

# MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY



## FACULTY OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS, MANAGEMENT  
AND CURRICULUM STUDIES.

THE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
INCLUSIVE POLICY OF SPECIAL NEEDS LEARNERS IN GWERU  
DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

BY

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## RELEASE FORM

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The teachers' perceptions on the implementation of inclusive policy of special needs learners in Gweru District Primary Schools.

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In partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Education Degree in Educational Foundations, Management and Curriculum Studies

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## **Dedication**

This research is dedicated to my husband Ally Mawocha, who valued my furthering of education and supporting me by paying fees. My dearest children: Marvellous, Rudorwashe, Prosper and Ally Junior for all the encouragement and support towards the success of the study. Thank you for unwavering support during the period of my studies. May the Lord almighty help them to stand with me to see my dream come true.

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## **Abstract**

A variety of researches have been carried out on education of the special needs children, and little have been done to find out the perceptions of teachers towards the implementation of the Inclusive policy of special needs learners ever since the introduction of the inclusive education. This research specifically focused much on the teachers' perceptions on the implementation of the inclusive policy of special needs learners in Gweru District primary schools. The research methodology was underpinned by descriptive survey. Questionnaires were administered to primary teachers while schools heads responded to face-to-face interviews. Data collected was represented thematically in tables and verbatim. The research revealed some adequacies on the effective inclusion. Children with special needs are still experiencing inequality in terms of lack of resources. There is need for teachers to be fully trained in special needs both theoretically and practically. The researcher concluded that there is inadequate stakeholder participation to ensure availability of equipment and materials to ensure effective learning of special needs learners. The study recommended that teachers training as well as in-service training take a bias towards inclusive education. It was also recommended that various stakeholders be given opportunity to participate in the implementation of inclusive education.

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# CHAPTER 1

## 1.1 Introduction

Globally, Inclusive Education is a relatively new phenomenon in education driven by the philosophy that all children, regardless of their mild or severe individual differences should attend the same school, in the same class with their peers. The research aims to investigate the teachers' perceptions on the implementation of the inclusive education policy of special needs learners in Gweru District Primary Schools. This chapter therefore outline the background of the study. The statement of the problem that was created for this research, is outline followed by guiding major research questions. The delimitations and limitations of the study are provided. The chapter also dealt with the definition of key terms used in the study.

## 1.2 Background of the study

After attaining independence in 1980, the Zimbabwean government embarked on a massive campaign to improve the education system in the country by introducing the Education For All (EFA).EFA goals were to ensure that no child should be left out of school regardless of gender, sex, race, and ethnicity, social, physical and cultural status. People like Jairos Jiri introduced homes and centres where children with different disabilities were enrolled coming up with Jairos Jiri centres throughout the country, Kapota home in Masvingo and St Georges in Bulawayo. Fourteen years down the line since the introduction of EFA issues that affects special needs learners have taken a low precedence over all other issues hence reasons to undertake this study.

Ainsrow and Cesar (2006) outlined that inclusive education was first introduced from an international perspective at the Salamanca World Conference in 1994, in Spain which included international papers on special needs children. UNESCO (2009) postulates that in

developing countries, inclusive education is seen as an approach to serve special education needs children within general education settings. However, internationally, inclusive education is seen as a system which caters for the needs of a diverse range of learners and supports diversity effectively eliminating all forms of discrimination. Whereas Stainback and Stainback (1990) allude that education is the right of all children, and inclusive education aims to ensure that all children have access to an appropriate, relevant, affordable and effective education within their community.

Peters (2004) postulates that most conceptual literature on inclusive education was Northern Europe and North America in origin, taking the whole school approach to institutional change and influenced by the special model of disability children in special schools were seen as geographically and socially segregated from their peers and the initial movement to integrate these students in mainstream schools thus integration shifted to one where the whole school was encouraged to become more adaptable and inclusive in its day to day educational practices for all student 'inclusive education'.

Pedagogy in particular was highlighted by Ainscow (2005) as the key to meeting all students' educational needs by making the curriculum flexible, and so more accessible. By recognizing that teaching methods which can make curriculum accessible to children with disabilities can also make learning accessible to all students, a teacher or school head is well on the way to improving the overall quality of their school.

Shah (2005) holds that in India, there has been a steady growth of inclusive education, since the passage of the Persons with Disabilities Act in 1995 and subsequent implementation of various policies and programs by the Indian government to enhance the participation of students with disabilities in regular schools such initiatives, however, have placed new demands on schools, especially on teachers who have the major responsibility for

implementing inclusive at the classroom level. It is therefore important that a research is carried out to find out teachers perceptions.

According to Das et al (2013) the United Nations initiative and policy and legislations implemented in many countries influenced India's decision to embrace the concept of inclusive education to provide equitable education opportunities to children with disabilities. The Salamanca Conference of 1994 advocated for the mainstream of children with special needs. Sutton et al (2011) concurs that in 1994 representatives from 92 countries including India, Italy and Greece and 25 international organisations attended the World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca, Spain. Das et al (2013) asserts that subsequently India undertook some key initiatives that focused on providing increased educational opportunities for students with disabilities in regular education setting. Most notably among them are the Persons with Disabilities Act (1995), National Trust Act, 1999, Sarva Siksh Abhiyan (Education for All Movement) 2001 and the Action Plan for Inclusive Education. These initiatives have brought inclusive education to the fore front of education reform movement in Indian.

Research communicated the view that teachers are the key to the success of inclusive programme Johnson (1996) in a study described and analyse the perceptions held by regular education teachers towards the placement of students with learning disabilities in their classroom. Key findings of this study were that class size should be reduced to support inclusion and that the teachers are basically enthusiastic about participating in inclusion. Teachers were concerned about their level of training regarding modification and received effective teaching strategies for students with disabilities.

In Malaysia Pendidikan (1996) holds that the Malaysian Ministry of Education, students with special needs are those who are visually handicapped or partially or fully deaf or suffer from

the disability to learn. These are the students that have been identified as suffering from physical-sensory deficiencies and learning disabilities. The Ministry of Education provides Special Education programmes for the three types of disabilities, namely, hearing, visual and learning disabilities.

Stiker (1999) viewed that the Italian policy of *integrazione scolastica* appears to create an idea context – legislative, educational, pedagogical and social for the development of inclusive education. On the other hand, Italy's decision to adopt the policy of *integrazione scolastica* was part of a wider educational policy of 'comprehensiveness' whose purpose was to break the reproduction of inequalities through a selective education system (such as the Fascist education system) Stiker (1999) alluded that Italy unlike Britain focussed on the need to provide special education facilities for those children with impairments who were usually hidden at home, victims of ignorance, superstition and religious fear. For this reason, segregation settings and primitive forms of special education in Italy were inevitable positively accepted, especially when comparison was made with previous forms of marginalisation of disabled pupils who were usually kept at home Meijer and Abbring (1994). Thus, although Italy was the exception to the big growth of special needs institutions throughout Europe and state special education was introduced very late as a consequence of the economic boom of the early 1960s Meijer and Abbring (1994), it was clearly welcomed as a valid and widely accepted alternative for the education of disabled people within the national education system. Nevertheless, in the 1960s special education was still a valid option in Italy as many acts, which were concerned with the organisation and maintenance of special institutions, (Lawn. 1073 – 24<sup>th</sup> of July 1992, and Law n. 942 – 31<sup>st</sup> of October (1996) were passed during that decade. Also Nocera (1988) illustrates in his historical account of special education in Italy, that special schooling was never really dismantled. He made a

strong case that special education remained a real menace and that policies should not leave room for manoeuvre for those people supporting the re-opening of special education systems.

In Greece, Wright (2005) asserts that the Hellenic education policy supports the full inclusion of the pupils in the mainstream classroom as the best means for the development of two way relationships among pupils with special educational needs and their classmates. Wright (2005) also asserts that some of the main elements of the law was education for all children with special needs was mandatory and the political decisions support the substantial inclusion of people with special needs in society by securing equal opportunities for learning, independent living and financial sufficiency. It clearly states that education must be provided in mainstream schools for all pupils with special need and in special schools for pupils with severe special needs.

Coming back to Africa, Botswana is one of the signatories of “education for All” that’s according to Mukhopadhyag (2009) Botswana is committed to enhance access to education to all her citizens and inclusive education is perceived to be the most effective approach in reaching this goal. Mukhopadhyag (2009) postulates that educating learners with disabilities began about more than 40 years ago in Botswana. Missionaries from the Dutch Reformed Church started the first school for children who were blind or had severe visual impairment in 1969, and missionaries from the Lutheran church opened the first school for children who were deaf or had severe hearing impairment in 1970. Furthermore Mukhopadhyag (2009) alludes that Botswana developed its first policy on education in 1977 known as Education for Kgahisana to prepare children with special educational needs for social integration by integrating them as far as possible with their peers in regular schools.

According to Mastropieri and Scrugg (2000) successful implementation of inclusive education is largely dependent on the positive attitude of teachers towards it. Palmer et al

(2002) asserts that a significant body of research indicated that teachers are positive towards the general philosophy of inclusive education, whereas other research has reported that teachers have serious reservations about inclusive education in practice that's according to Ring and Travers (2005).

Furthermore Ring and Travers (2005) alludes that there were some findings that although most of the teachers in Botswana were positive towards the concept of inclusive education, they did not have favourable attitude towards the inclusion of learners with special education needs in their classrooms due to the lack of essential knowledge and skills in inclusive education. Nonetheless this research also, will research on the teachers' perceptions on the implementation of the inclusive Policy of special needs learners in Gweru District Primary Schools.

Here in Zimbabwe, Zindi (1997) outlined that the Zimbabwean (1987) Education Act was revised in 2006, which specifies that there should be inclusion of children with Special Needs into regular schools. Further, the Nziramasanga Report 1999, which looked into the education affairs of Zimbabwe, stipulates that the quality of education for the child with disabilities should reflect the same standards and ambitions of general education. The idea of inclusion is also advocated by many policy documents like the African Charter on the rights and Welfare of the child adopted in 1990, the Jomtien World Declaration on Education. For all Report (1990), the Dacar Framework for Action on Education For All UNESCO (2002) and the Salamanca Report and Framework for action on children with special Needs (1994). In line with the above documents on inclusive education, UNESCO (2002) calls for the recognition of the importance of parents or community participation in the management of schools.

In a study by Mafa (2012) teachers pointed out that it was hard to successfully manage inclusive classes. They also mentioned lack of specific skills when dealing with specific forms of special needs, e.g reading and writing Braille and not being able to use sign language when interacting with children having hearing impairments. Most teachers said lessons preparation, planning how to organise pupils for teaching actual lesson delivery, variety of work to be assessed placed heavy demands on them.

Furthermore, Mafa (2012) echoes that problems encountered by teachers when handling inclusive classes bring to the fore the appropriateness of the teacher's training programmes that teacher trainees are exposed to during pre-service teacher training.

However, Peresuh et al (2000) outlined that in Zimbabwe the provision of special education to Africans was pioneered by Margareta Hugo of Dutch Reformed Church, when she established a school for the blind in Chivi. In support, Mafa (2012) asserts that to the Salamanca and Margareta, Zimbabwe started training personnel at different colleges like United College of Education and at other training colleges. Special education became one of the courses to be completed by student teachers before deployment. Education Secretary's Policy Circular 36 of 1990 also postulates that in Zimbabwe children are expected to master the national curriculum at all levels of schooling regardless of ability. Thus to achieve this, the teachers persecutions on the implementation of inclusive education in regular classrooms has to be investigated, hence the need for this study.

According to the Curriculum Development 2002, The Secretary's Circular minute of 1998 was the first document that tried to link the provision of special needs education to the education Act of 1987. The general aim of the Zimbabwean government in the provision of Special needs education was to bridge the gap for learners with special needs. However Hamanand et al (2003) allude that though attempts have been made to provide education for



children with special needs through programmes like integration and inclusion, it has however been noticed that the perceptions of teachers are influencing quality of education offered to children with special needs. Thus the current study seeks to find out teachers perceptions on the implementation of the inclusive policy of special needs learners in Gweru District Primary Schools are not influencing the quality of Education being delivered.

However, Cont (2001) alludes that a research communicated the view that teachers are the key to the success of inclusion programmes, as they are viewed as linchpins in the process on including children with special needs into regular classes. A study carried by Mpofu (2001) revealed that perceptions and attitude of teachers towards children with special needs are multidimensional and complex. Ainscow (2002) conclude that inclusion can only be successful if teachers are part of the team driving this process. However, a research carried by Mushoriwa (2001) on pre-school teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education established that 86% rejected inclusive education on the grounds that children with special needs will be frustrated because of the social and academic rejection.

The researcher noted with concern that the country at present is using the **1990 secretary's circular minute number p.36** dated 9 October 1990 as basis for placement procedure for special classes, resource rooms for special needs education in Zimbabwe. The researcher also seeks to find out the effectiveness of the policy towards the successful implementation of the special needs education project in relation to the actual situation on the ground

Mushoriwa (2001) postulates that the **Nziramasanga commission** of inquiry found out that special education centres and schools are able mainly to provide for children who are physically disabled who were mainly affected mainly by such diseases as polio myelitis, accidents and others. Children with these disabilities are easy to integrate, while those with mental and other socially constructed disabilities are left out. Mushoriwa (2001) also asserts

that the commission also observed that the lack of a comprehensive policy on special needs education raises a lot of questions as to what policy the schools psychological services is using in implementing the program on special education.

The above information becomes a motivational factor or driving force for the researcher through this current study can investigate teachers' perceptions on the implementation of the inclusive policy of special needs learners in Gweru District Primary Schools. Van et al (2001) stipulate that the success of an inclusionary programme may be at risk if regular classroom teacher holds negative perception and attitude towards inclusion of Early Childhood Education learners with special needs. Also Mushoriwa (2001) noted that teachers' perceptions affect the way they teach children with special needs in regular classes. Ainscow (2002) outlined that teacher attitude can shape the way special needs education is promoted. This implies that, perceptions of teachers towards inclusive education determine the quality of education and achievement of better results as observed by global researchers like Avramidis et al (2010). Since the perceptions and attitudes of teachers play a crucial role it becomes quite necessary for this current study to investigate the teachers' perceptions on the implementation of the inclusive policy on special needs learners in Gweru District Primary Schools.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

A statement of the problem has been described by Ellis and Levy (2008) as a concise description of the issues that need to be addressed by the research.

Although Zimbabwe being a signatory to the Salamanca Framework, teachers' perceptions on the implementation of inclusive education policy on special needs learners still it has a lot to desire in as far as implementation and provision of equality education and proper handling of children with and without special needs. A challenge is no longer on integration or inclusion

but on either how to sustain quality special need education and care through the teachers' perceptions.

This current study therefore seeks to address the following main research questions.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

- What policy guidelines have been put in place to ensure that special needs learners are included in regular classes?
- How do learners with special needs benefit from inclusion?
- What support systems exist to ensure that special needs learners are included in regular schools successfully?
- What trainings have teachers undergone to ensure that they teach learners with special needs effectively?

#### **1.5 Significance of the study**

After successful carried out and at its completion the study hopes to make recommendations which will be used as benchmarks for policy improvement in teacher training institutions, government authorities responsible for special needs education like the schools psychological services school administrators and parents and the whole nation at large. Given the aforesaid it therefore becomes instructive that immediate measures need to be put in place to ensure that the agreed upon standards are met in the implementation of special needs education on the regular teacher in particular.

##### **1.5.1 To the researcher**

This study will equip the researcher with necessary knowledge about teachers' perceptions in the implementation of the inclusive education policy of special needs learners. The study will help the researcher to develop much needed skills to deal with learners with special

needs. In addition, the researcher will be in a position to staff develop other staff members in school.

### **1.5.2 To the school**

This research is significant to the school especially the school authorities because it is the first study in the field of learners with special needs. The researcher will be any eye opener to the school authorities since inclusive education is a new system and it also assist other learners without special needs to accommodate and assist their peers with special needs. This study will also help the future educators who would like to carry out similar researches on teachers' perceptions on the implementation of the inclusive education Policy of special needs learners as a reference.

### **1.5.3 To the Educational Officers**

The District Education Officers (D.E.O) and Education Officer (E.O) will also benefit since they also want to know the teachers perceptions in the teaching of learners with special needs in regular classrooms and implementation of policy on inclusive education.

## **1.6 Assumptions of the study**

- The study is based on the assumption that;
- Almost every school has learners with disabilities.
- Schools have a policy to apply when dealing with special needs education.
- Schools have resource units or at least have access to a cluster one.
- Teachers have basic knowledge on how to handle special needs learners
- The teachers will disclose their perceptions on learners with special needs.
- Respondents of this study will be honest and willing to participate.
- The sample used will be a true reflection of the total population.

## **1.7 Delimitations of the study**

The study will only focus on Gweru District primary schools. The research study will focus on the teachers' perceptions on the policy of including learners with special needs in regular classrooms.

## **1.8 Limitations of the study**

This study is concerned with the teachers' perceptions on the implementation of the inclusive policy on Special needs learners in Gweru District primary schools. In view of the relatively small size of the sample and subsamples and the deficiencies of the methodology, research design and the instrument used, the study is likely to have limited generalisability. Some respondents may not be willing to give their perceptions, especially those who have learners with special needs in their classrooms. The study will base on the assumption that the sample used reflects the entire population which might have some differences. Transport and network problems are likely to slow down the progress of the study since the researcher will be in rural areas.

## **1.9 Definitions of key terms**

### **1.9.1 Perception**

According to Valeo (2004) perception is the ability to see, hear or become aware of something through the senses. On the other hand Noe (2011) defines perception as the process by which people translate sensory impressions into a coherent and unified view of the world around them. From the above definitions it can be deduced that perception is all about recognition and interpretation of sensory stimuli based on memory, thus for this context.

### **1.9.2 Special Needs Education**

Zindi (1997) defines special needs education as a specially designed instrument that meets the unique of children who may have disabilities such as learning physically, emotionally, visual, hearing and any other handicaps that inhibit him or her from realizing the full potentials. Mushariwa (2001) defines special needs education as an instruction that is specially designed to meet the needs of learners with disabilities such instruction may require to use special materials like wheel chair Braille, hearing aids, spectacles e.t.c. From two definitions special needs education emphasis that there are some children who have special educational needs that can be met in a regular classroom in an inclusive environment.

### **1.9.3 Disability**

Cant (2001) defines disability as a restriction in the ability to perform an obvious activity of daily living which others can. Dooley (2002) also defines disability as the physical or mental condition which limits one's movements, senses as well as activities. In this context disability can be taken to be as lack of adequate strength or power to perform tasks as per expectations.

### **1.9.4 Inclusion**

Wiebe and Kim (2008) views the inclusion method as a basic model where both disabled and non-disabled students are educated within the same classroom. Educational inclusion, then offers education geared to include all students, even those with disabilities in the same learning environment. This may include special needs children who have emotional and behavioural disorders. Teachers may encounter a variety of situations in the classroom, including those with learning disorders, emotional disabilities and mental retardation.

### **1.10 Summary**

The chapter outlined the teachers' perception on the implementation of the inclusive policy on special needs learners in regular classrooms. Guiding research questions were included to show the direction of the study. The significance of the study outlined the beneficiaries of the study to include the researcher, the school, educational officers and the assumptions of the study are also provided so as the delimitations and limitations as they had an effect on the outcome of the research. Literature review on learners with special needs included in the regular classrooms, its significance will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 2: Review of Related Literature**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The chapter focuses on the literature reviewed pertaining to teacher perception on education policy on special needs learners in primary schools. The review of literature includes the theoretical and conceptual frameworks. The researcher pays attention to what different authors say on inclusive education. The conclusion will be given finally which will sum up the main ideas discussed in this chapter.

### **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

Within the school setting, all students are expected to learn academic concepts as well as behavioural skills. Both of these areas often times are potential barriers for disabled students, they can develop low self-esteem issues which hinder them socially. Ntshangase, Mdikana and Cronk (2008) assert that these learners, due to their histories of repeated failure at school, are likely to feel as though academic outcomes are beyond their control, thus perceiving themselves as less competent than their peers. It is important that academic content and social skills are addressed with the classroom.

Miller (2011) asserts that social learning theory is suitable in inclusion as discovered by Albert Bandura in his theory. Miller (2011) also postulates that Albert Bandura developed the social learning theory which state that learning, both cognitive and behavioural, takes place through the observation modelling and imitation of others. Miller (2011) echoes that the main characteristic of the social learning theory, are the centrality of observational learning, a causal model that involves an environment-person-behaviour system cognitive contributions and self-efficacy and agency. This theory is suitable because it proposes that academic and behaviour modelling takes place through verbal instruction, live modelling by



a person, and symbolic modelling through four steps which are attention , retention, reproduction and motivation.

Moreso, Harding (2009) viewed that inclusion classes capitalize on this theory because disable peers can observe their non-disabled peers and their teachers and then imitate them both academically and behaviourally. Social learning theory combined with Freudian learning principles focus on teaching children important real-life social behaviours. Moreover, though this learning community students with disabilities are able to interact with their peers and develop friendships.

In addition to social learning, the zone of proximal development also has implication for inclusive classrooms. Harding (2009) alluded that according to Lev Vygotsky, the zone of proximal development states that students learn when guided by an adult or when working with more capable peers. Students with disabilities can learn from their peers without disabilities as well as with the support of adult guidance to gain a better understanding of the concept being taught. Again the teacher can Scaffold learners with disabilities, Harding (2009) asserts that scaffolding occurs a great learning support is provided as the time new concepts are introduced and the support is lowly taken from the student as he or she masters the content. This theory is suitable again for the special needs learners, as they need a lot of scaffolding especially the mentally challenged.

Vygotsky theory is important to inclusive education because it helps the teacher to know and understand the level of development of learners so that he/she can assist the learners. The teacher can scaffold the child through hints and prompts since the learner is and apprentice who learns by being pulled, helped or challenged by others. Ntshangase, Mdikana and Cronk (2008) assert that Vygostky understand that children construct knowledge through social interaction with others thus guided learning theory appropriate for inclusion.

Both the theories discussed describe how learning occurs in the classroom internationally both academically and socially. According to Ntshangase, Mdikana and Cronk (2008) his social interaction is important not only for learners' academic achievement but also for their long term general well-being and personal development in conjunction with the social learning theory, should theoretically help explain how students with disabilities progress academically and increase appropriate social interactions with places within inclusion classroom.

### **2.3 Policy guidelines that have been put in place to ensure that special needs learners are included in regular classes.**

A range of international human rights instruments have long established the right to education for all. [www.sightsavers.org/echoes](http://www.sightsavers.org/echoes) that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) firmly established education as a human right to all people. The United Nations Education, scientific and cultural organisation (UNESCO) convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), the first specific instrument concerned with the right to education, is based on the principles of non-discrimination and equal opportunities in education. According to Dart (2007) the Salamanca statement (1994) stresses the importance of inclusive education, calling on governments to give the highest policy and budgetary priority to enable them to include all children regardless of individual differences and to adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in mainstream schools.

Moreso, [www.SightSavers.Org/echoes](http://www.SightSavers.Org/echoes) that the commitment to inclusive education became a legal obligation through Article 24 of the 2006. Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities, which reaffirms the right of disabled children to quality education and committed government to ensure that persons with disabilities can access an inclusive,

quality and free primary and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live.

In Greece, Dart (2007) asserts that the education of individuals with Special Educational Needs Law (Law 2017/2000) provides that the identification of students with special educational needs be realized during the first year of primary school. This law also specifies the use of a special screen-test system at the start of every school year by the local Diagnostic Assessment and support centres for the entire Greek student population. It is hoped that these measures will lead to an integrated individualized Educational Programme for every student identified as having special needs. Once their individualized Educational Programme has been developed, students with special needs are placed in the regular school setting, which is considered by Diagnostic Assessment and Support Centres specialists as most appropriate for the education of all students.

Furthermore, Ainscow (1991) outlined that in Brazil the National Campaign which was made up of 200 social organisations, agree to bring social movements for children and for the right to education together into a single movement. Save the children worked closely with the National Campaign to bring the movements together and support their analysis of educational problems. The National fund for the Maintenance of Educational Development provided protected funding for young children's education. The campaign tapped into a strong public interest in early childhood education.

Foreman (2005) postulates that the movement towards inclusive education for all children with special needs began in the 1960s. The United Nations has made a number of influential declarations regarding inclusive education, such as the convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons (1975), and the convention on the Rights of the child (1989). In 1990, the World Conference on Education

for All was held in Jomtien, Thailand. A further conference in 2000 in Senegal gave rise to Dakar framework for Education for All, in which the international community pledged to ensure education as a right for all people, irrespective of individual differences. Ainscow and Cesar (2006) allude that, in 1994, inclusive education was put forward as a concept at the Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs education in Spain. The Salamanca statement is arguably the most significant international document in the field of special education. In the Salamanca statement inclusive education is described as a framework for action that would accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic and other conditions. UNESCO (1994) echoes that the Salamaca statement argues that regular schools with an inclusive setting are the most effective way to fight against discriminatory attitudes in order to build an inclusive society and to achieve education for all.

In other countries Stough (2003) asserts that another developing country, Costa Rica, is also developing inclusion with different education service models such as consulting teachers, educational assistance teams, joint teams and resource centres, though they have little publication in this field.

Whereas Stakes and Hornby (2000) suggest that teachers have to identify, possibly through assessment individual children's learning style in order to meet their needs. Exley (2003) postulates that by learning style, it is meant the application of an individual's cognitive style to a learning situation, the nature of the learning environment and the structure of a lesson. Chinn (2001) alludes that cognitive style is concerned with an individual's characteristic and relatively consistent way of processing incoming information of all types from the environment. The argument is predicted on the premise that since each person is different; the way she/he learns will also differ. Exley (2003) asserts that will mean the teacher has to teach to satisfy the learning style of the different ranges of students in the class. This may be

impossible considering the huge numbers of class sizes that some schools particularly in countries such as Ghana, Zimbabwe have to deal with.

A number of international agreements that impact on provision for children with special needs, to which Botswana is a signatory, have contributed to the country's participation in providing for these children (Bergsma, 2000). By adopting the Jomtein Declaration (The World Declaration on Education for All, 1990) the government recognised that the aims of education are common to all children and that education is a fundamental human right and therefore should be made accessible to all children including those with disabilities. The national policy documents the government's expressed desire to support children with special needs.

### **2.3.1 Benefits of inclusion to learners with special needs**

Marston (1996) points out that inclusive education can be beneficial to all students in a class, not just students with special needs. Some researchers show that inclusion helps students to understand the importance of working together and foster a sense of accommodation and empathy among the student body. On the other hand Gillies (2004) is of the view that proponent also argue that culturally, inclusive education is good for all students because it builds a caring community where everyone's experiences and abilities are valued.

Ainscow (1991) asserts that inclusion specifically aims to benefit special children through improvements in their learning outcomes including their social skills, personal development and academic achievement. Inclusion is capable of enhancing children's academic achievement through speech and language programs, improved parent-teacher communication, greater use of group work, a student participation in class discussions and increased community acceptance of people with disabilities. Jenkinson (1997) points out that

student at mainstream schools were more likely to have higher academic achievements than those at special schools, even when developmental level was similar.

Whereas Thomas and Vaughan (2004) assert that, in UK Learners with special educational needs are supported by the school under the School Action and School Action plus Programmes. The school responds to diversity by having in-house programmes such as the Reading Recovery Programme to support students with English as an additional language and learning Mentor Programme to support learners with behavioural needs. The learners identified with special educational needs in the school receive support from these programmes.

On the other note Ajuwon (2008) asserts that children are more likely to learn social skills in an environment that approximates to normal conditions of growth and development. Children, during their early years, develop language more effectively if they are with children who speak normally and appropriately.

Ainscow (1991) points out that inclusive education will contribute towards a better education system for all children, while ensuring that children with special educational needs are identified and appropriately so that they too can reach their full potential. All learners will benefit from more friendly and child centered teaching practices and school environments learners who need extra help in their learning will benefit from the school based support. Learners with special educational needs, additional health and psychosocial will benefit through the comprehensive approach to addressing their needs.

Ajuwon (2008) postulates that in some countries like Brazil, children are able to get class safely, wherever they live, community transport arrangements are funded. Children are freed from family duties to come to school and social protection measures are provided. Also health and nutritional supports are provided. Family awareness is raised to allow disabled

children to participate in schooling, also media and government information campaigns are used in many countries.

Furthermore, MohdSiraj (1996) stated that inclusive education would only succeed if the special need children were to be totally included in the mainstream classrooms. The teaching and learning process must focus on the children's strength as well as consider their weaknesses. Individual Education Plan should also be planned based on the student's individual needs York and Vanderook (1991).

Another benefit according to Schattman and Benay (1992) found that students with disabilities in an inclusionary setting are exposed to talented teachers, refine new social relationships with the same-age group, and experience more quality programs in a regular education classroom. Also Stainback (1990) concluded that inclusion is an appropriate instructional model because students with disabilities are accepted and supported by their peers and other members of the school community while having their educational needs met.

In United Arab, Lewis and Shaheen (2010) outlined that private schools will also be required to accept children with mild and moderate disabilities, though they would be permitted to charge higher fee to fund the development of their own special education programs. The General Secretariat Executive Council Emirate of Abu Dhabi Rehabilitation and Care Centre for people with disabilities has been integrated into public schools during 2010. In addition to 23 students who had no previous schooling, while 15 students have been integrated into higher education institutions.

Winter and O' Raw (2010) postulates that the advocates of total inclusion advocate for a zero rejection philosophy where no child is turned away from the local school on the basis that he or she is handicapped regardless of the severity of the handicap. These proponents argue that there should however be enough support services in the form of specialised gadgets or the

presence of an aide to ensure that within that inclusive environment, the handicapped child benefits. Inclusive education is driven by the philosophy that special gadgets for use by those with handicaps should find their way to the school where the children are and not the other way around where children with special needs are isolated and send to the so called special schools which in essence are segregated communities of people with different forms of impairments. Inclusive Education unlike separate placement which works on the philosophy that the child with challenges must adjust to school environment operates on the thinking that it is the school that must make adjustments to accommodate the child on the other hand. Hopkin (2003) alludes that, in Botswana, Special Education is perceived in conventional terms, and is mainly restricted to those of school age. The mentally handicapped and retarded, those with visual and hearing impairments and the physically handicapped are included. In practice the principal focus is to ensure that those covered have: equality of educational opportunity, are prepared for social integration through being in mainstream schools, are assessed at an early age so that they receive individualised education, and community and parental support is sought when education them.

In addition, Dart and Keerate (2002) points out that the Government policy decrees the inclusion of others in the Special Needs category they are prepared for life and living at home.

On the other hand, Ajuwon (2008) also comments on the obvious benefits of the inclusive education paradigm, like children are more likely to learn social skills in an environment that approximates to normal conditions of growth and development children, during their formative years, develop language more effectively if they are with children who speak normally and appropriately (Mitchell and Brown, 1991). Also Ferguson (1996) alludes that, often it is gratifying that where school and community environments can be made physically



and programmatically accessible, children and youth with physical disabilities can function more effectively than would otherwise be the case.

Hyaden and Thompson (2000) suggest that the presumed benefits of inclusive education for mental disabilities include that they will achieve at a higher level due to the higher demand and expectation of regular education programs. Students with special needs benefit from exposure to students without disabilities who would model acceptable behaviour and adaptive skills to students with special needs. The social acceptance of students with special needs increases through social contacts with a greater number of classmates and school mates without disabilities.

On the same note, children are catered for in a continuum of skills and abilities. Hagden and Thompon (2000) advance that an inclusive approach facilitates and encourages staff team work, caters for individual learner's rights, works towards eradication of stigmas and provide opportunities for special needs children to function in the real world and to demonstrate their strengths. Inclusion develops relationships and creativity that would not be possible in segregated situations.

### **2.3.2 Support systems which exist to ensure that special needs learners are included in regular schools successfully**

According to Thomas and Vaughan (2004) in the UK, the principle of integration into mainstream school as an advantage for students with special education needs was firmly established in the 1981 Education Act. Also Thomas and Vaughan (2004) assert that recently, the UK government's stance on inclusion was endorsed in the Green Paper. Excellence for All children: Meeting Special Educational Needs (1999). Thomas and Vaughan (2004) points out that, the Green Paper supports the UNESCO's 1994 Salamanca statement and framework for Action and it offers a number of steps to promote inclusion in regular schools

for special needs learners with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, there is an emphasis on stronger rights or children with special educational needs to be educated at mainstream education

Also Zalizan (2000) asserts that, in Northern Malaysia some school have three Special education programmes under one roof. They are integrated Programme for learning Disabilities the Dyslexia Programme and the Remedial Education Programme for learners in mainstream education requiring additional support in literacy and numeracy. The role of the Special education teacher in terms of inclusion is to get the learner ready to be placed in regular classes.

According to Okumbe and Seeco (2006) in most countries, there are educational psychologists who are applied in the field of education. Furthermore Okumbe and Seeco (2006) allude that Educational Psychologists apply scientific principle of teaching, learning and behaviour to help maximise the social, emotional and educational growth and development of children. They contribute to raising standards in the learner and school performance in order to improve and promote inclusion in classroom settings.

Okumbe and Seeco (2006) assert that the government of Botswana suggested the need of resource rooms and resource room personnel. It is said there is need for resource rooms in inclusive school settings where learners with special needs use, especially visually impaired and the intellectually retarded as they will take longer time using the teaching and learning aids. Okumbe and Seeco (2006) also assert that there should be an inclusive curriculum with prominence on strengths but which accommodates the needs of all learners from disadvantaged and minority groups and cultures.

According to Werner (2010) for classrooms to be fully inclusive, the learning materials and curriculum need to be made inclusive and responsive to the diverse cultures and socio-

economic backgrounds of children. Instructional quality in a diverse classroom can be improved by using multi-cultural and multi-ethnic examples, scenarios and vignettes to illustrate academic concepts, ideas and skills. This is a powerful strategy to incorporate diversity into the heart of teaching.

In developing countries, Singal (2008) point out that, it is suggested by various researchers that developing countries also need some changes in their policies to implement inclusive education. For instance Singal (2008) points out that, in India, in order to bring about the successful implementation of inclusive education, it is necessary to motivate people for their support, to change classroom practices and implement some pedagogical rather than structural changes. Similarly, Kristensen, Onen and Loican (2003) argue that developing countries such as Uganda, are facing similar challenges in implementation of inclusive education. It is said that they also need some support regarding the scarcity of teaching materials, extensive diversity, negative attitudes and many children in the classrooms.

However, Semmel et al (1991) stated that it is important to have a good collaboration between mainstream teachers, special education teachers and support staff in order to have good quality teaching and learning processes for special need children. He goes on to say teachers involved in the inclusive education must have enough exposure to the various teaching strategies behaviour modification and collaboration techniques.

On another note, Gok (2008) asserts that in India, schools are well-equipped in all aspects to cater and deliver quality education for all children. This includes having a balanced curriculum that is suitable for all categories of children, teachers who have the ability to handle the individual needs within the classroom and thereby promote an environment where personal development social skills and student participation are encouraged.

Also on the other note, (Koech Report 1999) outlined that, the government of Kenya is placing emphasis on inclusive education through regular schools for Special Needs learners as opposed to the practice of using special schools and special units attached to regular schools. However, special schools and units are essential for learners with special needs in the areas of hearing, visual, mental and serious physical challenges. With the increase in demand for special needs education and in line with the international development, the government has adopted Inclusive Education Gok (2008). This approach will increase access to education for children with special needs. Inclusive education calls for restructuring of the education system in terms of curriculum, instruction, physical facilities and other aspects to children enrolled to schools of their choice and convenience. Gok (2008) also asserts that it is important to note that government will face serious challenges in providing education to all its citizens with special needs in education unless it implements inclusive education. The government under the FPE programme is facilitating provision of additional capitation grants to facilitate implementation of inclusive education. The funds are provided to learners with special needs enrolled in both special education institutions and units attached to regular schools.

Idol (1997) asserts that, other teachers stressed their concern that as more students are included, teachers would need additional tools, and skills for coping with the social and emotional problems that accompany inclusive schooling.

In Zimbabwe, Musengi and Chireshe (2012) outlined that well before the Jomtien (1990) and Salamanca Conventions (1994), the Zimbabwean government's policy of education for all connected through an amendment to the Rhodesian Education Act in 1987 had made primary education compulsory and free for all children implicitly meaning even those with various forms of challenges. The government pursued the concept of segregation placement as well as integration. Musengi and Chireshe (2012) asserts that, the secretary's circular Minute

Number p36, of 21 June 1985, gave school Heads the power to enrol pupils with mild disabilities and place them in a separate class at the same school with their peers. Musengi and Chireshe (2012) viewed that these pupils would be assisted by specialist teachers posted to each school and officials from schools Psychological Services, a department which government and created within the Ministry of Education to deal with children with special learning needs.

In addition Samkange (2013) alludes that, in 1989, another intervention was done by the government through Chief Education Officer's circular Minute No. 3/89 which advised special schools to adopt the same curriculum with those schools enrolling children with no special needs. Samkange (2013) also alludes that in 1990, the Education Secretary's Circular Minute No. P36 of 1990 officially made operational integration through its directive that schools should provide specialised rooms for use by those with mild or severe special needs. Special schools however remained fully operational with government support in terms of grants and qualified manpower provision. Again, pressure from human rights campaigners and coupled with the resolutions of Jomtien and Salamanca conventions drove the government to introduce Inclusive Education.

Samkange (2013) viewed that, in Zimbabwe there have been many policy pronouncements of Inclusive Education. In 2001, through the Director's Circular No. 1, 200 pupils with disabilities were supposed to be included in sporting activities in their own category whenever those without disabilities participated. Another policy directive in the form of Director's Circular No. 2 of 2001 directed that sign language be taught in all primary schools in Zimbabwe. Through partnership with Leonard Cheshire Zimbabwe Trust in 2010 the Ministry of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture launched a campaign name Inclusive Education of All which was targeting 1000 children with disabilities from government schools.

On the other hand, Dart (2000) alludes that, in providing places for special needs children in Botswana, the Government's commitment is primarily to the mentally retarded and mentally handicapped. Some provision is now being made for children with visual and hearing impairment in units in a few state primary schools. Again, Dart (2000) asserts that Non-government agencies, those with expertise and experience in these areas, cater for most learners with visual and hearing impairment, and the severely disabled. Grants-in are made to the controlling authorities, thereby extending provision. Pupils in these and Government institutions are enabled to take public examinations and to move to the next stage schools if they satisfy the entry criteria. Government provision of diagnostic and testing services has increased, and this is aimed at detecting handicap and early detection.

In addition, Stedman (1993) alludes that the Ministry of Education in Botswana collaborates with the Ministry of Health to identify learners with severe problems to enable them to receive education outside the country, mainly in South Africa. Government policy does aim at social inclusion for the mentally retarded, and those with visual and hearing impairment.

Also in Nigeria, Ajuwon (2008) comments on the adoption of the policy of inclusion by the Nigeria's National Policy on Education (1998). The policy stipulates the integration of special needs students into regular classrooms, and free education for exceptional students at all levels.

### **2.3.3 Training that teachers have undergone to ensure that they teach learners with special needs effectively**

According to Meijer (2001) UNESCO works very hard to see to it that inclusive education is being implemented in schools as well as in societies. Meijer (2001) also cites a research that was carried out in United Kingdom which indicated that there were some problems regarding inclusive education. Teachers were generally reporting an increasingly heavy workload as

they responded to government initiatives aimed at raising standards of achievement for all pupils. Meijer (2001) further points out that in some schools there was reluctance to offer places to pupils who were considered 'hard to teach' as these pupils would lower aggregate assessment scores. This would lead to less favourable overall school standards of performance. In the research Meijer (2001) alludes that it was noted that dealing with diversity in the classroom formed one of the biggest challenges with European classrooms since the teachers had to deal with larger diversity within their classes and has to adopt or prepare the curriculum in such a way that the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs and their peers were sufficiently met.

Terzi (2008) contends that in the research it was further found out that when dealing with differences in the classroom teachers needed extra help from colleagues or special education teachers. According to Terzi (2008) at times a pupil with Special Educational Needs required specific help or instruction that could not be given by the teacher during the daily classroom routine and other teachers and support personnel had to come on the scene. The issue of good planning, cooperation and team teaching also formed a challenge. The research carried out in United Kingdom indicates that even though inclusive education is being implemented gaps still remain on how to successfully implement it.

Teachers need to be staff developed in order to use innovative teaching methods. Govinda (2005) asserts that there is a need to use innovative teaching methods and activities to meet the different learning needs of children from diverse backgrounds. Teachers need to be equipped with the different ways that children learn in order to help them develop teaching-learning practises and processes that are more meaningful for the children and assist all children to learn better especially those belonging to historically excluded communities.

Teachers need training in order for them to become effective special needs teachers. Govinda (2005) asserts that an effective and meaningful framework for teacher training and teacher education programmes would identify several professional development needs of teachers. Govinda (2005) goes on to say that to be effective, the framework should be linked to the changing social landscape of the contemporary elementary classroom in India. Teaching children from diverse backgrounds requires a tremendous amount of flexibility in teaching practices and processes as well as in curriculum design and learning materials. However, it was suggested that the ongoing programmes on teacher training and teacher education are yet to recognize and focus attention on the need to address teachers' professional developmental needs to prepare them to teach special needs learners.

Guralnick (1999) outlined that teachers are helped to first develop an understanding of the children's life experiences and knowledge of their socio-economic and cultural environment through workshops and meetings. Also in Pakistan, Werne (2010) asserts that sensitization and awareness workshops on accessibility needs for the children with disability were held at provincial levels and district government.

Chimedza (2000) points out some challenges to inclusive education which are faced by most developing countries. The challenges include lack of trained personnel. Most teachers in regular schools are not trained to teach learners with special educational needs and it is only recently that teachers' colleges introduced inclusive education. In support Mmari et al (2008) cited in Gronlund, Lim and Larsson (2010) states that in Tanzania Special needs education is rarely covered in teacher training colleges so teachers typically do not have the skills to cope with education for the children with disabilities.

The Herald (2010) outlined that the Inclusive Education for All campaign was initiated by the Leonard Cheshire Zimbabwe Trust and was meant to benefit 1000 disabled children from



government schools. It was seen that the Trust would help in the training of teachers in inclusion of teaching methods, develop teaching equipments, improve infrastructure and embark on awareness campaigns.

According to Mpofu (2004) the training of teachers through teacher's colleges for example the United College of Education in Special Needs Education has helped ameliorate the availability of teachers in Special need education. Mpofu (2004) also points out that collaboration between Leonard Cheshire Zimbabwe Trust and the Ministry of Education has helped in staff developing teachers in both Urban and rural areas. On the other hand [www.unrwa.org](http://www.unrwa.org), postulates that the UNRWA approach will be empowering teachers to develop child-centred and child friendly classroom practices and enable them to identify and respond to the diverse needs of students in their classrooms. Teachers are encouraged to use multicultural methods and materials to differentiate and enrich learning experiences to meet the diverse learning needs and abilities of the learners. The approach will be promoted through all continuous professional development programmes for teachers and a Toolkit for identify and responding to Diverse Needs of learners.

Zalizan (1997) asserts that inclusive education in Malaysia began through the Malaysians' involvement at the international level in seminars and workshops hosted by the United Nations particularly under the UNESCO activities. The World's Declaration on Education for All in Jomtien has been focusing on integration initiatives and equity issues including children with special needs.

According to Heiman (2004), students can be included in mainstream classes based on a multidimensional diagnosis including psychological and educational tests. The students usually receive academic support from a special education teacher in their regular classrooms or in a resource room. To provide flexible inclusion in the least restrictive environment, the

school needs to train more mainstream teachers to handle and cope with special needs students in their classes.

On the other hand, Bawa and Mangope (2011) allude that the regular teachers in Botswana were concerned about the effectiveness of teacher preparation programme at the university. Many teachers agreed that they needed to be provided with professional training to implement inclusive education. They felt that they lacked knowledge of special education to meet learner's needs. Bawa and Mangope (2011) also allude that teachers felt that Ministry of Education and Skills Development and schools should organise regular workshops for teachers where one gets opportunities to discuss about inclusive education. So in Botswana there is professional training for the successful implementation of inclusive education.

## **2.4 Summary**

The reviewed literature for this chapter described how different authors views inclusion internationally. The researcher also researched on some teacher's perceptions on the policy of including learners with special needs in regular classrooms. A theoretical framework which includes the theories of inclusion was also presented. The forthcoming chapter would be on research methodology.

## **CHAPTER 3: Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Kumar (2011) points out that methodology is the analysis of the principles, rules and postulates employed by a discipline. In this study the chapter of methodology gives a clear description of the research methodology to be applied during the process of data gathering. This chapter specifies and justifies the research design to be employed in the study, research instruments as well as source of data. Methodology will also help the researcher to focus on explaining how the problems were investigated and why particular techniques and methods were used. This chapter will comprises of the research design, sample and sampling procedure, data collection procedure and research instruments.

### **3.2 Research Design**

When carrying out a research, the choice of a research design is highly influenced by objectives and purposes of the research. MacMillan and Schumacher (2010) define research designs as plan and the structure of the investigation used to obtain evidence to answer research questions. Thus an educational research design is a strategy for collecting evidence, analyzing it and report findings. For instance, in this current study the research has to investigate the teachers' perceptions on the implementation of inclusive policy of special needs learners in Gweru District Primary Schools.

General (2006) says that research designs fall under two main perspectives that are qualitative and quantitative. In this current study qualitative research was adopted since it deals with aspects of social phenomena that may be observable and can be reported (Johnson,

2001). The descriptive survey which the researcher chose falls under qualitative design. Descriptive survey is a research method which describes what we see over and beyond. According to Babbie (2001) descriptive survey is probably the best method which is available to us in collecting data for the purpose of describing a population large enough to observe directly.

Patton (2005) notes that descriptive survey research design seeks to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena. This means that the researcher can focus on the current situation, assessing the nature of existing conditions as they are. MacMillan and Schumacher (2010) comment that the chances of providing accurate description of particular situations are very high when using descriptive survey. Babbie (2001) occurs that descriptive survey is the wide distribution of either questionnaires or interviews designed to get data from people. It describes what one sees since survey is all about seeing over and beyond. Thus descriptive survey design was considered to be most suitable in this current study. The descriptive survey design involves natural settings, which entail physical observation, interviewing participants and involvement of the researcher, hence the choice of this design which includes human beings as participants can be justified.

The method is suitable for studies that have individual persons as the units of analysis and according to Best and Khan (2001) the descriptive survey method employs careful procedures so that generalization extended to other individuals or groups. It is these procedures of the descriptive survey design that prompted the researcher to opt for this method because this research is on current issues which contributed to teachers' perceptions towards inclusive education.

However, the researcher noted that the descriptive survey study falls short in certain areas. Best and Khan (2001) point out that descriptive survey might look deceptively simple but it calls for the researcher to be thorough and well versed with the theoretical framework of the field of inquiry. Haralambos and Holborn (2000) contend that the researcher needs to be well versed with the theories pertaining the area under study. The above makes descriptive survey study highly intensive and require developed language skills so as to be able to identify construct in verbal data and to write a report that brings the study to life to the reader.

Despite the above noted shortfall, the researcher made efforts to minimize them by triangulation of questions and maintaining a professional code to guard against confidentiality and to be as objective as possible.

### **3.3 Population**

Population is taken as any group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher that's according to Khan et al (2001). Bless and Smith (2002) define population as the entire set of objects, events or group of people who are the subject of the research, and about which the researcher wants to determine some characteristics, for instance in this case teachers' perceptions towards inclusive education.

The population of this current study comprise of ECD teachers and their head teachers.

There are 95 primary schools in Gweru District and the researcher selected 4 schools in Lower Gweru. 5 teachers at each school were selected and the 4 head teachers. The total population number is twenty-four.

### Population

Number of Teachers	20
Number of Heads	4
Total population	24

#### 3.3.1 Sampling

It was from the large population that the researcher chooses a sample that resembled the characteristics of the entire group. Dominowski et al (2001) define sample as a small subset of the population that has been chosen to be studied. It has to represent the population and have sufficient size so that a given innovative or thesis can be subjected to a fair data analysis. Also Best and Khan (2001) is of the same view when they outlined that sample is a small portion of a population selected to study the whole population. The researcher chose the size, as Johnson (1991) notes that the sample size should be ..... as large as the researcher can obtain with reasonable expenditure of time and energy. In order to reduce the bias, names of ten surrounding schools in the cluster will be put in a box and later picked on randomly.

Through the assistance of head teachers, the researcher will identify teachers with learners with special educational needs in their classrooms. Five teachers from each school will be considered. The researcher feels that class teachers have some perceptions towards inclusive education as they have the special needs learners in their classrooms.

#### 3.4 Research instruments

The researcher will use the questionnaires and interviews as instruments for gathering data.

### **3.5 Interview**

In this study the four school heads of the selected schools will be interviewed. An interview is a very important data gathering technique that is used when carrying out a descriptive survey.

According to Sidhu (1999) an interview is a two way method which permits an exchange of ideas and information. It also involves the collection of information through direct verbal interaction between the interviewee and the interviewer. It requires the actual physical proximity of two or more people and generally required that all normal channels a communication be open to them. It is a research technique where a conversation is carried with definite purpose of obtaining certain information by means of the spoken words.

The interview offset the weakness of the questionnaire in that the interviewer could explain more clearly just what information was needed. Where the subject misinterpreted the question, the interviewer evaluated the sincerely and insight of the interviewee. This is done by observing the non-verbal cues like facial and bodily expressions, tone of voice, gesture, reaction, feelings, attitude and non-cooperation. The researcher will record voice data during interviews using a recorder.

#### **3.5.1 Questionnaire**

The researcher will also make use of questionnaires. Borg and Gall (1989) consider the questionnaire to be a document that asks the same questions to all individuals. The researcher pts for these instruments because they are free from bias. The respondents will be strictly attended to present questions on their own without the influence of the researcher. This will assure the researcher of gathering reliable and correct information. The researcher will design structured and open ended questions. Structured questions are preferred because they guide the respondents on the researcher's interest.

According to Gerald (2006) questionnaires are cheaper and easy to administer. As the researcher is a full time teacher, there is limited time for the researcher to go from school to school. So the researcher will leave the questionnaires to the school heads and the school heads will give the questionnaires to the class teachers. Questionnaire allows anonymity and the respondents are free to express what he or she wants.

However sometimes respondents may not respond to all questions. According to Leady (2001) on factor why respondents do not answer all questions is that some questions will be focusing and filled with jargon such that respondents will not understand them. Anywhere the researcher will prepare straight forward questions to avoid this.

### **3.6. Data collection and procedures**

- Application letters requesting for permission to carry our research will be sent to the schools together with introductory letters.
- School heads will be interviewed personally by the researcher.
- The respondents will be given two weeks to complete the questionnaires.

### **3.7 Data analysis**

The researcher is going to start by organizing data collected through the use of interview schedules and responses will be grouped in the form of tables and bar graphs. Besides putting the raw data in tables, charts and graphs the researcher is going to edit the data, that is to check for accuracy. The data will be analysed as Leedy (1997) says, that data collected by means of questionnaires, interviews or any other method means very little until it is analysed. The data will be analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. Tables and bar graphs will be used to present data.



### **3.8. Validity**

Validation of instruments will be done in order to ensure validity and reliability. Validity is the extent to which a component of research such as instruments reflects or measures what it really intends to measure. Best and Khan (2001) viewed that validity was achieved by ensuring that each question in the instrument was related to the topic under investigation. The researcher also will work to ensure that the questionnaires and interview guide measure the factors under study. The researcher will construct the questions in such a way that they will be no confusion but mean exactly what they intend to mean.

### **3.9 Reliability**

Reliability according to Davis (1983) deals with accuracy And a test is said to be reliable if it measures in the same way it is used. As Mourdly and Bacon (1976) observed, reliability of a question may be tested through pre-testing. In this study, to make sure that the questions give the same results if administered to the same group now and then, pre-testing of questionnaires will be conducted among class teachers. The pre-testing of questionnaire is important because the researcher will be able to refine and adjust some of the questions. This is in agreement with Borg and Gale (1997) who say that pre-testing provides extra information that leads to the improvement of the study, since it reduces the number of errors.

### **3.10 Summary**

This chapter outlined the research design, population, sample, size and characteristics, sampling techniques and research instruments were set up flaws of the selected instruments as well as the measures to be taken to minimize them were dealt with data collection procedures were given and the data analysis procedures were stated. The forth coming chapter will focus on data presentation, data analysis and discussion of the results.

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA PRESENTATION ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings on teachers' perceptions towards the implementation of inclusive education policy on special needs learners in Gweru District primary schools are analysed, interpreted, and discussed, under the following themes: guidelines, benefits, support systems and training.

##### 4.1.1 Demographic Data

The researcher obtained demographic information from the respondents in order to understand sample characteristics.

##### 4.1.2 Gender of the Respondents.

The study sought to establish how the sample population was distributed by gender and enable tabulation of responses in this light. Table 1 data reveals how the study respondents were distributed by gender;

**Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents.**

Category of respondents	Males	Percentage	Females	Percentage
Teachers	5	25%	15	75%
Heads	2	50%	2	50%

The results reveal that 15(75%) of the teacher respondents were females while 5 (25%) were males. There were 50% male school heads and 50% female school heads. This shows that

there was gender balance of head teachers. The conclusions that can be drawn from this data is that the majority (75%) of the respondents were females compared to 25% males.

#### 4.1.3 Age

The demographic attributes of age has importance through linkages with individual experience and personal accumulated knowledge. Long-term experience may have influence an influence to effective teaching. The study sought to establish the age distribution of respondents and the results are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents.**

Age interval	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Below 30 Years	1	5
31 – 40 Years	11	55
41 – 50 Years	4	20
Above 50 Years	4	20

The study established that 55% of teachers were in the age bracket 31 – 40 years while majority 5% were aged below 30 years, 41 – 50 years were 4 (20%) and above 50 years.

#### 4.1.4 Teacher Professional qualification

To ascertain the extent to which teachers were equipped to handle special needs learners in inclusive education; the Researcher asked questions on the qualifications held by the teachers. Reference is made to table below.

**Table 3: Teacher Academic Qualifications**

QUALIFICATION	N	%
Certificate	1	5
Diploma in Education General	18	90
Diploma in Special Needs	1	5
BSc in Psychology	0	0
Total	20	100

The responses indicate that majority of the teachers received general teacher training and the teachers in this category make up 95% of the population of the teachers. Another category is that of one teacher who holds a qualification in Special Needs Education, the same teacher holds a Masters in special Needs. This category makes up 5% of the teachers in the study. The last group comprises of those teachers with honours degree in psychology, these teachers could have a better understanding on the needs of children with special needs.

In response to the questionnaire item on teacher professional qualifications and preparation for inclusion the heads of schools responded in the following ways:

- *Most of the teachers have general diplomas in education but went through some workshops on handling children with special needs although they do not possess prerequisite skills needed in handling special needs learners.*
- *We are lucky to have one teacher who trained in special needs, and has also masters in the area.*
- *Teachers at this school have not been trained to handle special needs learners.*

- *We have a class with handicapped children but the challenge is we cannot handle children with saviour handicaps.*

From the responses given by the heads there are indications that general teachers lack pre-service training in the area of special needs.

#### **4.1.5 Years of Service**

**Table 4: Teachers' years of experience**

Years of experience	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 5 years	4	20
5 – 10 years	5	25
11 – 20 years	8	40
More than 20 years	3	15

According to the findings on Table 4, majority of teachers 8 (40%) had been in service for 11 – 20 years while 4 (20%) had served for less than 5 years, 5 (25%) had served for between 6 and 10 years and 3 (15%) for more than 20 years. This implies that most of the teachers may be said to have adequate experience in teaching service and can imply that they have more experience in teaching special needs learners.

#### **4.2 Theme 1: Guidelines Policy on Inclusive Education.**

In conducting this research, the Researcher wanted to find out whether school heads and teachers were aware of the existence of a government policy guidelines on inclusive and its meaning. Table 1 below shows the responses of teachers.

**Table 5. Teachers' responses on availability of policy guidelines in schools (n = 20)**

Does your school have the policy circulars of Special needs?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	13	65%
No	5	25%
Don't know	2	10%
Total	20	100%

Table 5 above, reveals that 65% of the teachers said that they have the policy circulars on special needs, and also confirmed of its existence as a guiding document for Special Needs Education and inclusion. A total of 25% of teachers are not aware of the policy on inclusion . Ten percent indicated that they did not know of the existence of the policy.

In response to the same questionnaire item the following were the responses of the school heads-

- *I have a circular on the placement procedures for learners with special needs.*
- *I am not quite sure.*
- *I have never heard of any policy on special needs.*
- *I am aware of the policy on special needs and inclusion.*

The responses by the school heads indicate that there is varied response from the school heads. Most of the respondents indicated that heads at their schools once talked about the policy, just one heads was really not aware of the existence of a policy on special needs and inclusion, while others are well versed with regards to the policy. Some also indicated that they were staff developed on special needs.

The other questionnaire item was on how the respondents were implementing the policy at school and the majority indicated that special needs children were enrolled in their schools. The 1990 secretary's circular minute number p 36 is currently being used as a basis for placement of special needs learners in schools.

The results indicate that the current policy on Special Needs Education and inclusion, which is the 1990s secretary's circular minute number p36, is effective in ensuring that inclusive education is implemented in schools. This is evidenced by some of the school heads admitting that they were not aware of the policy and that some schools have not yet implemented inclusion in their schools. Teachers have limited knowledge of special needs and inclusive education. This haphazard scenario can largely be blamed by the lack of legislation that enforces schools to implement Special Needs Education. This observation is supported by Peresuh [1999] who emphasised that it is important for government to develop a sound and comprehensive national policy or legislation that will guarantee compliance by all stakeholders in education. Zindi [1997] also emphasizes this point arguing that ineffectiveness of policies can be disastrous on the education of learners with disabilities as they can be ignored.

### 4.3 Theme 2: Benefits of learners with special needs in regular classrooms

Table 6: Types of special needs children in schools

Type of disability	Number of learners	%
Mental Retardation	10	50%
Physical Disability	15	75%
Hearing Impairment	4	20%
Sight	6	30%

From the table below it shows that 75% of special needs children who are enrolled in sampled primary schools are physically challenged followed by those with mental retardation at 50%. Those with hearing impairment were at 20% and those with sight problem at 30%. At the moment the blind learners seemed not to be enrolled in regular classroom as none of the respondents indicated that they have one.

In order to assess the levels to which teachers are meeting the academic needs of the special needs children, the researcher asked the teachers to define the concept of inclusion. Teachers gave varied responses when they responded to open ended question in the following ways;

- *It is where children with disabilities learn together with those who are normal.*
- *Education which is there for those pupils who are handicapped, especially mentally retarded.*
- *It is whereby pupils with different disabilities learn together.*
- *It is the mixing of students with disabilities and those without in one class.*



The results above indicated that the majority of the teachers understand the concept of inclusion as they generally indicated in their responses that it has to do with including learners with disabilities in regular classrooms. However, others indicated that inclusion is the general provision of education to learners with disabilities. The responses are an indication that teachers have a varied understanding of what inclusion is all about, some show that they are totally unaware, while others exhibit a general understanding of the concept of inclusion. From the interviews with the school heads, despite some not being aware of the policy document, all heads generally understand what the concept of inclusion is all about.

Most teachers have received trainings and workshops sponsored by Leonard Cheshire Trust to have a back ground on handling children with special needs.

**Table 7: Whether academic needs of learners with special needs are being met.**

Are the academic needs being met?	Frequency	%
Yes	12	60%
No	8	40%
Total	20	100%

Table 7 above indicates that most of the respondents (60%) revealed that academic needs are being met for learners with special needs while (40%) indicated 'no'. The respondents who indicated 'yes' seemed to have received some trainings and workshops sponsored by Leonard Cheshire Trust and some indicated that they were staff developed about how to teach learners with different disabilities. The respondents who indicated 'no' seemed to have not attended workshops.

**Table 8: Whether special needs learners cope well socially in classrooms.**

Learners with special needs cope well socially	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	17	85
No	3	15

Table 8 shows that most of the respondents (85%) agreed that special needs learners are coping well socially in the regular classrooms as opposed to 15% who were in disagreement. This reveals that special needs learners were able to play, share and learn well in groups (with the so called normal) in the regular classrooms.

#### **4.4 Theme 3: Support Systems Equipment and Material Resources**

The handling of special needs learners in the inclusive classroom is only possible through the availability of resources for both teachers and learners to use. To find out the extent to which resources are available at schools, the researched asked teachers and school heads on the support systems that existed in terms of equipment and material resources of special needs learners.

**Table 9: Availability of equipment and material resources.**

Availability of equipment and material resources	Number of teachers	Percentage
Yes	4	20%
No	16	80%
Total	20	100%

The data in table 9 above indicates that 80% of the respondents have no equipment and material resources at their schools to help teach learners with special needs. The scenario is the bulk of the school which is about 20% has the equipment and materials at their schools.

On the provision of resources at schools, on special needs, school heads expressed that in an effort to make accessibility of resources easy, they have through the Leonard Cheshire Trust managed to set up two resources units for the district. The facility is to enable schools to order equipment and accessories needed by schools which will be acquired through these units. The Ministry also works with the Social Welfare Department to order from government such equipment as wheelchairs needed by individual learners in respective schools.

The school heads also expressed the point that inclusive classroom concept is still in its infancy at their schools such that their learners with special needs are properly provided for, which is a setback on teachers' efforts.

**Table 10: Infrastructure (n = 20)**

Responses	Number of respondents	Percentages
Yes	7	35%
No	13	65%
Total	20	100%

The results from table 10 indicate that a total of 35% of the teachers are aware of the existence of a cluster resource unit and have been to the resource unit, while 65% indicated that they are not aware of a resources unit in the District.

The findings indicate that there is a serious lack of provisions of resources needed for inclusion to be a reality. Lack of finances has largely been blamed for the scenario. The other problem that emanated from the findings indicate that there is poor co-ordination between authorities responsible for resource units and the school as highlighted by the fact that a large number of teachers are not aware of the existence of resource units in their clusters which they are supposed to benefit from, thus projects remain idle instead of helping people. According to the Nziramasanga Report [1999] the government is making efforts to resuscitate the National Braille Press and audiological laboratories to help Resource units with equipment and accessories needed for successful inclusion.

All the stakeholders in the study who include the teachers, school heads and specialist concurred that rooms in the schools were poorly equipped and needed major revamps so as to provide adequately for the special needs learners. Some of the schools involved in the study had no resource rooms at their schools due to lack of funds and only about 2 schools do have classrooms which are renovated to suit special needs children.

The researcher asked the school heads on the role played by different stakeholders in provision of education and some of the points raised include-:

- *Provision of transport and accompanying learners to school.*
- *Material support for schools.*
- *Collaborate with teachers on how best to assist the learners.*
- *In- service training of teachers.*

One of the school heads was quoted saying that, “stakeholder involvement is the focal point to the success of the inclusive classroom concept.

The heads also explained that stakeholder involvement was necessary in the following ways;

- *Provision of wheel chairs for the physically challenged learners.*
- *Parents need to be involved in the in the individualised learning plans of their children.*
- *Parental involvement ensures that the rights of the learners are not violated and are the watchdogs of their children’s rights*
- *Parents to accompany learners to school.*

Stakeholder involvement in inclusive education has been noted as vital for provision of equipment, moral and financial support. Parents were identified as active participants through their knowledge of children’s rights and need for parental involvement in designing learning plans for special needs learners.

The findings of the research indicate that all stakeholders involved in the study concur that parents are important in the success of the inclusive education project this is in line with recommendations of the Salamanca Framework for Action [1994] which explains that the realisation of the goal of successful education of children with Special Needs is not the task of the Ministry of Education and schools alone. It requires the co-operation of families and the mobilisation of communities. It goes further to explain that a positive attitude on the part of parents favours the school and social integration. Chimedza and Sithole [2009] also exclaim that parents should be recognised as active partners in decision making pertaining Special Needs.

#### 4.5 Theme 4: Teachers' Training

To find out whether teachers were receiving any in service training on Special Needs Education, the researcher asked questions on in-service training and the results were as follows;

**Table 11: At your school have you ever been staff developed on how to teach children with special needs?**

Staff development for teachers or attendance of workshops	Number of respondents	percentage
Yes	13	65
No	7	35
Total	20	100

An analysis of the results on table 11 indicate that 65% of the teachers have attended workshops on special need education and inclusion workshops in the district and 35% of those in the study have not attended any workshops so far. The school heads when interviewed explained that the teachers who are the resource people in the area received training from an organisation called Leonard Cheshire Trust upon application for the programme in the early 20s.

In order to analyse the extent of staff development or workshops for teachers the researcher questioned the areas covered during workshops and results are as follows:

- *General on how to support children and make them feel part of the class.*
- *Sign language.*
- *Communication skills with special needs children.*
- *Conducive environment.*

**Table 12: Frequency of workshop attendance (n = 20)**

Number of workshops attended	Number of teachers	Percentage
1	7	35%
2	6	30%
More than 3	0	0
None	7	35%

The results indicated by table 12 reveal that 35% of the teachers in the study have so far attended a workshop on special needs education and inclusion twice. A total of 30% of the teachers have attended the workshops once and those who have never attended the workshops make up the remaining 35%. Most of the respondents who attended workshops revealed that they were sponsored by Leonard Cheshire Trust.

The last question on the teachers' questionnaire was on what could be done to teachers to be able to be effective in inclusive classrooms and some of the answers were as follows:

- *Teachers must be adequately trained for the programme to be effective and yield positive results.*
- *Teachers must be staff developed so that they have the skills.*
- *All teachers' colleges should introduce a module on inclusive education.*
- *Many workshops should be done and every teacher should have a chance to be trained.*

From the responses given by the teachers they are indications that general teachers lack pre-service training in the area of special needs.

The findings of the study indicate that the majority of the teachers are ill equipped to handle special needs learners in inclusive classrooms; this is largely attributed to the fact that some of the teacher training institutions are not covering special need education training concepts in their curriculum. Other institutions on the other hand offer the facility in passing as some teachers indicated that they covered the special needs as a topic. In-service training workshops are still in the take-off stage and there is need for government to do more. These results are in consistence with the Nziramasanga Report of 1999 which revealed that many teacher training colleges teach aspects of Special Needs Education to their trainee teachers in an adhoc manner. Senator David Coltart, the minister of education was quoted in the Sunday Mail issue of February 12 2012 saying that, teacher training is an essential component in the positive outcome of the inclusive education project.”

The study also revealed that the majority of teachers in the primary schools are Diploma holders, and very few teachers have taken initiative to study further especially in the area of Special Needs Education where one has to train at United College of Education for one and half years, after which no notches are added to one’s salary which explains why most people do not bother. The Nziramasanga Commission of inquiry [1999] argued that the government needs to reward teachers who take up such initiatives.

#### **4.6 Summary**

The results revealed that the provision of Special Needs Education is still in its infancy in the district. Some of the school heads who are responsible for communicating government policies with teachers are not aware of the existence of a policy document with regards to provision of inclusion education in the schools. The effects of policy instead of legislation have resulted in the provision of special needs education been implemented in adhoc manner with those who feel there is need for inclusion doing so while those who think otherwise do



nothing on the matter. This lack of knowledge pertaining special needs has resulted in some of the teachers also not knowing anything about the policy on inclusion.

The findings also indicate that teachers lack in-service training in the area of special needs, thus they are not capacitated to handle special needs learners in their classes. In-service training workshops have been introduced in the district to help teachers acquire knowledge and skills needed in handling special needs learners.

Provisions for special needs learners are still at an time low in the district making the catering of special needs learners in regular classes a difficult task for the learners.

All stakeholders in the study were in agreement that the involvement of parents in provision of education for special needs learners was a pre-requisite for the success of the project without the parents the whole project would fail dismally.

## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter will focus on the summary, conclusions and recommendations that came out as a result of the data collected and analysed.

### **5.2 Summary of chapters**

The purpose of the study was to explore the teachers' perceptions towards the implementation of inclusive education policy on special needs learners in Gweru District primary schools. Teachers perceive inclusive education for special needs learners as something difficult as there is serious lack of skills to handle special needs learners.

A review of the related literature indicates that inclusive education has become an ideal teaching approach worldwide. Stukat [1999] points the principle of equal opportunity and the universal rights to optimal personality development are a more basic to special needs education and inclusion than any possible gains economically from special programmes of training and education. Lewis [1999] also adds that the emerging consensus among educators and clinicians today is that all disabled persons with the exception of those who lack all capacity to respond to stimulation are capable of learning and should be educated in ways that increases self sufficiency and reduce dependency. It is from such ideas that the UNESCO came out with the Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs.

In conducting the research, the Researcher used the case study research design; this method is useful especially for trying theoretical model by using them in the real world. The method also is useful in narrowing down a very broad field of research into one easy one. In this case, the research was narrowed down to Gweru primary schools. The disadvantages of using case studies lies in that at times the generalisations cannot fit a whole population, thus the findings

from this research may not necessarily imply that the situation explained in this research is true for the whole of Gweru.

The researcher used questionnaires and interviews to collect data in four Gweru primary schools, teachers were chosen as respondents for questionnaires from each school and school heads were also interviewed. The limitations in collecting data were that some information given on the questionnaire needed further clarifications by way of interview which was however impossible due to the limitations of time. Some heads during the interviews were reluctant to co-operate which affects the conclusions and findings of the research.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

A number of implications stem from the findings of the preceding chapter. Bearing in mind the limitations that have been cited in the research instruments used and those mentioned in chapter one, the findings are therefore explanatory than confirmatory. For easy referencing the conclusions are organised in line with various sections of the study.

#### **5.3.1 Guidelines Policy on Inclusive education**

While steps have been made towards the creation of inclusive education a reality, the findings indicate that integration is still the dominant guiding principle. Schools adopt ways of including special needs learners in their schools in ways that they deem appropriate and there is very little regard to the policy statements such as the 1990s Secretary's Circular minute number p36. The Researcher noted that there are no clear cut, supervised and planned curricula to be followed by various schools offering special need education. The Nziramasanga Commission [1999] observed that special need programmes were being run in an adhoc manner.

### **5.3.2 Benefits of learners with special needs in regular classrooms**

Inclusive education is capable of enhancing children's academic achievement through speech and language programs. Jenkinson (1997) points out that students at mainstream schools were more likely to have higher academic achievements than those of special schools. Ajwon (2008) asserts that children are more likely to learn social skills in an environment that approximates to normal conditions of growth and development. Children with special needs benefit as indicated by most of the respondents.

### **5.3.3 Teacher Professional qualifications**

From the responses on the teachers' questionnaires, an interesting trend emerged, majority of teachers who went for general teacher training indicated that they did not receive any training on provision of education for learners with disabilities, after training also a few initiatives have been taken by the government and other stakeholders to educate teachers on the provision of education for learners with special needs. Very few teachers also have made efforts to train further for courses that are specifically meant to cater for learners with special needs. Simui [2009] cited in Chireshe [2011] propounds that teacher education should be at the centre of the inclusive education reform, hence the need to see pre-service teacher education as a beginning in the long journey of inclusive education. He further explains that preparation should include strategies aimed at transforming teachers' practices which are largely influenced by their attitudes and beliefs.

### **5.3.4 Support Systems**

The findings of the research indicate that there is a serious shortage of resources in schools to cater for special needs learners; the school environments in most of the cases indicate that environments do not accommodate learners with disabilities. Tassoni [2003] points out that

inclusive education as a concept signals a significant mind shift instead of expecting children, “to come up to standard” or otherwise be segregated, the emphasis is on schools and settings to adapt and be flexible enough to accommodate every child. The Nziramasanga Commission [1999] noted with concern that government had established resource units in some primary schools but these units were not fully equipped. At one particular school visited learners with hearing impairments were crowded in a makeshift class that was not sound proof which is supposed to be an essential provision for speech therapy lessons, some of the schools do not have ramps and rails to cater for the visually and physically challenged citing financial problems as some of the reasons for not developing relevant infrastructure.

There is a general consensus among all who took part in the study, that involvement of stakeholders in the provision of education for learners with disabilities was a pre-requisite; one school head was quoted as saying, “with stakeholder support even in the height of economic challenges that the country is facing schools can provide resources for special needs learners, if the school and stakeholders work together in harnessing resources to make inclusion a reality for them.

Mutepefa, Mpofu and Chataika [2006] commented that in unplanned or defector inclusive education, the parents or guardians have little involvement in curriculum and classroom practices beyond enrolling their child. In these schools the lack of educational plans for students impedes parents from involvement in their child’s education.

## 5.4 Recommendations

The study recommends that:-

- Trained teachers and school heads must undergo in-service training in special needs education so as to capacitate them with skills to handle special needs learners in regular classrooms.
- There should be continuous research by all stake holders on special needs education to make it relevant for local schools and Zimbabwe at large, borrowing ideas from success stories of other countries.
- With the current trend towards inclusive education teachers' colleges and universities should include special education curriculum and make it a compulsory component of studies.
- Non - governmental organisations should also be seen taking initiatives in provision of special needs education to compliment government efforts.
- The government through the public works department must embark on programmes to make school buildings are friendly for all learners especially the disabled.
- Provide per capita grants and allocate funds in the national budget that are to be channelled towards provision for special needs education taking into account that education for the disabled is an expensive undertaking.
- Government should formulate legislation that ensures proper provision of special needs and inclusion.

## References

## Appendices

### APPENDIX 1

#### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

I, Mawocha Nancy, a student at the Midlands State University undertaking Bachelor of Early Childhood Education Degree as part of my programme, I am conducting a study entitled, Teachers perceptions on the implementation of the inclusive Policy of special needs learners in Gweru District Primary Schools. The information will be used for academic purposes only and will be kept confidential.

#### **Demographic data**

##### 1. Gender

Male  Female

##### 2. Age

Below 30 years  31 -40 years   
41 – 50 years  Above 50 years

##### 3. Experience

Less than 5 years  6 – 10 years   
11 – 20 years  More than 20 years

##### 4. Professional qualifications

Diploma  Degree   
Masters  Certificate

If any other specify .....

.....



5. (a) Does your school have policy circulars of Special needs from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary education?

Yes  No  Don't know

(b) If your answer is 'Yes' indicate briefly

.....  
.....

(c) What the policy says about including learners with Special needs?

.....  
.....

(d) How are you implementing the policy at your school?

.....  
.....  
.....

***Tick all which apply to you***

6. (a) Which types of Special needs learners do you have in your school?

- Mentally challenged
- Physically challenged
- Deaf and Hard of hearing
- Those with low vision
- Blind
- Any other specify

.....  
.....

(b) Are their academic needs being met?

Yes  No

(c) (i) If 'yes' how are they being met?

.....  
.....

(ii) If 'no' what is the problem?

.....  
.....

(d) Are special needs learners copying well socially in the regular classrooms?

Yes  No

7. (a) Do you have the equipment and material resources at your school to help you in teaching learners with Special needs.

Yes  No

b(i) Is the infrastructure suitable for special needs learners?

Yes  No

(ii) Support your answer

.....  
.....

(c) Is the Head teacher supportive of the inclusive policy?

Yes  No

(d) How do you cater for special needs learners who stay far away from the school?

.....  
.....

8. (a) Have you ever attended workshops since inclusive education started?

Yes  No

(b) (i) If 'Yes' how many times

Once  twice  more than 3 times

(ii) If 'No' give reasons.

.....  
.....

(c) At your school have you ever been staff developed on how to teach learners with special needs?

Yes

No

(i) If your answer is 'yes' which topics were covered

.....  
.....

(ii) If your answer is 'No' in which areas of Special Needs Education would you like to be assisted?

.....  
.....

(d) What do you think can be done to teachers to be able to be effective in inclusive classrooms?

.....  
.....

**APPENDIX B**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE SCHOOL HEADS**

I Mawocha Nancy, a student at the Midlands State University undertaking Bachelor of Early Childhood Education Degree. As part of my programme, I am conducting a study to entitled “Teachers perceptions on the implementation of the inclusive Policy of Special Needs learners in Gweru District primary schools. The information you provide will be used for academic purposes only and will be kept confidential.

	<b>School Head A</b>	<b>School Head B</b>	<b>School Head C</b>	<b>School Head D</b>
1. Does your school have policy circulars of special needs from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education?				
2. What does the policy say about including learners with special need?				
3. What are the benefits of inclusion to learners with special needs?				
4. Are their academic needs being met?				
5. Are special needs learners copying well socially in the regular classrooms?				
6. Do you have the equipment and material resources at your schools to help you in teaching learners with special needs?				

7. Are your teachers able to teach learners with special needs?				
8. What support systems are in place at your school which helps teachers to use in teaching learners with special needs?				