 15 years [] 16 years and above []

3. What is your gender?

SECTION B: Availability of ECE

1. Do you have ECE centre in this school? YES NO

2. If your answer is YES in 1 above, how many children with special needs have been enrolled?
3. Explain how your school identifies these CSEN
4. Mark any of the disabilities found in your class from the list below
 - Visual Impairment []
 - Hearing Impairment []
 - Intellectual Impairment []
 - Physical Impairment []
5. Please specify the levels of disabilities marked in 3 above
5. How do you meet the educational needs of CSEN.....
6. How stocked is the ECE centre at this school in terms of teaching and learning materials?
.....
7. How do you involve parents in educational programmes for CSEN?.....

SECTION C: Benefits of Inclusive ECE to CSEN

8. What do you think are the benefits of ECE centre to CSEN?.....

SECTION D: Challenges Faced by Inclusive ECE centres.

9. What challenges do you face by including CSEN in ECE centre at this school?
.....

SECTION E: Measures Put in Place to Overcome Challenges Faced by Inclusive ECE

10. What measures have you put in place to overcome challenges faced in inclusive ECE centres?

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORT

Appendix D: Interview Guide for Parents

INTRODUCTION

You have been selected to help in finding out the Provision of Early Childhood Education to CSEN in selected primary schools of Kabwe District.

1. Are you aware of ECE?
2. Do you have a child with disabilities enrolled at this ECE centre?
3. How did you come to learn about this ECE centre?
4. How was your child admitted to this centre?
5. How effective is the ECE centre in terms of catering for CSEN?
6. What are some of notable benefits of including your child in this centre?
7. What challenges are you facing in having a child with disabilities under the ECE programme?
8. What measures have you put as a parent to overcome the challenges faced in inclusive ECE centres?

Thank you for your time!!

Appendix E Observation Checklist

The observation checklist was used as a guide in all the 6 ECE centres in the sample.

Outside Environment

- Ramps to the building
- Sanitation facilities
- Illustrations on the walls
- School yard condition
- Play grounds
- Source of drinking water

Classroom Observation

- Environment-blackboard, illustrations, maps, chairs, tables, windows
- Number of pupils
- Special needs pupils seating arrangement (in the front, at the back?)
- Peer to peer interactions (CSEN)
- Teacher/pupil interactions (CSEN)
- Learning materials / play objects (e.g. toys, building blocks)
- Teaching aids availability and the use of teaching aids